



# *Onitsha Traditional Council*

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

Monday, 05 October, 2020

## **Proclamation No. 4 of 2020 on the Termination of Proclamations Nos. 1, 2 and 3 of 2020 on Burials, Traditional Marriages and Traditional Festivals, Respectively, in Onicha Ado N'Idu During the Covid-19 Pandemic.**

We are all aware of the various measures taken by the Federal and Anambra State Governments, as well as the World Health Organization (WHO), in response to the Corona Virus (Covid-19) pandemic, including the total lockdown of the country on 30 March 2020 for one month.

Consequently, the Obi-in-Council, following due consultations with the leaders of our constituent groups, decided to issue the three proclamations named above. Though restrictive and burdensome, they were made with a distinct sense of responsibility, and called for short-term sacrifices for longer-term safety and good health of our population in the peculiar situation we faced.

The Governments have carried out periodic reviews of the crisis, balancing the imperatives of public health and safety, on one hand, and the economic consequences for the nation, on the other hand. The Obi-in-Council has maintained a similar posture, particularly with regard to the impact on our local economy. The Council applauded the sterling contribution by the Onitsha Community Covid-19 Response Team (OCCRT) in the fight against Covid-19 and its aftermaths. It also appreciated the constructive proposals by the constituent groups on the ways and means of gradually resuming our communal traditional and social life whilst complying with the extant Covid-19 protocols on hygiene and safety. The proposals have been fully discussed and collectively agreed with the Obi-in-Council. Consequently, I hereby make the following proclamation:

1. The three extant proclamations in connection with the Covid-19 protocols on safety and hygiene, namely,



- No. 1 of Monday, 04 May 2020 on the Burial of Departed Ones;
- No. 2 of Thursday, 18 June 2020 on Traditional Weddings; and
- No. 3 of Thursday, 18 June, 2020 on Traditional Festivals;

are hereby terminated and replaced by this Proclamation No. 4, except Article 1 of Proclamation No. 2 on the registration and payment of security levy for traditional marriages, which remains in effect. The effective date for Proclamation No. 4 is 18 October, 2020, that is, the day after Iwaji Ikpala Eze. Therefore, families may begin immediately to register with Ime-Obi for dates in respect of events that may take place from that date onwards.

2. All ceremonies will be carried out in strict compliance with the current Government protocols on safety and hygiene for Covid-19, the ***Regulations on Funeral Rites, Marriages and Other Cultural Matters In Onicha Ado N'Idu, 2015 Edition (Rules and Regulations)***, as well as the specific modalities agreed between the Obi-in-Council and the respective constituent groups, who will assume responsibilities as follows:
  - Funerals and Traditional Weddings: Ndi Diokpa and Ikporo Onitsha.
  - Ozo Title Taking and Itu Ugo: Ndi Diokpa and Agbalanze Onitsha.
  - Odu Title Ceremonies: Otu Odu Onicha.
  - Social Events: Ndichie and Ogbo so Achi Ani.
  
3. In all circumstances, the family undertaking any ceremony, along with their Diokpa and Ndichie Ogbe, must assume overall responsibility for compliance and the good order of the ceremony. Therefore, families intending to undertake any ceremony must obtain in advance the general guidelines from Ime Obi, and the specific guidelines from the respective constituent group, as ignorance will not be cogent excuse for default.
  
4. For the avoidance of doubt, the current mandatory safety and hygiene measures by Government include:
  - Wearing of face masks in the public, including ceremonies.
  - Adequate provision for hand washing and sanitizing.
  - Adequate provision for temperature testing
  - Not more than thirty persons gathered in one location
  - Physical distancing of about 6 feet apart.
  - Not staying for more than two hours continuously in an enclosed place, and the use of fans (not air conditioners) in such situations.
  - Elderly persons and those with pre-existing health conditions should avoid large events.



5. In addition, the following local guidelines will apply:

- Use of open spaces/fields for proper ventilation and physical spacing.
- No masquerades should perform whatsoever, except for *Idu Avia*.
- Music and dance groups should perform in fixed locations and not move around.
- Persons who conscientiously feel unwilling to attend compulsory events should discuss this with their constituent group leaders.
- Ceremonies should be kept brief and entitlements should be monetized where possible.
- Take-away food packs are recommended instead of general service.

6 In the interest of communal discipline, it is mandatory that the ***Rules and Regulations*** are strictly adhered to, particularly with regard to Funerals and Traditional Marriages. Special attention is drawn to Chapter I, Section 34, Page 13, on *Lavish Entertainment*. No persons, groups of persons, or kindred or constituent groups may vary or add to the tariffs and other provisions of the ***Rules and Regulations*** without the express approval of Obi-in-Council. These rules and regulations are currently under review and kindred and constituent groups will be duly consulted in order to reflect appropriate tariffs and provisions, going forward.

This proclamation, if prudently applied, should take us gradually back to normal communal life whilst still maintaining full alert against Covid-19. However, it must be stressed in the strongest terms that the chances of contracting the deadly virus remain very high, as is happening elsewhere in the world. It is imperative, therefore, that we must continue to take every personal and collective responsibility for our safety and good health. The situation will continue to be reviewed as the picture unfolds.

#Nduka

His Majesty,  
Nnaemeka A. Achebe, CFR, mni  
Obi of Onitsha