

BODY OF CHAIRMEN NBA – ABIA STATE

C/O CHARLES ONUCHUKWU & CO
NO. 142 AZIKIWE ROAD, ABA, ABIA STATE

9th January, 2025

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE MEETING OF BODY OF CHAIRMEN OF ABIA BAR HELD ON THE 9TH DAY OF JANUARY, 2025 AT CHARLES ONUCHUKWU & CO. OKECHIYERE CHAMBERS, NO. 142 AZIKIWE ROAD, ABA, ABIA STATE.

The Body of Chairmen of Abia Bar comprising of five (5) Branches of the Nigerian Bar Association in Abia State namely: Aba, Umuahia, Isiala Ngwa, Ohafia and Ukwu respectively convened on the 9th day of January, 2025 at Charles Onuchukwu & Co. Okechiyere Chambers, No. 142 Azikiwe Road, Aba, Abia State. After extensive deliberations, the following resolutions were adopted:

1. JUSUN STRIKE

The Body of Chairmen of NBA Branches in Abia State express grave concern over the intermittent closure of all the Courts in Abia State due to the industrial actions embarked upon by JUSUN in Abia State the latest of which commenced on the 2nd day of January, 2025 as a result of Dr. Alex Otti's administration's multiple failures in implementing the Memorandum Of Understanding reached with JUSUN.

The Body of Chairmen of NBA Branches in Abia State note with dismay that the action of JUSUN to embark on the said industrial action aligns with the directives from the **Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and JUSUN National Leadership** which mandated all affected State branches to enforce the strike over the non-implementation of the New National Minimum Wage and other salary adjustments under the Consolidated Judicial Salary Structure (CONJUSS) for Judicial Staff in Abia State.

The Body of Chairmen of NBA Branches in Abia State note the devastating effect of the JUSUN Strike as follows:

a) Pre-trial inmates at the various detention centres in Abia State who from the provisions of the Constitution are presumed innocent until otherwise is proved are still locked up without access to the Court to seek for bail.

- b) Those who were granted bail before the strike but are yet to process same are equally locked up. These categories of persons are now languishing in custody until the strike is called off leading to prison congestion.
- c) There are equally inmates awaiting trial who are at the correctional centres whose trials have been delayed and jail term extended.
- d) The strike action has also made the enforcement of fundamental rights unattainable.
- e) There is a total black out or absence of justice in Abia State right now.
- f) Crime is equally on the increase with no open Court to prosecute the perpetrators.
- g) Police cannot get Warrant of Arrest if their letter of invitation is not honoured.
- h) The Judiciary is losing a lot of revenue with the continued closure of the Court rooms.
- i) Most Lawyers especially the Young Lawyers whose survival depend largely on the daily appearance fees are currently being impoverished due to the action of the government and JUSUN; just as the African proverb goes "when two elephants fight, it is the grass that gets trampled".

The Body of Chairmen of NBA Branches in Abia State therefore call upon the Government of Abia State as a matter of urgent importance and or concern to immediately implement without further delay the New National Minimum Wage for Judiciary Staff in Abia State in keeping faith to the earlier assurances and promise by the government to address the grievances of Judiciary Staff including but not limited to the implementation of the minimum wage, wage awards, payment of arrears and provision of entitlements or benefits for retirees of the Judiciary.

The Body of Chairmen of the NBA Branches in Abia State further note with displeasure that while other civil servants in Abia State who are paid under the public service salary structure, may have started receiving salary adjustments, Judiciary Staff in Abia State remain excluded.

The Body of Chairmen of NBA Branches in Abia State resolve to engage the Government of Abia State to ensure that the demands of Abia State Judiciary Staff are met within five (5) working days (commencing from the date of issuing of this communique) and to ensure that the JUSUN Strike is immediately called off for the greater good of Abia State.

2. APPOINTMENT OF JUDGES

The Body of Chairmen of NBA Branches in Abia State resolved to convene a stake holders meeting in collaboration with the Chief Judge of Abia State, the Honourable President of the Customary Court of Appeal of Abia State, the Honourable Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice of Abia State, Honourable Judges of the Abia State Judiciary, Learned Senior Advocates of Nigeria, Bar Leaders and Elders of the Bar etc on a day and time that is convenient to all the stakeholders in order to ensure an amicable resolution of all pending issues relating to the appointment of Judges in Abia State.

3. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMEN OF CUSTOMARY COURT

The Body of Chairmen of NBA Branches in Abia State resolved that the Abia State Judicial Service Commission should immediately publish the result of the February 2024 aptitude test organized by the Commission for applicants seeking to be appointed Chairmen of Customary Court in Abia State without further delay.

4. LEGAL PRACTITIONERS REMUNERATION ORDER 2023

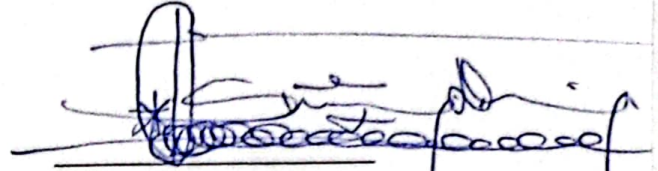
The Body of Chairmen of NBA Branches in Abia State resolved to ensure strict compliance and adherence to the Legal Practitioners Remuneration Order 2023 which regulates the remuneration of a Legal Practitioner for business and services rendered under 'State Band 1' of the said Order. It also resolved that all Branches of the Bar in Abia State must as a matter of urgent concern and importance set up a 'Remuneration Committee' and to also sensitize their members on the importance to conform with the Order and ensure that Legal Practitioners are fairly compensated for their expertise and efforts for all legal services rendered; as this will safeguard the reputation of Legal Practice and the Legal Community in Abia State. It further resolved that a Joint Enlightenment Programme of all the NBA Branches in Abia State will be carried out on a day

and time to be communicated by the Body of Chairmen (at a venue which will also be communicated to members in due time)

Dated the 9th day of January, 2025



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