

TRANSCRIPT OF AN INTERVIEW WITH SOWORE STEPHEN OMOYELE
ON 6TH AUGUST, 2019

DURATION : 1 HOUR , 42 MINUTES 47 SECONDS

DSS1 - Amm, the time now is about hmm, how many minutes to seven (7) o'clock? Hmm thirteen (13) minutes to, to seven (7) O'clock and this is the DSS National Headquarters and I'm sure Mr Sowore Stephen Omoylele, you're aware of where you are at the moment, right?

Sowore - That's correct.

DSS1 - Okay now, we, we, we, the Service arrested you because of your planned revolution and we are here, we are here to ask you certain questions, to have a conversation with you. We have questions for you. I want to tell you that you are not obliged to say anything except you wish to do so. But whatever it is that you say, you see, is being recorded in the presence of your lawyer and at the end of the day, we will also request you to make written statement after our conversation with you, and it could be used in evidence. Are you ok with this?

Sowore - Have you hmm eem shown my lawyer the detention and arrest eem warrant or a detention order at this point?

DSS1 - Okay its, eee he met with our legal department,

Sowore - Yes.

DSS1 - I don't know if in the course of his meeting with them he asked the same question.

Sowore - I am asking, I'm asking you too.

DSS1 - Then I now ask the lawyer did you, did you ask of the detention order?

Bar Sam - No, not at all.

DSS1 - Okay, you didn't at all.

Lawyer - Yeah

DSS 1 - Okay, so may be when we are done,

Sowore - Okay,

Stephen
OMOYELE SOWORE
12/09/2019

DSS1 - You can sort it out, he can sort it out with the legal department, but there is a detention order already.

Sowore - Okay.

DSS1 - Okay, if you want after then you can confirm from the legal department, they will get him through the process, so are you okay for us to continue?

Sowore - Yes.

DSS1 - I am Usman, My colleague here is

DSS2 - Moses,

Sowore - Mooor!

DSS2 - Moses.

Sowore - Okay.

DSS3 - And I am Monsur.

DSS4 - My name is John.

DSS5 - Sani.

Sowore - You all have last names apparently.

DSS1 - I am Usman Usman.

Sowore - Okay.

DSS1 - Yeah I am Usman Usman, so ee like I said, we'll be asking you questions and our, our, our advise is, be truthful to the best of your knowledge. We'll not force you to say anything. Whatever question we ask and you have a problem with or you don't have an answer to it, or you don't want to answer us, there is no compulsion, you simply tell us you're not going to answer these questions. So we'll just want to proceed by asking, in the course of your being here, has anybody molested you in any way or maltreated you?

Sowore - Eyess.

DSS 1 - How?

Sowore - My understanding is that the DSS is one and only body from where I was arrested to this point.

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - So, I was abducted in the middle of the night,

Sowore
DMONRE Sowore
12/09/2019

DSS1 - Okay,
Sowore - Ee taken to one of your facilities in Lagos,
DSS1 - mmn.
Sowore - I was beaten up, rough handled on my way to the facility in the car,
DSS1 - Okay.
Sowore - And my cousin who was in the room with me was also beaten and handcuffed, and ee my properties were forcefully seized,
DSS1 - mmn.
Sowore - and when I got there, of course, eem the maltreatment continued, they threw me on a cold floor,
DSS1 - mmn.
Sowore - And locked the door,
DSS1 - mhm,
Sowore - And I had no contact with even the guards for two (2) nights, ee I was in that facility before I was flown here by your agents.
DSS1 - Okay.
Sowore - So I was seriously maltreated.
DSS1 - Has anybody denied you food?
Sowore - While in your facility in Lagos Yes, but I decided that because of their hostility I won't take any food until I am allowed to talk to a lawyer.
DSS1 - Okay, but since here, has anybody denied you food?
Sowore - I continued to refuse food,
DSS1 - Okay, you continued to refuse food,
Sowore - Until I was allowed to speak with a lawyer, and as soon as I was allowed to talk to a lawyer,
DSS1 - So you refused food, since from Lagos,
Sowore - Since the day I was arrested,

Shyler
DIXON/SOWORE
12/09/2019

DSS1 - Okay, you refused food since the day you were arrested, and you continued, but we have allowed you food from outside right?

Sowore - So far yes.

DSS1 - Okay and you have seen your lawyer as requested.

Sowore - I have seen my lawyer,

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - but I am still being denied access to my immediate family.

DSS1 - And you've made calls to your family members?

Sowore - I've not made any calls to them. My brother is outside; he wasn't allowed to see me as we speak.

DSS1 - Okay, it's okay, I will, I will, I will sort that out but I, I understand you, you, you made a call the other day?

Sowore - No, I've not made any call to my family members, I only made calls to people I remember their number to bring me food and ask them to call my brother. My brother came in today.

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - But he was denied access to me, so I haven't been able to see him and as a result speak with my mum; and my wife and kids.

DSS1 - Okay,

Sowore - Yes.

