



# NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION

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## **STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION, YAKUBU CHONOKO MAIKYAU, OON, SAN, TO MARK THE INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION DAY, 9 DECEMBER 2022**

Today is the day set aside by the United Nations to mark the global fight against corruption. Since the adoption of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption nineteen years ago in 2003, December 9 of every year has been designated as the International Anti-Corruption Day.

The Nigerian Bar Association is happy to identify with the global community as we all use the opportunity of this year's Anti-Corruption Day to re-affirm our commitment to eradicate corruption in all spheres of our professional life and national affairs. This is more so that this year's event which we are marking today seeks to highlight the crucial nexus between anti-corruption and peace, security, and development.

It is the reality of our existence that many of the ills that afflict our society today cannot be divorced from corruption in its various cancerous forms. At the root of virtually every societal malaise is one form of corrupt practice or another. Whilst anti-corruption might not be the silver bullet that will automatically transform the world into an Eldorado, there is no doubt that if we are able to use our commonwealth to tackle the menace, the world will certainly be a better place for all of us.

Another reality that we cannot shy away from is the fact that it is going to require a synergy of all of us working together to decimate corruption and its tentacles. The responsibility for its annihilation is therefore not limited to anti-corruption agencies or the judiciary alone. The cornerstone of the anti-corruption architecture is a functional legal framework which ensures that corrupt practices are not only prohibited but are discouraged and penalised. It is therefore our joint responsibility, and we all have a role to play in this regard.

The Parliament, in addition to its constitutional oversight function which must be discharged in a transparent manner, must also strive to enact legislations which are proactive, comprehensive, and effective. The Executive must implement these laws without discrimination and ensure that laws are not used as an arbitrary political tool. On its own part, the Judiciary must apply anti-corruption laws without fear or favour and not as an appendage of its sister arms. The media, as the fourth estate of the Realm, must give impassioned and impartial coverage to the anti-corruption war.

As the umbrella body of members of the legal profession in Nigeria, the NBA has a formidable role to play in our national quest to liberate our great country from corruption. The NBA will continue to work with the National Assembly to ensure that comprehensive legal reforms are carried out for the purpose of enthroning a functional legal framework to combat the ills of corruption. With the Executive, our commitment shall be to ensure that the laws are implemented without fear or favour and without abridging the rights of the citizens. With the Judiciary, we are committed to ensure that justice is done in every case before the court.

However, it is important to ensure that in our fight against corruption another demon in form of abrogation of fundamental rights of our citizens is not institutionalised. Anti-corruption agencies must therefore not see themselves as special creatures who are above the law passed

### NATIONAL OFFICERS:

Yakubu Chonoko Maikyau, OON, SAN President

Adesina Adegbite, FICMC, General Secretary; Linda R. Bala (Mrs), 1st Vice President; Chukwuemeka Clement Ugo, 2nd Vice President; Amanda Ego Demechi-Asagba, 3rd Vice President; Caroline Ladidi Anze-Bishop, Treasurer; Chinyere Gladys Obasi, Welfare Secretary; Akorede Habeeb Lawal, Publicity Secretary; Daniel K. Kip, Assistant Secretary; Charles Ajiboye, FICMC, FCAI, ACIS Assistant Publicity Secretary

by the Nigerian people's Parliament. The rights of every citizen must be respected at all times and due process must be followed in our anti-corruption crusades.

Members of the legal profession must support all anti-corruption agencies in the fight against economic crimes; money laundering and other related crimes, terrorism and other criminal activities often funded with illicit funds. We must strengthen our Rules of Professional Conduct for Legal Practitioners to reflect our primary call to serve the cause of justice for the benefit of the people. While we enjoy our privilege as members of the legal profession, we must remain conscious of our bounden duty to the Nation and resist any attempt to be used by any person or group of persons to abuse that privilege.

One fundamental reason why this year 2022 Anti-Corruption Day is of significance to us in Nigeria is the opportunity it provides us to mark the event in the context of our forthcoming general elections. Electoral malpractice is a form of corruption which we tend to ignore and which deserves to be roundly condemned. The truth is that corruption of the electoral practices, be it in form of vote-buying or electoral violence, undermines the democratic practices thereby circumventing the will of the people. This is therefore an opportunity for all of us as stakeholders to recommit ourselves to the patriotic duty of ensuring that the General Elections coming up in the first quarter of year 2023 is corruption free. It is by doing so that we can all bequeath a better Nigeria that we will all be proud of to the next generation. In my Inaugural Speech, I did say:

*Besides the need to guarantee the security of the lives and properties of Nigerians as they troop out to vote in the 2023 general elections, the ultimate outcome of the election will largely depend on the interface between the Bench, the Bar and the Political gladiators. As members of the Legal Profession, serving either on the Bench or at the Bar, we owe Nigerians sincere and honest participation in the process. We must do all that is legitimately within our abilities, motivated by the desire to serve the cause of justice, to ensure that the relevant laws and rules, properly interpreted and applied, remain the guiding principles for our involvement in the process.*

*While we will stand with the Courts and do everything legal to protect the integrity of the Bench against any onslaught or any form of intimidation by the political class, any person or group of persons, we will not hesitate to call out and pursue disciplinary action(s) against erring judicial officials. Similarly, members of the Bar who misconduct themselves while participating in the resolution of electoral disputes will face disciplinary action at the Legal Practitioners' Disciplinary Committee (LPDC) and the Legal Practitioners' Privileges Committee (LPPC), where Senior Advocates of Nigeria (SAN) are involved.*

The NBA under my watch shall remain committed to working with all other stakeholders to ensure that anti-corruption becomes a code of conduct we all subscribe to and a badge of honour we are all proud to wear. As ministers in the temple of Justice, the professional conducts of our members must be above board at all times in line with one of our aims and objective that the NBA shall maintain *the highest standards of professional conduct, etiquette and discipline*. In all we do, we must be guided by our professional and ethical commitment to ensure that Nigeria becomes a model nation in enthroning a culture of zero tolerance for corruption. This is the path to the recovery, reformation and repositioning of our dear nation, Nigeria.



**Yakubu Chonoko Maikyau, OON, SAN**  
PRESIDENT