NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION
OWERRI BRANCH
INVESTIGATION/FACT-FINDING COMMITTEE

FINAL REPORT

OF THE INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE SET UP BY THE NBA OWERRI BRANCH CONSTITUTED AT THE EXTRAORDINANARY GENERAL MEETING OF THE BRANCH HELD ON THE 15TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 2026.

1. INTRODUCTION:

At its Extraordinary General Meeting of 15th October, 2026, at the NBA Owerri Bar Centre, Old High Court Complex, Orlu Road, Owerri, the General Meeting of the NBA Owerri Branch decided to and did constitute a 5-Man Investigation Committee, to investigate the application for, receipt, management and disbursement of the sum of One Hundred Million Naira (N100m) gift from the Imo State Government, said to have been given to aid/sponsor the attendance of members of the NBA Owerri Branch to the NBA Annual General Conference (AGC) which was held in August 2026, in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The Committee was constituted thus:

i. Chidi B. Nworka, Esq. – Chairman
ii. F. C. Obinna, Esq. - Member
iii. M. Chukwura Onuorah, Esq. – Member
iv. Chima Ezike, Esq. – Member
v. Victoria C. Joshua, Esq. – Secretary

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE:

i. To investigate circumstances surrounding the application for, receipt, management and disbursement of the said N100m and all matters incidental thereto.

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ii. To report its findings and recommendations on same, which report shall be submitted at the next General Meeting of the Branch scheduled for Saturday, 31st October, 2026.

3. METHODOLOGY:

i. The Committee called for memoranda from members of the Branch who have any relevant information or light to shade on the subject matter.

ii. Separate, distinct letters were also written to specific members of the Executive Committee of the Branch, to wit: The Chairman of the Branch; Vice Chairman; Secretary; Treasurer; Financial Secretary; Publicity Secretary; Social Secretary and Welfare Secretary, calling for their individual responses, as well as copies of any and every document howsoever related to the subject matter, that is in their possession/custody. Specific letters were equally written to Three other persons who are not Branch EXCO members. These were: The Hon. Attorney General of Imo State, the Captain of the NBA Owerri Branch Football Team and the Chairman of the Owerri Branch AGC Logistics Committee.

iii. Upon the expiration of the time limited for the submission of memoranda and documents, the Committee conducted oral interviews of some persons who had already submitted memoranda, as well as other persons. Also interviewed orally were the Chief Registrar of the High Court and the Secretary of the Imo State Judicial Services Commission. The attempt to have an oral interview with the Hon. Attorney General was abortive as the Committee met his absence from his office.

4. SUMMARY OF RESPONSES:

a. BRANCH CHAIRMAN (PROF. MAZI UDEGBULAM):

The Chairman of the Branch – Prof. Mazi Udegbulem, refused to respond on the merits of the request made of him by the Committee but rather, he wrote a petition wherein he called on members of the

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Committee to recuse themselves on the ground, according to him, of:

a. *"Nemo judex in causa sua".*
b. Likelihood of bias by prior adverse publication by the Committee's Chairman and some other members.
c. Lack of good standing of the Secretary of the Committee
d. Multiplicity of committees and possible conflicting findings.

The committee replied to the said letter, advising him in the final analysis to take the opportunity given to him to respond to the requests of the Committee. He chose not to, but rather moved forward with several manoeuvres aimed at stopping the Committee from carrying out its assignment, including instituting Two (2) law suits: one, in the Imo State High Court, sitting at Aboh Mbaise: **SUIT NO: HAM/199/2026: PROF. MAZI UDEGBULEM VS CHIDI B. NWORKA & ANOR**; the second is at the Federal High Court, Owerri: **SUIT NO: FHC/OW/CS/120/2026: PROF. MAZI UDEGBULEM VS REGISTERED TRUSTEES NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION & 2 ORS**, all on the same issue of avoiding the investigation. In these two suits at these different courts, he attempted to obtain ex parte injunctions, but failed in both attempts. However, the Committee was availed of some publications made by the said Branch Chairman, including a press release/conference credited to him, which shed some light to his activities regarding the N100m fund.

b. VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. EKEZIE K. ONUMAJULU):

The Vice-Chairman denied prior knowledge or participation in the application for, receipt or disbursement of the ₦100,000,000.00. He stated that he first became aware of the money during a dinner hosted by the Attorney-General of Imo State in Port Harcourt. He further stated that the executives were not informed of the application before it was made. He further stated that he suggested that the issue of what to do with the gift should be presented to the General Meeting, but the Chairman had argued that the money was not for sharing to members, but was for specific projects which were soon to be commissioned by the Attorney General on behalf of the

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State Government; that it was based on this representation that the EXCO approved the quoted prices for the proposed projects. The approval only concerned the cost presented for those projects and was not approval of the receipt or disbursement of the donation generally. He stated that he was neither aware of nor involved in approving the sum of ₦ 42,100,000.00 reportedly expended on AGC logistics.

c. SECRETARY (IKENNA K. UJAH ESQ)

The Branch Secretary made available certain minutes of EXCO meeting, including those of 1st and 8th September 2026 and letter dated 2nd September, 2026. The Committee requested further records, and he complied by making available the following: Minutes of General meeting dated 26th September, 2026; Correspondences relating to the applications to government for the grant dated 7th August, 2026, 10th August 2026, and 31st August 2026, as well as the EXCO minutes of 11th August 2026.

The Secretary stated that he did not have copies of some outstanding documents; that he checked his file where his correspondences are kept and discovered that they were missing. Consequently, he wrote to the Branch Chairman on 27th October, 2026 requesting a return of the said documents which are in the custody of the Branch Chairman, and the Branch Chairman reportedly sent only the letter dated 10th August, 2026. The Secretary therefore reprinted copies of the said letters dated 7th, 10th, and 31st of August, 2026, which he gave to the committee, as a result of which reprint those letters were unsigned.