DSS1 - So, I will get back to your brother and know what it is. But I am not aware you've been denied such privileges, of course for the one you've talked about talking to your lawyer, immediately you know I handed the matter, I said, you said you're not going to do your interview until you saw the lawyer and now you have your lawyer present with us, now let's go for, for the records and now can you tell us about yourself.

Sowore - Aaam my name is Omoyele Sowore.

DSS 1 - Okay.

Omoyele Sowore
OMOYELE SOWORE
12/09/2019

Sowore - That's my name.
DSS1 - Okay.
Sowore - What else do you want to know?
DSS1 - Your date of birth.
Sowore - I was born on 16th February, 1971.
DSS1 - 1971 where?
Sowore - I was born in Ese-Odo Local Government Area of Ondo State.
DSS1 - Okay, ee the name of your parents,
Sowore - David Sowore and my mum is Esther Sowore.
DSS1 - Your mum is Esther Sowore,
Sowore - Yes.
DSS1 - You say a brother of yours came here today?
Sowore - that's right.
DSS1 - What is his name?
Sowore - Allen.
DSS1 - Allen.
Sowore - Yes.
DSS1 - Allen who?
Sowore - Sowore.
DSS1 - Okay, what time did he come?
Sowore - It's just a few minutes ago.
DSS1 - Few minutes ago?
Sowore - Yes, he's probably still within the premises, I mean outside the gate as we speak.
DSS1 - Okay, was he one of the ones that brought food to you.
Sowore - He accompanied the people that brought food.
DSS1 - He accompanied them, Okay emm, now tell us about your family history, particularly eem marital life. Are you married?

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DAMUYERE SOWORE
12/09/2019

Sowore - I am married, yes.
DSS1 - Okay, your wife's name.
Sowore - eem ssp Olubumi Sowore.
DSS1 - Okay.
Sowore - She's based in the US at this point.
DSS1 - Okay she's based in the US.
Sowore - That's correct.
DSS1 - Okay, and do you have children with her?
Sowore - Yes.
DSS1 - How many children?
Sowore - Two (2) that I know of.
DSS1 - Two (2) that Hmmm,hmm the others you don't know?
Sowore - It's not impossible. My dad used to say some kids you may never know?
DSS1 - Okay just the two (2) you know of, so what are their names?
Sowore - One is ee Kiribo, the boy, he's the younger and the eldest is ee Omotone.
DSS1 - Okay, they live with you?
Sowore - Yes.
DSS1 - Where?
Sowore - In the US.
DSS1 - Okay in the US, do you have a house in Nigeria?
Sowore - I do in my village.
DSS1 - In your village?
Sowore - Yes.
DSS1 - Okay, where is your village?
Sowore - Kiribo, Ese-Odo Local Government Area of Ondo State.
DSS1 - Of Ondo State?
Sowore - Yes.

Allyson
OKROYETE SOWORE
12/09/2019

DSS1 - Then, apart from the one you have in the village; do you have a house anywhere in,

Sowore - No

DSS1 - In Nigeria?

Sowore - No.

DSS1 - Not at all.

Sowore - Not at all.

DSS1 - Whether rented?

Sowore - No.

DSS1 - You don't have any?

Sowore - Except if it is office related,

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - And that I cannot consider my private space.

DSS1 - Okay, now aa aa tell me about your, your educational background.

Sowore - I attended primary school in my home town.

DSS1 - Mhm where?

Sowore - Actually I attended, I was home schooled by my father,

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - As I travelled with him as a teacher.

DSS1 - Mhm

Sowore - But ee then started officially in my home town in Local Authority Primary School, Kiribo from there I went to,

DSS1 - From what year to what year?

Sowore - May be about 1976 to 1980, I spent only four (4) years in primary school, I was promoted, I had double promotion to high school.

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - in 1980 and ee the high school was like Community High School Kiribo.

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DAMUETE SOWORE
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DSS1 - Okay, you finished from there ee,
Sowore - I finished from there and proceeded to another secondary school where I spent two (2) years and I did WAEC again at Ofedepe Grammar School in Okitipupa, also in, ee I thing in Okitipupa Local Government now if I remember correctly.
DSS1 - You're correct Local government.
Sowore - From there I proceeded to the University of Lagos.
DSS1 - Okay.
Sowore - After University of Lagos I,
DSS1 - what did you study in the University?
Sowore - Geography and planning.
DSS1 - Geography and Planning?
Sowore - Yes.
DSS1 - From what year to what year?
Sowore - Eem between 1989 and 1995.
DSS1 - 95 okay.
Sowore - I spent six (6) years in school.
DSS1 - Mmm, okay.
Sowore - So after that I¹ obtained a Masters Degree in Public Administration.
DSS1 - Mhm
Sowore - From Colombia University in New York.
DSS1 - Mmm, Okay did you do Youth Service?
Sowore - I did.
DSS1 - Okay where?
Sowore - I did in Yola.
DSS1 - Yola.
Sowore - Yes, in Adamawa State.
DSS1 - In Adamawa State?
Sowore - Yes.

Omoyete Sowore
12/09/2019

DSS1 - Okay, okay, now, now since them where have you worked? Where and where have you worked? Places you worked.

