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February 12, 2024.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF BENUE STATE REV FR HYACINTH ALIA PHD ON ALLEGATIONS OF CORRUPTION AND NEPOTISM AGAINST THE STATE CHIEF JUDGE, JUSTICE MAURICE IKPAMBESE

His Excellency Sir

1. In the last few weeks there has been mounting and series of allegations of corruption against the office and person of the Chief Judge of Benue state in the person of Justice Maurice Ikpambese

2. What has been most surprising is the deafening silence that has met the allegations much as they are grave and therefore capable of leading to loss of total confidence in the state judiciary as a whole. These allegations which started as beer parlour talks in small circles have now snowballed so much so that they are now being broadcast on national and international television as was lately reported on TVC.

4. Recently a group of Benue indigenes abroad, known as Benue Diaspora Vanguard had cause to also petition the National Judicial Council (NJC) Independent Corrupt and other Offences Commission, Department of State Services, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission on same subject matter.

5. For purposes of specificity these allegations are as follows among many others:

A: Sale of properties belonging to the Adzuana Daboh estate by the Chief Judge without the knowledge and authorizations of the estate beneficiary's/family members. According to the reports, the state Chief judge had served as the estate administrator shortly before being appointed to his current position by the previous administration. The illegal sale in question was to Oracle business owned by immediate past Governor Samuel Ortom who appointed him Chief Judge in the first place despite he was not the most senior judge at the time.

B: A controversial judgement between the state Board of Internal Revenue Service (BIRS) and MTN communications in which he awarded damages to the state government over and above what BIRS had even asked for in order to partake in the proceeds.

D: Refusal to declare his assets in open violation of the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria as it relates to the appointment of public officers. This has become even more compelling given the allegation against him as to massive acquisition of properties worth hundreds of millions of naira within Abuja and Makurdi.

E: Open violation of the financial regulations act of 2022 by indiscriminate authorisation of transfer of public funds belonging to the state judiciary into private accounts of individuals suspected to be very close to him.

F: Arbitrary takeover of cases undergoing normal court procedures in whom he seemingly has interest. A good example been a matter at Aliade High court with case number ALHC/ 04/ 2024. In which he, by his fiat reassigned a case been handled by Justice Lilian Tumba without the knowledge of the court registrar and also directed another person to take charge of the court registry.

G: Undue interference in matters of political nature, of recent been the case of the Benue APC Chairmanship matter in which he is alleged to have received a two hundred million bribe hence his controversial approach to the matter which is obvious in the mafia way and manner he has seized the case and consequently vacated the said order; this raises further suspicion on the allegations of complicity by the Petitioners.

H: Contract racketeering. In one case, his son was awarded contract to supply computers at the state judiciary without any form of competitive bidding whatsoever. This can be verified by your Excellency as well.

6. In view of the grave nature of these allegations, His Excellency may in keeping with his vow to sanitise the state, initiate an investigation into the allegations without further delay.

8. In conclusion, I want to express my gratitude to His Excellency for the great turn around the state has witnessed in the last few months since he assumed office and hopes for even greater times ahead.

Your Excellency may wish to note that the responsibility of the all the arms of government in the state rest your shoulders and Benue people look forward to your definite action on this very important subject matter.



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