



NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION

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STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION ON THE RESIGNATION OF MEMBERS OF THE NBA NATIONAL ELECTION APPEALS COMMITTEE

Dear Colleagues,

1. You would recall that elections into the National Offices of the Nigerian Bar Association ("NBA") held on Saturday, 16 July, 2022 after which the Electoral Committee of the Nigerian Bar Association ("ECNBA") returned winners into the various national offices.
2. Also, in line with the provisions of Section 14(1)(L) of the NBA Constitution 2015 (as amended in 2021), we had constituted a National Elections Appeal-Committee (the "**Appeals Committee**") which had the mandate of receiving and resolving complaints and disputes arising from the elections.
3. It bears stating that at the time of constitution of membership of the Appeals Committee, the political inclination of its members to any of the aspirants for the National Offices was not known to the leadership of the NBA. Indeed, the announcement of members of the Appeals Committee on 21 May 2022 predated the release of the list of qualified candidates by the ECNBA on 27 May 2022, as well as the official flag-off of campaigns by the ECNBA.
4. Since after the election, however, it has come to the knowledge of the leadership of the NBA that there have been some protest against the membership of the Appeals Committee bordering on allegations of possible partiality. Indeed, at least, one of the candidates at the election has petitioned the office of the President of the NBA suggesting that some members of the Appeals Committee are, or may be, compromised having allegedly supported the campaigns of some candidates who were returned at the election, and whose victory could be the subject of an electoral challenge.
5. In reaction to the above allegation, I received a letter dated 29 July 2022 and signed by all the members of the Appeals Committee, communicating their resignation of membership of the Appeals Committee on moral grounds and in order to pave the way for the constitution of a new Committee that would enjoy the confidence of any petitioners.
6. One of the promises that I made upon assumption of office, was to ensure a free, fair and transparent electoral process; one that inspires confidence in both winners and losers. It goes without saying that the electoral process which opens with the nomination of candidates extends beyond the actual casting of ballot, to post-election issues such as determination of petitions arising from the election.

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**

Ensuring the impartiality of members of the Appeals Committee therefore cannot be overemphasized.

7. Against the backdrop of the allegation of bias, or likelihood of bias against members of the Appeals Committee by some interested parties, and the consequential resignation of the entire members of the Appeals Committee, the leadership of the NBA, wishes to announce as follows:
 - A. A new Appeals Committee is hereby set up with the following members:
 - Kanu Agabi, SAN, CON - Chairman
 - Olisa Agbakoba, SAN, OFR - Member
 - Cecilia Madueke - Secretary
 - B. The new Appeals Committee will have **Mr. Rotimi Ogunyemi** as its Resident Expert on IT and **Mr. Olumide Babalola** as Counsel.
 - C. Considering the lapse of the period of 10 days (from the date of announcement of the election results) allowed by the defunct Appeals Committee for the filing of election petitions, the new Appeals Committee, shall indicate the time within which petitions may be filed following this announcement.
 - D. The new Appeals Committee is empowered to direct, at the request of a petitioner, or in its discretion, an independent audit of the July 2022 Elections, if the justice of the matter requires it, or if it would be necessary to further entrench confidence in the process.
8. On behalf of the National Officers of the NBA, let me register my unalloyed gratitude to members of the Mrs. 'Funmi Roberts-led Committee for accepting the NBA's invitation to serve. The circumstances leading to their resignation is no doubt, a most unfortunate one yet, the moral high ground that they have taken will forever be remembered and appreciated.



OLUMIDE AKPATA

President

Nigerian Bar Association

2nd August 2022