

## **PRESS RELEASE**

14<sup>th</sup> March, 2018

- *NJC recommends the compulsory retirement of Hon. Mr. Justice Theresa Uzokwe, Chief Judge Abia State and Hon. Justice Obisike Oji of Abia State High Court.*
- *Issues stern warnings to Justices S. E Aladetoyinbo and Olusola Ajibike Williams of FCT and Lagos High Courts.*
- *Sets up Committee to investigate a Supreme Court Justice and two (2) State Chief Judges.*
- *Appoints sixty (60) Judicial Officers for twenty-four (24) States.*

The National Judicial Council under the Chairmanship of the Honourable Mr. Justice Walter Samuel Nkanu Onnoghen, GCON, at its 85<sup>th</sup> Meeting which was held on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March, 2018, recommended the compulsory retirement of Hon. Mr Justice Theresa Uzokwe, Chief Judge, and Hon. Mr. Justice Obisike Oji of Abia State High Court of Justice, to Governor Okezie

Ikpeazu of Abia State. The Council also issued stern warnings to Justices S. E. Aladetoyinbo and Olusola Ajibike Williams of the FCT and Lagos State High Courts.

2. Hon. Mr Justice Theresa Uzokwe was recommended for compulsory retirement following the findings of two investigative committees set up by the Council. The committees investigated petitions against her by Umeh Kalu, SAN, Attorney-General/Commissioner for Justice of Abia State, alleging illegal constitution and working with a parallel Judicial Service Commission instead of the one constituted by the State Governor and confirmed by the House of Assembly.

Hon. Mr Justice Uzokwe was also found to have misconducted himself in Suit No. HU/131/2005,

wherein he delivered judgement in the sum of N825, 000 (Eight Hundred and Twenty-five Thousand Naira) only in favour of a Litigant, but subsequently signed a garnishee order of N109, 612, 500 (One Hundred and Nine Million, Six Hundred and Twelve Thousand, Five Hundred Naira) only.

3. Hon. Mr Justice Obisike Oji was earlier queried by the Council for allowing himself to be sworn-in as acting Chief Judge, and thereby colluding in, and aiding an unconstitutional process. His reply was unsatisfactory and the Council recommended his compulsory retirement.

4. The NJC reprimanded, seriously warned and placed on the Watch List Hon Justice S. E. Aladetoyinbo of the FCT High Court for impropriety in a case between

U.L.O. Consultants Ltd v BIL Construction Nigeria Ltd, sequel to a petition by one Uche Luke Okpuno. Council would have sanctioned the Judge more severely but had to take into account the fact that aspects of the case are appealable.

5. Council also seriously warned Hon Justice Olusola Ajibike Williams of the Lagos State High Court for grave errors of judgment in her level of involvement in a family business. Council found that the Judge, as a judicial officer, should have been more circumspect and conscious of her office. Council's sanction was as a result of a petition by Chief Ladi Rotimi-Williams, SAN.

6. Council at the Meeting also considered various petitions written against thirty-one (31) Judicial

Officers and resolved to empanel three (3) Investigative Committees against one Justice of Supreme Court and two (2) State Chief Judges.

7. Petitions against various Justices were dismissed either for lack of merit, lack of evidence of misconduct, being *sub judice* or that the subject of such petitions were matters for appeal. The dismissed petitions were against Hon. Mr. Justices Abdu Aboki, Theresa Abadua and Ahmed Belgore all of the Court of Appeal; Hon. Mr. Justices J. T. Tsoho, Ayo Emmanuel, Sabiu Yahusa, Zainab B. Abubakar, B. O. Quadri of the Federal High Court; Hon. Mr. Justices A. N. Ubaka and B. B. Kanyip of National Industrial Court; Hon. Mr. Justices Bello Kawu, S. C. Orji, A. N. Talba of the FCT High Court; Hon. Mr. Justice K. C. Nwankpa of High

Court Abia State; Hon. Mr. Justice D. A. Onyefulu of High Court Anambra State; Hon. Mr. Justice W. I. A. Effiong High Court Akwa-Ibom State; A. M. Ikpambese, High Court Benue State; Hon. Mr. Justice G. E. Gbemre, High Court Delta State; Hon. Mr. Justice A. O. Onovo, High Court Enugu State; Hon. Mr. Justice Idi Apollos, High Court Gombe State; Hon. Mr. Justice G. O. Ogunsanya, High Court Ogun State; Hon. Mr. Justice A. B. Abdulkarim, High Court Osun State; Hon. Mr. Justice K. A. Ojiako, High Court Imo State and Hon. Mr Justices A. M. Lawal, L. A. Okunnu and L. B. Lawal Akapo, High Court Lagos State.

Council decided to advise Hon. Mr. Justice J. E. Ikede of Delta State High Court and Hon. Mr. Justice Yusuf

Halilu of FCT High Court to be more careful in the course of their judicial duties.

8. Council decided to refer a petition by Prince Adesina Okuneye against Hon. Mr. Justice Mwada Balami of the FCT High Court to the Police to investigate the allegation of N5, 000,000 (Five Million Naira) bribe to the Judge for granting bail to an accused person. Council decided that the petition should be put in abeyance until the outcome of the investigation by the Police.

9. Council at the Meeting also recommended sixty (60) Judicial Officers to Governors of twenty-four (24) for appointment as High Court Judges, Sharia Court Kadis and Customary Court of Appeal Judges.

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