



NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT: Plot 1102, Muhammed Buhari Way, Cadastral Zone A00, Central Business District, Abuja Nigerian Tel: +234 800 333 1111
www.nigerianbar.org.ng

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION (NBA), YAKUBU CHONOKO MAIKYAU, OON, SAN, ON THE INSISTENCE BY THE CHAIRMAN, BODY OF BENCHERS (BOB), CHIEF WOLE OLANIPEKUN, OFR, CFR, SAN, TO PRESIDE OVER THE CALL TO BAR CEREMONY SCHEDULED FOR 6 AND 7 DECEMBER 2022

On 4 December 2022, I wrote a letter to the Chairman, Body of Benchers (BoB) Chief Wole Olanipekun, OFR, CFR, SAN, copied to the Chief Justice of Nigeria, Life Benchers, and other Benchers. In that letter, I requested the Chairman of the BoB to recuse himself from presiding over the Call to Bar Ceremony scheduled for 6 and 7 December 2022, for reasons clearly articulated therein. I sent the letter to the Chairman and all Benchers by email on 4 December 2022, I also submitted a hard copy of the letter on 5 December 2022 to the Secretary of the BoB along with **one hundred and fifty (150)** copies of the letter for circulation to all Benchers.

It would be recalled that my predecessor-in-office had, on 22 July 2022, written to the Chairman of the BoB to recuse himself from office on the same grounds set out in my letter, but the Chairman refused to acknowledge the said letter nor bring it up for consideration more than 5 months since its delivery to the BoB. My present letter is to bring to attention the earlier call made by my predecessor and to emphasise the damage being done to the legal profession by reason of our collective silence over such devastating issue, with the expectation that the Chairman will see reason to show remorse and for the BoB to ask the Chairman to recuse himself knowing that no one is bigger than the legal profession.

At the meeting of the BoB held on 5 December 2022, I drew the attention of the Chairman to my letter and called for deliberations on same since it directly impacts on the propriety of the Chairman presiding over the Call to Bar ceremony, but this was not done nor were the hard copies of the letter distributed to the Benchers. The meeting of the BoB was adjourned to January 2023, on a date to be fixed by the Chairman.

In the circumstances therefore, having regard to my firm persuasion that the matters raised in my letter should have led the BoB to ask the Chairman to recuse himself in the interest of safeguarding the integrity of the Legal Profession, I am in good conscience unable to attend and participate in the Call to Bar Ceremony. The NBA under my leadership cannot be part of the ceremony superintended by the current Chairman of the BoB for all the reasons stated in my letter under reference. To do so will be to endorse, celebrate or condone a practice that I consider unwholesome and unprofessional, by virtue of the Rules of Professional Conduct for Legal Practitioners 2007. The NBA under my leadership remains committed to the protection of the integrity of the Bench and the Bar and will not shirk that responsibility.

I assure all members of the NBA that the sole motivation for my letter to the BoB is my conviction on the need to salvage the image, reputation, and integrity of the legal profession in Nigeria, which has been negatively impacted by the email by Adekunbi Ogunde, a Partner in the Law Firm of the Chairman of the BoB.

I congratulate our colleagues – the new wigs, for the great feat they have attained by fulfilling the requirements for joining the noble profession of Law. I pray that God Almighty will keep

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

and preserve them as they contribute their quota in building the legal profession and the nation at large. The NBA remains committed to the protection of our legal space and shall spare no effort to stop any external incursions or actions amongst members that can destroy our dear profession of law. Be assured of our support and preparedness to provide sincere mentorship to you through colleagues who have distinguished themselves in various fields of legal practice and exhibited high regard for ethics and professionalism. Once more, congratulations!!

Long live the legal profession!

Long live the Nigerian Bar Association!!

Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria!!!

Yakubu Chonoko Maikyaou, OON, SAN
PRESIDENT

