



# NIGERIAN MUSLIMS NETWORK

*And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of Allah, and be not disunited*

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## PRESS RELEASE ON CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

The Nigerian Muslim Network (NMN), formed in 1991, is an Internet-based discussion group of hundreds of Nigerian Muslims mostly residing in the Diaspora. One of the main objectives of the NMN is to work towards building an accountable, fair and just Nigerian society for all Nigerians, in line with one of Islam's central teachings of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. The NMN issues out press releases on matters that affect Nigerian Muslims in particular, and all Nigerians in general, periodically.

Corruption has sadly been an endemic feature of Nigeria's socio-economic and political activities over the last three decades or so, to the extent that Transparency International recently ranked Nigeria the second most corrupt country on earth. This high level of corruption (at the highest levels of Government), is singularly responsible for the continued suffering of the vast majority of Nigerians. Billions of Naira that should have been used to provide basic services, such as funding schools, healthcare, housing, infrastructure, providing portable water and electricity, are perpetually siphoned to foreign accounts or misappropriated by corrupt officials entrusted to manage these funds.

In this light, NMN wishes to recognize and appreciate the tremendous efforts and great achievements made by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). In particular, the exemplary role of Alhaji Nuhu Ribadu, and its courageous and determined effort to combat top-level corruption, since its inception in 2002. We congratulate the EFCC for these efforts. NMN wish to encourage the EFCC to continue to demonstrate high level of discipline, professionalism, fairness, and justice in all its activities. We urge the EFCC never to be intimidated in the discharge of its patriotic duties.

At the same time, we urge them to speedily bring up the cases of the affected public officials to be tried in the law courts. In this context, NMN is disturbed by the apparent slow pace of the prosecution of indicted public officials in our court system. We strongly urge the Judiciary to expedite the process of trying the accused officers in the law courts. It is important that Justice is served, and in a speedily manner. Justice delayed, is justice denied.

While a lot of progress is being made by the EFCC, recent corruption-related developments show clearly that more still needs to be done. These include:

- (i) Claim by the EFCC that 31 of Nigeria's 36 state governors are super-corrupt;
- (ii) Some of Nigeria's political leaders have been arrested in foreign lands on charges of corruption and/or money laundering;
- (iii) Corruption charges labeled against the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria by the Abia State Governor.

Although the aforementioned have not been proved in a court of law, the NMN is very concerned about these developments and the negative consequences they have on the already-battered image of Nigeria abroad, and also on the socio-economic well-being of the vast majority of Nigerians. A situation where the majority of the political leadership at all levels of government is accused of corruption is terribly unhealthy for the socio-economic well-being of Nigerians.

Owing to the gravity of these charges, NMN urges the National and all 36 State assemblies to immediately remove the immunity against prosecution for criminal offences by the Executive leadership at State and Federal levels. This is important to make top elected leaders, such as the President, Vice President, Governors and Deputy Governors,

available for prosecution in corruption-related offences. The recent corruption case involving a State Governor shows clearly that the EFCC is limited by the immunity clause enshrined in our constitution. It is our utmost belief that the gravity of corruption in high levels of Nigerian political system necessitates the urgent removal of this immunity clause. And we, in the NMN, call for and would like to see the removal of the immunity clause (nationwide) within the shortest possible time.

Furthermore, NMN calls for the setting up of an Independent Commission constituted by the Attorney General and given the full powers and jurisdiction to investigate ALL public office holders charged with corruption irrespective of their position. Although the EFCC has so far discharged its duty admirably, the NMN strongly believes it is more prudent to use an Independent Commission rather than an entity formed by the Presidency.

NMN calls on all Nigerian Muslims to eschew and condemn corruption and corrupt officials at all times, no matter who is involved. We call on our brothers and sisters to demand accountability from our elected officials. We call on our Islamic Scholars and Community Leaders to eschew corruption in all its forms, and play a leading role in creating awareness about combating the cancer of corruption in our country. This is a key part of our Islamic responsibility to enjoin the good and condemn evil at all times.

NMN strongly believes that until the Nigerian Muslims in particular, and all Nigerians in general, start to play a more active role in the war against corruption, Nigeria (as a nation) shall continue to be doomed. Combating the cancer of corruption and lack of accountability requires the collective efforts of all Nigerians.

In summary, the NMN calls for:

- (i) The EFCC to continue its spirited campaign against corruption in Nigeria; and do so with utmost level of professionalism, fairness and discipline (allowing no sacred cows);
- (ii) The removal of immunity (against prosecution for criminal offences) for President, Vice President, Governors and Deputy Governors;
- (iii) The prosecution of all people who are alleged to be corrupt no matter how highly placed;
- (iv) The setting up of an Independent Commission to investigate the corruption charges leveled against the President and any public office holder;
- (v) Nigerian Ulama and Muslim Community Leaders to eschew corruption in all its forms, and play a leading role in creating awareness about combating the cancer of corruption in our country;
- (vi) Muslims to demand accountability from all our elected officials at all times;

Signed:

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