Sowore - When I finished eem at the University of Lagos after NYSC, I worked briefly as an Organizing Secretary for the DA, the Democratic Alternative it use to be a political party, one of the first political parties, but then it was a Civil Society Organization, it was a pro democracy organization so,

DSS1 - Mhm.

Sowore - After that, I left to the US.

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - Ee in the US I did all kinds of jobs.

DSS1 - Like what sort of jobs?

Sowore - You know eem, I worked as a refugee resettlement manager.

DSS 1 - Okay.

Sowore - And then after that, I also worked as a manager for catholic charity it's also for refugee resettlement.

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - Before I proceeded to start Sahara Reporters.

DSS1 - Okay

Sowore - In 2006.

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - So I worked at Sahara Reporter till 2008 or there about and then ee I got eem part-time job as a University lecturer.

DSS1 - mnm, Which University?

Sowore - At school of, the School of Visual Arts in New York City and also what used to be known as Brooklyn Polytechnic, it's now City University of New York.

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - Where I taught ee Post ee, Post Colonial African History in those two (2) Schools, Yeah

86m
ORNYELE SOWORE
12/09/2019

DSS1 - Okay, so from what time to what time did you work in that University?

Sowore - I'm still working; I still work at the School of Virtual Arts as a part-time lecturer. They call us adjunct Professors, I think is equal to, it's part-time.

DSS1 - Adjunct Professors.

Sowore - Because it's part-time, so I teach only one class from September to December every year.

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - So at Sahara Reporters, I continued as publisher until last year,

DSS1 - Mhn, okay.

Sowore - When I ran for presidency, I haven't fully gone back there.

DSS1 - Okay, now you started Sahara Reporters right?

Sowore - Yes.

DSS1 - Is it registered?

Sowore - It's yes; it's registered in the US.

DSS1 - In the US?

Sowore - As Sahara Reporters Media Group. It is registered in the City, I mean in the State of New York. It is a legal entity eem, in the State of New York.

DSS1 - Okay no sort of registration in Nigeria, right?

Sowore - No there is ee Sahara Reporters Media Foundation in Nigeria.

DSS1 - Okay is it registered?

Sowore - It is registered, yes with the CAC.

DSS1 - With the CAC?

Sowore - Yes.

DSS1 - Sahara Reporters Media Foundation.

Sowore - Yes.

Soye
DMONETE Sowore
12/09/2019

- DSS1 - **Okay, Now, who are the members of the Board of Directors of Sahara Reporters Media Foundation?**
- Sowore - I am one of them and one of eee, also members is eem Temitope ee Omuyide, we are the two (2) eem players of the group.
- DSS2 - **Do you mind if I continue?**
- Sowore - Yeah, go ahead.
- DSS2 - **Ok eem two (2) of you, are there only two (2) members**
- Sowore - Yes, at this point, it's less than a year, it's about two (2) years old self.
- DSS2 - **Two (2) years old?**
- Sowore - Yes.
- DSS2 - **So anything else on the personal level?**
- Sowore - Maam except you tell me your interest, that's pretty much my life ee in a nutshell.
- DSS2 - **Okay, travel.**
- Sowore - Travels.
- DSS2 - **Yeah**
- Sowore - Extensively, ee it's travelled from Nigeria since ee I think ee 1999; I left Nigeria in 1999 and travelled to the US. First I travel in 1999 to Belgium for a conference from there I went to the US and stayed, I've been in the US ever since 1999. I've spent twenty (20) years there.
- DSS2 - **What are the other countries...**
- Sowore - Ee I've been to a lot of countries Ghana, South Africa, I've been to Spain, Italy, I've been to Australia, I've been in Austria, I've been in United Kingdom, Ireland, I've been in a bunch of a Caribbean countries, I've been in Jamaica, Democratic Republic of Dominica, ee I've been in Canada, I've been in ee lot of countries, like Kenya, yes.
- DSS2 - **Do you have any particular criteria for chosen where you visit?**

Sowore
OMONETE Sowore
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Sowore - No ee except during the election, I ee chose where Nigerians are flash communities of the diaspora, mm yes. But beyond that, I mostly travelled for conferences that I was invited to, because I was a speaker for Amnesty International for long time, and so they invite me to conferences, I speak on environmental issues, they invite me for conferences, during elections, I travel to where I am invited by the Diaspora, I campaigned, everywhere, almost everywhere. And I've also been to thirty-four (34) States in Nigeria, including the Federal Capital Territory.

DSS1 - **Okay, Now so thirty four (34) States in Nigeria, you've almost covered Nigeria.**

Sowore - Yes I have at this point left with Borno. I have actually passed through Yobe before,

DSS1 - **Okay.**

Sowore - But never really, I cannot count Yobe because I never really stayed there, but I've driven through Yobe before.

DSS1 - **So which is the other one that you didn't go?**

Sowore - Ee I haven't been to Ebonyi.

DSS1 - **Ebonyi?**

Sowore - Yes

DSS1 - **So why didn't you go to Borno?**

Sowore - Ebonyi?

