



Onitsha Traditional Council

P.O.Box 1, Ime -Obi, Onitsha

Thursday, 18 June 2020

Proclamation On Traditional Weddings In Onicha Ado N'Idu As A Consequence Of The Corona Virus Pandemic (No. 2)

The Obi-in-Council has addressed the issue of sustaining our traditional social life in the kingdom with regard to traditional weddings in the context of the prevalence of the Corona Virus (Covid-19). Following due consideration, the Obi-in-Council has decided that traditional weddings may take place during the current period, but strictly within the provisions of the Federal and Anambra State Governments' laws and Covid-19 protocols on safety and hygiene, and the *Regulations On Funeral Rites, Marriages And Other Customary Matters In Onicha Ado N'Idu, 2015 Edition (Rules and Regulations)*.

Accordingly, therefore, I, Nnaemeka A. Achebe, CFR, mni, by virtue of the authority vested in me as the monarch of Onitsha Ado N'Idu, hereby make this Proclamation regarding traditional marriages in the Kingdom while the extant laws, rules, regulations and protocols relating to the Covid-19 pandemic are still in force.

1. All proposals for traditional wedding, including with non-indigenes, must henceforth be duly registered at Ime Obi with an applicable registration fee prior to the date of the ceremony, having been duly countersigned by the respective Diokpa and Ndichie Ogbe.
2. Whilst this Proclamation is in effect, a further written undertaking must be signed by the heads of the families of the bride and bridegroom and countersigned by their respective Diokpa and Ndichie Ogbe stating that the ceremony will be conducted strictly in line with all the provisions of the extant laws, regulations, protocols, and this Proclamation, failing which appropriate sanctions will be imposed by the Obi-in-Council. In a proposed wedding between an Onitsha indigene and a non-indigene, only

the Onitsha family, Diokpa and Ndichie Ogbe will sign the undertaking (also see paragraphs 10 and 11 below).

3. The family of the bride must ensure that adequate arrangements are in place in line with the State Government's Covid-19 protocols on safety and hygiene, including the adequate provision of sanitizers and hand washing facility, wearing of face masks by everyone attending, physical distancing, and limiting the number of participants to a maximum of thirty (30).
4. Consequent on No. 2 above, the ceremony should be held outdoors under canopies in order to facilitate physical distancing and natural ventilation.
5. The family of the bride must fully ensure that the ceremony is conducted strictly in line with Chapter III, Marriage (Inu Nwunye), of the *Rules and Regulations, 2015 Edition*, cited above, which they are urged to study very carefully.
6. The ceremony should not exceed two hours in duration and ideally should hold between 12:00 noon and 2:00 pm.
7. In order to minimize the chances of infection, only the traditional breaking of kolanut and offering of drinks for the wedding couple should be performed, and the person doing so should wash or sanitize his/her hands before proceeding. All other aspects of the ceremony requiring the sharing of kolanuts, and drinks to attendees should be deemed to be symbolically performed and, therefore, waived. For the same reason, all traditional entitlements to all parties in whatever form should be monetized.
8. There must be no entertainment of any type, that is, no food, drinks, snacks, or any form of refreshment whatsoever anywhere in connection with the ceremony. Similarly, there should be no performance of music, dance, or any form of merry-making that may attract spectators and uninvited persons.
9. *Idu Uno* should be performed symbolically by briefly displaying the relevant items at the end of the ceremony. The items should thereafter be transported to the bridegroom's family house unaccompanied by Umu

Ilo and Umu Agbogo, who should receive their traditional entitlements strictly in line with Chapter III of the *Rules and Regulations 2015 Edition*.

10. If the prospective husband is a non-indigene, the bride's family must take the responsibility for the compliance with the aforementioned provisions by their prospective in-laws, failing which the bride's family will be held accountable and sanctioned.
11. If the prospective wife is a non-indigene, it is incumbent on the Onitsha family of the bridegroom to comply with the aforementioned provision in the interest of their own safety and wellbeing, and those of others.
12. By countersigning the undertaking form, the Diokpa and Ndichie Ogbe also assume responsibility for the good order of the ceremony.

The intention of this Proclamation is not to unnecessarily or arbitrarily stifle a fundamental element of our communal cultural life. The stark truth, however, is that over 440,000 persons have died world-wide from the complications of this unseen but very deadly enemy, which is now with us in Onitsha. As at Monday, 15 June, 2020 about 50% of both the 65 confirmed infections and 9 deaths in Anambra State were recorded in the greater Onitsha metropolis comprising Onitsha North and South LGAs and Idemili North LGA. These numbers may rise significantly when aggressive testing commences soon. Therefore, it is important for everyone as well as the entire community to take direct responsibility in adhering to all the extant laws, rules, and protocols in the interest of containing the virus as soon as possible and preserving our lives. I trust that we will all do the needful without any coercion.

This Proclamation takes effect on Thursday, 18 June, 2020 and will remain in force until revoked by me.

#Ndu ka ife nine. #Nduka

**His Majesty,
Nnaemeka A. Achebe, CFR, mni,
Obi of Onitsha.
17 June, 2020.**