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Ofala
2026

**Celebrating 500+
Years of the
Onitsha Monarchy**

October 16, 2026
Ezechima Square, Onitsha

#Ofala2026 #igbambolganiru



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OFALA 2026 THEME



igba mbo, iga n'iru Strive, and Advance | From Resilience to Progress

For over 500 years, Ndi Onicha have shown *igba mbo* — resilience. Through every challenge we endured, adapted, and rose again.

In 2025 we celebrated *njiko na ntachi* — Unity and Resilience.
Now in 2026 we move forward to *iga n'iru* — deliberate progress.

This is our charge: strive in your craft, advance your community. Let personal effort build our Kingdom.

Our logo reflects this journey: the swords of authority and continuity, the beads of identity and honour, and the royal proclamation at its centre. It is a heritage that is not static, but in motion — rooted in royalty, built on resilience, moving toward progress.

From resilience we have come. To progress, we now advance.
Ofala 2026. Strive, and Advance.



HIS MAJESTY'S OFALA MESSAGE



OFALA 2026 - ADDRESS BY HIS MAJESTY, NNAEMEKA ALFRED ACHEFE, CFR, MNI, OBI OF ONITSHA

1. OPENING

We begin with gratitude to God Almighty that we gather for my 25th Ofala on the throne of Ezechima. We thank Him for bringing us together and pray that this celebration and its side events will be joyous.

This is our annual ritual - gratitude for blessings, atonement for shortcomings, and supplication for peace and development.

To all gathered, a hearty welcome. We do not take your presence for granted.

2. STATE OF THE NATION

In 2024, I noted uncertainties after the general elections and a steep decline in wellbeing. Hardship deepened through 2025, pushing more Nigerians below the poverty line. The World Bank put 104 million Nigerians in poverty in 2023, worsened by insecurity. I called on Government to prioritize the poorest. On 28 July 2026, the Catholic Bishops' Conference met Mr. President and raised the twin crises of security and economic hardship. Some officials politicized the visit, claiming the Bishops spoke only for their congregation and that all was well. The truth is that hunger, unemployment, poor healthcare and insecurity transcend politics, religion and ethnicity. We plead with Mr. President to give urgent attention to this dire situation.

National elections are barely three months away. The political class has shifted from governance to positioning. Elections should be an opportunity to select the best to govern. Non-partisan stakeholders - traditional and religious institutions, town unions and civil society - must intensify advocacy for free and fair elections. Parties must abhor violence and campaign on issues.

The recent off-cycle Osun governorship election, despite violence, showed robust campaigns, massive turnout and reasonable INEC performance. It is a marker for the national elections.

I call on the South East to shake off historical apathy to elections. We cannot stay away and complain of marginalization. All votes count.

3. THEME 2026: "IGBA MBO, IGA N'IRU: STRIVE AND ADVANCE”

This continues our recent themes:
2023 - "Better. Together. Stronger." - consolidation for future challenges.
2024 - "Courage. Perseverance. Self-reliance: Onye Kwe, Chie Ekwe" - empathy and encouragement.
2025 - "Njiko na Ntachi: Community Resilience" - unity and communal values.
A common thread reflects the attributes that sustained our founding fathers on their migration from Ado and Idu - determination, courage, unity, self-sustenance, resilience and the leadership of Eze Chima - to found a homeland described as "a land built by Nature for herself.”

Each generation must hand over that homeland in a more pristine condition. For ten years the country has been very challenging. We cannot place hope entirely on government. Ndi Onicha must summon those enduring ancestral attributes to survive while upholding dignity. Onicha Ga Adi!

4. ONITSHA ADVANCEMENT FOUNDATION @5 [OnAF]

After five years, OnAF requires a broad review to become fitter, with impact evaluation critical. The high point this year was the Ford Foundation study on Gender-Based Violence - "Culture of Silence". The low point remains failure of several ASBA loan beneficiaries to repay, now placed on traditional sanction.

- 4.1

Implementation Team [OnAF-IT]: Vets proposals on priority, budget and impact. Projects sanctioned in the past year: Ugbo Azu Uno Continuity; Basic ICT Training for Women; One Youth 2 Skills [State Ministry of Youth]; Vocational training in crocheting/knitting/weaving; HWB Continuity; Restaging of VRI; GBV Study; Integration of VRI with GBV; Scholarship scrutiny. Challenges persist - funding, delay in East Pavilion training facilities, shortage of local faculty, and inadequate start-up capital for trainees.
- 4.2

Shared Services Resource Centre [RC]: The operational base providing administrative and logistics support. Supported activities: WEPC Ugbo Azu Uno micro-enterprise for 112 participants and Basic ICT for market women sponsored by Otu Odu Europe since 2024; HWB free eye screening with Centre for



Sight Africa for 160 indigenes; OLEC/Youth Ministry 1 Youth 2 Skills mentorship for 125 cooperative heads.

Scholarship: Since 2024, scheme for brilliant indigent youths. In 2026, partnership with Pan Atlantic University via Mastercard Foundation - Barbara Egbuji and Victoria Munonyedi succeeded, bringing total beneficiaries to six.

Palliatives and Outreach: Elderly, widows/widowers and persons with disabilities benefited after Ofala 2025 and Christmas/New Year. Pre-Ofala medical outreach for the second year in Onitsha North/South - cancer, menstrual hygiene, hypertension/diabetes - 405 beneficiaries supported by Otu Odu Europe, Iyienu Teaching Hospital, Health and Wellbeing USA, TAG UK, Magna Dental, Red Cross. 2026 outreach will focus on GBV, eye/dental clinics and health checks.

- 4.3

Onitsha Leadership and Entrepreneurship Centre [OLEC]: Trains graduates, artisans and undergraduates in leadership and entrepreneurship, supporting cooperative formation and mentorship.

One Youth Two Skills: In 3 years with Anambra Youth Ministry, 534 youths trained [90% Onitsha].
Electrician Training: Sponsored by NASENI 7-11 Sept 2026, 100 participants [83 Onitsha - 66 practicing electricians, 34 aspirants, including 5 females and 29 electrical students] received starter kits and N100k grant. OLEC will organize follow-up entrepreneurship and mentorship.

