



NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION

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DIRECTIVE TO NBA BRANCHES TO VISIT THEIR STATE GOVERNORS AND DEMAND FOR COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE 1999 CONSTITUTION ON FINANCIAL AUTONOMY FOR THEIR STATE JUDICIARY

Dear Colleagues,

As you are aware, we are now in the second week of the nationwide strike action and total shutdown of the Nigerian courts by the Judiciary Staff Union of Nigeria (“JUSUN”) which was embarked upon to press home the long-standing demand for financial autonomy of the Nigerian Judiciary. This demand for financial autonomy is legitimate, constitutional and is in the best interest of the Judiciary as it is one of the key parameters for enthroning independence of the Judiciary and fostering democracy.

Prior to the commencement of the strike action, the Nigerian Bar Association (“NBA”) while supporting the objective of the industrial action, had taken a position that the timing of the strike action would work hardship on legal practitioners, and everyone involved in the justice administration process. As a result, the NBA has since then been in touch with JUSUN and other critical stakeholders to discuss the strike action and various strategies for resolving same in the interest of everyone concerned. For instance, in a bid to resolve the issue, the National Officers of the NBA had a meeting with the National Officers of JUSUN on Thursday, 8th April 2021 to properly strategize and synergize the age-long partnership of both bodies on the critical issue of achieving financial autonomy for the Nigerian Judiciary.

Furthermore, on 12th April 2021, the NBA leadership was in a larger meeting, comprising the leadership of JUSUN, Federal Government officials including the representatives of the Attorney-General of the Federation, the Inspector-General of Police, the Presidential Committee on Financial Autonomy for the Judiciary, the Body of Chief Judges of States, the National Judicial Council (NJC) and the Hon. Minister of Labour, Dr. Chris Ngige. After extensive deliberations, the meeting was further adjourned to Thursday, 15th April 2021. Unfortunately, the said meeting was called off at the last minute and adjourned sine die.

It is also important to note that an earlier meeting scheduled for Wednesday, 14th April 2021 with the Nigerian Governors Forum did not hold as there was no feedback from the Nigerian Governors Forum, the most critical stakeholder on this issue.

With these developments and the recent actions and utterances of officials of some of the State Governments, it has become apparent that most of the State Governments are not ready or willing to implement the constitutional provisions which grant financial autonomy to the Judiciary.

After due consultations with several stakeholders, we have come to the inevitable conclusion that the NBA must take more decisive steps at this troubling moment. We must, as a body, act in consonance with the aims and objects of our Constitution, by effectively playing our role in the defence of the independence of the Judiciary which this fight for financial autonomy seeks to achieve.

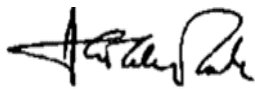
NATIONAL OFFICERS:

Olumide A. Akpata **President**

Joyce Oduah, **General Secretary**; John Aikpokpo Martins, **1st Vice President**; Debo Adeyemo Kazeem, **2nd Vice President**; Mercy Ijato Agada, **Treasurer**; Olakunle Edun, **Welfare Secretary**; Raphael Nnamdi Anagor, **Financial Secretary**; Dr. Rapuluchukwu Nduka, **Publicity Secretary**; Uchenna Nwadialo, **Assistant Secretary**; Ferdinand Naza, **Assistant Publicity Secretary**

In view of the above, the Chairmen of all the branches of the NBA are hereby requested to effectively mobilize their members and pay visits to their respective State Governors at the Government Houses on Monday, 19th April 2021 to press home the demand for implementation of financial autonomy for the Judiciary. At the visit, NBA Branches in each State are to present a joint written demand to their State Governor requesting full compliance with existing legislative instruments and court judgments on the financial autonomy of the Judiciary.

The Chairmen of the NBA Branches are further requested to ensure that these visits are embarked upon, every subsequent Monday, until there is full compliance with this demand that is aimed at strengthening our democracy and the dispensation of justice. We trust that our members will give the leadership of their respective branches all the support that they require to achieve this much needed victory for our justice system.



OLUMIDE AKPATA
PRESIDENT
16th April 2021

