

**News Release 14 July 2011**

## **OOR JOHN BELONGS TO GLASGOW**

**Urgent: Removal of John Oguchukwu to Nigeria on Wednesday 20 July 2011 Home Office Ref: 01052232**

John Oguchukwu fled Nigeria in 2002 because of religious and ethnic persecution. John's family were targeted by a ritualistic cult and his father, mother and sister were all murdered. John was captured, imprisoned and tortured by them, he suffered brutality and abuse and he is receiving treatment for post traumatic stress disorder which he has suffered from for many years.

John Oguchukwu is an Extraordinary Minister at St. Michael's Church in the East End of Glasgow and has assisted greatly in the church work for seven years. John's parish community has benefited greatly from his presence and voluntary work among us as an Extraordinary Minister in St Michaels Parish Church. To lose him would be a grievous blow to an already stressed area. The Archbishop of Glasgow Mario Conti wrote to the Home Secretary John Reid in 2004 'He would be an asset to our country, our community, the parish in which he serves and his departure would be a sad loss to us all. I would therefore ask that John Oguchukwu be allowed to stay in this country. The parish can be relied upon to give him every support.'

He has also attended the Central College of Commerce where he achieved a HND. His course leader Arlene Brown wrote to the Home Office in support of John's asylum claim 'I have no hesitation in recommending him as an asset to this country.' His Section Leader Charles Mechan wrote 'I have no hesitation in supporting John's claim for asylum in this country.' John Oguchukwu is currently about to enter his Senior Honours year at Glasgow University where he is studying Business Management. John has completed almost all of his Honours degree he has only one more year to complete. It appears to us unjust to thwart him at this moment after so much effort. John was supported in his studies by an award from the Archdiocese of Glasgow and Bobby and Patricia O'Neil of Saint Vincent De Paul charity. Just two weeks ago John was one of only 10 students selected and put forward by the Glasgow University Principle Anton Muscatelli for a Bursary from the Thomas and Margaret Roddan Trust. The Principle, the Clerk of Senate, Head of College, Advisor of Studies have this week made representations to the Home Secretary urging a stop of John's deportation, to grant him the right to stay in the UK and to allow him to complete his undergraduate degree.

John has established deep and long term relationships with his Scottish friends and family none more so than Elizabeth Jenkins his Scottish mum 'John has been unofficially adopted by myself and my family here in Greenock. I myself being his Scottish mum plus my daughters and grandchildren accept him as a member of our family. He is a devoted son showing love to myself plus members of my family. He has proven to be an asset in my family's life, I passionately plea for John to remain in Scotland.' Joe and Anne Reilly consider John an extended part of their family 'John has become an important member of our community and we would be extremely saddened if he were not allowed to remain with us. He is such a fine example to all of our young people. I cannot think of anyone who does not have a great admiration for him. In three words everyone loves John. He is a great asset to our society and we all hope and pray he will be allowed to remain among us. He is truly deserving of political asylum in our country.'

The Home Office has accepted he has established a private life here in the UK in accordance with Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights. John has never been considered for the Legacy Programme despite the fact he applied for asylum in July 2002 before the Legacy Programme cut off date of 5<sup>th</sup> March 2007. John's contribution to society, his established community links and his almost 10 years asylum claim all make him an exceptional case for the Legacy Programme. He has been treated unfairly in his exclusion from it.

We express our sorrow, anguish and opposition at the news of the deportation of a valued member of our community. We ask most urgently that the Home Secretary Theresa May review his case personally before any further action regarding removal from the UK takes place as his life is in danger. John's University, Parish, community family have organised a minibus to travel to Colnbrook Monday 18 July.

**Notes to editor:**

- **John claimed asylum in 2002 and has lived in Scotland for 7 years**
- **John Oguchukwu is an Honours student at the University of Glasgow**
- **John Oguchukwu is an Extraordinary Minister at St. Michael's Church in the East End**
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- **Archbishop of Glasgow Mario Conti 0141 810 1766**
- **St. Michaels Parish- 0141 554 0530**
- **University of Glasgow - Dr. Cian O'Driscoll 0141 330 2002**