



AFRICAN BAR ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION DU BARREAU AFRICAIN

نقابة المحامين الافارقة

www.afribar.org

PRESS STATEMENT

African Bar Association Condemns Amnesty International's Unwarranted Intervention in the Nigerian Bar Association Electoral Dispute

The African Bar Association (AFBA) expresses its profound disappointment at the statement issued by Amnesty International concerning the intervention of the Honourable Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Prince Lateef Fagbemi, SAN, in the ongoing Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) electoral dispute.

The Attorney General's intervention, as publicly communicated, amounted to suggestions intended to facilitate an amicable, lawful, and institutional resolution of a dispute affecting Nigeria's foremost professional legal association. Such efforts neither constituted coercion nor usurpation of the NBA's autonomy, but reflected the legitimate interest of the Chief Law Officer of the Federation in promoting respect for the rule of law and institutional stability.

Against this background, AFBA finds Amnesty International's characterization of the Attorney General's intervention as "interference" to be both unwarranted and misplaced.

Amnesty International has earned global recognition for its work in the promotion and protection of internationally recognized human rights through research, documentation, advocacy, and campaigns against human rights violations. Internal electoral disagreements within a professional association, and policy suggestions offered by a public official towards their peaceful resolution, do not ordinarily engage the human rights mandate for which Amnesty International is internationally respected, unless there are demonstrable allegations of violations of fundamental rights protected under domestic or international law.


By entering a debate that principally concerns institutional governance and professional self-regulation, Amnesty International risks extending its public advocacy beyond the sphere of its recognized competence. Such interventions may inadvertently politicize issues that are better addressed

through established legal and institutional processes and may undermine the organization's perceived impartiality on matters that genuinely implicate human rights.

The African Bar Association reiterates its unwavering commitment to the independence of the legal profession, the rule of law, and the peaceful resolution of disputes through constitutional and institutional mechanisms. We encourage all stakeholders to approach the NBA electoral process with restraint, fidelity to the Association's Constitution, Bar Leaders and Elders, Institutional mechanisms for dispute resolution, and respect for due process.

AFBA respectfully calls upon Amnesty International to exercise institutional restraint and to remain focused on its globally acknowledged mandate of protecting and promoting human rights. Preserving the clarity of that mandate strengthens the credibility and effectiveness of the organization in addressing the grave human rights challenges confronting Nigeria, Africa, and the wider international community.

The African Bar Association remains committed to constructive engagement with all institutions dedicated to justice, democracy, and the rule of law, while affirming that interventions in matters of professional governance should be guided by competence, legal principle, and respect for institutional boundaries.



Nicholas Sumba

Director, Publicity and Protocol.

Dated at Nairobi, Kenya this 11th day of July 2026.