

PRESS RELEASE

16th October, 2018

The attention of the National Judicial Council has been drawn to a publication by the Civic Society Network Against Corruption urging President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, not to forward the name of Honourable Mr. Justice Uwani Abba-Aji recommended to him by the Council for appointment as a Justice of the Supreme Court to the Senate for confirmation otherwise it would challenge the action in Court.

2. The Group premised its objection to the appointment of Hon Mr. Justice Abba-Aji to the Apex Court on the report of an online newspaper of 16th October, 2016, which featured his name as one of

the Judicial Officers under investigation for corruption by Security Agencies for accepting bribe from a Senior Lawyer who is currently facing trial at the Law Court.

3. The Civil Society group concluded by imploring President Buhari, GCFR, to withhold submission of Hon. Mr. Justice Abba- Aji's name to the National Assembly until he is purged of the allegation of corruption.

4. In as much as the National Judicial Council would not join issues with anyone on this matter, it is necessary to put the records straight. Members of the public would recall that sequel to the request of the Attorney-General of the Federation, in 2016, Hon. Mr Justice Abba-Aji and seven (7) other Judicial Officers

were directed by the Council to recuse themselves from performing their judicial functions pending their investigation by Security Agency.

5. However, Hon. Mr. Justice Abba-Aji and five (5) others were recalled as only three (3) out of the Judicial Officers then under investigations were arraigned in Court.

6. For the avoidance of doubt, Hon. Mr. Justice Abba-Aji has since been sitting in Court and no Investigation Agency has filed any new allegation against His Lordship, in fact, his international passport had been returned to him and he had been travelling outside the country without any hindrance, signalling that the

investigation agencies have nothing new against His Lordship.

7. The law of the land remains that no one is to be punished except for an offence established by due process of law.

8. The National Judicial Council hereby re-affirms its commitment to zero tolerance for corruption which is the stand of The Honourable, The Chief Justice of Nigeria and Chairman of the Council, Hon. Mr. Justice Walter Samuel Nkanu Onnoghen, GCON.

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