He further revealed that when the National 3rd Vice President requested for these same letters, he went to his folder in the NBA Branch Computer system, only to discover that these letters had been deleted from his folder. He now checked further in the recycle bin of the system, and discovered that those letters had been permanently deleted from the recycle bin.

The Secretary confirmed that there was no resolution or any meeting held where the Executive body or the General meeting were informed nor approved the application for the funds sought

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from the Imo state Government; that he was instructed by the Chairman to write the letters and he simply obeyed.

He further stated that since he became secretary of this branch, he has never signed any Cheque for the withdrawal of any funds from NBA Owerri account, except with regard to lawyer's remuneration from the franking of Power of Attorney.

Furthermore, he stated that from the 26th day of September, 2026 when the AGC logistics Committee read their report, the said report was never given to him, but was directly handed over to the Branch Chairman by the AGC Logistics Chairman. He said he has demanded severally for the said document for proper documentation, but the Chairman has refused to hand over same to him.

d. TREASURER (MS. OLACHI MADONNA ANOSIKE)

a. The Treasurer's report, dated 21st October, 2026, stated that the N100,000,000.00 (One Hundred Million Naira) donation was credited into the NBA Owerri Branch Account No. 4150005954 at Fidelity Bank Plc. That she was not present at the visit wherein the Chairman met with the Governor of Imo State for the said gift. That the Chairman at the Executive Committee meeting informed EXCO members of the said visit and stated that a written request signed by the Chairman and Secretary was made to the Governor for assistance for certain Branch projects.

b. That the Chairman constituted an AGC Logistics Committee and made her an ex-officio member, wherein arrangements were made for welfare and participation of members. The arrangements included welcome cocktail, 3-days luncheon for members, Suya night and other logistics.

c. That the AGC Logistics Committee plans proceeded with the anticipated Government support. That in anticipation of Imo State Government support, the Chairman directed her to raise a Cheque for the sum of N34,000,000.00 (Thirty-Four Million Naira), said to be for the AGC Logistics on the 21st August, 2026, which cheque was not made out to any recipient.

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d. That on the 24th August 2026 while in Port-Harcourt for the NBA AGC, she received an alert indicating a credit of N100,000,000.00 (One Hundred Million Naira). The transaction notification identified Paul Obinatu as the creditor. On the same day, she received various debit alert as stated below:

(a) ADE GLORY FOOD EMPIRE – N4,000,000 (Four Million Naira)
(b) CHIEMEKA ELEBIRI – N12,000,000 (Twelve Million Naira)
(c) DANIELLA OBIANUJU OHUABUNWA – N10,000,000 (Ten Million Naira)
(d) KELECHI OGUGBUAJAH – N2,000,000 (Two Million Naira)
(e) CHIKAIMA LILIAN UGOANYANWU – N6,000,000 (Six Million Naira)

TOTAL DEBIT = N34,000,0000 (Thirty-Four Million Naira).

e. That on Wednesday, 26th August 2026, during the dinner hosted by the Hon. Attorney-General of Imo State for the members of NBA Branches in Imo State, the Government support was announced by the HAG and he stated that the money was intended to be shared among members. That she approached the Branch Chairman to confirm when the sharing would commence, but the Chairman informed her that the money was meant for projects and not for sharing to members.

f. That at the Executive Committee meeting held after the NBA AGC, she raised concerns with regards to the said donation and suggested that the money be shared to members. The Vice Chairman supported her view but further suggested that the matter be referred to the general meeting for decision.

g. The Chairman in response to her concerns, directed the Secretary to read the letters written to the Governor requesting for support for specific projects and the letter of appreciation acknowledging the receipt of the donation, and followed with an explanation that the donation was for specific projects.

h. Following the Chairman's explanation, the Executive Committee agreed to apply the donation to the said projects. At the subsequent

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meeting, quotations for the projects were presented, considered and approved for payment.

i. The list of expenses she claimed was made from this account under reference are:

(a) AGC LLOGISTICS = ₦ 42,000,000
(b) SOLAR INSTALLATION = N17,500,000
(c) ACCOMODATION REFUND = N4,000,000.
(d) COMPUTER SETS = N2,240,000
(e) SPEAKER INSTALLATION = N2,195,000.
(f) EXECUTIVE CHAIRS = N1,930,000.
(g) NHIS ENROLMENT = N5,000,000.
(h) BUS REPAIRS = N1,119,080
(i) AIR CONDITIONERS = N5,418,000

TOTAL = N81,402,080.

K. The Treasurer stated further expenditures to wit:

i. 2 months payment of NBA Administrative staff Salaries = ₦ 490,000

ii. Door repairs at Bar Centre = ₦ 219,000

iii. Welding of chairs and fabrication of solar batteries protector = ₦ 297,000

iv. AGC Reimbursement made to Kelechi Ogubuaja = ₦ 81,000

v. Travel logistics to Dunukofia = ₦ 200,000

vi. Payment to Auditor for NBA Remuneration Account = ₦ 200,000

vii. Power Amplifier = ₦ 400,000

viii Repair of NBA bus during the trip to Dunukofia = ₦ 307,000

ix Moulding of key for NBA bus = ₦ 35,000

x. Refund to Kelechi Ogubuaja for drinks supplied at the September general meeting = ₦ 60,000

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xi. Chairman's travel expenses to Abuja to represent the branch in honouring Prof. Obiaeri's SAN conferment = ₦ 525,400

L. The treasurer attached the following documents to her response

i. Statement of Account from Fidelity bank with Account number 4150005954 for the period of 1st August 2026- 12th October 2026.

