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THE QUESTION AFAM OSIGWE, SAN PRESIDENT NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION MUST ANSWER: WHY IS HE UNCOMFORTABLE WITH A FREE, FAIR, TRANSPARENT AND CREDIBLE ELECTION?

1. INTRODUCTION

The attention of Egbe Amofin O'odu'a (Egbe Amofin) has been drawn to some unwarranted uproar from certain quarters following the release of the Directions of the Honourable Attorney-General of the Federation (HAGF), pursuant to the submission to him of the Report of the 3-Man Committee (the Report) constituted on 11th June, 2026. The Committee was constituted following the resolution reached at the meeting which the HAGF held with all Past Presidents of the NBA since 1998 and leading counsel to the respective parties in Suit Nos. I/205/2026; I/221/2026 and Appeal No. CA/B/110/2026.

Unfortunately, among those who have been making denigrating and disparaging commentaries about the person and office of the HAGF, as well as some respected leaders of the Bar from the South-West are Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN; the Eastern Bar Forum (EBF); and the Mid-Western Bar Forum (MBF). Most unfortunately still, these vituperators, purveyors of commentaries, or opinion peddlers have chosen not to address, positively, realistically, and objectively any of the Directions of the HAGF. Rather, they have chosen to engage in unrestrained grandstanding and needless vituperation, in the course of which, Mr. Mazi Osigwe, SAN, in particular has exposed himself as deeply entrenched in perpetrating illegalities, by way of electoral fraud in the NBA elections. While the NBA, particularly under Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN, perceived himself as the purifier of the polity, hypocritically, Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN, is the exact opposite of what he purports to crusade.

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2. NBA ELECTIONS TRAJECTORY SINCE 2018

Before going further, Egbe Amofin considers it critical to draw the attention of the NBA, stakeholders and the Nigerian public, to the fact that NBA elections in recent years have been characterised by numerous electoral malpractices, a significant number of which constitute blatant violations of, and infringements upon, the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Immediately after the conduct of the **2018 NBA Presidential Election**, **Chief Arthur Obi-Okafor, SAN**, a contestant in the election who was declared runner-up, described the exercise as **"...the biggest embarrassment and robbery in the Association's electoral history."** He further stated: *"The first danger signal that there was a deliberate attempt to rig this election emerged when we discovered that close to 4,000 names and telephone numbers assigned to voters did not belong to the stated owners but were instead linked to other persons."*

Professor Ernest Ojukwu, SAN, who was also a presidential candidate in the election, similarly condemned the process in the following terms: *"Though a winner has emerged from this present contest, we must not forget that we contested against corruption, massive vote-buying, vote capture, rigging, and a skewed process. These factors make a challenge to the result both necessary and compelling..."*

Professor Chidi Anselm Odinkalu was equally unsparing in his assessment of the **2018 NBA election**, describing the exercise as **"a racket."** **In his words:** *"This was not an election... It was a racket and a messed up one at that... This racket is a disgrace. The process was compromised and did not even pretend about it. The outcome lacks legitimacy and the declared winner has procured a compromised non-mandate."*

Let us pause to state that in 2018, Prof. Odinkalu was one of the core supporters of **Professor Ernest Ojukwu, SAN**, and his rebuke of the election at the time was not only apt but also spot-on. Although the situation has now worsened, the Egbe Amofin wonders whether this same Professor will be as objective as he was in 2018 in condemning the present, more deteriorated scenario for obvious reasons. On the heels of the same 2018 election, some lawyers were charged before the court by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in Charge No. FHC/L/118C/2020 for

conspiring to alter the personal details, including the email addresses and phone numbers, of about 1,004 eligible voters in the election. The Egbe Amofin has referenced the 2018 developments in order to bring to the fore the fact that the Directions issued by the HAGF, who is also the Chief Law Officer of the Nation and doubles as the official leader of the Bar, are intended to address all these fraudulent and criminal practices that have become synonymous with NBA elections and have brought the legal profession, of which the HAGF is the official head, into disrepute. It is no worthy to state that subsequent elections including the one that brought the present president to office was similarly controversial.

If Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN, does not have anything to hide and is not afraid of his own shadow, one wonders why a self-professed puritan would be so apprehensive about due process and compliance with the laws of the land.