- 4.4

Ado Business Incubation Centre [ABIC]: Focused on digital skills and employment. Concluded 12-week Frontend Web Development with APTECH - 10 participants [5 Onitsha]. Two OnAF members completed hub management training. Assessment of Ime Obi Library showed useful assets - furniture, computers, IT suite - but needs reliable power/internet, cleaning and safety. Glo internet currently supports training. Proposed model: ABIC leads incubation/partnerships; EDI leads entrepreneurship; Youth Council supports mobilization. Next phase: technical assessment, minimum remediation, and funded pilot focused on digital skills, remote work, business digitization and STEM. Success will be measured by completion rates, businesses digitized, employment and income.
- 4.5

Microfinance Institution [MFI]: The 2022 vision of graduating to a Microfinance Bank remains unattainable short-term due to cost and regulation. Prof. Ngozi Egbuna [retired CBN Director, Professor of International Finance, UNIZIK] has now accepted to lead the repositioning.



Capacity Building in Action: His Majesty with a trainee at the NASENI / OnAF Electrical Installations and Maintenance Training Programme, September 2026.

- 4.6 **Women Empowerment [WEPC]:** Basic ICT - Funded by Otu Odu UK/Ireland, 130 women trained in 3 sessions, with two WhatsApp platforms created; some now run online shops. Ugbo Azu Uno - flagship food security using backyards - 300 trained in 4 sessions, 70% have established farms. Angel/Micro-Credit - First loans N30k-70k to 10 women in 2022 repaid; 35 applied for fresh loans for disbursement late 2026. Coal Stoves - Federal Ministry of Science and Technology initiative, distribution being structured.
- 4.7 **Health and Wellbeing [HWB]:** Health Insurance with ASHIA - 700+ enrolled in 4 years; challenge is declining utilization. Cancer Awareness - toolkits for prostate/breast/cervical cancers distributed. Mental Health/Substance Abuse - First aid project stepped down due to budget; substance abuse is growing alarmingly and rehabilitation facility is now priority. Walk-In Health Centre at Okwueze Umuezeoroli - operational with Diaspora support; hosted eye outreach - 160 beneficiaries [50 glasses, 68 eye drops, 17 cataract referrals, 25 glaucoma monitoring].
- 4.8 **Life After Stroke Centre [LASC]:** Based at Okwueze Umuezeoroli, serving 491 survivors beyond prevention to research. Philips Foundation research found LASC effective in improving function and quality of life - presented at World Stroke Congress and published in International Journal of Stroke - attracting WHO and OSCAIL collaboration to replicate in 4 States/Africa. It hosts Africa's first stroke carers centre. Dr. Rita Melifonwu's research provided the first definition of social participation after stroke, earning a PhD and Postgraduate Researcher of the Year at London South Bank University.
- 4.9 **GBV Research Study:** US\$100,000 Ford Foundation grant July 2025 - "Breaking the Culture of Silence". Two phases: participatory research and implementation. Data from 841 participants across villages showed GBV occurs among women, girls, men and boys; sociocultural norms perpetuate it; victims rarely report; it occurs irrespective of status, age or education; mostly at home and perpetrators are often related. The study broke silence - survivors now report. A data-driven curriculum and Onitsha GBV Prevention Strategy with M&E toward zero tolerance has been developed.
- 4.10 **Cooperatives:** On 29 Dec 2020 I guaranteed ASBA loan of N65m to 13 MPCS at N5m each for one year. As of January 2026, only 3 had repaid. Meeting of 17 Feb 2026 yielded only N5,474,727, leaving N23,914,846.33 outstanding as of 13 Aug 2026. On 17 Sept 2026, traditional sanction Iso Aru was imposed on defaulters/sponsors until repayment.
- 4.11 **Education - Long Vacation Tutorial [LVT]:** Introduced 2007 by NAOAS to positively engage secondary and tertiary students during vacation. Runs 4-5 weeks in Aug/Sept. 2025/2026: 74,000 students [vs 3,400 in 2015] with 65 tutors at Ezechima Primary and Pioneer. Funded by Obi-in-Council supported by Agbalanze, Ikporo USA, OIU, Onwa Ikobi, Dr. Patrick Okolo, Otu Odu.[North][South]
- 4.12 **Values Re-Orientation Initiative [VRI]:** 2023 launch stalled. Lesson: values cannot be imposed top-

down. On Ime Obi instruction, VRI Working Group restarted. On 12 April 2026 met six groups - Ikporo, OIU, Youth Council, Agbalanze, Otu Odu, Ogbo So Achi Ani - to listen. Insights: behaviour must improve and enforcement strengthened; use what we have and act now; without economic opportunity, values messaging won't stick. Three shifts required: Empower youth economically; Enforce community standards; Lead from institutions. Final plan before end of 2026.

- 4.13 OnAF Financial Summary Sept 2025-Aug 2026: Inflows N50,824,831 - Transfers from Domiciliary Account N47,655,600 [94%]; Sponsorships N2,974,312 [6%]; Others N194,919. Key was Ford Foundation US\$100k GBV grant - a major confidence milestone. Outflows N56,607,533 - GBV payroll N36,832,404 [65%]; Supplies N11,862,589 [21%]; Stakeholder engagements N3,012,872 [5%]; RC overheads N2,045,264 [4%]; others. 93% GBV spend mirrors 94% inflows, providing youth employment as field assistants and analysts.

5. OTHER ACTIVITIES

- 5.1 **Obi-in-Council:** No new appointments; focus on integration. We lost Chief Emmanuel Egbunike, Ajie Ukadiugwu Isagba and Chief Amb. Obiora Erokwu, Owelle Osowa Anya. Printing errors in 7th Edition Rules and Regulations corrected for re-printing with free exchange. Ndichie committee on Mmuo Avia to accelerate report. Code of conduct under review. Traditional Court continues weekly; parties must choose jurisdiction upfront and not resort to Statutory Court while matter pends. I completed two manuscripts: Vol I Traditional Jurisprudence [cases adjudicated on appeal] and Vol II Traditional Governance, for presentation at Ofala 2027 marking my 25th anniversary.



- 5.2 **OIU: Centenary April 2025** - "Preserving Tradition While Embracing Modernity". New PG Ezennia Ikechukwu Iwenofu succeeded Sir Chike Ekweogwu. Activities: 48 out-of-school indigenous children identified for resumption; Youth Summit 28 Aug 2026 "Quo Vadis: Securing Future Today"; digital registry of unemployed youths; INEC online registration of 71000 persons in both LGAs.

- 5.3 **Other Groups:** Concern about substantive Diokpas domiciled outside creating long-term proxy Igba Uko; Agbalanze constitution amendment lingering since 2018 - final reminder before proclamation; escalating title-taking costs reiterated 17 Sept; Otu Odu President suspended after meeting 10 June 2025, Deputy Acting, constitution review ongoing.