ii. Memo for the release of ₦ 34,000,000 dated 21st August, 2026 and a photocopy of the Cheque for ₦ 34,000,000.

ii. Memo requesting for approval for the purchase and installation of Air Conditioners dated 8th Sept 2026.

iii. Memo for the approval of N10,000,000 for Installation of new solar panels at the Bar Centre dated 3rd September, 2026, and the photocopy of the N10,000,000 Cheque.

iv. Memo for the purchase of executive chairs dated 7th September, 2026

v. Quotation for protector and repair of Chairs dated 12th September, 2026.

vi. Online receipts of transfer dated 15th, 22nd September and 3rd October, 2026.

v. Memo for Computers, Printers and Power surge extension boxes dated 9th September, 2026, and the Fidelity Bank Cheque dated 9th September 2026.

vi. Memo for flight ticket booking for the Branch Chairman dated 8th October, 2026.

vii. Quotation for supply and installation of public address system dated 3rd of September, 2026.

Viii Application for Staff salary dated 1st September, 2026

Ix Treasurer's quarterly financial report dated 25th of September, 2026.

e. FINANCIAL SECRETARY (KELECHI OGUBUAJA)

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The Financial Secretary stated that he is not a signatory to the NBA account and does not receive alerts. He stated that at the executive meeting of 11th August, 2026, the executive agreed that the sum of ₦ 2,000,000 should be transferred to him to enable him take care of the logistics during the AGC 2026, as it would be very hard and practically impossible for the Chairman and Treasurer to be signing cheques at the conference. He said that he was not a member of the AGC Logistics Committee and did not participate in its expenditure decisions. He did not ratify any expenses made at the AGC 2026.

He stated that he received an alert for the sum of ₦2,000,000.00 on the 24th of August 2026, and that the Branch Chairman called him on phone the same day and told him that he (Chairman) had made some expenditure since 23rd August, 2026 with regards to logistics and therefore demanded a refund of the sum of ₦1,185,000.00, which amount he returned to the Branch Chairman.

He attached the following exhibits namely:

a. Exhibit FIN SEC 2A- K which are receipts of transfer of expenditure by the Branch Chairman;
b. Exhibit FIN SEC 3: Receipts of transfer for the refund of the sum of N 1,185,000 to the Branch Chairman;
c. Exhibit FIN SEC 4: Expenses made at the NBA AGC 2026;
d. Exhibit FIN SEC 4A-K: Receipts of transfers made by the Financial Secretary.
e. Exhibit FIN SEC 5: Application for the refund of N 81,000 being out of pocket expenses by the Financial Secretary;
f. Exhibit FIN SEC 6: Application letter for the sum of N200,000.00 being money for fuel to Dunukofia in Anambra State.
g. Exhibit FIN SEC 7: List of Branch members that submitted their bank account details for the AGC payout funds.

f. PUBLICITY SECRETARY

The Publicity Secretary stated that at the first post-AGC meeting, the Branch Chairman informed the EXCO of the receipt of government support and sought opinions on its use. According to

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the Publicity Secretary, the Chairman represented to the EXCO that the money was intended for a purpose different from payment of conferees' expenses, and the EXCO approved estimates on the basis of the Chairman's presentation. The Publicity Secretary suggested that the executives may have been misled about the purpose and status of the funds. He also referred to the urgency created around the proposed Branch projects and stated that he got a proposal for the purchase of computers and air conditioners.

g. **THE SOCIAL SECRETARY** – Chinenye Akah, Esq., in her written response dated 20th October, 2026, stated: That she got to know about the receipt of the N100,000,000.00 (One Hundred Million Naira) donation from the Imo State Government on 26th August 2026 when the Hon. Attorney General announced it during the dinner organized by the Imo State Government during the NBA AGC in Port-Harcourt, Rivers State. That she did not handle any financial transaction or payment during the Annual General Conference. All the expenses were handled by the 2026 AGC Logistics Committee, while the Executive Members were made ex-officio members. That she was relieved of her official assignment in 2026 AGC planning, and she made complaints of same to the Branch Chairman and to other Executive Committee members during the Executive Committee meetings.

h. THE WELFARE SECRETARY – Chiamaka Nwaogaraku, Esq., in her own response dated 21st October, 2026, stated: That because she disagreed with the way and manner the 2026 AGC Logistics Committee members were appointed without her input, she was subsequently sidelined. That she did not participate in the activities of the 2026 AGC Logistics Committee, she was not part of the hotel reservation and did not have any idea of any expenditure of the AGC Logistics Committee.

i. AGC LOGISTICS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN (DESMOND UNEGBU ESQ)

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He replied on 23rd October, 2026 and stated that he presented his AGC report on 26th September 2026, and upon the adoption of the report, he submitted it alongside with all other documents relating to the AGC logistics committee to the Executive committee of the NBA Owerri Branch. Upon being invited by the Investigation Committee for oral interview, he refused to attend but rather wrote a letter dated 29th September 2026, to the Committee, and attached a photocopy of a pending suit at the High Court of Imo state sitting at Ahiazu Mbaise in suit No: HAM/145/2026. He stated that in view of the pending suit, he should be absolved from attending to the Committee's invitation for oral interview, pending the final determination of the law suit.

j. The Committee received memoranda and other snippets of information from various other members of the Branch which it found quite useful and helpful in its inquiry. For confidentiality and protective security of some of the informants, the identities of the various other informants will not be revealed in this report.

k. ORAL INTERVIEW OF MRS. LILIAN UGOANYANWU

Mrs. Lilian Ugoanyanwu, whose name appears in the available financial information as Lilian Chikaima Ugwanyanwu, stated that she held no elected Branch office but served as Alternate Chairman of the AGC Logistics Committee. She said she contacted vendors for logistics arrangements.

a. She acknowledged that ₦6,000,000.00 was credited to her personal account on 24th August 2026. She stated that no budget had been prepared before or after the transfer to her and that she was not present at any EXCO meeting where discussions concerning the AGC logistics committee proposals were approved. She could not confirm whether a budget had been presented or not.

b. She stated that the ₦4,000,000.00 out of the N6m credited to her account, was intended for four days of venue or hall hire at ₦1,000,000.00 per day and that the hall payment was made on 25th August 2026.

