

The Hon Chief Justice of Nigeria and
Chairman National Judicial Council
Supreme Court Complex
Three Arms Zone,
Abuja
Nigeria.

Your Lordship,

**THE STATE OF AFFAIRS IN THE SUPREME COURT OF
NIGERIA AND DEMAND BY JUSTICES OF THE COURT**

My Lord The Honourable Chief Justice of Nigeria, we the entire Justices of the Supreme Court of Nigeria, carefully reviewed the state of affairs in this Court and unanimously resolved to write formally and draw the attention of Your Lordship to our demands.

As a preamble, let it be clearly understood that, the resolution to write Your Lordship was reached with all sense of responsibility. We are serving this Country diligently and to the best of our ability. We resolve disputes between the Executive and the Legislature including all manner of disagreements, between governments and individuals. We are responsible citizens of this Country. It would be a tragedy if the Nigerian Public were to know that we are unable to resolve our own problems internally without going Public. The decision to write to you formally must be seen by Your

Lordship as an effort on our part to preserve the dignity of the Judiciary and the respect accorded to us by Governments and people of Nigeria. God forbid the day that our internal issues become a matter of National discourse. It would be a catastrophe better imagined. Your lordship must therefore act before it is too late.

My lord may recall that you reluctantly called a Justice's meeting on the 23rd day of March 2022 after several persistent requests to hold the meeting. Our new Justices were never introduced formally in a meeting, as has been the practice, from the date of their swearing in on 6th November, 2020 until the 23rd day of March, 2022 when the recent Justices meeting was held.

Your Lordship may also recall that at the meeting we tabled and discussed our demands on:

- I. Justices accommodation,
- II. Our vehicles,
- III. Electricity tariff,
- IV. Supply of diesel,
- V. Internet services to our residences and chambers,
- VI. Epileptic electricity supply to the Court,

We also raised the issue of the failure of the Honourable Chief Justice to carry the Justices along in managing the affairs of the Court, the deteriorating condition of services generally and the state of the litigations department.

At the meeting, Your Lordship agreed that welfare committee be Constituted to compile and forward our demands. On the 24th day of March 2022, the welfare committee submitted to Your Lordship request for review of electricity allowance because of the increase in electricity tariff nationwide. The welfare Committee also submitted our request for diesel allowance, because of the epileptic electricity supply, the astronomical hike in the price of diesel and the fact that Justices require electricity to work at home. The Committee also requested for the restoration of our monthly Internet allowance, because we require uninterrupted Internet service in order to have access to materials online to write our judgments. Your Lordship received and ignored these demands since 24th March 2022.

At the Justices meeting, we intimated your Lordship that some Justices sworn on the 6th day of November 2020 were yet to be accommodated by the Court. Your Lordship promised to take up the issue that day. To date Your Lordship has not taken any step in this direction.

With regard to Justice's vehicles, several are due for replacement, while the new Justices have not received their full complement of vehicles to date. Moreover, some of the vehicles supplied to the Justices are either refurbished or substandard. Your Lordship has not taken steps to address this problem.

At the meeting we also discussed training. In the past Justices were nominated to attend two to three foreign workshops and trainings **per annum** with **an** accompanying person for reasons of age. **Since Your Lordship's** assumption of office Justices only attended, two workshops in Dubai and Zanzibar. They were not accorded the privilege of travelling with accompanying persons as was the practice. **Your Lordship** totally ignored this demand and **yet** travelled with your spouse, children and personal staff. We **DEMAND** to know what has become of our training funds, **have they been** diverted, **or** is it a plain denial? Your Lordship may also remember that the National Assembly has increased the budgetary allocation of the Judiciary. **We find it** strange that in spite of the upward review of our budgetary allocation, the Court cannot cater for our legitimate entitlements. **This is unacceptable!**

Another issue discussed **was the provision of qualified** legal assistants. **We are aware that** even lower Courts provide **legal** assistants **for their** Justices and Judges. The Supreme Court, apart from being the highest Court in the land, is a policy Court. We are confronted with various **complex legal issues of national significance with the addition of** time bound matters coming in between our regular Court sittings. **We require qualified legal** assistants in order to offer our best. This demand has not

been accorded any attention by the Honourable Chief Justice.

The state of health care in the Court has deteriorated; the Supreme Court clinic has become a mere consulting clinic. Drugs are not available to treat minor ailments. There is general lack of concern for Justices who require immediate or emergency medical intervention.

Your Lordship has not addressed the issue of our rules Court. The Rules of Court are the immediate tools employed by Justices to dispense Justice to Court users. Your Lordship has kept the amended Rules of Court for almost three years now, awaiting your signature. We strongly believe the new rules will aid speedy dispensation of Justice.

Recently, the Chief Registrar served Justices with an internal memo, that electricity would be supplied to the Court between the hours of 8am and 4pm **daily**, for lack of diesel. The implication of this memo is that **the** Justices must finish their work and close before 4pm. **Your Lordship** with all due respect, this is the peak of **the** degeneration of the Court; it is the height of decadence, and clear evidence of the absence of probity and moral rectitude. Your Lordship, this act alone portends imminent danger to the survival of this Court and the Judiciary as an institution, which is gradually drifting to extinction. The Judiciary is an arm of Government. The

Supreme Court of Nigeria, just like the Presidential Villa and the National Assembly, is the seat of the Judiciary as an arm of Government. The implication of the memo is that **this** arm of Government is **potentially** shut down. May God never allow that day.

Your Lordship, this is a wake up call. Your Lordship must take full responsibility as our leader. You must not concession your responsibility to people who have no responsibility or stake in preserving and defending the dignity of the Institution. **Your Lordship** occupies a position of leadership. We will not wait for the total collapse of the institution. **We** must not abandon our responsibility to call Your lordship to order in the face of these sad developments that threaten our survival as an institution. We have done our utmost best to send a wake up call to Your Lordship. **A** stich in time saves nine.

Finally, Your Lordship the choice is now yours. It is either you quickly and swiftly take responsibility and address these burning issues or we will be compelled to further steps immediately. May this day never come.

Please accept the assurances of our highest regards.

1. Justice Olukayode Ariwoola.....
2. Justice Musa Dattijo Mohammed.....
3. Justice Kudirat Motonmori O. Kekere-Ekun.....

4. Justice John Inyang Okoro.....
5. Justice Chima Centus Nweze.....
6. Justice Amina Adamu Augie.....
7. Justice Uwani Musa Abba-Aji.....
8. Justice Mohammed Lawal Garba.....
9. Justice Helen Moronkeji Ogunwumiju.....
10. Justice Abdu Aboki.....
11. Justice Ibrahim Mohammed Musa Saulawa.....
12. Justice Adamu Jauro.....
13. Justice Tijjani Abubakar.....
14. Justice Emmanuel Akomaye Agim.....