DSS1 - **Borno, Borno**

Sowore - Why I didn't go to Borno,

DSS1 - **Hnn**

Sowore - Which is ee, I couldn't find flights during the time we wanted to go there, before they went, they said it was not safe to travel by road, I didn't want to endanger the lives of our campaign committee members.

DSS1 - **Okay, so meaning those trips were campaign related.**

Sowore
DMONETE SOWORE
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Sowore - A lot of the trips to the thirty-four (34) States were campaign related in mass two and a half (2^{1/2}) years, that's correct.

DSS1 - **Okay, now who are your closest associates in Nigeria?**

Sowore - I do not know because, I have mostly associated with people who are based out of Nigeria.

DSS1 - **Okay.**

Sowore - Yes, they are Nigerians too.

DSS1 - **Okay.**

Sowore - But at home, I just have had friends over this years, we were in pro-democracy groups together,

DSS1 - **Like?**

Sowore - One of them being Femi Falana who used to be my lawyer,

DSS1 - **Mhn.**

Sowore - Olisa Agbakoba.

DSS1 - **Mhn.**

Sowore - Wole Soyinka.

DSS1 - **Mhn.**

Sowore - Ayo Obe. ¹

DSS1 - **Mhn.**

Sowore - Emm ee I have eem Mako Fabeyi, Olusegun Mayegun who used to be NANS president.

DSS1 - **Mhn.**


Sowore - Nasiru Kura.

DSS1 - **Mhn.**

Sowore - When ee he was alive we used to be close with Bamidele Aturo. So these are some of them, and in recent years, may be, Student unions leaders I meet in the course of campaigning.

DSS1 - **Okay.**

Sowore - Yes.


OMONOLE SOWORE
12/09/2019

DSS 1 - Okay, what about outside, outside, outside Nigeria?

Sowore - Ee People in the diaspora, I've been in close contact with ee may be leaders of Amnesty International,

DSS1 - Mhn.

Sowore - Committee to protect journalist who work together, media contacts.

DSS1 - Mhn, Okay now, which clubs or societies do you belong to?

Sowore - I am not in any club, except Amnesty International.

DSS1 - Amnesty International?

Sowore - Yes

DSS1 - Okay

Sowore - That is the only one I know I'm officially registered with.

DSS1 - Okay, you are officially registered with.

Sowore - Yes.

DSS1 - What of political parties?

Sowore - I founded the.

DSS1 - You are affiliated with or?

Sowore - I founded the African Action Congress in August last year.

DSS1 - August last year,

Sowore - And I also ran under the platform of the party as the presidential candidate.

DSS1 - Okay, now for the, for the, for the party, what was your primary manifesto?


Sowore - It's called SPAISAHIT

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - Based on Security, Power, ee Security, Infrastructure, anti-corruption ee, economy aah it's been a while now

DSS1 - So, you formed a pneumonic around it,

Sowore - Yes


DMOYELE SOWORE
12/9/2019

DSS1 - Spaisa what you said?
Sowore - SPAISAHIT,
DSS1 - SPAISAHIT
Sowore - Yes, you know Health, Education, Agriculture, Technology and Tourism, you know, I think R is restructuring.
DSS1 - Okay, r was restructuring?
Sowore - Yes.
DSS1 - Okay, now did your party win any election at all?
Sowore - We didn't believe that any election held in this last election, so we don't even talk about winning or losing elections.
DSS1 - What I am asking is whether, I'm not asking whether you believe any election held,
Sowore - I'm just telling you that eee.
DSS1 - So was there any winner from your party at any level.
Sowore - No that I know of.
DSS1 - So if there is, you should know of course.
Sowore - That's what I'm telling you.
DSS1 - So there was none really, so now ee when you founded that political party what, what was your ambition? What was your dream?
Sowore - I wanted a political party that could change the way Nigeria politically is run.
DSS1 - Mmn.
Sowore - And eee help, I wanted to be the president of Nigeria and change Nigeria forever.
DSS1 - Okay.
Sowore - Yes.
DSS1 - By.
Sowore - By winning the election.
DSS1 - By winning the election.

Sowore
OMOYELE SOWORE
12/09/2019

- Sowore - Yes, but unfortunately no election was held in my view.
- DSS1 - Okay.
- Sowore - what I saw, it as an act of aggression against the Nigerian people.
- DSS1 - How?
- Sowore - Well in my village, soldiers followed me there, and you know, prevented people from voting, and they carted away ballot boxes, shot at the drone that I was using to monitor the election, a cbn drone.
- DSS1 - Mhn.
- Sowore - Seized it and till today, they have the possession of it so that we could not prove that there tried to rig the election in that place. And that was what was widespread in the 2019 election.
- DSS1 - Okay.
- Sowore - Across the country.
- DSS1 - Soldiers shot down the drone? Did you have the permission to use the drone?
- Sowore - Aam it does not require, are you asking me if, whether they shot down the drone or the permission to use it?
- DSS1 - Yeah, they shot down the drone you said, but was there the permission for you to use that drone?
- Sowore - I have a drone that I brought in officially, so they saw it.
- DSS1 - How was it brought in officially?
- Sowore - Through the airport.
- DSS1 - Through the airport?
- Sowore - Yes, and I showed it to them that it was a drone, and I took it to them.
- DSS1 - And you had, you had the requisite permission to fly the drone?
- Sowore - I don't know if you need a permission to fly a drone that is not going beyond eight (8) meter above ground.

