



# NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **ALL DECISIONS TAKEN IN UYO WERE TO ENSURE THAT ANOTHER CRISIS WAS AVERTED IN SPIDEL**

In recent days, members of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) have been exposed to a misleading and sometimes hilarious public narrative regarding the 2025 SPIDEL elections. While individuals are entitled to express dissatisfaction, public commentary must reflect facts, the law, and the actual administrative realities, not assumptions or incomplete information.

For the sake of institutional integrity and to avoid misleading the wider Bar community, it is necessary to clarify the issues raised and correct the inaccuracies now circulating.

1. During the National Executive Council of the Nigeria Bar Association held in Ilorin on May 15, 2025, the NBA resolved to appoint the Prof. Paul Ananaba SAN-led interim leadership/Electoral Committee to conduct an election for the Section on Public Interest & Development Law (SPIDEL).
2. Contrary to this resolution, the Prof. Paul Ananaba SAN-led interim leadership/Electoral Committee purported to set up an Electoral Committee to be chaired by Kunle Edun SAN.
3. In violation of the mandatory provisions of the Bye-Law Requirements, the Uniform Bye-laws for Sections, Third Schedule to the NBA Constitution, the Electoral Committee purportedly appointed by Prof. Paul Ananaba SAN-led interim leadership/Electoral failed to do the following:
  - a. Failed to publicly announce the date of the election as fixed by the Electoral Committee, invite nominations of candidates for the various offices, and membership of the Executive Committee of the Section.

#### NATIONAL OFFICERS:

Mazi Afam Josiah Osigwe, SAN - President

Dr. Mobolaji Ojibara - General Secretary; Sebastine Anyia - 1st Vice-President; Mrs. Bolatumi Olasunbo Animashaun - 2nd Vice President; Zainab Aminu Garba - 3rd Vice-President; Blessing Imo Udofa-Poromon - Treasurer; Nyada Auta - Welfare Secretary; Bridget Ijeoma Edokwe - Publicity Secretary; Henry Barnabas Ehi - Assistant General Secretary; Ebieri Emmanuella Ekpese - Assistant Publicity Secretary

- b. Did not publicise the provisions of the Bye-Law as to eligibility to contest and eligibility to vote and issue election guidelines (please see Article XII(1)).
  - c. Did not notify candidates who failed to qualify of the reason(s) for their disqualification within seven (7) days of any decision to such effect, so as to enable such candidates to apply to the Appeal Committee of the Section for a review of the decision of the Electoral Committee within seven (7) days of the decision.
  - d. Did not cause a list of the candidates for election to various offices of the Section to be publicised by sending same by email to all members in good financial standing, or on the website or other electronic platform(s) of the Section (please see Article XII(4)).
  - e. Failed to indicate the mode and procedure for the conduct of the election, and also failed to notify the members of the chosen mode of the election.
  - f. Did not compile and publish the list of eligible voters by sending the same by email to all members in good financial standing, or on the website or other electronic platform(s) of the Section, not later than twenty-one (21) days before the date of election (see Article XIII(g)).
4. The leadership of the NBA also became privy to the decision of the purported Electoral Committee to clear John Aikpokpo-Martins to be returned unopposed as the candidate for the Chairmanship of SPIDEL despite clear constitutional provisions that bar him from running for the same office for a second term.
5. The leadership also discovered that, despite the myriad of constitutional breaches, the purported Electoral Committee had also drawn up a list of what appeared to be hand-picked nominees of John Aikpokpo-Martins to be equally returned unopposed as elected officers of SPIDEL.
6. Worried about these developments, the President of the Association, Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN, requested Prof. Paul Ananaba, SAN, to convene an emergency meeting of the leadership of SPIDEL, Past Chairmen, and other stakeholders of SPIDEL to avert an electoral crisis.
7. At this meeting, these breaches were highlighted, and it was agreed that the purported election could not go on and that it was

better for the stakeholders to agree on a harmonised leadership for the Section.

8. It was at this meeting that the harmonised list of names to be presented to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) was agreed. Indeed, Kunle Edun SAN, who is erroneously reported to have resigned as 'chairman of the Electoral Committee', not only participated in the proceedings but accepted the same and in fact nominated himself as a Council member.
9. Upon Kunle Edun, SAN, nominating himself as a Council member, he was advised by the NBA President on the need for the Committee he purportedly chaired to step aside so that Prof Paul Ananaba can inform the AGM of the meeting, and request ratification of the names to avoid SPIDEL being thrown into another crisis.
10. We dare any person who claims to have an audio recording of the meeting (though unauthorised) to publish the same.
11. It is therefore laughable for Dr. Anne Agi to claim that the NBA President rejected her as Secretary of SPIDEL because she did not support him. This would suggest that Dr. Anne Agi has a very low opinion of the NBA President. It may interest Anne Agi to know that the Chief Rapporteur at the 2025 NBA Conference, Dr. Ada Anaghara, did not support the President, yet she was still appointed to that position. Indeed, a review of the list would show that supporters of the three candidates who ran for the NBA Presidency in the last election were evenly appointed as rapporteurs and as serving members of Committees in this administration.
12. The current NBA leadership does not subscribe to the practice of appointing the same group of individuals as rapporteurs for over a decade. We are committed to broadening participation and creating opportunities for more members of the Bar to contribute meaningfully. Consequently, a new set of rapporteurs, drawn largely from the host state of the AGC, was appointed. This approach proved effective, as it not only expanded inclusion but also resulted in significant cost savings for the Association by eliminating the need for extended hotel accommodation and related expenses traditionally incurred for a large number of rapporteurs.

13. A simple Google search showed that Anne Agi's allegation that the NBA President has declined her invitation to the launch of her book, *Space Law 101 For Beginners*, because she was not supporting him, is not only false but unfortunate. The search showed the book was presented at the inaugural meeting of Space Law and Arbitration Association of Nigeria (SLAA) about March 2022 ([Nigeria losing huge revenue opportunities because of absence of space law – Agbakoba - Businessday NG](#)) and launched via Zoom on Saturday, 13th August, 2022 ( [Anne Agi set to Launch Space Law 101 for Beginners, 13th August \[See Zoom Link\] - BarristerNG.com](#)), during the tenure of Olumide Akpata as NBA President, shortly after the election of YC Maikyau and long before Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN commenced his campaign for the office.
14. There would have been a need to respond to one Tosan Barbara Onwubiko's head-scratching spin that the NBA President hates her because of her closeness to John Aikpokpo-Martins. How does one prove that John Aikpokpo-Martins and the NBA President are very good friends who may only have disagreed on John Aikpokpo-Martins' eligibility to run for SPIDEL Chairmanship and nothing more.
15. SPIDEL has gone through a crisis period. We all need to join hands to allow the Section work. There is no need for conjecture or spins about how we got here. Whatever decision was taken at that meeting was to avert a crisis and also bring the tenure of Prof. Paul Ananaba SAN-led caretaker leadership to an end. If any mistake was made in adopting that mode to avert a crisis, it is assured that it was made with good intentions and not any ill motive. Please let us move and join hands to ensure that peace returns to SPIDEL.

Thanks.

**Sabastine Anyia**  
**1st Vice President**  
**Nigerian Bar Association**