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c. This Committee was not given any venue contract, nor invoice, nor proof of payment, nor any evidence of approval for these expenditures.

d. She stated that ₦380,000.00 was paid for the medical treatment of Mrs. Ngozi Ihiekwe, a Branch member who reportedly suffered a traffic accident on 27th August 2026 during the AGC, from this Branch money paid into her account. She said the payment was made on the Branch Chairman's instruction because the member's life was at risk.

e. She stated that she did not pay for the cocktail, reportedly estimated at ₦3,500.00 per portion, for 500 persons, and that drinks for the cocktail were purchased in Owerri and taken to Port Harcourt.

f. She stated that she paid ₦500,000.00 as an advance for 'Bo-le', with the total estimated at ₦1,250,000.00 at ₦2,500.00 per plate. She said branch executive committee paid the balance of ₦750,000.00.

g. A drinks budget of ₦1,600,000.00 separate from the drinks purchased in Owerrri and conveyed to Port-Harcourt was also mentioned, with a part payment of ₦297,000.00 reportedly made.

h. She stated that water was purchased from the money paid into her personal account as follows:
   a. On 23rd August 2026: ₦275,000.00 for 550 bottles.
   b. On 24th August 2026: ₦400,000.00 for 800 bottles.
   c. On 25th August 2026: ₦400,000.00 for 800 bottles.
   d. On 27th August 2026: ₦275,000.00 for 550 bottles.

   At the stated rate of ₦500.00 per bottle, the total is ₦1,350,000.00 for 2,700 bottles of water.

   She did not provide any receipt or invoice evidencing these reported expenses. This Committee requested for her bank statements with which she received and disbursed the sum of N6m

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credited to her bank account, but she bluntly refused to release it, saying that it was her personal salary account. An explanation that the Committee had a right to view same as it related to the receipt and disbursement of a part of the funds which it is investigating, did not make her change her mind.

i. She stated further that ₦1,900,000.00 was paid to her on 7th September 2026 as reimbursement for her personal funds used for AGC expenses. She also stated that ₦1,303,000.00 out of the N1.9m further credited to her bank account, was refunded to the Chairman of the branch and the AGC Logistics Committee Chairman, to replace the personal contributions allegedly made by them.

   The Committee was not furnished with a complete schedule identifying the personal advances, the expenses they funded, the exact amounts refunded to each person, nor the original source of each payment.

I. NBA OWERRI BRANCH FOOTBALL TEAM CAPTAIN (E.S NKOJU ESQ)

In his response to the Investigation Committee's request on 21st October, 2026, he stated that the branch supported the football team's outing at the AGC 2026 by providing accommodation, feeding and transportation. He stated that the team members were accommodated in a hotel from 16th – 24th August 2026. He further stated that they were lodged at G-throne Hotel & Suites Rumuigbo, Rivers State, from 16th -22nd August 2026, wherein they occupied 11 rooms.

From 23rd – 24th August 2026, the team was lodged at Homeland Apartments and they occupied one Unit of three bedrooms duplex apartment, as well as 2 units of One bedroom Flat and three studio self contained apartment. The branch fed the team from 16th – 23rd August 2026 with two meals daily except on the 16th and 23rd of August when they were served with just one meal per day.

The branch also provided the team with transportation from 16th - 27th August 2026. Finally he stated that the team was not involved

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in the funding, planning and arrangement of any of the aforementioned things provided for them by the Branch.

m. JUDICIAL SERVICE COMMISSION SECRETARY (MRS. JENNIFER NWOSU).

During an Oral interview on the 28th of October, 2026, she stated that she was aware of the Application to the Governor of Imo state for funding by the Branch Chairman and in fact she took the Chairman of the Branch to, and facilitated his meeting with the Governor. She denied receiving any money from the N100,000,000 gift, whether directly or through any proxy, describing any such insinuation as false and malicious, for which she was getting ready to move against those peddling such rumour.

n. CHIEF REGISTRAR OF HIGH COURT OF IMO STATE, HIS WORSHIP EZERIOHA

The Investigation Committee visited the Chief Registrar on 28/10/26 for the purpose of finding out her involvement in the locking up of the Justice Nsofor Magistrates' Court Complex, Orlu Road, Owerri, wherein is situate the Bar Center of the Owerri Branch, on Saturday, the 10th day of October, 2026, thereby preventing members of the Branch from accessing the Bar Center and consequently frustrating the Extraordinary General Meeting scheduled to hold that day. She claimed that the locking up of the premises on 10/10/2026 was for security reasons and that it was a standing instruction dating back to when she assumed office as Chief Registrar. She said that her standing instruction is to the effect that on weekends the court premises must be under lock and key. She further stated that she was not officially informed of the scheduled Extraordinary General Meeting of 10/10/2026 and that she also knew nothing about the presence of armed policemen at the gate of the court premises on that day. When confronted with the fact that some of the security men spoken to said that the Chief Registrar instructed them to lock up the premises, she confirmed that it was indeed her instruction to them, but that it was her said standing instruction.

o. ATTORNEY GENERAL OF IMO STATE, PAUL OBINATU, ESQ.

