

PRESS RELEASE

16 June 2023

- *NJC bars Judicial Officers from switching from High Court to Customary Court of Appeal;*
- *Empanels seven Committees to investigate Judicial Officers;*
- *Recommends appointment of Thirty-seven (37) Judicial Officers for various Courts*

The National Judicial Council, at its 102nd Meeting presided over by the Chief Justice of Nigeria and Chairman, National Judicial Council, Hon. Justice Kayode Ariwoola, GCON, on 14 and 15 June 2023, came up with a policy barring Judicial Officers from switching henceforth from High Court of Justice to the Customary Court of Appeal and vice versa.

The only exception allowed is when a new Customary Court of Appeal is established in a State. Judges who indicate interest to go to the Customary Court of Appeal will be allowed to proceed.

Once established, the candidates for the headship of the Court must be drawn from that Court only, even if all the

Judges of the Court are junior to their counterparts in other Courts.

REPORT OF COMMITTEES

Council considered the Reports from various Investigation Committees and the Preliminary Complaints Assessment Committees on petitions written against thirty-three (33) Judicial Officers from the Court of Appeal and State High Courts and agreed with the Committees recommendations to empanel Investigation Committees against seven Judges of different states.

Petition against the remaining Judicial Officers were either dismissed for lack of merit, lack of diligent prosecution, withdrawal of the petition, being subjudice and for the subject Judge having retired from service.

The dismissed petitions were written against Hon. Justice Mary Peter Odili, Rtd Justice of the Supreme Court, Hon. Justices A. R. Barka, James G. Abundaga, O. O. Olasumbo

Goodluck, Ibrahim A. Andetur-Yangsto all of the Court of Appeal, Hon. Justices F. O. Liman, A. R. Mohammed, H. A. A. Dashen, Peter Lifu, F. O. G. Ogunbanjo, A. Lewis Allagoa, D. E. Osiagor all of the Federal High Court;

Others are Hon. Justice Theresa O. Diali, Chief Judge, Delta State, Hon. Justices S. B. Belgore, K. N. Ogbonnaya Jude Onwuegbuzie, Edward Okpe of the High Court of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Hon. Justices Joseph I Acha, Vesty O. Eboreime, both of High Court, Edo State, Hon. Justices Thelma Adanna Achom, Elvis A. Ngene of the Ebonyi State High Court, Hon. Justices A. B. Usman, M. M. Abubakar of Bauchi State High Court, Hon. Justice O. A. Opesanwo of the Lagos State High Court, Justice Oladiran Akintola of Oyo State High Court, Justice Gegele A. Hammed of Kwara State High Court, Justice K. N. Udobong of Akwa-Ibom State High Court, Justice B. C. Iheka, Imo State High Court, Justice M. A. Zandai High Court, Borno

State, Justice Mohammed Shinkafi of Zamfara State High Court, Justice R. S. Ladoja of the Kaduna State High Court and Justice M. S. A. Mohammed of the High Court of Niger State.

INTERVIEW COMMITTEE

Council also considered the report of its Interview Committee and recommended Thirty-seven (37) Judicial Officers for appointment to the President and seven Governors as Justices of the Court of Appeal, Heads of Court and Judges of the High Court and Customary Courts of Appeal.

They are as follows:

1. NINE (9) JUSTICES, COURT OF APPEAL

- i) Hon. Justice Asma'u Musa Mainoma
- ii) Hon. Justice Paul Ahmed Bassi
- iii) Hon. Justice Hannatu Azumi Laja-Balogun
- iv) Hon. Justice Binta Fatima Zubair
- v) Hon. Justice Hadiza Rabiu Shagari

- vi) Hon. Justice Peter Chudi Obiora
- vii) Hon. Justice Okon Efreti Abang
- viii) Hon. Justice Jane Esienanwan Inyang
- ix) Hon. Lateef Adebayo Ganiyu

2. CHIEF JUDGE, KANO STATE HIGH COURT

- i) Hon. Justice Dije Abdu Aboki

3. CHIEF JUDGE, EDO STATE HIGH COURT

- i) Hon. Justice Daniel Iyobosa Okungbowa

4. CHIEF JUDGE, BAYELSA STATE HIGH COURT

- i) Hon. Justice Matilda Abrakasa Ayemieye

**5. PRESIDENT, CUSTOMARY COURT OF APPEAL,
DELTA STATE**

- i) Hon. Justice Catherine Ngozi Ojugbana-Orishedere

6. THREE (3) JUDGES, BENUE STATE HIGH COURT

- i) Lilian Ngusuur Terseer-Tsumba
- ii) Patrick Eka Oche
- iii) Ukande Mvendaga Peter

7. FIVE (5) JUDGES, DELTA STATE HIGH COURT

- i) Ossai Rita Ngozi
- ii) Aforkeya Obomejero
- iii) Adolor Sunny Onorieukuhakpo
- iv) Samuel Ifeanyi Okeleke
- v) Umuko Aboyowa Godwin

8. EIGHT (8) JUDGES, EDO STATE HIGH COURT

- i) Ovenseri Otamere
- ii) Obayuwana Osarenren Mathias
- iii) Edoghogho Eboigbe
- iv) Ojo Maureen Osa
- v) Bright Erazé Oniha
- vi) Ehinon Anthony Okoh
- vii) Godwin Jeff Okundamiya
- viii) Osayande Ikwuemosi Awawu

9. FOUR (4) JUDGES, KATSINA STATE HIGH COURT

- i) Nuradeen Abdulmumeen
- ii) Halima Lawal Bagiwa
- iii) Abdullahi Bara'u Faskari
- iv) Sanusi Ma'aruf Aminu

10. ONE (1) JUDGE, CUSTOMARY COURT OF APPEAL, BENUE STATE

i) Iortyer Vihilun Fidelis

11. TWO (2) JUDGES, CUSTOMARY COURT OF APPEAL, DELTA STATE

i) Gbakeji Michael Emakpor

ii) Uraih Tracy Patricia Ifeanyi

12. ONE (1) JUDGE, CUSTOMARY COURT OF APPEAL, OGUN APPEAL

i) Sofowora Oriyomi Abiodun

NOTIFICATION OF RETIREMENTS

The notification of retirements of nine Judicial Officers of the Federal and State Courts were also received and noted by the Council.

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