3. THE MEETING OF 11TH JUNE, 2026

Before sitting down to properly digest the Directions of the HAGF, Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN, condemned the Directions wholesale in a statement he issued on July 7, 2026, and went further to accuse the Chairman of the Committee, Chief Wole Olanipekun, CFR, SAN, of bias. He further twisted what transpired at the meeting which the HAGF had with the past Presidents on June 11, 2026. Coincidentally, counsel representing the parties, including the Egbe, were at that meeting, and the report the Egbe received from them is different from his own version. By the way, it was the lead counsel to the NBA, Mr. Babatunde Kwame Ogala, SAN, who first mentioned Chief Wole Olanipekun, CFR, SAN, to chair a Committee to be set up by the meeting. Immediately he mentioned the eminent Chief's name, the report reaching us was that he (Chief) vehemently protested, querying Mr. Ogala as to why he should suggest his name. Thereafter, the HAGF beckoned to Mr. O.C.J. Okocha, SAN, who was the most senior past President present at the meeting, to make some suggestions, whereupon O.C.J. Okocha, SAN, re-echoed Chief Wole Olanipekun's name, with a plea to him to take up the assignment in the interest of the Association and the Profession. Again, Chief Olanipekun protested that he would not want to take up the assignment. It was at this juncture that the HAGF rose to his feet to plead with Chief Olanipekun to accept the assignment in the interest of the

profession, and to chair the 3-Man Committee comprising himself, Prince Lanke Odogiyen, and Paul Usoro, SAN, to look into the causes of the present conflicts within the NBA and make appropriate recommendations on the way forward. The Committee submitted its report to the HAGF on 26th June, 2026. The Report is now a public document for anyone to assess.

In Par. 1.5 at pages 2-3 of the Committee's Report, it is stated thus: "**Chief Wole Olanipekun, CFR, SAN** vehemently pleaded to be excused from serving on the **Committee** for several reasons. However, he was prevailed upon by the HAGF and the meeting to accept the decision of the meeting. Eventually, a **3-Man Committee** comprising **Chief Wole Olanipekun, CFR, SAN, Prince Lanke Odogiyen and Paul Usoro, SAN, FCI Arb.**, was constituted to look into, among others, *the cause or causes of the present conflicts within the NBA leading to the institution of the referenced cases, and to make appropriate recommendations on the way forward to the Honourable Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice*".

Concerning **Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN**, the Committee, in Par. 3.2, pages 5-6 of its Report wrote thus: On 22nd June, 2026, the **President** of the NBA, **Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN** called the Chairman of the **Committee** (while the **Committee** was in session), stating that he had not submitted any memorandum but that he was ready for any virtual engagement the **Committee** might want to have with him against 23rd June, 2026. Pursuant to this, it was mutually agreed between the **NBA President** and the **Committee** that the **Committee** would virtually interact with him by 2:30pm on Tuesday 23rd June, 2026 and that the link for that will be sent to him. As agreed, the link: <https://zoom.us/j/96287466962?pwd=i4aJZav4RlUvbo8MgSixcoXYw9HzuV.1> was sent to the **NBA President** at 9:53am on 23rd June, 2026. At 2:30pm and subsequently thereafter, the **Committee** noticed that the **NBA President** did not connect via the link provided, prompting the **Committee** to ask the Executive Assistant of the Chairman to put calls across to the **NBA President**, but the calls were also not answered. A message was also sent to Mr. President thus:

"Mr. President Sir,

This is to inform you that the 3-Man Committee meeting has commenced sir and members are presently awaiting your participation. I have called your line twice, the calls rang through, but no response, Sir. For ease of reference and convenient access, I have reproduced the link below once again."

Up to the time the day's session closed at about 7:30pm, and till the Committee finished its assignment, the **President** of the NBA did not join the meeting.

On page 2 of the (Minority) Report of Paul Usoro, SAN, which was submitted on July 1, 2026, he commented about Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN thus: *"It is unfortunate that the NBA President did not honour the invitation of the Committee. The primary responsibility for dousing the current tension over the 2026 Elections lies with the NBA President, as the Leader of the Bar, by virtue of his office. He is the one who, by words and deeds, can and should give assurances that he would in no way influence or interfere with the conduct of the Election by the Electoral Committee of the NBA ("ECNBA"), given the allegations of open bias levelled against him by those who submitted memoranda to the Committee as well as the 2 (two) contestants who appeared to testify before the Committee. The NBA President must assume his leadership role in that regard."*

Assuming without conceding that Mazi Osigwe, SAN, was putting forth a fraction of the truth in respect of his unfair allegation of bias against Chief Wole Olanipekun, CFR, SAN, what then would he say about what Paul Usoro, SAN, said concerning him? Was Paul Usoro, SAN, also biased? If one may ask, why did he not object to the inclusion of Paul Usoro, SAN on the Committee? The stark reality is that Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN, believes that he is the Lord of the Manor, an Emperor at Large, a man who can accuse an innocent person of wrongdoing but who does not want anyone to comment on his apparent misdeeds, even when they border on an extant breach of the laws of the land. He believes that his impunity cannot and should not be questioned.