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The Investigation Committee, vide its letter of request dated 17/10/2026, wrote to the Hon. Attorney General requesting his response to the issue under reference. The Hon. Attorney General declined to reply to the Committee's letter. The Committee also visited the office of the HAG on 28/10/2026 in order to orally interview him, but met with his absence. However, the committee received a video clip of when the Attorney General hosted the conferees to a dinner in Port Harcourt, whereat he announced the gift of N100m to the Branch from the Imo state Government. His speech as recorded in the video suggested that the gift was given to be shared to every member of the NBA Owerri Branch and not limited to only conferees, but went further to state that those who attended the conference should get a greater share than those who did not attend. The Committee equally saw a letter subsequently written by the Attorney General in which he claimed that the gift was not only for sponsoring the conference but also included some projects of the branch.

The committee equally received information that the Honourable Attorney General received through proxies a cut from the N100, 000, 000. 00 (One Hundred Million Naira) gift amounting to N22, 000, 000. 00 (Twenty-Two Million Naira) which he allegedly shared with the Secretary of the Imo State Judicial Service Commission, Mrs. Jenifer Nwosu.

Finally the committee received an intercepted memorandum written by the Attorney General to the Commissioners in the Imo State Government who are lawyers in which memo he stated that it is the instruction of His Excellency the Governor of Imo State that every appointee who is a legal practitioner should attend the meeting of the Branch i.e the Extraordinary General Meeting of 15/10/2026. The memo concluded thus: **"It should be our mandatory obligation to work assiduously against the impeachment of the Chairman of NBA Owerri Branch, Dr. Mazi Udegbulem".**

All of the above were why the committee sought specific clarifications from the Attorney General which he failed to respond to.

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5. **FINDINGS:**

After a critical analysis of the responses received, documents and all other information that came to its attention, the Committee found as follows:

1. That a letter dated 7th August 2026, addressed to the Governor of Imo State, and signed by the Branch Chairman and Secretary, requested assistance in the sum of ₦88,718,000.00 to facilitate the Branch's participation in the 2026 AGC in Port Harcourt.

2. That another separate letter dated 10th August 2026, also signed by the Branch Chairman and Secretary, sought for government assistance for Branch projects, such as - Completion of the cloakroom project; Installation of solar panels and air-conditioning facilities at the Bar Centre; Provision of at least two coaster buses; Enrolment of 1,800 Branch members under the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), at a stated rate of ₦38,718.00 per person. The letter also referred to an estimated cost of ₦30,000,000.00 for Solar panels and also the purchase of air-conditioning facilities.

3. At this point it must be mentioned that information received by the Committee, revealed that the Branch Chairman, Prof. Mazi Udegbulem, has also received from the Imo State Government, the sum of Thirty Million Naira (N30m) which he stated in his application letter was for the specific projects of installing solar panels and air conditioners in the Bar Centre. The information explained that of all the Chairmen of the other Branches of the Bar in Imo State, the Owerri Branch Chairman was the only one who had received this project money from the government. This, it must be understood, is quite separate from the N100m given for the AGC.

4. That a letter of appreciation dated 31st August 2026, also signed by the Branch Chairman and Secretary, was sent to the Governor of Imo State, thanking him for the N100m assistance to the Branch to enable the Branch participate in the 2026 NBA AGC. The letter also

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referred to the anticipated release of funds for solar installation and the provision of coaster buses.

5. That the sum of ₦100,000,000.00 was credited to the Branch account at Fidelity Bank with Account No. 4150005954 on 24th August, 2026, with the name Paul Obinatu as the creditor.

6. The Committee learned also that certain members of this Branch had earlier made donations amounting to approximately N6m, to aid the Branch to attend and participate in the said AGC in Port Harcourt.

7. The Committee received information concerning a budget of ₦2,000,000.00 for "AGC Logistics", reportedly approved at the EXCO meeting of 11th August 2026. It was also reported that the sum was to be paid into the Financial Secretary's account for convenient disbursement. However, no tangible explanation was furnished to the Committee on how the sum of N34,000,000.00 contained in the pre-drawn up, recipient-less cheque, metamorphosed into the sum of N42,100,000.00 contained in the Branch Treasurer's report, all given as "AGC LOGISTICS". And this is in addition to the approximately N6,000,000.00 donated by some members of this Branch as AGC Support. No specific particulars were supplied explaining what this said "AGC Logistics" is, or what constituted it. The relationship between these funds remains unresolved. The Committee was not availed with any documents detailing what and what constituted the said "AGC Logistics". What therefore constituted the said "AGC Logistics" that gulped this huge sum of money is yet to be explained by the Branch Chairman, Prof. Mazi Udegbulem, and his helpers, particularly, the Treasurer, Ms. Olachi Madona Anosike, the AGC Logistics Committee Chairman, Desmond Unegbu, Esq. and the AGC Logistics Committee Alternate Chairman, Mrs. Lilian Chikaima Ugoanyanwu. They owe this Branch explanations on what this said huge amount of money was spent on and how.

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8. The Committee found that the applications for government support were initiated by the Branch Chairman, assisted by the Branch Secretary who signed those letters with him, without any evidence of prior consultation with, consent of, nor approval by either the Executive Committee or the General Meeting of the NBA Owerri Branch. The Committee found that the Executive Committee as a body had no prior knowledge of the decision to solicit nor the applications for sponsorship from Imo State Government. That decision to solicit for sponsorship from the Government runs counter to the provisions, intendment and spirit of **Article 3(1) of the Constitution of the NBA and Article 2(1) and 12(1) of the Uniform Bye-law for Branches**, in that same tends to mortgage the integrity, honour, independence of this Branch of the Bar, and may be inimical to the interest of this Branch in its future engagements with the Government, in view of the adage that: "He who pays the piper dictates the tune".