Shayela
DMOYELE SOWORE
12/09/2019

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - Yeah I didn't have any information to that effect, INEC was aware of it.

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - And so I, I don't have that information.

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - Yes.

DSS1 - Okay, Now eeh lately you've been on, on social media campaigns for revolution and the rest of them right? And you made several statements regarding revolution, I want us to, I want you to, to speak to us about that your revolution and eem the planned revolution.

Sowore - What exactly do you want to know about it?

DSS1 - Everything about it.

Sowore - Its eee, it was our party, that's the AAC met and eee we decided that the level of engagement to change Nigeria will require a higher level of resistance.

DSS1 - Resistance?

Sowore - Yes, against the authorities, peaceful resistance.

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - And that we gathered, discussed and everything we said is what is wrong about Nigeria that has to be fixed. And we put it out, that's how you found out, because it was not hidden and we tagged it revolution now.

DSS1 - Revolution Now?

Sowore - Yes, and we had a bunch of demands and we also made public about how the country is being run.

DSS1 - Mnn.

Sowore - And we campaigned, spoke on TV, put it on social media so that everybody could see and we chose a date August 5 that people could engage in peaceful protest across Nigeria.

DSS1 - Okay.

Shyde
DMOYELE SOWORE
12/09/2019

Sowore - And before that could happen I was arrested. Abducted I should like to say by your men.

DSS1 - Mhn.

Sowore - And I hear that I've been incommunicado, so I don't know what eventually happened. But I learnt from some of our colleagues and from clips that I watched in one of the offices on Tv that people came out peacefully, they were attacked, a lot of people were arrested. And ee that's the information I have.

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - Yes.

DSS1 - Okay, So what's the, what's the militant angle to that revolution you talked about?

Sowore - Aaa I did I say militant? I said higher level of resistant. I happen to have been a student activist, a student leader and each time we were not satisfied with government,

DSS1 - Mhn.

Sowore - We protested.

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - Yes we protested severally, including against military rulers.

DSS1 - Mhn.

Sowore - And it was ee our efforts as young students across the country.

DSS1 - Mhn.

Sowore - That produced the democracy we have today.

DSS1 - Mhn.

Sowore - Eem, so it is in that light.

DSS1 - Mhn.

Sowore - That we say a lot of things were wrong. Arbitrary detentions.

DSS1 - Mhn.

Soye
OMOYETE SOWORE
12/09/2019

Sowore - Like this one that you did to me, you know, eem the level of security or insecurity in the country.

DSS1 - Mhm.

Sowore - And the fact that people didn't have living wage.

DSS1 - Mhm.

Sowore - Hunger and starvation in the land.

DSS1 - Mhn

Sowore - Those are the demands that we felt that government is ignoring, and eem they should be assembled and presented to them in the way that they can be forced to listen to those demands.

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - And our party in coalition with a group of ee CSOs Civil Society Groups met and had these open meetings. Like you said, you heard about it, we sent them,

DSS1 - Mmn.

Sowore - To discuss how to put heads across the country.

DSS1 - Mhn.

Sowore - Before I was arrested, over twenty (20) cities had signed up for that protest action.

DSS1 - Mhn.

Sowore - Or match.

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - But again it was tagged revolution now, that was the battle cry for that resistance.

DSS1 - Okay, so will you say that the idea of revolution was one of the mandates of your political party? Or one of?

Sowore - When you say revolution, everybody who wants to see a sudden and very impressive change in society use the word revolution.

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - Yes.

Sowore
DMOYETE SOWORE
12/09/2019

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - Even the current president once talked about the revolution when he was asking for election.

DSS1 - Mhm.

Sowore - During election, some other parties said they want revolution. What they want is a change.

DSS1 - Okay change?

Sowore - That will be fundamental enough that society will turn around.

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - That is what revolution is all about.

DSS1 - But will you tag it militant in anyway?

Sowore - When you say militant, what do you mean?

DSS1 - No it's your own words.

Sowore - No I've not used the word militant; you are the one who introduced it that's why I'm asking you. I said resistance.

DSS1 - Did you ever use militant revolution in any of your comment in the call for revolution?

Sowore - I've told you, I've said it persistently since the interview that, yes, we've used the word revolution now, it's the hash tag and it trended for a long time.

DSS1 - So you said you've not used the militant once.

Sowore - You are the one who introduced it. When you said militant, that is why I am asking you to break it down to my level.

DSS1 - No, it's just one of the words you've used at some points, may be you clarify it.

Sowore - Well I'm also asking you to clarify what you mean.

DSS1 - And I, and I, I think one of the clips we saw said, at some point you made a point, I don't know whether it was you or one of your coordinators saying by the time you're done with the revolution, DSS will cease to exist by Monday or Tuesday.

Abigail
DORIS SOWORE
12/09/2019

Sowore - Yes.

DSS1 - **Right?**

Sowore - What's DSS?

