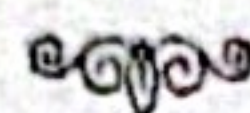




AARE

OLUMUYIWA AKINBORO

SAN. FCIArb (UK), FIMC, LITB Benin City



Acknowledged

2:54 PM

NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION
ELECTORAL COMMITTEE
ECNBA

Sun. 07-07-2026

4th July, 2026

The Chairman,
Electoral Committee of the Nigerian Bar Association (ECNBA)
ECNBA Secretariat,
NBA House,
9 Oro Ago Street,
Garki, Abuja,

Dear Sir,

PROTEST AGAINST THE CHANGE OF 2026 NBA NATIONAL ELECTION DATE FROM 20TH JULY 2026 TO 18TH JULY, 2026 AND THE BIASED GUIDELINE FOR PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

I write as a Candidate for the office of President in the forthcoming 2026 National Officers' election of the Nigerian Bar Association.

In the early hours of Saturday, 4th July, 2026, my attention was drawn to the Notice of Change of Election Date issued by the ECNBA. Upon being informed, I quickly checked my email and there was no such communication of change of election date from the ECNBA. The information was also not on the WhatsApp group created for the Candidates.

Following the above, I contacted you on the telephone and you confirmed to me that indeed the ECNBA has effected a change of the election date from 20th July, 2026 to 18th July, 2026 and that emails have been sent to that effect since 3rd July, 2026 and I informed you that I did not receive such email.

You will recall that at the stakeholders' interactive meeting held on 2nd July, 2026 I complained that I do not receive emails of crucial notices from the ECNBA. I only receive less important notices. You suggested that my email address as supplied could be incorrect. However, after my telephone conversation with you I received the said email communicating the change of election date at about 4:03pm on 4th July, 2026 in the same email address that I supplied.

In the notice it was stated that the change was "further to deliberations at the meeting of the Committee with candidates held on 2nd July, 2026..." suggesting that the issue of change was deliberated upon at the meeting and



a resolution reached. This was certainly not the case as only one candidate made a suggestion at the meeting for the election to be held on a weekend. The said suggestion was not deliberated upon or debated and no resolution was reached in that regard. The said decision of the ECNBA to change the election date could not therefore be said to be a product of that meeting.

A decision of this magnitude which further limits the already short period of time earlier allotted for campaign upon lifting the ban cannot be unilaterally taken by the Committee without full consultation with the Candidates who already have campaign programmes and activities scheduled for the now encroached period. Even in an event that the ECNBA considered it plausible for the election to be held on a weekend, one wonders why the date was brought forward instead of shifting same to the next weekend of 25th July, 2026. Extending the election date will be a better arrangement as it is preferable that persons who already have it in their consciousness that the election is on 20th July and who are unaware of the change of date discover on 20th July that the election has been extended to the next weekend rather than realizing that the election has already been concluded the weekend before.

It is on this note that I reject the change of election date which was done without proper consultation with the Candidates.

Furthermore, I have also read the guideline for the Presidential debate published by the ECNBA and I find its provisions to be in direct contrast to what a debate ought to be. The provisions fall far below globally acceptable standard and removed every features of a fair debate properly so called.

For example,

Rule 15 provides that "Candidates shall not use their presentation time to address, challenge, criticise, or respond to any other candidate."

Rule 16 provides that "No candidate may interrupt, heckle, or make any verbal or non-verbal interjection during the presentation of any other candidate."

Rule 30 provides that "Presidential candidates shall not engage in direct exchanges or rebuttals with each other."



The cumulative effect of the above provisions is the unmistakable elimination of the core features of a debate such that what is left is merely an address by the Candidates.

The electorate is not simply entitled to know the intended programmes and policies of each candidate. It is entitled to observe how firmly those programmes and policies are articulated, how convincingly they are defended, and whether they can survive informed challenge. A candidate whose proposals cannot withstand scrutiny from fellow candidates has not truly had those proposals tested before the electorate.

While reasonable limits are acceptable to avoid descent into disorder a prohibition that extends to every form of rebuttal, response or engagement silences intellectually stimulating engagement by participants.

Also, **Rule 29** provides that the sequence of participation throughout all three stages of the presidential debate shall be: Aare Olumuyiwa Akinboro SAN, Lateef Omoyemi Akangbe SAN, FCI Arb, and Oyinkansola Badejo-Okunsanya SAN (Mrs. B.), and further stipulates that this order **"shall not be altered."**

Established debating practice recognises that fairness requires rotation such that speaking order ordinarily changes between rounds so that no participant permanently occupies either the most advantageous or the least advantageous position, thereby ensuring that any positional advantage is shared equally rather than conferred exclusively upon particular candidates.

The omission of any rotational mechanism from the present Guidelines therefore creates an avoidable inequality in the conduct of the debate and smacks of bias in favour of a candidate who has the singular advantage of responding to the others.

I therefore call on the ECNBA to immediately reconsider its stance and put together a fair and balanced debating guidelines that will guarantee healthy and intellectually stimulating engagements that properly interrogates Candidates' programmes, policies and ideas for the benefit of the electorates. Anything short of this will only amount to a sham and will leave me with no other option than to opt out of the debate.



Should the ECNBA require any assistance on how to conduct a fair debate, I recommend that it should quickly contact the organizers of the NBA Lagos Branch Town Hall held on 2nd July, 2026.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'A' followed by a horizontal line and a flourish.

Aare Olumuyiwa Akinboro SAN, FCI Arb (UK), Life Bencher
Past General Secretary, Nigerian Bar Association.

CC:

1. The President, Nigerian Bar Association
2. The Chairman, Board of Trustees, Nigerian Bar Association
3. The Chairman, Body of Benchers