9. The Branch Chairman presented the proposed projects as "urgent items" to be commissioned at the General House meeting of 26th September 2026, and by this representation, misled the EXCO to approve the estimates he presented to it for particular items. This approval by the EXCO, though wrong, since there was no budget for same approved by the General Meeting of this Branch, related ONLY to the estimates of the particular items in the projects. The approval does not translate to one which approved the original solicitation for funds from government, nor the expenditure of the entire ₦100,000,000.00, which exercise ought to have been referred to the General House for approval, but was not.

10. By his own vires, the Branch Chairman not only made clear, but removed all doubt that he understood that the gift of N100,000,000.00 was for support for the Branch's participation at the NBA AGC. This is resolutely clear from the contents of the letter of appreciation to the Governor of Imo State dated 31st August, 2026. This letter not only thanked the Governor for the AGC gift of N100m, but also expressed the hope that assistance for the projects

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mentioned in the letter of 10th August, 2026, would follow as they were being expected by the Branch. The Branch Chairman's later claim, first, to the EXCO, and then to the General House of this Branch, that the N100m gift was for projects only and not for distribution to members, was only a deceptive ruse he dredged up to avoid being held to account for not distributing the said money to members of this Branch who attended the AGC in Port Harcourt. Even if anyone can say that the N100m amount went beyond the N88m plus he had applied for from government, he has not explained why he did not set aside this said N88m plus to be applied to the Conference, but rather plunged the entire sum to his "projects".

11. A cheque of ₦34,000,000.00 was issued in advance on the 21st August 2026, without the name of a recipient, in anticipation of the money expected from the government. The memo dated 21st August, 2026 for the issuance of this cheque did not have any budget attached to it, nor was there any Executive Committee approval for same.

12. A credit of N100,000,000.00 (One Hundred Million Naira) was received by the Branch on the 24th August, 2026 through Fidelity Bank Account No. 4150005954. The transaction notification identified Paul Obinatu (which is the name of the Attorney General) as the creditor. On the very same day, the following under listed sums were debited from the same account:

    e. ADE GLORY FOOD EMPIRE – N4,000,000 (Four Million Naira)
    f. CHIEMEKA ELEBIRI – N12,000,000 (Twelve Million Naira)
    g. DANIELLA OBIANUJU OHUABUNWA – N10,000,000 (Ten Million Naira)
    h. KELECHI OGUGBUAJAH – N2,000,000 (Two Million Naira)
    i. CHIKAIMA LILIAN UGOANYANWU – N6,000,000 (Six Million Naira)

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TOTAL DEBIT = N34,000,0000 (Thirty-Four Million Naira).

This seemed to liquidate the N34,000,000.00 pre-signed cheque raised by the Branch Chairman and Treasurer without it being addressed to a recipient. While the Committee knows Kelechi Ogugbuaja and Chikaima Obianuju Ugoanyanwu as members of this Branch, it did not discover who **CHIEMEKA ELEBERI and DANIELA OBIANUJU OHUABUNWA** are, nor was it revealed what service they rendered to the Branch with the sums of N12m and N10m respectively, that they were issued.

13. The oral interview with the Treasurer and documents submitted by her revealed that about N42 million Naira was spent on AGC logistics, but failed to explain how the N34 million cheque released metamorphosed to N42 million. Further, she could not explain whom **ADE GLORY FOOD EMPIRE, CHIEMEKA ELEBERI and DANIELLA OBIANUJU OHUABUNWA** the recipients of the sum of N4,000,000.00, N12,000,000.00, and N10,000,000.00, respectively, are and the purpose of the funds released to them with regards to NBA AGC. The Treasurer stated that she did not see the receipts or invoices relating to the AGC Logistics Expenditure and that none was submitted to her.

14. The Committee found that one DANIELLA OBIANUJU OHUABUNWA who received the sum of N10,000,000.00 (Ten Million Naira) on the 24th August, 2026, for an undisclosed purpose, was the same person that received the sum of N1,930,000 (One Million, Nine Hundred and Thirty Thousand Naira) allegedly spent for the purchase of Executive Chairs purportedly bought by the Chairman. The Chairman would be in a position to explain his relationship or otherwise with the said DANIELLA OBIANUJU OHUABUNWA, and who exactly she is.

15. That it was at the Executive Committee meeting held after the 2026 NBA AGC that the Chairman informed members of the EXCO of the receipt of the N100,000,000.00 (One Hundred Million Naira)

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donation from the Imo State Government. The presentation made by the Chairman to the Executive did not reveal that any part of the N100,000,000.00 gift had been spent.

16. The alleged expenses of N42 million as AGC Logistics was not discussed and approved by the Executive Committee, whether before or after the NBA AGC. It is apposite to mention at this point, that this Branch did not in previous years of attending AGCs, engage in the sort of lavish splurge embarked upon by this particular EXCO. What used to happen was that all members attending, bore their accommodation, transportation (whether collectively arranged or singly), and feeding expenses. Sometimes, some benevolent senior lawyers would invite conferees to lunches and dinners which those seniors sponsored. It is not known that the Branch, at the expense of the Branch, organised, dinners, 'Bo-le' Nights, cocktail parties, etc for conferees. Such an engagement entails a huge financial burden which the General House ought to have had prior knowledge of and approve the budget for. No such program nor budget for same was presented to the General House of this Branch for such extravagance.

17. A reported ₦4,000,000.00 hotel refund to members as stated in the Treasurer's Report was without any explanation or beneficiary list, date of the reported refund to members and the reasons for the refund or evidence of the approving authority.