- 5.4 **Diaspora Engagement:** Town hall 29 March 2026 accounting for Ofala funds; crisis from 2024 joint

AOUSA/OOOUSA Dallas convention led to separate conventions this year; OIU PG visited USA May 2026; UK/Ireland participation in Igbo Festival London 11 July 2026; Onitsha Ado Europe convention London 08 Aug 2026; 13th Global Town Hall 06 Sept 2026 - 177 participants.

5.5 **Security:** Vigilante now under Anambra Homeland Security Law 2025 - AVG/OCVU replaced by Agunechemba with new uniform and ID. Four patrol vehicles unserviceable - OIU PG undertaking repairs. Achievements: Surveillance showed 50% of uncompleted buildings in Inland Town occupied by squatters - cleared; notorious burglar Ifeanyi Ogbogu arrested with millions in recovered property; black spots Omozele, Okwueze Okebunabo, Ilochi/Iyiawu, Umuikem under surveillance.

5.6 **Vault Burial:** Universal method imperative with limited land - graves, soak-aways and boreholes compete, risking water contamination. 851 bodies buried Inland Town April 2024- May 2026 is unsustainable. Sensitization held May-June 2026 - groups accept need but reluctance persists. Enlightenment to continue.

5.7 **Golibe Festival:** 2025 edition 26-31 Dec 2025 - lessons for 2026. MoU with QVT Media to manage sponsorship and publicity. Project Management Team inaugurated 26 July 2026. 4th edition Magazine ready - first 100 copies for launch 26 Dec 2026.



5.8 **Onitsha Millennium Development Foundation [OMDF]:** Registration complete, UBA account operational since Feb 2025. Total inflows as at 31 Aug 2026 - N291.78m - levies N270.6m [93%], fines N17.28m [6%], interest 1%, from 250 title ceremonies. N191.78m reconciled and transferred to UBA account; N100m balance under reconciliation. Funds invested in safe, liquid instruments. External auditors to be appointed.

5.9 **Ofala 2025 Audited Accounts:** In line with transparency, audited independently. Receipts from Ndi Onicha/corporates N71,826,405 [2024: N56,814,458]. Sponsorships N101,642,000 [2024: N45,400,000]. Globacom major sponsor since 2010 - over 20% in 2025. Expenditure N85,320,000 [2024: N37,848,000]. Surplus N88,148,405 added to brought-forward N54,627,858 = N142,776,263 carried forward.

5.10 **Strategic Communications:** If Ime Obi does not tell its story, others will and get it wrong. Steps: CAC registration/dedicated banking of Millennium Foundation receipts, publication of OnAF Summary and Ofala Accounts. Vehicles: Ime Obi Media launched Ofala 2025 as cultural/digital arm run by youths, providing archival coverage and commercial services; OnAF Communications Alliance [OCA] reactivated - "Investing in Onitsha's People, Preserving Onitsha's Legacy" - three pillars: Values Reorientation; OnAF Programmes; Communications Alliance.

6. YEAR AHEAD - 25TH ANNIVERSARY

Next year is my 25th anniversary on the throne - a time for retrospection and future planning - series of events from May culminating in grand Ofala Oct 2027.

Priorities: OnAF@5 Conference and scenario-building for short/medium/long-term priorities; youth unemployment building on Youth Summit; substance abuse and anti-social behaviour; GBV continuous implementation with VRI collaboration; 2-year landscaping/tree planting upgrade of Okwueze/Okebunabo and Onu Ilo; completion of East Pavilion Youth Development Centre; vault burial enlightenment; census of Civil War victims for memorial; resume census of persons with disabilities. We are in a marathon, not a sprint.

7. GRATITUDE

Gratitude to God and ancestors. To guests and traditional rulers - safe journey. To enduring partners Globacom [15 years] and International Breweries [12 years] - thank you. Welcome to Origin. To other supporters - corporates, individuals, security, media, medical groups - thank you. Development partners - Ford Foundation, Anambra Youth Ministry, Ajoke Afolabi Foundation, National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI), Philips Foundation, Pan Atlantic University, Anambra State Health Insurance Agency, Centre for Sight Africa, LEAP Africa, and APTECH.

OnAF operates largely pro bono except few RC stipends, with volunteers globally - thank you. Ofala Steering Committee under Chief Dr. Okey Areh - impressive elevation.

Finally, deepest gratitude to my people Onicha Ado n'Idu including Ndichie and constituent groups for trust. Daalu nu rinne.

Agbogidi.

16 October 2026.

**Above is a summary of the message. The full text is available at: <https://ofala.org/hm-speeches/>*

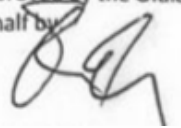
Financial Stewardship & Accountability

OFALA STEERING COMMITTEE
SUMMARY OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR 2025 OFALA ONITSHA

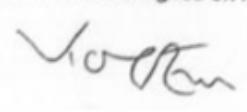
	NOTE	2025 (NAIRA)	2024 (NAIRA)
RECEIPTS			
US Diaspora		37,576,325	41,004,450
EU/UK Diaspora		6,615,080	100,000
Umuonicha		18,860,000	12,710,008
Health Outreach donations		500,000	1,650,000
Onitsha Constituent Groups		1,655,000	750,000
Corporates in Onitsha		6,620,000	600,000
Total Receipts		71,826,405	56,814,458
EXPENDITURE			
Event Setup		21,502,100	7,594,000
Security & Protocol		5,580,000	4,130,000
Logistics		7,570,000	3,500,000
Catering		9,356,750	7,376,600
Communications & IT		26,569,350	4,815,000
Health Outreach		1,375,800	3,263,000
Art Exhibition		2,750,000	1,750,000
Lecture Series Exes		0	1,720,000
Youth carnival		5,542,000	0
Sundries		5,074,000	3,700,000
Total Expenditure		85,320,000	37,848,600
Surplus(Deficit) before sponsorships		(13,493,595)	18,965,858
Ofala Sponsorship Receipts	3	101,642,000	45,400,000
Surplus		88,148,405	64,365,858
Ofala surplus b/f in bank		54,627,858	19,422,179
Appropriations		(29,160,179)	
Surpluses c/f in bank	4	142,776,263	54,627,858

Approved by the Ofala Planning Committee on 14 December 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

Approved by the Ofala Planning Committee on 14 December 2025 and signed on its behalf by:



CHIEF DR MIKE AREH
CHAIRMAN

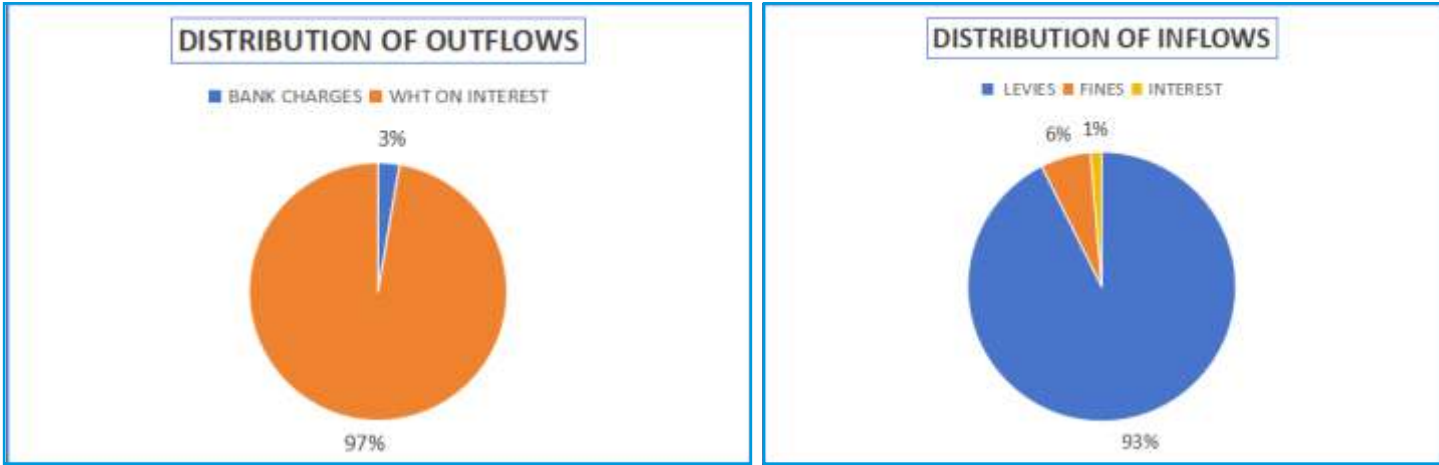


AKUNNE VICTOR EMODI
TREASURER

Financial Stewardship & Accountability Cont'd

ONITSHA MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

SUMMARY	NAIRA	%
INFLOWS		
LEVIES	270,600,000.00	93%
FINES	17,698,170.00	6%
INTEREST	3,879,000.44	1%
TOTAL INFLOWS	292,177,170.44	100%
OUTFLOWS		
BANK CHARGES	10,617.00	3%
WHT ON INTEREST	387,850.02	97%
TOTAL OUTFLOWS	398,467.02	100%
BALANCE	291,778,703.42	



OFALA TO OFALA - A YEAR OF STEWARDSHIP



His Majesty (centre) presenting a plaque to His Eminence, John Cardinal Onaiyekan, Archbishop Emeritus of Abuja (right), at the 22nd All Nigeria Editors Conference in Enugu. With them is NGE President, Mr. Eze Anaba.



His Majesty, Royal Father of the Day at the public presentation of Ohanaeze at 50, with other dignitaries. At the event, he reflected on the trajectory of Igbo nationhood and leadership.



The Abia State Government hosted an event in honour of His Majesty on the occasion of his 85th birthday. He is flanked by Governor Alex Otti and his wife, Mrs. Priscilla Otti.



Royal Diplomacy: His Majesty receiving King Jeki VI during a historic royal visit as Opobo prepared for coronation.



His Majesty, with U.S. Consul General, Mr. Brandon Hudspeth, left and other guests at Nigerian Culture Day at the American International School, Lagos.



His Grace, Archbishop Valerian Okeke, conducting His Majesty, around the Shanahan University permanent site at Trans-Nkisi during an inspection tour.



His Majesty receiving the Key to Prince George's County, Maryland, USA, presented by Maj. George Nonso Onyenyeonwu, USAF (Rtd), on behalf of County Executive Hon. Aisha Braveboy.



Trainees of the NASENI/OnAF Electrical Installations and Maintenance Training Programme held at Ime Obi in September 2026, during an interaction with His Majesty at the closing ceremony. His Majesty is seen with some of his Ndichie.



A new executive committee of the Onitsha Improvement Union was elected following which it was sworn in by His Majesty.



His Majesty presenting the Memorandum of Understanding to leaders of Ubulu na Ikem Village following the reconciliation of its four kindreds - Umu Anyaso-Ede, Umu Osodi, Umu Alumona.



His Majesty, at the grounds of Ime Obi during Umatu Eze Onicha - the annual corn feast of the throne - formally opening Onitsha Ado N'Idu's royal festival season ahead of Ofala 2026.



ABOUT OFALA ONITSHA

Ofala: A 500-Year System for Progress

The Obi of Onitsha's Ofala survived 500 years because it does what modern institutions must do: measure progress, reward excellence, and mobilize people to advance. *igba mbo, iga n'iru* - Strive and Advance is not new. It is why the throne endures.

Ofala 2026 asks one question: How did a 500-year throne survive to build the future? The answer is on the streets of Onitsha: enterprise, youth innovation, and one people advancing together. This is Strive and Advance."

Background

Indigenous to Onitsha, Ofala holds in early to mid-October as the highpoint of the Onitsha ceremonial cycle. Rooted in deep spirituality, it is the Obi of Onitsha's annual emergence from seclusion - *inye ukwu n'nlo eze* - after he has successfully negotiated the fortunes of the kingdom with the ancestors.

The festival celebrates two things at once: the renewal of the throne, and the historic joy shared between the Obi and his people at the discovery that yam is non-toxic and a vital source of food. It is also the occasion when the Obi reviews his army and receives the pledge of loyalty from his redcap chiefs, the *Ndichie*.

For centuries, when the monarch was rarely seen in public, Ofala was the one moment Ndi Onicha beheld their king. That purpose remains. Today, Ofala is the sacred bridge between palace and people - a living audit of our resilience and a declaration of our direction for progress.

The Ofala Experience

Ofala unfolds over two days of royal dances, tributes, parades, and music at Ime Obi.

Iru Ofala - Day 1

This is the Obi's day. In the company of the *_Ndichie_*, the Obi appears three times in full regalia, dancing to the war drums. Between appearances, subjects, guests, and stakeholders from across Onitsha and beyond pay homage. It is ritual, pageantry, and a display of *_excellence_* in leadership.