4. DIRECTIONS OF THE HONOURABLE ATTORNEY-GENERAL OF THE FEDERATION AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE

While the Egbe is not holding brief for the HAGF, no lawyer or legal practitioner can run away from the fact that the HAGF is the official leader of the Bar; and by the Bar, the Egbe is not talking about the NBA, which is just an integral part of the Bar. The position of the HAGF is almost as ancient as the Common Law itself. Being the Chief Law Officer of the Federation, it is incumbent on him to ensure compliance with all the laws of the land. In this instance, one wonders what the grouse of Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN and his co-travellers is with the Directions issued by the HAGF for the use of the NIN, which is a mandatory requirement under the laws of the land. Under the amended NIMC Act 2026, which repealed the 2007 Act, (although the 2007 Act also made the use of NIN compulsory in several transactions, including voting at NBA elections), the 2026 Act now makes it abundantly mandatory for almost every transaction, including passport applications, voter registration, opening of bank accounts, land deeds, tax payments, etc. Put succinctly, it is about 'one person, one identity', and the goal is to reduce duplication and make verification easier across government and private institutions. It provides penalties for identity fraud, a recurring decimal that has characterised NBA elections, including a minimum five-year jail term for unauthorised access, multiple registrations, and impersonation.

The Egbe Amofin notices that the Directions of the HAGF exclude or do not accept its supplication, as recommended by the Committee that the sub-zoning arrangement which it made to engender inclusiveness, and also in pursuant to the NBA Constitution; rather, the Directions, while agreeing with the Egbe to the effect that it cannot be operational at this election, but that it should be made effective as of the next round of elections. This translates to the fact that the Egbe Amofin has fought a battle of which it is not the direct beneficiary, but the next Zone that would contest the office of President or any other office or offices in the next round of elections. Yet, the Egbe Amofin is not lamenting about this. Be that as it may the Egbe notice that, while the Directions of the HAGF do not wholly accept its supplication as recommended by the Committee regarding the sub-zoning arrangement devised to engender inclusiveness and give effect to the spirit of the NBA Constitution, the Directions nevertheless align with the Egbe's position in

principle. The Directions are to the effect that the arrangement cannot be operationalised for the present election cycle but should be implemented in the next round of elections. This effectively means that the Egbe has fought a cause from which it stands to derive no immediate benefit, the beneficiaries being the Zone or Zones that will contest the office of President and other elective offices in the next election cycle.

5. **MAZI AFAM OSIGWE, SAN APPEARANCE AT CHANNELS TELEVISION**

The Egbe is constrained to comment on the curious assertion reportedly made by Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN, during his appearance on Channels Television on 8th July, 2026, to the effect that the leadership of the Honourable Attorney-General of the Federation over the Bar is merely ceremonial. Assuming, without conceding, that such a statement was indeed made, the Egbe is inclined to believe that it may have been nothing more than an inadvertent slip of the tongue. If, however, it was a deliberate articulation of his position, then it would amount to a most unfortunate and misleading proposition coming from a Senior Advocate of Nigeria who presently doubles as the President of the Nigerian Bar Association.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Honourable Attorney-General of the Federation, as the Chief Law Officer of the Federation, is the official leader of the Bar at the federal level, just as the Attorneys-General of the various States are recognised as the official leaders of the Bar within their respective jurisdictions. The significance of that position transcends ceremonial symbolism and carries with it important responsibilities connected with the administration of justice, the rule of law, and the supervision of legal affairs within the Federation. For example, the extant Constitution of the Body of Senior Advocates of Nigeria (BOSAN) affirms any sitting HAGF as the Chairman of the Body provided he is a member of the Inner Bar.

Indeed, if the leadership role of the HAGF is merely ceremonial, as suggested, one is compelled to ask what ceremonial function was being performed when Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN, together with past Presidents of the NBA and other stakeholders, attended the meeting convened by the HAGF on 11th June, 2026. More importantly, why did all those present, including Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN, and his legal representatives,

voluntarily undertake to abide by the resolutions reached at that meeting? These are legitimate questions that have yet to receive satisfactory answers.

The Egbe, therefore, finds it difficult to reconcile the attempt to diminish the institutional role of the **HAGF** with the conduct of those who willingly participated in, benefited from, and undertook to be bound by the outcome of a meeting convened under his authority. One cannot, with intellectual consistency, submit to a process, agree to be bound by its resolutions, and thereafter seek to denigrate the authority under which that process was convened merely because subsequent developments have proven inconvenient.