DSS1 - **Mhn will cease to exist.**

Sowore - What's DSS?

DSS1 - **No it was your comment.**

Sowore - DSS is Department of States, here State Services, your organization.

DSS1 - **Ee yeah.**

Sowore - It was created by, for the people,

DSS1 - **Mmn.**

Sowore - If the people don't want the DSS to exist, then it won't exist, that's the power of the people. So that somebody said that the DSS will cease to exist doesn't mean that, you know, the DSS should go and grab the person except you're saying that the DSS, most people won't say something against them.

DSS1 - **No that's not what we are saying, I am, just asking, we've heard several other things; it's just one of those things.**

Sowore - I'm explaining to you that if someone says to you that DSS will cease to exist by Tuesday. Today is Tuesday, are you not still in existence?

DSS1 - **That's what we're asking,**

Sowore - Mh haha.

DSS1 - **That's why we're asking, how was that to be achieved?**

Sowore - No but the question is, what was the context in which the person said it?

DSS1 - **You're the one who made mention of it.**

Sowore - Because you said, you don't even know who said it.

DSS1 - **You said one of your state coordinators said it.**

Sowore - No I never said that, no don't put words into my mouth. You said it was either me or you heard from one

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of my State coordinators. You said you didn't know who said it.

- DSS1 - Okay we'll come to that,
- Sowore - Alright.
- DSS1 - We'll come to that, when we come to that I think you'll elaborate more for us. Now on this, on this planned revolution, are, are they other individuals, key persons allied to the revolution?
- Sowore - Oh I've said that ee organizations.
- DSS1 - Like which organization.
- Sowore - and our party members. There is a group; we had a coalition called CORE, Coalition for Revolution.
- DSS1 - Coalition for Revolution?
- Sowore - Yes.
- DSS1 - Okay.
- Sowore - And the group had other student groups, we had labour groups, fringe groups and eem decided to, we met several times.
- DSS1 - Okay.
- Sowore - And planned the match that was scheduled for August 5.
- DSS1 - Okay.
- Sowore - Yes, so some of the groups I don't remember their proprietors,
- DSS1 - But which ones do you remember?
- Sowore - Aaam I know of hamper, I don't know the full meaning of Hamper, it's the acronym for it,
- DSS1 - Okay.
- Sowore - Yes, I know of Ansa, you know I think is Association, national Association against, you know, some attacks against students.
- DSS1 - Okay who is the person from Hampa.
- Sowore - Aam like I said, I don't remember their names, you know, right here like I told you, I've been kept incommunicado with my gadgets confiscated.

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DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - Yes.

DSS1 - Okay

Sowore - And I told you that I've been away from this country for twenty (20) years.

DSS1 - Okay

Sowore - I haven't really had close associates; yes, I'm just developing in the last one and a half years.

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - Yes.

DSS1 - So who are the sponsors of this revolution?

Sowore - Eem it is self funding.

DSS1 - Self funding?

Sowore - Yes.

DSS1 - Okay, Self funding?

Sowore - Yes, so there is no sponsor.

DSS1 - No sponsor?

Sowore - Yes, I use my own resources.

DSS1 - So you use your own resources?

Sowore - Yes.

DSS1 - So how much is your net worth that you are using to do this revolution?

Sowore - Yes, it's eem I don't, we done have any assigned amount, for example we ask people to produce berets,

DSS1 - To produce berests?

Sowore - Yes, and it's an orange beret.

DSS1 - Orange beret.

Sowore - And nobody gives us money, for we just ask them to pay the producers of the berets, we purchase and wear them.

DSS1 - Okay.

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Sowore - Yes and we made banners, made placards; I never got to see them before I was arrested.

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - Yes.

DSS1 - Mhn

Sowore - Yes

DSS1 - You never got to see?

Sowore - Banners

DSS1 - Berets?

Sowore - No, no I saw the berets, we were making more, I have the berets, I wore the beret in one of my press conferences.

DSS1 - Ok now, do you have any accounts, bank account committed to this purpose or dedicated to it?

Sowore - No no noo, I have a personal account at GTB.

DSS1 - Ok.

Sowore - Yes, if that is, I put some money they and transfer money to some of the coordinators, as in the States, to make banners, placards.

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - And eem it's just, it's just a few of them,

DSS1 - Okay,

Sowore - Because we didn't have much money.

DSS1 - So like who and who did you transfer money to?

Sowore - I don't want to call their names here,

DSS1 - Okay,

Sowore - Yes, some of them were recommended to me as protester,

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - People who have been..., eh., whom we talked, and I talked to them, eh..., I did send some money to do them, yes.

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DSS1 - Okay, so you basically were funding from your own account.

Sowore - That's correct.

DSS1 - Now which, how many accounts do you have in Nigeria?

Sowore - I have one account that is personal to me, and I had an account open.

DSS1 - Mhn.

Sowore - And it's been inactive since the elections were over.

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - Ee Two (2) other accounts are associated with Sahara Reporters Media Foundation.

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - They're with UBA and I think GTB.

DSS1 - UBA and GTB for Sahara Reporters.

