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# Nigerian junta is using blackmail to stay in power

CRITICISE my government and someone standing for human rights will be sentenced to death, to deflect your criticism.

This is the Machiavellian style of administration being used by the Abacha military government in Nigeria.

International human rights agencies accused the government of suppressing human rights and of being an impediment to democracy after Chief M K O Abiola was incarcerated after winning the June 1993 elections. These were monitored by international observers.

In seeking recognition and consideration from the international community and human rights agencies, the Abacha government

has resorted to international blackmail.

When the international community asked why Chief Abiola was still in detention, the government used the law court as a subterfuge, and the world accepted this because it respects the rule of law.

Amid widespread opposition, Abacha arrested more than 40 people including Nigeria's former head of state, General Olusegun Obasanjo.

General Abacha's deputy, Shehu Yaradua, accused them of plotting a coup.

The detainees denied this but were sentenced to death.

The world's outcry and plea for clemency made General Abacha commute their sentences to life imprisonment.

The international community was happy and General Abacha scored his first blackmail point.

Now the military government in Nigeria has sentenced Ken Saro-Wiwa, 54, an international novelist and human rights crusader, and other Ogoni youths to death.

Their offence is speaking up against the environmental degra-

dation of Ogoni land by multinational oil companies.

General Abacha wants the world to ask him for clemency again so that his popularity will soar and he will score his second blackmail point.

The world should understand and check the trick of the Nigerian military junta which wants to stage-manage international blackmail in order to remain in power for many years.

As if they come from a country at war, Nigerians are scattered all over the world due to human rights suppression, imprisonment and killing of anyone who speaks against the government hit squads. — CHARLES UGOH (Nigerian), Hillbrow