One curious thing that the Egbe noticed in all the vilifications against the **HAGF** and other leaders of the Bar from the South-West is that they have not been able to pinpoint any wrongdoing attributable to them. Not a single one of the Directions issued by the **HAGF** has been faulted. Instead, the pithy submission is that the **HAGF** does not have jurisdiction to issue the Directions for the NBA. Apart from being the Chief Law Officer of the Nation and Leader of the Bar, the Egbe confirms that all the past Presidents of the NBA from 1998 (except one), including Afam Osigwe, SAN, were present at the meeting held under the aegis and chairmanship of the **HAGF** on June 11, 2026, and that the meeting was held in the **HAGF** Conference Room. Apart from J.B. Daudu, SAN, who resides in Abuja, all the other Presidents travelled from different parts of Nigeria to Abuja purposely for the meeting. The Presidents spoke in turn, and every one of them commended the **HAGF** for calling the meeting, which was meant to save the Bar from disintegration under the infantile leadership of Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN. Apart from two of the past Presidents, all of them frowned at the perception of partisanship which had become the trademark of Afam Osigwe, SAN. None of them, including Afam Osigwe, SAN, objected to the setting up of the 3-Man Committee headed by Chief Wole Olanipekun, CFR, SAN. The Egbe has, inter alia, alluded to the fact that Mr. Afam Osigwe, SAN, called to inform the Committee of his readiness to interface virtually with them on 23rd June, 2026, but later treated the Committee with discourtesy by failing to respond to calls, reply to text messages or connect with them via the link sent to him at the appointed time dictated by him to the Committee. Further, without making any attempt to hold brief for the **HAGF**, the Egbe states emphatically

that the present HAGF is the most apolitical of all the recent HAGFs Nigeria has had, and it is most unfortunate that Mr. Afam Osigwe and his co-travellers are disparaging him. Egbe notice with much concern the synonymy of the use of the word "purported" in the press statements of Afam Osigwe, SAN, issued on July 7, 2026, and that of the Eastern Bar Forum, dated June 30, 2026. Whereas the Directions of the HAGF were issued on 6th July, 2026, the Eastern Bar Forum statement was dated June 30, 2026, meaning that they were either conjecturing about what the Directions contained or were too much in a haste to look at them at all. The word "purported", in law and general usage, is very negative. It is not complimentary, not edifying, and not ennobling. The Egbe expects the NBA President and his cohorts to extend much courtesy and respect to the office and person of the HAGF, who is also a very senior member of the Bar, having attained the rank of Senior Advocate of Nigeria in 1996, a rank which Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN, attained just six years ago. In the legal profession, respect for seniors is one of our greatest ethos, pathos, precepts, values, traditions, and customs. Furthermore, it is outlandish for Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN, to pronounce that he would not obey any of the Directions while the Mid-Western Bar Forum and Eastern Bar Forum are rendering the same refrain.

Indeed, a closer look at the Committee's Report further exposes the hollowness of these criticisms.

6. THE 3-MAN COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION

The Committee made 14 Recommendations, none of which has been impugned by any of these sensationalists. The first of the recommendations is that all the cases in court be withdrawn forthwith. Among other very profound recommendations of the Committee was that Access Bank, which collects the Bar Practising Fees of all lawyers in the Country, should make available the list of lawyers who have paid their Practising Fees for the purpose of compiling the list of those who have paid their Practising Fees; that a new Voters' Register should be compiled, starting from the Branch level, from where the list of eligible voters shall be forwarded to the National; that mobile SMS should be used for receiving voters' authentication instead of emails, which have been proven to be susceptible to manipulation; and

that the NBA Constitution should be recalibrated in terms of succession to offices in the similitude of the practices in the IBA, the Commonwealth Lawyers Association, and other known professional bodies. In a most misleading manner, Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN, imported the strange phenomenon of "Universal Suffrage" into the Committee's recommendations as well as the Directions of the HAGF, when, in actual fact, at no point or portion was that recommendation made. This is very disturbing and worrisome, coming from the President of the NBA. The Committee's Recommendations were based on 22 Findings, none of which Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN, has impeached. In a most misleading manner, Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN, imported the strange phenomenon of "Universal Suffrage" into the Committee's Recommendations as well as the Directions of the HAGF when, in actual fact, at no point and in no portion of the Report was such a recommendation made. This is very disturbing and worrisome, coming from the President of the NBA. The Committee's Recommendations were based on twenty-two Findings, none of which Mr. Afam Osigwe, SAN, has impeached. Equally unfair was Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN's attempt to link Chief Wole Olanipekun, CFR, SAN, to having made submissions against universal suffrage at the meeting of 11th June, 2026. This is a familiar subterfuge that the cabal has weaponised against the Egbe and its respected leaders over the years. Chief Wole Olanipekun, CFR, SAN, never made such a statement or contribution. On the contrary, it was another past President of the Association, who spoke long after the eminent Silk had concluded his contribution, that alluded to the issue. The attempt to attribute that position to Chief Wole Olanipekun, CFR, SAN, is therefore wholly erroneous and misleading.