Sowore - Media foundation

DSS1 - Sahara Reporters Media Foundation, UBA and GTB?

Sowore - Yes.

DSS1 - What of your personal accounts?

Sowore - It's with GTB.

DSS1 - How much do you have in that account?

Sowore - At this point it's probably like twenty thousand Naira (N20, 000.00) left.

DSS1 - Okay for Sahara Reporters Media Foundation?

Sowore - I don't control those accounts, they.

DSS1 - Who does?

Sowore - Eem it would be, there is eem Sahara Reporters executive director in New York and another individual in Lagos.

DSS1 - In Lagos.

Sowore - They are the signatories. Because when I was running for office, I had to divest myself from the organizations.

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DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - Because of, so as to avoid conflict.

DSS1 - Okay, so which other personal account do you have?

Sowore - I don't have.

DSS1 - Dollar accounts,

Sowore - I don't have, all my GTB accounts have dollar component have Naira component, they have the savings, current and the credit card.

DSS1 - Okay.

Sowore - The credit card is a hundred dollars probably the dollar one is two, two hundred dollars.

DSS1 - In GT?

Sowore - Yes, It's just one account that I have.

DSS1 - What account name is that?

Sowore - It's in my name Omoyele Sowore.

DSS1 - Ok just these two (2) names, no third name?

Sowore - No no no.

DSS1 - Now eem, what's, what's the link between you, your revolution the IMN, the Islamic Movement in Nigeria?

Sowore - No none. I've covered Islamic Movement of Nigeria extensively.

DSS1 - How?

Sowore - As a reporter.

DSS1 - Okay as a reporter?

Sowore - Yes, as a result, I have developed links with them.

DSS1 - Mhn.

Sowore - In terms of finding out what's happening in the Organization.

DSS1 - Okay.

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Sowore - And I was also opposed to the killings, you know, that was carried out in their premises, personally and I've condemned it openly.

DSS1 - **Mhm.**

Sowore - I've attended rallies here in Abuja, during the election to assure them that, if I become president, their leader would be released.

DSS1 - **Rallies by them or?**

Sowore - By them.

DSS1 - **Okay, so you've been in IMN rallies?**

Sowore - Yes

DSS1 - **How many times?**

Sowore - Eeh once I attended once.

DSS1 - **When was that?**

Sowore - It was during the elections, I don't know the exact date, but it was during the election, I was campaigning in Abuja and they said they have a rally, so I attended the rally.

DSS1 - **Okay.**

Sowore - Yes.

DSS1 - **So you have any contact person in the IMN?**

Sowore - I have several before. There was even a day eee the place was attacked, I had a contact with the wife, I was on the phone with the wife, when she said.

DSS1 - **Which of the wives?**

Sowore - Eeem its Zainab, the one that was arrested with ee El-Zakzaky.

DSS1 - **Mhm.**

Sowore - She called me, I got a phone, she called me, and somebody called me and said this is the number for her and that they are in distress.

DSS1 - **Mn**

Sowore - And I called her back and she said they are about to get killed, I was talking to her when she said

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there've arrived and the chip cut-off and I reported it on Sahara reporters. So yeah.

- DSS1 - Mhn.
- Sowore - And I used to be in touch with their spokespersons.
- DSS1 - Mhn.
- Sowore - And also received, I forgot his name, eem, I also receive press releases for Sahara Reporters from them directly.
- DSS1 - Okay.
- Sowore - The IMN media people.
- DSS1 - Okay.
- Sowore - Yes, and so we've been, on Sahara Reporters platform, yes I have reported extensively about the crises with the IMN.
- DSS1 - **Now have you ever had any financial, monetary exchange between you, Sahara Reporter and IMN, or between them and you and Sahara reporters.**
- Sowore - No.
- DSS1 - No?
- Sowore - No.
- DSS1 - **Now, what of the Indigenous People of Biafra, (IPOB)?**
- Sowore - I don't have any contact with them but I met with Kanu in New York this year, and eem I heard he was in New York and I requested to meet with him.
- DSS1 - Okay.
- Sowore - And eem when I met with him, I discussed their concerns, eem because I said if I was president, I will bring them to dialogue, so that Nigeria will not break up.
- DSS1 - Okay.
- Sowore - So I met with him, but the context of our conversation is public, we uploaded them on YouTube, and face book and it was announced as well.
- DSS1 - Okay.

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- Sowore - Beyond meeting with him I don't have any other contact with him
- DSS1 - Okay, you've not received any form of financial help, support from him?
- Sowore - Never.
- DSS1 - Or he has not supported you in anyway financially.
- Sowore - No, never.
- DSS1 - Okay.
- DSS2 - Eem let's go back to the revolution aspect.
- Sowore - Yes.
- DSS2 - Can you defined what you meant by this revolution now?
- Sowore - As I said it's a battle cry. Emm when I was in the University, Ibrahim Babangida General was in Office and one day we decided Babangida must go, it was our battle cry, we produced posters, shared it everywhere. I wasn't arrested but our leaders were arrested, including the NANS leader that time. He was charged for treason, they said he wanted to overthrow the military government. We said the name military government is not legitimate so, they cannot tell us that, and ee eventually the cases were thrown out. So as pro-democracy activists, we work to expand the democratic space. And we chose which words we use because is freedom of speech.
- DSS2 - Okay.
- Sowore - We chose how to associate because is freedom of association and we decide where to move in our country because is freedom of movement. Yes, so revolution now is our own way of saying that we are dissatisfied with the current state of the nation. And we have established that without taking action, the current leaders of the country will not do something different. And I'm glad that some of the demands are being addressed. I heard El-Zakzaky is being granted bail now, to go for medical treatment, that was something of concern to our team, but there is a lot more that needs to be addressed.
- DSS2 - When you say take action, what exactly do you mean?