18. A reported ₦5,000,000.00 disbursement was made to the Welfare Secretary for NHIS enrolment. The Committee was not shown a record explaining the selection of 89 members from the original proposal to enrol 1,800 members at ₦38,718.00 per person, or proof of the enrolments. The Committee was not told what happened to the balance of the NHIS enrolment money, after ₦3,445,902 was spent for the reported enrolment of 89 members, neither was it told about what informed the selection of the 89 members instead of the 1,800 members, nor the criteria for the selection.

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19. The Committee found that the sum of N490,000 was transferred to the Treasurer's personal account from the Branch account under reference for the payment of August and September Salaries of the administrative staff of the Branch, as against the usual account for the payment of their salaries. The Treasurer failed to explain to the Committee why this account was used.

20. The Committee found that various debits of N50,000 were made from the account under reference between 29th September and 12th October, 2026, which were credited to some members of the Branch (about 178 persons) as AGC Support, pursuant to the directive and approval of the Branch Chairman. This is very strange considering that the same Chairman had been claiming that the said money was not for distribution to members but was rather for projects.

21. The Committee found that the Vice Chairman, Social Secretary, Welfare Secretary and Financial Secretary were not involved in the negotiations, purchases, payments, contracts and approvals relating to the reported N42 million Naira AGC Logistics expenses.

22. The Committee found that the Alternate Chairman of the AGC Logistics Committee – **CHIKAIMA LILLIAN UGOANYANYU, ESQ.**, received the sum of N6,000,000 and N1,900,000 in her personal account on the 24th August and 7th September, 2026 (respectively) without any budget, to run the AGC Logistics expenses. When asked to explain how the N7.9 million was spent, she claimed to have spent all the funds for certain items during the AGC, but failed to produce any receipt or invoice. When asked to produce her statement of account, she refused and her refusal to produce her statement of account made the Committee to draw the inference that she was rather hiding something and was not forth coming with the truth.

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23. The only justifiable emergency expenditure the Committee found from all the expenses made from the account under reference was the medical bill of N380,000 for Ngozi Ihiekwe, Esq.

24. The Committee found prima facie evidence of serious substantive, procedural financial mismanagement and irregularities, particularly in relation to the approvals, disbursements, documentations and spending of Branch funds. The roles of the Branch Chairman, Treasurer and AGC Logistics Committee Chairman and Alternate Chairman, require particular scrutiny, having regard to their respective involvement in the application, authorization, processing, disbursement and accounting of the transactions under investigation.

25. The wilfull refusal of the Branch Chairman and AGC Chairman to produce the AGC Logistics Reports and other relevant documents clearly evinces an intention to conceal their activities regarding the expenses. This intention to conceal what was done is reinforced by the report of the Secretary that the acknowledgement copies of the various letters regarding the application for the sponsorship by Imo State Government as well as appreciation letter were removed from his file at the Bar Centre, and were also mysteriously deleted not only from his folder in the Computer System at NBA Branch Secretariat, but was as well permanently deleted from the recycle bin of the said system.

26. The Committee found that the entire expenditure with regards to the N100m gift from the Imo state governor embarked on by the chairman and his helpers were in gross contravention of **Article 12 (6) of the Uniform Bye Laws for Branches** except in one respect to wit; the payment of N380, 000 as medical bills for our member Mrs Ngozi Ihiekwe who was involved in a traffic accident during the AGC 2026. There was no urgency, let alone emergency, in all else that this fund was spent on, that should warrant this unauthorised frittering away of this fund.

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27. There were no budgets, let alone supplementary budgets presented to the General Meeting of the Branch for approval.

28. There were no proposals for any projects whatsoever presented to the General Meeting for approval, which act is in gross violation of the express provisions of the NBA Constitution and the Uniform Bye-laws.

29. The Committee found that the Branch Chairman, Prof. Mazi Udegbulem, failed to provide direction and leadership to the Executive Committee and AGC Logistics Committee to ensure the efficient utilization of the resources of the Branch subject to the approval of the Branch Executive Committee or the General Meeting, in contravention of the provisions of **Article 7 (1) (c) of the Uniform Bye-laws for Branches.** On the contrary, he rather machinated and engineered a reckless dissipation of the funds of this Branch.

30. The expenditure incurred for travel logistics to Dunukofia, Anambra State, a mission that has no business with any activity of the Branch; travel logistics of the Chairman to Abuja for the 2026 SAN investiture; payment of two months salary to NBA Owerri Branch administrative staff and sponsorship of the two administrative staff to the lawyers' 2026 conference, etc. which expenses are not projects of the Branch, not only contravened the provisions of the NBA Constitution and Uniform bye laws, but also quickly exposes the falsehood of the Branch Chairman's claims that the gift from government was meant for specific projects. One wonders what sort of projects the Chairman's trip to Abuja to attend SAN Conferment, or trip to Dunukofia, or taking the admin staff of this Branch on a frolic to a lawyers' conference that they have no business with, thereby abandoning their duty post at the Bar Centre, are.

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31. The Committee found that the Branch Chairman's statement that the N100, 000, 000. 00 gift was for projects and not for sharing to members of the branch, only to turn round to approve the disbursement of funds to some members as AGC support, are sharply contradictory and amounts to gross misappropriation of the Branch funds contrary to the provisions of **Article 7 (1)(c) of the Uniform Bye-laws.**

6. OBSERVATIONS:

Having carefully examined the circumstances surrounding the application for and receipt of the ₦100,000,000.00 government grant, the stated purposes for which the funds were sought, the available bank statements, financial reports, minutes, correspondence, memoranda and explanations submitted by the relevant Branch officers and members and all other information available to the it, the Committee makes the following final observations:

a. The Committee is of the view that the applications for sponsorship from the government, initiated by the Branch Chairman, with the involvement of the Branch Secretary, without evidence of prior consultation with or approval by the Executive Committee or the General meeting, has put the independence of the Branch in serious jeopardy. Although the Uniform Bye-Law recognizes grants and donations as legitimate sources of Branch funds, the process of obtaining and administering such funds must conform to the established governance and financial procedures of the Association, and must not be received from any source and in any manner that would jeopardize the independence and interest of the Bar.