Still on Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN, pages 24-26, par. 6.2 of the Report reproduced just one of his numerous outings exposing his campaign of partisanship in favour of his dynasty's candidate and for ease of reference, it is contained in the video clip recorded during the NBA SPIDEL function of 13th April, 2026, where Afam Osigwe, SAN thundered thus: *"We'll celebrate a few tokenisms extended to women. Women are appointed Ministers of Women Affairs. Non-defence, not of Finance, not of some important Ministries. And so, when we have such conversations, it must be about trusting women with political leadership; trusting that*

women are not just expected to be wives and homemakers, but they can be trusted with political leadership because they can do if not as well but much better than men. And so, it is an issue of, or like what Ellen Johnson Sir Leaf said about the sticky floors and the broken ladders that have kept women down. We must make sure that these sticky floors and broken ladders and glass ceilings don't keep women down. That in action, and in deed, women are proportionally represented in political leadership. For me speaking here as a lawyer, it's also a shame that at the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), no woman has ever been elected President of the Association; and we are waiting to see how lawyers are going to vote in these days elections where for the first time a woman is strongly running to be President, and it will depend on lawyers to determine whether a woman can be trusted with political leadership. There has been a female President by the way, but that President set down the tenure of Clement Akpamgbo, SAN, who, was appointed as the Attorney-General of the Federation during the tenure of General Ibrahim Babangida regime. And we should not just talk about inclusiveness; but take positive steps to ensure that it works. At the NBA at the moment, we have three Sections: Section on Business Law, Section on Legal Practice, and the Section on Public Interest and Development Law (SPIDEL), which women head the three of them. This is a sign of greater things to come. Many more women are heading our branches and we have about 139 of them. They can do better. And so I'm glad we are having this conversation... Thank you so very much..."

7. MAZI AFAM OSIGWE, SAN DENIGRATION OF MRS PRISCILLIA KUYE, SAN THE 17TH PRESIDENT OF THE NBA

The Egbe takes serious exception to the very derogatory manner Afam Osigwe, SAN referred to Chief (Mrs) Priscillia Kuye, SAN, a Life Bencher as merely completing the tenure of Sir. Clement Akpamgbo, SAN. For the avoidance of doubt, Chief (Mrs) Priscillia Kuye is a pride to the Egbe, the Association and the entire womanhood. Whether or not, Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN and his allies like it or not, Chief (Mrs) Kuye was the first female President of the NBA, and before she rose to that position, she had

held many elective offices in the NBA, including National Financial Secretary, First, Second and Third Vice President.

The Egbe is at a loss as to why the campaign by the 'Ruling House' from which Afam comes has reached a theatrical crescendo this time around, when it is the turn of Egbe Amofin/South-West to produce its President. The Egbe states emphatically that it is not against a female President in any manner whatsoever. In fact, the Egbe boasts of several of its Amazons, including Chief Folake Solanke, CON, SAN, the first female SAN in Nigeria; Mrs. Hairat A. Balogun, OON, Life Bencher, the First Female General Secretary of the NBA, and the First Female Chairman of the Body of Benchers; and a host of other matriarchs from within its ranks. However, the Egbe is at a loss as to why, two years ago, in 2024, when Afam Osigwe, SAN contested the election, then zoned to the South-East, he did not step down for any female flag bearer, or deemed it fit to invite any of the several female veterans from the South-East where he comes from, including notable Bar leaders, academics and jurists from the South-East, so as to genuinely champion the cause of the **first female elected President**. Ironically and intriguingly, Mrs. Joyce Oduah, a tested Leader of the Bar, who wanted to contest the office of President from the South-East in 2024 alongside Afam Osigwe, SAN and others, was disqualified by the 'owners of the NBA' in order to pave the way for Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN that year. For the purpose of emphasis, Mrs. Joyce Oduah had served the Lagos Branch of the NBA as First Assistant Secretary between 2000 and 2002, Publicity Secretary of the Branch between 2007 and 2009, and Social Secretary of the Branch between 2009 and 2011. At the national level, she was National Treasurer of the NBA between 2012 and 2014, and General Secretary between 2020 and 2022. What an irony!

