



# NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION

## PORT HARCOURT BRANCH

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### SETTING THE FACTS STRAIGHT - STATEMENT ON THE DISSOLUTION AND RECONSTITUTION OF THE SOCIAL COMMITTEE OF THE BRANCH .

Dear distinguished members of the NBA Port Harcourt Branch,

I am constrained to issue this public statement in view of the misinformation, misrepresentations and utter falsehood that have recently been circulated in the social media space about our dear branch and my person, by a group of unscrupulous mischief-makers who would stop at nothing, including negative propaganda, cyber bullying, blackmail and personal attacks, to stimulate crisis, in an attempt to return the branch to their stranglehold, from which we have been liberated in June 2024, after about ten years of questionable leadership, plunder of our resources and intimidation of dissenting voices.

Having just marked one year of this administration with our several collective achievements despite the shenanigans, obstacles and campaigns of calumny by some unscrupulous members of the branch, this administration has been and remains poised to deliver more dividends to the branch in the coming months, but for the recent distractions.

It has therefore become necessary to disclose the following salient facts that informed the dissolution and reconstitution of the Social Committee, and to set the records straight as to the malicious and libelous publications against my person by some branch officers and members. These facts include the following:

1. The Social Committee is an ad hoc committee of the branch created for convenience, to work with the social secretary in the organization of branch social events. It is not provided for in the NBA Constitution or Uniform By-laws and thus has no stipulation as to its leadership. It is therefore not an entitlement of the Social Secretary to chair same. Thus, a dissolution of the

committee does not in any way impact on the statutory duties of the social secretary, which accounts for her continued membership of the reconstituted committee as an Ex-officio.

2. Section 7(1) of the **Uniform By-Law of Branches in Schedule III of the NBA Constitution 2015(as amended)** authorizes a branch chairman to direct branch officers in the execution of their duties, and also empowers the chairman to take any action deemed to be necessary, in the interest of the branch. Such actions are subject to ratification by the EXCO and General meeting. This is not new to the Bar, as can be gleaned from Section 13(4)(a) of the NBA Constitution which empowers the President to constitute committees, subject to ratification by the National Executive Council.
3. For the avoidance of doubt, let me re-state that:
  - a) The branch Chairman is entitled to exercise her powers under the provision of Section 7(1) b, c and h, of the Uniform By-laws to oversee the performance of branch officers, subject to the approval of the EXCO or General House.
  - b) The Social Secretary has consistently been insubordinate and refuses to take direction from the branch Chairman or EXCO, contrary to the provisions of Section 7(7)(c) of the Uniform By-Laws
  - c) The Social Secretary insists on receiving funds for branch programs in her personal account as shown in her requisition for the cocktail funds, which was declined by me, being contrary to the branch financial policy
  - d) The events that led to the dissolution and reconstitution of the social committee were brought to the attention of EXCO on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 2024, in an emergency meeting in which the cocktail was listed as an item on the agenda during which EXCO directed the social secretary to work within the directions of the branch chairman.
  - e) The disclaimer of the Branch Vice-Chairman is within his rights, though apparently done mala fide without engaging with me, and it is a misrepresentation of facts as he was present at the emergency EXCO meeting as were several other officers.
  - f) The facts with regard to the engagement of an event planner are well recorded in the Minutes of both EXCO and branch meetings which approved hiring of the planners, subject to delineation of roles to avoid conflict, and further to which a checklist was done as to roles and shared with the social secretary.
  - g) Engagement of event planners was necessitated by lapses observed in the social events and the law week of the branch in 2024, and premised

on the need to improve upon and host more professionally organized events and save cost this year 2025.

4. It is sad that the Social Secretary of our dear branch, Ms. Mary Samuel Dikibo, has resisted all efforts to ensure teamwork, discipline and accountability in organizing branch events, on the erroneous belief that branch social events are her exclusive preserve to plan and execute as she deems fit. She thus failed to respond to requests for such information as:
  - Design of the cocktail cards, the number of cards per category of lawyers, (to determine the expected income) and categories of guests, submission of cards produced, (for authentication) to reduce infiltration by non-paying guests;
  - The list of vendors for the cocktail and their contact details to enable the event planners confirm their services and ensure that they deliver according to plan; amongst other directions.
  - The social secretary also refused to work within agreed timelines, choosing rather to do what she wants at her own time.
5. While I do not want to descend to the depths with the social secretary, it is necessary to debunk some of the lies being peddled online thus:
  - a) It is utterly false that the Chairman's son, was hired to perform at the NBA Port Harcourt branch dinner. Rather, my son who is an Architect and a performing artiste, upon my request, performed at the annual dinner, **free of any charge**, to add colour and verve to the dinner. This is to the knowledge of the Social Secretary and EXCO.
  - b) The decision to propose new photo/videographers for the cocktail arises from the social secretary's continued failure up to this point, to submit photobooks and videos of the 2024 cocktail and dinner, despite receiving funds for the services and their production.
  - c) Similarly, the recommendation to engage different caterer for the cocktail was informed by their outstanding and excellent catering services I experienced firsthand at a recent event. Although the final menu is yet to be decided, the vendor's provisional quote based on sample options falls well within the approved budget for the event. One wonders where the social secretary conjures her own facts from, given that both vendors have been approved by the EXCO.

In conclusion, my dear colleagues, it is important to state that no branch can function properly where officers refuse to accede to supervision or direction by the branch chairman, EXCO and General meeting, in the performance of

their duties. There is hierarchy in every administration which must be respected in the interest of the branch. It is unfortunate that the Social Secretary resorted to a social media campaign of calumny, in her misguided belief of autonomy in the performance of her duties, urged on by some mischievous members of the branch, while efforts were ongoing for the resolution of the issues by Branch leaders and the President of the Bar.. I urge you all to remain calm and refuse to succumb to the incessant bullying, insults, harrassment, blackmail and intimidation by sour losers in the last elections, who would stop at nothing to destabilize our branch in order to once more perpetuate their nefarious activities. NBA Port Harcourt branch belongs to us all, not to any group of individuals and I will continue to work in your best interests subject to the decisions of the general house.

I am very hopeful that this storm in a teacup will blow over very soon.

I thank you all for your continued support, and appeal for your calmness, as we strive to take the branch to greater heights.

Dated this 15<sup>th</sup> Day of July, 2025

Signed.



**CORDELIA UWUMA EKE, FICMC**

Branch Chairman

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<b>Cordelia U. Eke, (Mrs).</b> Chairman	<b>Emmanuel John, Esq.</b> Vice Chairman	<b>Obum D. Nwoye, Esq.</b> Secretary	<b>Francis I- Allagoo, Esq.</b> Assistant Secretary	<b>Nnenda A. Kejeh, Esq.</b> Treasurer
<b>Dr. Modupe Babalola</b> Financial Secretary	<b>Mary Samuel Dikibo, Esq.</b> Social Secretary	<b>Kelechi Faith Chinule, Esq.</b> Publicity Secretary	<b>David O Onyema, Esq.</b> Welfare Secretary	<b>Adums Ezechimenum, Esq.</b> Provost