Azu Ofala - Day 2

This is the people's day. Age-grade societies, in colorful uniforms, process before the throne in homage. The arena comes alive with music, masquerades, and cultural expression that affirm our identity and values. Iru and Azu together show a kingdom advancing as one.

Ofala in Recent Times: Heritage to Future

What began as a royal obligation has grown into a modern platform for culture, enterprise, and community impact.

The festival now features the Oreze International Art Exhibition, the Ofala Youth Carnival, the Medical, Health and Wellbeing Community Outreach, a lecture series, a post-Ofala banquet and the Ofala Thanksgiving Service. This growth has earned national and global recognition. The Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation has designated the Onitsha Ofala Festival a major Nigerian festival. The United Nations World Tourism Organisation has issued a Certificate of Recognition for Excellence in Culture, in acknowledgment of Ofala's contribution to cultural development.

Ofala is on course. With 500 years of resilience _ behind it, the festival now draws national, West African, and international attention - not only as a ceremony, but as a system that mobilizes people to _advance_.

With the theme igba mbo, iga n'iru: Strive and Advance, Ofala 2026 reaffirms the mandate: a 500-year institution that endured by adapting, and that now builds the future.
Possible Images. One dominant image per sub-section.



OFALA 2026

EVENTS

Igba mbo, iga n'iru: The 2026 Advance Agenda Strive, and Advance | From Resilience to Progress

INYE UKWU N'NLO EZE ONICHA

Date: Wednesday, October 7, 2026 | **Market Day:** Eke

Summary: This is the annual seclusion of the Obi of Onitsha - the most sacred and private moment in the Ofala ceremonial cycle. For the following native week: Oye, Afor, Nkwo, and Eke, the monarch is incommunicado as he negotiates the fortunes of the kingdom with the ancestors.

Heritage to Future: Honoring the spiritual foundation of kingship while advancing visionary, service-driven leadership for Ndi Onicha.

OGBALIDO

Date: Saturday, October 10, 2026 | **Market Day:** Nkwo

Summary: A feast of atonement for brave men, particularly Ndichie (redcap chiefs) and big game hunters, honoring their valor and contributions. It signals the final countdown to Ofala, and is a formal announcement of the commencement of the public festivities.



Heritage to Future: From ancient royal decrees and military revies to advancing transparent communication and civic participation in 2026.

INYEPU UKWU N'NLO EZE ONICHA

Date: Sunday, October 11, 2026 | **Market Day:** Eke

Summary: The Obi's ceremonial emergence from spiritual seclusion after successfully negotiating the fortunes of the kingdom with the ancestors. This sacred rite marks the end of the Umatu period and the Obi's return to his people.

Heritage to Future: Honoring the ancestral covenant of kingship while advancing a vision of service, unity, and measurable progress for Ndi Onicha. What was once a sacred renewal for the Obi alone is now a platform to mobilize the entire kingdom - from resilience to progress.

MEDICAL, HEALTH AND WELLBEING COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Date: Monday, October 12 - Thursday, October 15, 2026

Summary: A community-focused health initiative offering medical screenings, health education, and wellbeing services to Ndi Onicha. The outreach extends the Obi's care for his people beyond the palace.

Heritage to Future: Extending the king's traditional role as guardian of his people to advancing access to health, wellness, and community care.

OREZE ART EXHIBITION

Date: Tuesday , October 13 - Sunday, October 18 2026

Summary: An international art exhibition showcasing contemporary and traditional works. Oreze positions Onitsha as a hub for culture, creativity, and dialogue during Ofala.



Heritage to Future: Leveraging Igbo artistic heritage to advance cultural tourism, creative enterprise, and global visibility for Onitsha.

YOUTH CARNIVAL

Date: Wednesday, October 14 , 2026

Summary: A vibrant celebration of music, dance, fashion, and talent by Onitsha youth. The carnival reflects the energy, innovation, and creativity of the next generation.

Heritage to Future: Channeling youthful expression drawing from the traditional igbo ilo (youth procession) to advance cultural pride, entrepreneurship, and the future of Igbo identity.





IRU OFALA

Date: Friday, October 16, 2026 | **Market Day:** Oye

Summary: The highpoint of the Ofala Festival. The Obi makes his first public appearance after seclusion, blesses his people, receives homage, and declares the theme: igba mbo, iga n'iru.

Heritage to Future: From a sacred rite of renewal for the Obi to advancing our collective resolve to move from resilience to progress.

AZU OFALA

Date: Saturday, October 17, 2026 | **Market Day:** Afor

Summary: The second day of the grand public Ofala celebration. It features continued homage, cultural performances, masquerades, and community engagement at Ime Obi.

Heritage to Future: Turning heritage celebration into advancing economic opportunity, hospitality, and community unity.

OFALA THANKSGIVING SERVICE

Date: Sunday, October 25, 2026

Bishop Crowther Memorial Anglican Church, Egerton Road, Onitsha.

Summary: A special interdenominational service of gratitude to God for the life of the Obi, the peace of Onitsha, and a successful harvest and festival.

Heritage to Future: Blending faith and tradition to advance gratitude, unity, and spiritual renewal for Ndi Onicha



IRU OFALA

FRIDAY OCTOBER 16, 2026

- 11:00am
Arrival of Guests and Onitsha Indigenes.
- 11:30am
All Guests and Indigenes are seated
- 12 :00pm
Arrival of Ndi Ichie
- 12:00pm:
Arrival of Ndichie Ogbeolu led by
Chief John Abutu, *Ojogwu Eze*
- 12:15pm:
Arrival of Ndichie Isiokwe/Ogboli-Olosi led by
Chief Benedict Onochie Emengo, *Oboli Boja*
- 12:35pm:
Arrival of Ndichie Umu-Ezearoli led by
Chief Osi Odukwe, *Ojudo Enema*
- 12:55pm:
Arrival of Ndichie Okebunabo led by
Chief (Dr.) Okey Mike Areh, *Onya Ozoma*
- 1:10pm:
Arrival of Ndichie Ugwunobamkpa led by
Chief Albert Okey Ibekwe, *Odu Osodi*
- 1:30pm:
Arrival of Ndichie Eke n'Ubene led by
Chief (Engr.) J. Okey Ononye, *Onowu Iyasele*

IRU OFALA

FRIDAY OCTOBER 16, 2026

- 2:00pm
Igwe's First Outing
- 2:20pm
Paying of homage by Ndi Ichie, Ndi Diokpa,
Agbalanze Onitsha,
Otu Odu Onitsha, and Ikporo Onitsha.
- 2:50pm
Igwe's Ofala Address
- 3:00pm
Egwuota (Royal Drums) Dance by
Ndi Ichie Okwa/Okwareze
- 3:30pm
Igwe's Second Outing
- 3:45pm
Greetings, Presentation of Gifts and Courtesies By Special Guests
Music interlude
- 4:15pm
Egwuota (Royal Drums) Dance by Ndi Ichie Ume
- 4:45pm
Music interlude:
Egwu Ndi Eze (Aninweta Mazeli).
- 4:50pm
Igwe's Third Outing and End of Ofala.