Why does his dynasty within the NBA want to impose its own choice of a female candidate on the Egbe or the South-West, a Region that produced the first Nigerian lawyer, Sapara Williams, who was called to the English Bar in 1879 and began practising in Lagos in 1888; a corridor that produced the first Nigerian Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Chief F.R.A. Williams, in 1975; and the Zone that produced the first Chief Justice of Nigeria, Sir Adetokunbo Ademola, GCON, in 1958; the same sphere that produced a

good number of the chartered Presidents of the NBA itself, just to mention but a few of the several firsts the South-West has scored within and outside the legal profession. Lawyers in Nigeria should not quickly forget that when the NBA descended into the doldrums in 1992, it was resurrected through the instrumentality of the Committee of Chairmen and Secretaries led by one of the foremost Yoruba lawyers, Chief Adegboyega Awomolo, SAN, who could have taken advantage of his position then to translate himself to the office of NBA President in 1998, but chose not to; rather, he supervised a free and fair election in which Chief T.J.O. Okpoko, OFR, SAN, emerged President.

The Egbe also wishes to make it loud and clear that it is not against the person of the female candidate being sponsored by the 'Ruling House of Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN', a ruling house which is under the surrogacy of a well-known past President of the NBA, who has vowed that, "come rain or shine, he will continue to fix and impose leadership on the Association, even if his choice, according to his boasting, is a cripple or invalid". As far back as early last year (2025), the head of the ruling house to which Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN, belongs openly announced whom he would coronate as NBA President in 2028 when the zoning arrangement rotates to the North. He made this declaration at the birthday celebration of a lawyer from the North, an event which he chaired. Furthermore, when a young lawyer from Akure placed a telephone call to the NBA President some time ago and sought to make him realise the futility of the war he was waging against the Egbe, the President's uncompromising response was that he had a godfather who directs him on what to do, and that if the Egbe wants to court his friendship, its leaders must first have to appease his mentor, the known godfather who made him President.

Be that as it may, the Egbe and the Zone it represents will not surrender its sovereignty, heritage, rich traditions, pride, dignity, integrity, values, and ideals to any principality. Borrowing the words of one of the presidential candidates who appeared before the Committee, 'the Cabal that is holding the NBA hostage is unautrosic'. The Egbe will resist any surrogate being imposed on it from outside by this known Cabal, more particularly when they are bent on impugning the laws of the land in an attempt to do so, just as they have been doing before.

While the Egbe also notice the sponsorship of this clique of a lady presidential candidate, it is imperative to let the public know that they have saddled her with a First Vice Presidential Candidate from within the clique and not from within the rank and file of the Egbe. This arrangement speaks volumes.

The Egbe also wishes to make it crystal clear that it harbours no objection to the person of the female candidate being supported by the group which it has referred to as the '**Ruling House of Afam Osigwe, SAN**'. Despite the fact that the micro-zoning arrangement in Egbe excludes her Zone 3, the Egbe Screening Committee' nevertheless allowed her to fully participate in its screening exercise, to which she willingly subjected herself, including compliance with all the criteria laid down for the exercise. Out of the four aspirants who participated in the exercise, she ranked fourth. The Egbe's concern is not with any individual candidate but with the attempt of the Cabal to foist that Candidate on the Egbe and the South-West, as if she was or is the Egbe's Candidate. It is a decoy which they will maximally use against the Egbe/South-West, that, you have had your turn but the Candidate is ours; and the same goes that he who pays the piper dictates the tunes.

Be that as it may, the Egbe and the Zone it represents will not surrender their sovereignty, heritage, rich traditions, pride, dignity, integrity, values, and ideals to what one of the presidential candidates who appeared before the Committee described as "the Cabal that is holding the NBA in stranglehold." The Egbe will continue to resist any attempt, whether direct or indirect, to impose leadership choices upon it from outside the Zone, more particularly where such attempts are perceived to be inconsistent with due process and the applicable legal framework.

