



NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION

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NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION EXPRESSES SOLIDARITY WITH THE ISTANBUL BAR ASSOCIATION

The Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) has followed with grave concern the ongoing criminal and civil proceedings against the leadership of the Istanbul Bar Association before the courts of the Republic of Türkiye.

We note that the proceedings stem from a public statement issued by the Istanbul Bar Association on 21 December 2024, in which it recalled international legal protections for journalists in conflict zones, called for an effective investigation into the deaths of two Kurdish journalists allegedly killed in a drone strike, and demanded the release of protesters and lawyers detained at a demonstration.

The prosecution of the Istanbul Bar Association's President, Professor İbrahim Kaboğlu, and ten executive board members for "propaganda for a terrorist organisation" and "disseminating misleading information," together with the civil proceedings that led to the dissolution of its executive board, represent a clear assault on the independence of the legal profession.

The Nigerian Bar Association aligns with the concerns already expressed by the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI), Amnesty International, the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), Human Rights Watch, the International Commission of Jurists, and other international organisations, that such proceedings are incompatible with Türkiye's international human rights obligations, particularly those concerning the rule of law, freedom of expression, association, and the independence of lawyers and bar associations.

As an association with a long and tested history of defending the rule of law, human rights, and the independence of the legal profession, the NBA views these proceedings as a dangerous precedent that risks silencing bar associations worldwide from carrying out their statutory and internationally recognised duties.

We therefore:

1. Call on the Turkish authorities to immediately discontinue both the criminal and civil proceedings against the leadership of the Istanbul Bar Association.

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; Ebere Emmanuella Ekpese - Assistant Publicity Secretary

2. Urge respect for the fundamental rights of lawyers and bar associations to freely engage in rights-based advocacy without fear of intimidation, reprisal, or dissolution.
3. Stand in solidarity with the Istanbul Bar Association and reaffirm our shared commitment to defending the legal profession as a cornerstone of democracy and the rule of law.

The Nigerian Bar Association remains steadfast in its duty to resist any attempt, anywhere in the world, to weaken the independence of lawyers and bar associations.



MAZI AFAM OSIGWE, SAN
President



DR. MOBOLAJI OJIBARA
General Secretary

