



15th of June, 2021

Hon. Dr. Justice I.T Muhammad, CFR,
Chief Justice of Nigeria and Chairman,
National Judicial Council,
Supreme Court Complex,
Three Arms Zone,
F.C.T, Abuja.

My Lord, The Hon. Chief Justice of Nigeria,

RE: THE NEED TO SUSPEND 2021 ANNUAL COURT VACATION

According to **William Ewart Gladstone** a British statesman and [Liberal](#) Politician - "**Justice delayed is justice denied**". The foregoing age long legal maxim as we all know is to the effect that; if [legal redress](#) or [equitable relief](#) to an injured party is available, but is not forthcoming in a timely fashion, it is effectively the same as having no remedy at all.

The view of William Ewart Gladstone was reiterated by the [Chief Justice of the United States Warren E. Burger](#) in his address to the [American Bar Association](#) in 1970 wherein he noted as follows:

"A sense of confidence in the courts is essential to maintain the fabric of ordered liberty for a free people and three things could destroy that confidence and do incalculable damage to society: that people come to believe that inefficiency and delay will drain even a just judgment of its value; that people who have long been exploited in the smaller transactions of daily life come to believe that courts cannot vindicate their legal rights from fraud and over-reaching;

that people come to believe the law – in the larger sense – cannot fulfill its primary function to protect them and their families in their homes, at their work, and on the public streets.

Now the following have truncated judicial activities in Nigeria since the month of March, 2020 till date:

1. COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

My Lord will recall that during the outbreak of the deadly Coronavirus (COVID-19) and in tandem with COVID-19 Regulations 2020 and as a preventive measure against the spread of the virus in the country, My Lord had by a Circular No. NJC/CIR/HOC/11/631 dated 23rd of March, 2020, directed all Heads of Courts to suspend Court sittings for an initial period of two weeks from 24th March, 2020. *Before the expiration of the said two weeks on the 7th of April, 2020*, My Lord further extended the suspension of Court sittings till further notice, given the lockdown measure put in place then by Federal and some State Governments to curb the spread of [COVID-19](#). **The Courts barely resumed in June, 2020 when the ENDSARS protest forced another lockdown of our Courts.**

2. ENDSARS PROTESTS.

My Lord will also recall the protests by the Nigerian youths beginning on 5th of October, 2020 where the youths called for the disbandment of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad popularly called SARS. Young men and women, mostly unemployed and with nothing to lose, also joined the fray and took advantage of the deterioration of law and order around the Country to barricade roads and wreak havoc. By 23rd October, 2020 they had destroyed at least 25 police stations in Lagos, Edo, Rivers and Anambra states, burned down public and private buildings including Court buildings, thereby grounding judicial activities for several weeks. In fact the judiciary in some States such as Lagos State are yet to fully recover.

3. THE JUSUN STRIKE

My Lord will recall too that, the Judiciary Staff Union of Nigeria (JUSUN) had on April 6, 2021 ordered its members across the Federation to shut all Courts in the Country to press home its demand for implementation of financial autonomy for the Judiciary. The said strike action which has just been temporarily called off had paralyzed judicial activities across the federation for over two months.

MY HUMBLE REQUEST

It is a well-known and acknowledged fact that, our Judges are hardworking and patriotic Nigerians and as such and in view of the highlighted circumstances that had paralyzed judicial activities across Nigeria, there is a glaring opportunity for the Judiciary to make a **bold statement** to rekindle the hope of the common man, as well as, renew investors' confidence in Nigeria as an investment destination. I therefore most humbly accordingly, urge Your Lordship and all other heads of Courts in Nigeria to in the interest of persons who are languishing in detention and awaiting trial and those that their cases have suffered inordinate delay due to extraneous factors aforementioned, **kindly direct a suspension of the 2021 Annual Judges Vacation** in order to save our justice system.

My Lord, such a direction will no doubt portray the Judiciary as a most responsive institution and third arm of government that is the last hope of the common man. Such a direction will also definitely and substantially clear most of the backlog of cases which have suffered delays in our Courts thereby making our Courts "fit for the purpose" again.

While thanking My Lord for a consideration of this humble suggestion, please be assured of my highest regards.

Yours faithfully,

CHIEF BOLAJI AYORINDE O.F.R., SAN, FCrb.,

CC: 1] THE HON. PRESIDENT OF THE COURT OF APPEAL
2] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF THE FEDERAL HIGH COURT
3] THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL COURT
4] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY, ABUJA
5] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF ABIA STATE
6] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF ADAMAWA STATE
7] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF AKWA IBOM STATE
8] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF ANAMBRA STATE
9] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF BAUCHI STATE
10] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF BAYELSA STATE

- 11] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF BENUE STATE
- 13] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF BORNO STATE
- 14] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF CROSS RIVER STATE
- 15] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF DELTA STATE
- 16] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF EBONYI STATE
- 17] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF EDO STATE
- 18] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF EKITI STATE
- 19] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF ENUGU STATE
- 20] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF GOMBE STATE
- 21] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF IMO STATE
- 22] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF JIGAWA STATE
- 23] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF KADUNA STATE
- 24] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF KANO
- 25] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF KATSINA STATE
- 26] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF KEBBI STATE
- 27] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF KOGI STATE
- 28] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF KWARA STATE
- 29] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF LAGOS STATE
- 30] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF NASARAWA STATE
- 31] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF NIGER STATE
- 32] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF OGUN STATE
- 33] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF ONDO STATE
- 34] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF OSUN STATE
- 35] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF OYO STATE
- 36] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF PLATEAU STATE
- 37] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF RIVERS STATE
- 38] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF SOKOTO STATE
- 39] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF TARABA STATE
- 40] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF YOBE STATE
- 41] THE HON. CHIEF JUDGE OF ZAMFARA STATE
- 42] THE PRESIDENT, NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION
PLOT 1101, MOHAMMADU BUHARI WAY, CBD, ABUJA
- 43] THE SECRETARY
BODY OF SENIOR ADVOCATES OF NIGERIA (BOSAN)