8. **THE MID-WESTERN BAR FORUM AND EASTERN BAR FORUM VIRTUPERATION.**

As for the Mid-Western Bar Forum, Eastern Bar Forum, and other vilifiers of the **HAGF**, respected leaders of the profession from the South-West, who are unarguably senior citizens of Nigeria, as well as the Egbe itself, the Egbe wants to state that while it is not cowardly or timid to respond to them, it is, however, not in the Egbe's character, tradition and custom to abuse learned

colleagues or elders. It is also not in rhythm with the traditions, customs, and norms of the legal profession to do so. Both the leadership and followers of the Egbe respect and revere the leaders and colleagues in the Mid-Western Bar Forum, including the respected present Chairman of the Body of Benchers, **HRH Albert Akpomudje, SAN**, whose recent coronation ceremony in Warri the Egbe sent a powerful delegation to attend, comprising its Secretary and another top member. Constantly, the revered elders of the Egbe constantly remind members and Executive of the Egbe not to be discourteous to the members of other zones and Fora.

Contrariwise, the Mid-Western Bar Forum has shown and exhibited disrespect to both the Egbe and its leaders, and is always hasty to attack them at any moment, at the prompting of the same Bar leader, who keeps boasting that it was he who commanded two members of the Mid-Western Bar Forum to drop their individual ambitions of contesting the post of NBA President this year. One then wonders: if this 'powerful' individual could command two MBF members not to contest, and they obeyed his command, why is he still the one using and aiding Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN, in support of a rebellion and sabotage against Egbe Amofin/South-West? Thus, the Egbe cautions and warns Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN, and his entourage to desist from this disparaging voyage and enterprise, which do not edify the legal profession, particularly the position of President which Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN occupies.

The Egbe further admonishes both the Mid-Western Bar Forum and the Eastern Bar Forum to direct and channel their emphasis to where the problems of the NBA lie, and to the dramatis personae who have put the Association in a stranglehold for years, rather than crucifying highly respected, tested, and venerated members and leaders of both the Bar and the Nation from the South-West/Egbe Amofin. The Egbe reiterates the fact that it will never poke its nose into the internal affairs of the Mid-Western Bar Forum, the Eastern Bar Forum or the Northern/Arewa Bar Forum, and neither will it sponsor any rebellion against any of the Fora, because it is not healthy for the entire Association, apart from the fact that it is unfair and a disservice.

9. THE SUIT FILED BY THE EGBE AMOFIN AT IBADAN

Despite the blackmail being sponsored against the Egbe and its leaders, particularly the insinuation that the Egbe took the NBA, its President and others to Court in Ibadan and obtained ex parte orders, the Egbe wishes to make it very clear and emphatic that it was pushed to the wall. First, despite several appeals and letters written by the Egbe to all organs of the NBA, its Board of Trustees, as well as past Presidents and Secretaries, not a single response was received; all the letters were treated with ignominy. Second, Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN, openly declared that he would not obey the orders, and he made good his decision. Third, these accusers have readily forgotten that, in the recent past, their principal took the then Chairman of the Body of Benchers, the Body of Benchers itself and others to court in Lagos, fighting as if it were a 'do-or-die affair' over the ordinary chairmanship of the Appointments Committee of the Body. He took the Body to the cleaners through the processes he filed. The matter was only withdrawn from court after he had bulldozed his way through by retrieving the chairmanship. In retrospect, the Egbe now knows why that ferocious legal battle was waged in respect of an otherwise innocuous position of Chairman of the Appointments Committee of the Body of Benchers. Through that position, which has now been politicised for the first time in the cherished history of the Body. Recruitment is now being made to swell the membership of their oligarchy; and 50% of the membership of the ECNBA were elevated to the Body of Benchers almost immediately after their recruitment to the ECNBA. Cronies and personal aides, and attendants of 'the Boss' and Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN, now dominate the Body of Benchers. In vendetta, they are always in a haste to remove those they perceive as not loyal to them from any statutory position and replace them with their cronies. Two recent examples will suffice: the removal of Chief J.S. Okutepa, SAN, a frontline lawyer, from the Body of Benchers on the political ground that he accepted to serve as leading counsel to Egbe Amofin; and the promotion of a particular female aspirant from the Egbe to the membership of the Council of Legal Education, almost immediately after she switched her support from Aare Akinboro, SAN, and 'cross carpeted' to the side of their preferred candidate. The NBA has never been near the scandals into which it has now been plunged; and, if care is not taken, they will soon plunge the Body of Benchers into similar problems, as it is now under their grip. They are, within the NBA, in power, government and authority, and they think they are in absolute

control. Even within the Egbe, they deploy 'divide-and-rule tactics' to corner a few of its members, including a tiny tribe who, though they had benefited so much from the support of the Egbe in previous elections, have decided to team up with the Cabal for now because they believe they have an axe to grind with the Egbe. Nevertheless, the Egbe is very proud of the solid support it enjoys from the large majority of its membership across all the six States in the South-West, as well as the Yoruba-speaking areas of Kwara and Kogi. More than any other Forum, the Egbe believes in the coherence, oneness, stability, progress, relevance, and advancement of the NBA, for several reasons, some of which have been highlighted earlier. Those who want to pull the NBA down know themselves. It is now time for the physician in the NBA to heal itself; for the intruder in the NBA to remove the log in its eyes, rather than searching for the speck in another man's eyes.