AZU OFALA

SATURDAY OCTOBER 17, 2026

12:00pm
Arrival of guests, Age Grades, and Indigenes

1:00 pm
All guests, Age Grades and Indigenes are seated.
Arrival of Ndi Ichie.

1:30pm
Igwe's first Outing

2:00pm
Egwuota (Royal Drums) Dance by
Ndi Ichie Okwa/Okwareze.

2:15pm
Igwe's Second Outing

2:45pm
Egwuota (Royal Drums) Dancing by Ndi Ichie Ume.

3:00pm
Parade of Age Grades etc. and
Paying of homage to Igwe

3:15pm
Sponsors' Activities

4:15pm
Igwe's Third Outing and End of Azu Ofala.

THE NDICHIE: COUNCIL OF CHIEFS

The Ndichie are the Obi's direct governing council. Appointed after wide consultation to ensure balance and competence, they uphold an ancestral structure of 52 chieftaincy positions across three classes: 6 Ndichie Ume (1st Class), 23 Ndichie Okwa (2nd Class), and 23 Ndichie Okwareze (3rd Class) . Today, the Ndichie provide political leadership and administer traditional justice within their kindred groups and villages, ensuring the Obi's authority and the people's voice remain connected at every level."

NDICHIE UME



Chief (Engr.) Joseph Okechukwu Ononye
Ōnôwú Íyàsélé; Onuiyi; Agadāba Órimili



Chief Albert Okechukwu Ibekwe
Ōdū Ōsōdī; Nkatāūkwū



Chief (Dr.) Okechukwu Mike Areh
Ōnyá Ōzómā; Ukanāgbāoji; Ásākālākpòbi

NDICHIE OKWA



Chief (Surv.) Chuka E. Oboli
Osumá Âfâ; Âkankpôsi



Chief (Dr.) Amechi Isaac Uyanne
Omódí (Dàîke; Alumâga)



Chief Pat Onwura Mba
Âkpê (Ôlódí; Jebogwù)



Chief Albert Ikem Abadom
Êdè Gbogbogâgâ



Chief Osita Felix Anionwu
Ike Akatakwuani



Chief Ubaka Morah
Ôjibâ Inwâgwè

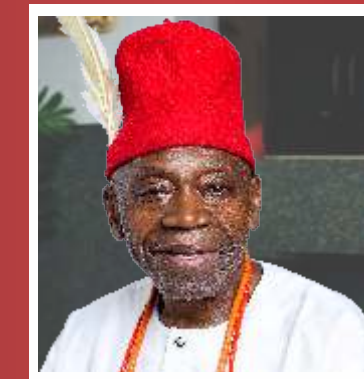


Chief Osi Odukwe
Ôjûdo Enemâ

NDICHIE OKWA



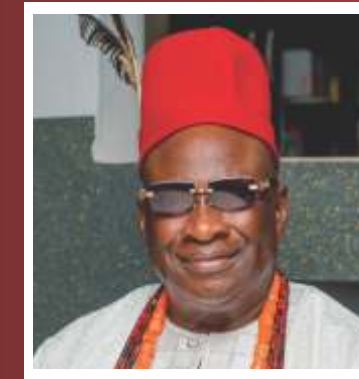
Chief Charles O. Nwora
Ôzízâni Ôbí



Chief Benedict Onochie Emengo
Ôbolí Bôjâ



Chief Ikechukwu Areh
Gbôsâ Ôbí



Chief (Engr.) Nche Ugbo
Ôjîâbu Ugâlâ



Chief Chuma Umunna
Ôgbûobâ Anyâlâgbôm



Chief John Abutu
Ôjôgwú Êzè



Chief Jude Oniah
Ôjîède Êzè



Chief (Dr. Attorney) Okey Akpom
Ôdôgwú Êzè

NDICHIE OKWAREZE



Chief Chuka Ifejika
Ōnòlì, Ógwùdà nà Ìyelé



Chief Molokwu Azikiwe
Àkwuè Ísámá



Chief Olisa Okolo
Èsèágbà Ágbàlā Udóbi



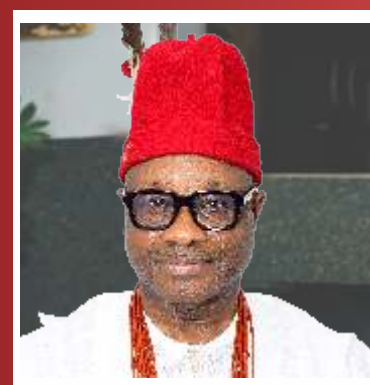
Chief (Dr.) Jide Ebo
Ágbà Oríogu



Chief Richard Onochie
Ìgwúòbà Ákàlám



Chief Anthony Obiesie
Àjàkò Òbì



Chief Ben Epundu
Ìjàgwò Òbì



Chief Obiora Nnagozie Etukokwu
Úbòh Negbasele

CULTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

Ofala is the heartbeat of Onitsha Ado n'Idu. Dating to the 16th century and regarded as the first Ofala in Igboland, it celebrates the Obi's emergence from his annual spiritual seclusion - inye ukwu na nlo - a sacred rite of renewal, protection and thanksgiving for the gift of yam and life itself.

Over two majestic days - Iru Ofala and Azu Ofala - tradition comes alive in colour, sound and symbolism.

AGE-GRADE SOCIETIES

The Colour of Community

Azu Ofala belongs to the people. On this day, Ime Obi becomes a living tapestry as Onitsha's renowned Age-Grade Societies pay homage to Agbogidi.

In elaborate, coordinated uniforms and ceremonial attire, each group - youth, elders, Umuada, Otu Odu and more - performs with precision, rhythm and pride. Their parades and dances are more than spectacle; they are a powerful expression of communal order, solidarity and shared identity.





