



ADVOCACY FOR BAR LICENCE FREEDOM (ABLIF)

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7th July, 2025

The President,
Nigerian Bar Association (NBA),
NBA National Secretariat,
Plot 1101, Cadastral Zone A00,
Central Business District,
Abuja, Nigeria.

Attention: Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN.

**RE: FORMAL OBJECTIONS TO THE MANDATORY CPD POLICY UNDER THE MCPD
RULES 2025 AND ABLIF'S ULTIMATUM FOR ITS IMMEDIATE REVIEW AND
SUSPENSION**

We write on behalf of the **Advocacy for Bar Licence Freedom (ABLIF)**, a broad-based coalition of Nigerian legal practitioners committed to promoting fairness, legality, and access within the legal profession.

We begin by expressing our sincere appreciation for your recent virtual presence on our WhatsApp platform and your continued engagement with members of the Bar across all cadres. Your responsiveness is commendable and in line with your promise of a transparent, progressive, and inclusive Bar leadership.

However, we are constrained to **formally register our strong opposition to the recent NBA directive under the MCPD Rules 2025, which seeks to make the acquisition of a minimum of five (5) CPD/CLE credit hours a mandatory precondition for:**

- **Issuance of the 2026 Practising Certificate;**
- **Access to NBA Stamps and Seals;**
- **The right of audience before courts or tribunals;**
- **Drafting and filing of legal documents.**

This directive, though well-intentioned, is deeply problematic on multiple legal, constitutional, economic, and logistical grounds. We summarize our objections as follows:

I. Legal Overreach

The **Legal Practitioners Act (LPA)**, which governs the practice of law in Nigeria, does not empower the NBA to impose CPD requirements as a precondition for issuance of the practising certificate. That function lies solely with the **Chief Registrar of the Supreme Court**, and any contrary enforcement stands on legally shaky ground.

II. Violation of Lawyers' Rights

Making CPD credit hours a condition precedent to practice infringes upon:

- **Section 36(1) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended)**, which guarantees the right to a fair hearing;
- **Section 17(3)**, which secures the right to work and earn a livelihood without discrimination.

It is unconstitutional, discriminatory, and a direct affront to the rights of duly called and enrolled legal practitioners.

III. Economic and Logistical Hardship

While CPD programmes are portrayed as widely available and low-cost, the actual experience of many lawyers—especially junior, rural, and less-connected colleagues—tells a different story:

- Fees for CPD programmes range from **₦30,000 to over ₦1.5 million**;
- Virtual sessions are often overcrowded or inaccessible due to limited slots or poor connectivity;
- Physical attendance is impractical in many areas due to the absence of NBA structures, poor infrastructure, or security concerns.

To penalise lawyers for circumstances beyond their control is inequitable and exclusionary.

IV. Questionable Implementation

The decision to deny practising certificates or court access based on MCPD compliance is not only punitive but potentially unlawful, as the MCPD Rules 2025 are not legislation and cannot override existing laws or constitutionally guaranteed rights.

V. Our Humble Demands

We respectfully, but firmly request the following reliefs:

1. *Immediate suspension of the CPD-as-prerequisite-for-practising-certificate policy;*
2. *Constitution of a broad-based committee to review the legality, implementation, and sustainability of the MCPD framework, with inputs from lawyers across all spectrums;*
3. *A return to LPA-compliant procedures for issuing practising certificates—based strictly on payment of the prescribed annual fees;*
4. *Retention of CPD as a voluntary professional development tool, not a mandatory licence condition;*
5. *Provision of free or fully subsidised CPD programmes, accessible to all lawyers regardless of location;*

6. Adoption of a phased, inclusive and consultative approach to implementing far-reaching reforms.

VI. Ultimatum and Further Action

We strongly urge the NBA, under your leadership, to act within **five (5)** working days of receipt of this letter to:

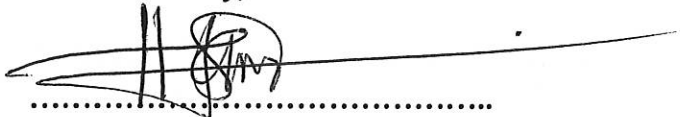
- Publicly suspend the implementation of the MCPD policy as a prerequisite for practice;
- Commence stakeholder dialogue towards a fair and lawful resolution.

Failing which, ABLIF and its partners shall be left with no alternative but to pursue all lawful remedies to protect our professional rights and constitutional freedoms, including but not limited to litigation, public interest advocacy, petitions to oversight bodies, and engagement with domestic and international stakeholders.

Let the record show that we approached your office in good faith, believing in your integrity and vision. We hope you will respond in kind—with wisdom, courage, and justice.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours faithfully,



.....
Amb. Hameed Ajibola Jimoh, Esq.
(National Convener, ABLIF),



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Christabel Zoe Ayuk, Esq.,
(National Secretary, ABLIF),

For and on behalf of:

ADVOCACY FOR BAR LICENCE FREEDOM (ABLIF)

Kindly find below, some of the names of comrades who are in support of this Advocacy all across the Federation of Nigeria.

Names of Comrades for Advocacy for Bar Licence Freedom:

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CC:

1. President of the Senate, (National Assembly), Federal Republic of Nigeria, FCT-Abuja.
2. Speaker of the House of Representatives, (National Assembly), Federal Republic of Nigeria, FCT-Abuja.
3. Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Supreme Court of Nigeria, FCT, Abuja.
4. Chief Registrar, Supreme Court of Nigeria, FCT-Abuja.
5. President, Court of Appeal of Nigeria, FCT-Abuja.
6. Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF) and Minister of Justice/Chairman, General Council of the Bar, Federal Ministry of Justice, FCT-Abuja.
7. Minister, Federal Capital Territory, FCT-Abuja.
8. The Chief Judge, - Federal High Court of Nigeria, FCT-Abuja.
9. The Chief Judge, High Court of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.
10. President of the National Industrial Court of Nigeria, FCT-Abuja.
11. Secretary, Body of Benchers, FCT-Abuja.
12. Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Federal Republic of Nigeria, FCT-Abuja.
13. Commissioner of Police, FCT-Abuja.
14. Director, State Security Services (SSS, also known as D.S.S.), Federal Republic of Nigeria, FCT-Abuja.
15. Chief of Army Staff, Federal Republic of Nigeria, FCT-Abuja.
16. Director-General, National Intelligence Agency (NIA), Federal Republic of Nigeria, FCT-Abuja.
17. US Embassy, FCT-Abuja.
18. UK High Commission, Abuja, FCT-Abuja.
19. United Arab Emirates Embassy, FCT-Abuja.
20. Amnesty International Nigeria, FCT-Abuja.
21. Mr. Julius Sello Malema, MP, Member of Parliament of the National Assembly of South Africa.
22. Executive Vice Chairman/Chief Executive Officer, Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC), FCT-Abuja.
23. President, International Bar Association (IBA).
24. President, Pan-African Lawyers Union (PALU).
25. President, Law Society of England and Wales.
26. Chairman, Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Committee (LPDC).