At page 4 of ThisDay's publication of 11th April, 2026, appeared a banal headline, "NBA to Lawyers, Amupitan: We're Watching Your Conduct on Parties' Internal Matters," wherein Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN was quoted to have said, amongst others: *"...to this end, I call on the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to exercise its expanded supervisory powers with utmost neutrality, independence, and fidelity to democratic values"*. According to him, *"...INEC must not, under any circumstances, be perceived as a participant in political engineering or as an institution whose regulatory authority is deployed in a manner that weakens political pluralism. The Chairman of INEC, being a distinguished Professor of Law and Senior Advocate of Nigeria, is uniquely positioned to appreciate the constitutional implications of these developments. The NBA expects that the Commission, under his leadership, will ensure that its actions reflect independence, fairness, and strict adherence to democratic norms. The Bar is closely watching the conduct of the Commission and expects that its regulatory role will strengthen, not diminish, confidence in Nigeria's democratic process."* From the above, while Mr. Osigwe hypocritically wants INEC to be fair, impartial, neutral, independent, and committed to democratic values, avoiding being perceived as a participant in political engineering, he is, with impunity and affront, doing worse within the NBA, where he has now become uncontrollable, to the extent of boasting that, in spite of the

clear Directions of the HAGF, which are rooted in law and fidelity to democratic principles, he would flout the Directions and go ahead with the planned elections of the NBA, riding roughshod over the laws of the land. Just last week, he impunitively dissolved the Executive of the NBA Port Harcourt Branch and imposed a Caretaker Committee headed by one of his known cronies, who is also a campaign director of their female presidential candidate. He has thrown that foremost Branch into a quagmire. Before then, he brazenly and unconstitutionally constituted a Caretaker Committee for the Abuja Branch of the NBA and disrupted the smoothrunning of the Branch. He has completely disabled the NBA-SPIDEL. In all these absurd steps taken by him, did he consult the NEC of the Association? Not unexpectedly, his handpicked ECNBA re-echoed the same lyric. During his appearance on the Channels Television programme "Politics Today", he was his boastful self, accusing imaginary enemies from the South-West, including a notable young and dynamic SAN, who was one of his core supporters in 2024, forgetting how he boasted to this eminent Silk, some time ago, about how he would conduct and determine the outcome of this election. In the same vein, Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN has been very unsparing in his vehement attacks on the Nigerian Judiciary and lawyers alike, although, he would later deny what he has publicly transmitted.

At page 3 of his Press Statement issued on July 7, 2026, Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN submitted as follows: "We therefore state categorically that the purported Sub-Committee report which contain the Purported directives of the Honourable Attorney-General is beyond its remit and biased" (*Sic*) Whatever this means, with respect to the NBA President, there is so much of a mix-up in this few lines of his. First, one does not know the 'Purported Sub-Committee report' he was/is referring to, as no Sub-Committee was set up, and no Sub-Committee Report was submitted to the HAGF. Second, if he was referring to the 3-Man Committee Report, no Directives are contained in that Report. Third, the Honourable HAGF issued 'Directions' on 6th July, 2026, and not 'Directives', in law, there is a gulf of difference between 'Directives' and 'Directions'. Fourth, where does the allegation of bias come from? Is it from the imagination of Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN, a man who has demonstrated such unrestrained bias and whom both the

Majority Report and the "Minority Report" condemned for bias? He is akin to the proverbial executioner who cannot abide the sight of a dagger in his own vicinity.

In closing, the Egbe wants to borrow from the recent admonition of a respected Nigerian to the NBA, to the effect that *"The institutional credibility of the NBA is at stake. The process of our elections must be examined through the lens of Rule of Law, public confidence and democratic legitimacy. The NBA internal governance must be connected with the broader constitutional role of lawyers in the society. Lawyers cannot credibly demand democratic standards from others unless they uphold such standard within their own Association"*

Dated at Ibadan this 9th day of July, 2026.



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Aare Isiaka Abiola Olagunju, SAN
Chairman Egbe Amofin O'odua



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Prince Adetunji Oso, SAN
Secretary, Egbe Amofin O'odua