TRADITIONAL MUSIC, TRIBUTES & PARADES

The Sound of Majesty
Ofala is announced by a 21-gun salute and the all-night resonance of the royal _Ufie_ gong.

To the pulsating beat of war drums and the solemn grandeur of _Egwu Ota_ - the royal music - the Ndichie, Onitsha's Red Cap Chiefs, enter in stately procession.

At its core, Ofala is homage. Royal fathers, dignitaries, age-grades and community groups throng Ime Obi to renew their covenant with the throne, while Agbogidi honours distinguished sons and daughters, affirming the enduring bond between monarch and people.

ROYAL REGALIA & SYMBOLISM

Heritage in Motion

The climax remains Agbogidi's emergence, announced by cannon shots and thunderous cheers.

His regalia is a language:

The Abani - the bronze ceremonial sword, raised to bless and protect the kingdom - symbol of authority, continuity and spiritual power.

The Feathers - adorning his headgear, signifying uniqueness, nobility and authority, as the eagle is king of the birds.

The Beads & Swords - as embodied in the Ofala 2026 identity - the swords speak to leadership, the beads to culture, honour and belonging.

Three times the Obi circles the arena, on his second appearance offering a rare royal dance - a moment when subjects renew their bond with the throne.

As we celebrate Ofala 2026 - igba mbo, iga n'iru: Strive and Advance - we are reminded: heritage is not static. It is our foundation for movement.



COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC IMPACT

Ofala is more than a festival. It is a homecoming, an economy, and a global statement.

TOURISM & HOMECOMING

Every October, Onitsha becomes the world's meeting point for Ndi Onitsha. Ofala draws traditional rulers from across Nigeria, captains of industry, political leaders, cultural enthusiasts, the diaspora and international visitors to Ime Obi.

For many families, it is the annual homecoming - a moment to renew bonds with the throne, with kindred and with heritage. For visitors, it is a window into the majesty of Onitsha Ado n'Idu. Hotels are fully booked, roads come alive, and the city radiates with pride and hospitality. From the Owuwaji feast of thanksgiving to the Youth Carnival that lights up the streets, every segment of society participates.



His Majesty receiving the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Certificate of Excellence in Culture, presented in recognition of Ofala's outstanding contribution to the preservation and promotion of Nigeria's cultural heritage

ECONOMIC BOOST

Ofala is a powerful engine for local commerce.

About ₦1 billion circulates through festival-related activities each year, touching a wide chain of beneficiaries - traders, hoteliers, caterers, transporters, tailors, designers, make-up artists, decorators, photographers and artisans.

The demand for elaborate traditional costumes, coral beads, royal fabrics and ceremonial uniforms fuels local craftsmanship. Food and hospitality services experience a major surge. This vitality creates jobs, empowers youth and women entrepreneurs, and contributes tangibly to improved community welfare.

Recognizing this, the Onitsha community extends the impact beyond the festival through the Ofala Steering Committee's broader initiatives in training, micro-finance, medical outreach and cultural development - ensuring prosperity is not seasonal.

GLOBAL RECOGNITION

Ofala's excellence is acknowledged nationally and globally:

- Endorsed by the Nigerian Tourism Development Authority (NTDA) as a prime asset to Nigerian tourism, capable of developing into a global cultural event.
- Certificate of Excellence in Culture by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) - presented at the first UNWTO Global Conference on Linking Tourism, Culture and the Creative Industries in Lagos, in recognition of Ofala's outstanding contribution to the preservation and promotion of Nigeria's cultural heritage.

- Celebrated by partners such as Globacom, who since 2011 have described Ofala as "an engine of identity, creativity, commerce and tourism."

TOWARDS UNESCO RECOGNITION

Ofala embodies the UNESCO ideals for cultural initiatives - safeguarding living heritage, fostering social cohesion, peace and community development. With its centuries-old traditions, elaborate rituals, and inclusive participation across generations and genders, Ofala is acknowledged as a strong candidate for inscription on the *UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list* - a living legacy for humanity.

Ofala 2026 - igba mbo, iga n'iru: Strive and Advance. Our culture, our commerce, our pride.

CHIMEDIE & OREZE: A LIVING HERITAGE, FROM PALACE TO THE WORLD



The Ofala is not a performance of the past. It is living heritage. Every October, the Obi of Onitsha steps out to bless his people, and in doing so, he reminds us that tradition only endures when it breathes in the present.

Under the 2026 theme, *igba mbo, iga n'iru* - Strive, and Advance, we are doing exactly that: striving to preserve what made us, and advancing by giving it new life.

The Past, Preserved: Chimedie Museum

Due to open in 2027, Chimedie Museum is the vision of His Majesty, Obi Nnaemeka A. Achebe, CFR, mni. Located close Ime Obi (the palace), the museum will be the permanent home of the Onitsha Kingdom's memory - royal regalia, historic photographs, manuscripts, artifacts, and the oral histories of over 500 years of governance, trade, and diplomacy.

Chimedie is not a warehouse. It is a center for research, learning, and pride. It takes the objects of our ancestors and secures them for our children, so that the story of Ndi Onitsha is never lost, only deepened. The Present, Expressed: Oreze International Art Exhibition

Every Ofala, the palace grounds also host Oreze, the annual international art exhibition. Here, artists from Nigeria and across the diaspora respond to Igbo cosmology, history, and values through contemporary forms. Ancient symbols meet new media. Palace walls become gallery walls.

Oreze ensures that our heritage is not only conserved, but interpreted - debated, reimagined, and shared with the world each year.