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- Sowore - I mean that's what we did on August 5, embark on matches, peaceful action.
- DSS2 - **What was your ultimate eem objective?**
- Sowore - The objective is up to the government to determine. Our objective is to force the hand of government to address critical issues affecting the country.
- DSS2 - **So it was just to address issues?**
- Sowore - That's why we made demands. If we wanted to do something different we would not have announced it publicly, Yeah.
- DSS2 - **Okay, You, you ran for the president last year.**
- Sowore - That's correct.
- DSS2 - **What was your motivation for running?**
- Sowore - I wanted to change this country forever.
- DSS2 - **So and you campaigned?**
- Sowore - Yes, that's correct.
- DSS2 - **From your own testimony here you said you went to thirty-four (34) States.**
- Sowore - Yes, that's correct.
- DSS2 - **You actually believed that election was the process to power?**
- Sowore - I do yes, that's why I campaigned and contested election.
- DSS2 - **Okay and, the outcome of that election, what's your thought.**
- Sowore - I had said it, it's a very horrible election, that was an act of aggression against Nigerian people, I didn't believe an election held, I was very disgusted, because I've covered several elections as a reporter. I've actually fought for democracy as a student and in my adult life, I keep fighting for democracy. And fighting to expand democratic space and ensuring that from time to time, there is peaceful transfer of power. And I have seen to it with others that there was a military to civilian transfer of power in 1999, you know, after 1999, when somebody wanted to do third

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term; we made sure we fought against it, so that we can stabilize our democracy. After that period, somebody was sick and they claim he was recovering in Saudi Arabia; we fought to ensure that a minority in this country became president. After that, a party that said it will be in power for sixty (60) years was defeated because we rose up, including, I think in ee 2012 January, when there was occupy Nigeria, you know, a major movement in this country that shook, shook the country to its root. And that led to all the revelation about all the oil scams that drained our common wealth. So as a reporter, I have done a lot of critical stories, about eem about corruption and about what happens that is hidden in government and I know that as a result eem, people in Government don't like me.

- DSS2 - **Back to the election, do you still believe eem election is part of democracy?**
- Sowore - It is, also, but democracy also allows for descent that is beyond election. Yes, you can have a perfect election and still go out and protest. And peacefully, you know, and ask for changes fundamental.
- DSS1 - **Does that involve to take over power?**
- Sowore - You can ask for changes, that's what I just told you.
- DSS2 - **So your revolution was not to change the government?**
- Sowore - Listen, I have explained to you that there was a higher level of resistance against the inactivity of the government. The State of the Nation, you know so.
- DSS2 - **The objective of.**
- DSS1 - **What objective yeah.**
- Sowore - The objective is to bring about the change that will make people feel comfortable within this nation. And people don't feel comfortable if the want, the country is falling apart. You all know, that the country is insecure
- DSS2 - **Do you think there is demo, ee democracy without election?**
- Sowore - the moment you defeat election, you've killed democracy.

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- DSS2 - Because you said you do not, you cannot deceive yourself that eem, you can actually get to power through election.
- Sowore - No I said, if we had free and fare elections, anybody can get to power, but we don't have free and fare elections in this country.
- DSS2 - You do not believe that elections are the pathway to power?
- Sowore - If they are free, they are, but if they are not, then you close the opportunity for democracy to take hold, and we haven't had free and fair election, I am a presidential candidate, and I can tell you that categorically that the elections weren't free and fare.
- DSS1 - What is your definition of free and fare election?
- Sowore - Oo that's a long one, eee but I'll try my best. It is the election were people are allowed to freely express their choice, not an election were soldiers ee shot at people, where thugs are deployed to ransack polling units where figures are changed in the middle of the night in collation centers, that's not free and fare elections. Free and fare elections are elections where people are allowed to exercise their franchise, freely without intimidation and the results tally with their intent.
- DSS2 - Do you think Nigeria is a failed State?
- Sowore - Nigeria? If it is not failed already, it is on its way to failing.
- DSS2 - What do you think?
- Sowore - What do I think? I think if it has not failed completely, it is on its way to failing, Nigeria is falling apart and it is part of the reason why people like me are very concerned instead of seating and ringing my hands, I decided to come home to run for election. It is the reason why I meet with people like Kanu, so that they can see how Nigeria, breaking up Nigeria will not help to solve the problem I told him. If you break up Nigeria and you have Biafra and Biafra is flourishing and you are surrounded by a Nigeria

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