b. There is already, a most unholy alliance/romance between the Branch Chairman, Prof. Mazi Udegbulem, and the Attorney General of Imo State, Paul Obinatu, Esq. The Committee, in the course of its investigation, received information (which it could not confirm) that the said Attorney General received a cut from this N100m sum from Government, amounting to Twenty-Two Million Naira (N22m),

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which he shared with some other persons said to have "facilitated" (whatever that means) the release of the money by Government, including the Secretary of Imo State Judicial Service Commission, Mrs. Jenifer Nkosu, and did so through proxies. While the Committee could not ascertain the truth or otherwise of this information, there is need to discover who **CHIEMEKA ELEBIRI and DANIELLA OBIANUJU OHUABUNWA,** in whose names the debit alerts for the sums of N12m and N10m respectively, were received from the N34m pre-drawn, recipient-less cheque had been drawn by the Branch Chairman and Treasurer.

c. Furthermore, at the EXCO meeting in which the quotations of specific projects were approved, there was a first rejection of a proposal for the contracts said to have been brought by the said Attorney General. One wonders HOW the Attorney General of Imo State, descended to the level of bidding for the contract for installation of solar, supply of television and AC, etc, undertaken by the Branch Chairman. Plus: who informed the Attorney General that such contracts were up for bidding to make him supply his own bid/proposal? Though in the video made of the dinner he hosted for Imo Conferees, the Attorney General was clearly seen and heard declaring that the money was for distribution to all members of the Branches, whether they attended the conference or not, his letter trying to support what the Branch Chairman did with the sum, contradicted his earlier position. The Committee viewed this as a last-ditch effort made to shield the Branch Chairman from scrutiny.

d. The Committee also saw a memo allegedly sent by the Attorney General to the Commissioners in the employ of the Imo State Government, wherein he informed them that it was the instruction of the Governor that every appointee who is a lawyer should attend this meeting (Extraordinary General Meeting of 15/10/2026), and that it should be: **"our mandatory obligation to work assiduously against the impeachment of the Chairman of the NBA Owerri Branch, Dr. Mazi Udegbulem."** And indeed, on that day and at that meeting, several strange faces not before seen

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attending our Branch meeting, had flooded the Bar Centre, in attendance of that meeting, along with the Attorney General himself.

e. The Committee is further of the view that the N100m fund was received for AGC participation of members and not for Branch development projects, as very clearly explained in the Branch Chairman's appreciation letter. All the claims of the Branch Chairman to the contrary were ruses he dredged up to mask and befuddle his misappropriation of that fund and to deprive the deserving members of this Branch who had registered for and attended the AGC of their entitlement to that fund. The explanations of the Attorney General and even that of the Governor of Imo State, in his press release praising the Branch Chairman for his "judicious use" of the fund for Branch projects, as well as the donation of the Coaster Bus to the Branch, are all viewed in that same light. These after thoughts rather smack of stories brought up in an attempt to save the position of the stooge they had succeeded in implanting as the Chairman of NBA Owerri Branch.

f. Any doubt that the N100m was strictly for the AGC and not projects, is dissipated by the fact, as found by the Committee, that the Branch Chairman had received and pocketed a separate N30m said to be for the project of installation of solar panels and AC.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS:

a. Consequent upon the foregoing, the Committee recommends that the General House should immediately and as a matter of urgency, direct the production of all outstanding financial records, and commission an independent professional audit panel for the reconciliation of all the Branch accounts, as well as the personal bank accounts of the Branch Chairman, the Treasurer, The Chairman and Alternate Chairman of the AGC Logistics Committee, and all other accounts through which any part of the funds from

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government meant for this Branch, went into, including any business accounts maintained by these persons under any businesses they run. The audit panel should require these named officers and all other persons concerned to provide specific explanations for the transactions identified.

b. The Committee is of the firm view that a case of gross misappropriation of Branch funds, as well as that of gross violation of the provisions of the NBA Constitution and the Uniform Bye-law have been committed **majorly by the Chairman, Prof. Mazi Udegbulem,** and to a lesser extent, by the **Treasurer, Ms Olachi Madona Anosike.** The Treasurer's major flaw is extreme recklessness and gross incompetence in the performance of her duty as a treasurer. She lacks even the barest qualification and characteristics, how much less ability, to be allowed to manage/guard the Treasury of this Branch.

c. The Committee recommends that this Branch should obtain from the Branch Chairman an explanation as to why he has till date not reported the N30m he received from government for solar panel and air conditioners, and to reveal which bank account this sum was paid into.

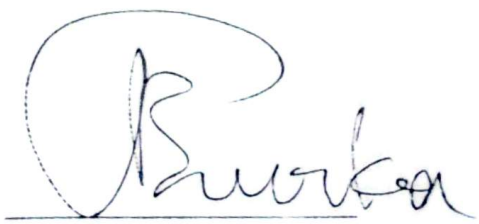
d. The Committee does not hesitate to recommend that the General House may consider the commencement of appropriate disciplinary procedure against both officers and any other person found to be complicit in these misdeeds.

e. It is the final opinion of this Committee, that at the very least, these two officers are most unworthy of retaining their posts as Chairman and Treasurer of this Branch.

Dated this 31st Day of October, 2026.

SIGNED:

Chidi B. Nworka Esq = Chairman =



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F. C. Obinna Esq	=	Member	=	
Chukwurah Onuorah	=	Member	=	
Chima Ezike, Esq.	=	Member	=	
Victoria C. Joshua	=	Secretary	=	

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