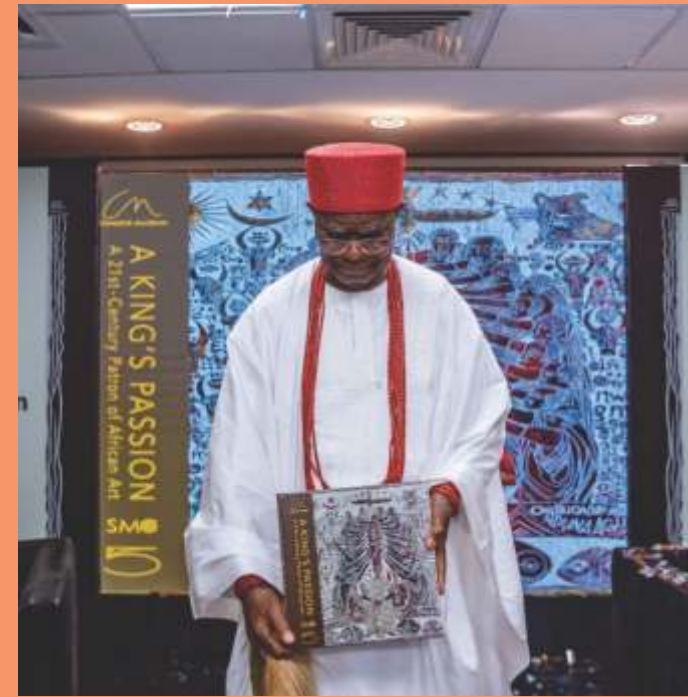
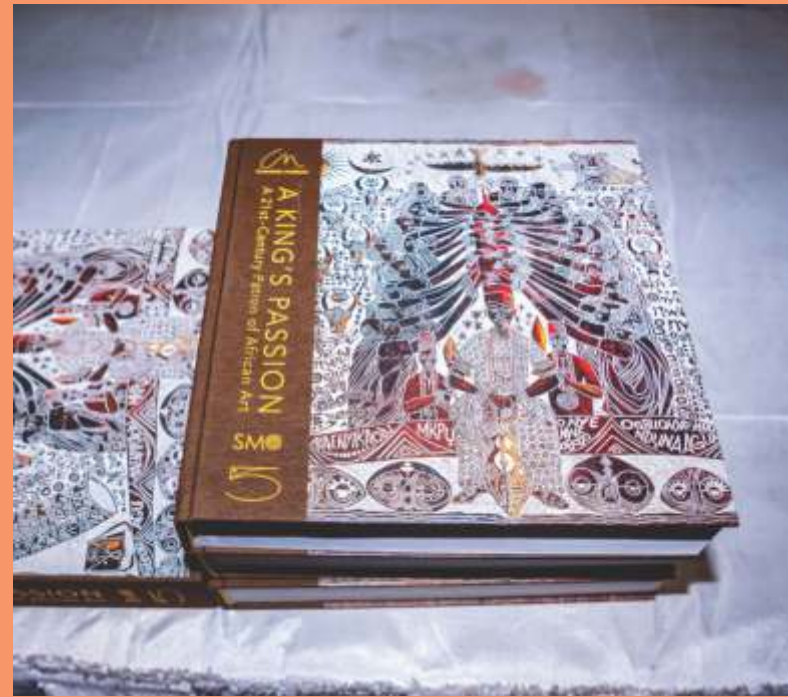
One Story

Chimedie preserves the artifact. Oreze interprets it. Together, they close the circle between ancient and contemporary. An artifact in Chimedie can inspire a 2027 work at Oreze, experienced by the same visitor during the same Ofala.

This is our living heritage.

We invite you to experience Oreze this October, and to return in 2027 for the opening of Chimedie. At Ofala, the past does not stay behind us. It walks forward with us.





GALLERY









NOTES

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NOTES

THE ONITSHA ADO N'IDU CEREMONIAL CYCLE 2027					
S/NO	EVENTS	WEEKDAY	MARKET DAYS	MONTH	DATE
1	IFEJIOKU	FRIDAY	OYE	JANUARY	8
2	IKA AJACHI	WEDNESDAY	OYE	JUNE	9
3	ILO AJACHI	FRIDAY	OYE	JUNE	25
4	IKA UMUATU	SUNDAY	OYE	AUGUST	8
5	UMUATU EZE ONICHA	MONDAY	OYE	AUGUST	16
6	UMUATU EZE IDI	FRIDAY	OYE	AUGUST	20
7	UMUATU IKPALA	TUESDAY	OYE	AUGUST	24
8	UMUATU OSOSO IKPALA ISI	SATURDAY	OYE	AUGUST	28
9	UMUATU ONICHA	WEDNESDAY	OYE	SEPTEMBER	1
10	IDO ANYU	SUNDAY	OYE	SEPTEMBER	5
11	IWAJI IKOLO AWADA	WEDNESDAY	OYE	SEPTEMBER	29
12	IWAJI IKPALA AWADA	THURSDAY	AFOR	SEPTEMBER	30
13	IWAJI [KOLO EKE	FRIDAY	NKWO	OCTOBER	1
14	IWAJI IKPALA EKE	SATURDAY	EKE	OCTOBER	2
15	IWAJI IKOLO UBENE; UBULU NA IKEM	SUNDAY	OYE	OCTOBER	3
16	IWAJI IKPALA UBENE; UBULU NA IKEM	MONDAY	AFOR	OCTOBER	4
17	IGO URAI	TUESDAY	NKWO	OCTOBER	5
18	MGBAPU AFA OBODO	WEDNESDAY	EKE	OCTOBER	6
19	INYE UKWU N'NLO EZE ONICHA	WEDNESDAY	EKE	OCTOBER	6
20	IWAJI (KOLO UGWUNAOBAMKPA/EKWENSU	THURSDAY	OYE	OCTOBER	7
21	IWAJI IKPALA UGWUNAOBAMKPA/EKWENSU	FRIDAY	AFOR	OCTOBER	8
22	OGBALIDO	SATURDAY	NKWO	OCTOBER	9
23	INYEPU UKWU N'NLO EZE ONICHA	SUNDAY	EKE	OCTOBER	10
24	OFALA TRADITIONAL DAY	MONDAY	OYE	OCTOBER	11
25	AZU OFALA TRADITIONAL DAY	TUESDAY	AFOR	OCTOBER	12
26	OFALA CEREMONIAL DAY	FRIDAY	OYE	OCTOBER	15
27	AZU OFALA CEREMONIAL DAY	SATURDAY	AFOR	OCTOBER	16
28	IWAJI IKOLO IKPALA EZE	SUNDAY	NKWO	OCTOBER	17
29	IWAJI IKPALA EZE	MONDAY	EKE	OCTOBER	18
30	ITO UKPUKPA	THURSDAY	NKWO	OCTOBER	21
31	IKELEBEJI IKOLOBIOJI	TUESDAY	EKE	OCTOBER	26
32	OSISITE UGWUNAOBAMKPA	SATURDAY	EKE	OCTOBER	30
33	OSISITE EZECHIMA	SUNDAY	OYE	OCTOBER	31
34	ORURU ANI	WEDNESDAY	OYE	NOVEMBER	24
35	OSO EKWULO	MONDAY	OYE	DECEMBER	6
36	IGA ONICHA	TUESDAY	OYE	DECEMBER	14