



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 20, 2023

STATEMENT ON

SENATOR BULKACHUWA'S ADMISSION OF JUDICIAL INFLUENCE

It is our position that the inadvertent admission of guilt by Senator Bulkachuwa should not be allowed to go unaddressed. Relevant governmental agencies should act to restore public trust in the judiciary. Citizens and civil society actors should continually follow up the process and engage actively for action in the interest of our democracy.

Following the valedictory session of the 9th Assembly, the Nigerian media space was thrown into a frenzy by Senator, Adamu Muhammad Bulkachuwa thanking his wife, retired Justice Zainab Bulkachuwa, former President of the Court of Appeal. During the valedictory session, Senator Bulkachuwa thanked his wife for being tolerant, acceptant of his encroachment, and for extending her help to his colleagues while she was in office. A thank-you message of this nature would ordinarily be of little interest to public discourse but his wife's position as the former President of the Court of Appeal raises serious concerns about the integrity of the judiciary and questions the sanctity of Nigerian democracy. If, as insinuated, Justice Bulkachuwa's position had been used to influence electoral adjudications and other judicial processes unfairly, it constitutes an electoral crime and the perpetrator should be prosecuted accordingly.

Arising from the above, the Initiative for Research, Innovation and Advocacy in Development (IRIAD) and The Electoral Hub strongly condemn any form of undue influence over members of the judiciary. The institution plays a key role in upholding the principles of justice, fairness and the rule of law, and ought not to be tainted by outside influence. It is, therefore, very unsettling that a lawmaker entrusted with representing the interests of the people boasts about influencing the decisions of a high-ranking judge.

In the interest of our democracy and the sanctity of our electoral process, we call on relevant stakeholders to thoroughly investigate this anomaly and ensure the prosecution of everyone found culpable. Immediate action is required in the interest of public good. We specifically call on the Nigerian Police Force, the Office of the Attorney General of the Federation, and the Nigeria Judicial Council to take steps towards restoring the trust in our judiciary. We implore these institutions to conduct a collaboratory review of actions or inactions of Justice Zainab Bulkachuwa while in office. This would help in establishing the basis on which judicial proceedings can be initiated and the sanity of our democratic experience restored.

It is our position that the inadvertent admission of guilt should not be allowed to go unaddressed. Relevant governmental agencies should act to restore public trust. Citizens

and civil society actors should continually follow up the process and engage actively for action in the interest of our democracy.

We reiterate that accountability, transparency and justice are major requirements for democracy, democratic consolidation and societal development. As such, we commit to continue monitoring this situation closely and ensuring fairness and impartiality in a judicial system that serves the best interests of all Nigerians.

#ElectoralJusticeforNigerians
#ElectoralJudicialIntegrity2023
#StrengtheningElectoralAccountabilityNG
#IRIAD4ElectoralJustice

Signed

Princess Hamman-Obels

Director, IRIAD-The Electoral Hub

Phone: +234 9121551331 and + 234 9086998850

E-mail: electoralhub@gmail.com and comms.iriad@gmail.com

Twitter: @electoralhub and @iriadev

Instagram: @electoralhub, @theelectoralforum, and @iriadev

Facebook: @electoralhubng, @electoralforum, and @iriadev

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-electoral-hub/>
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/iriadev/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@electoralhub1196>

Website: <https://www.iriadng.org> and <https://www.electoralhub.iriadng.org>

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