



**NGF'S RESPONSE TO NED MUNIR NWOKO'S PRESS STATEMENT DATED 20TH AUGUST, 2022**

Not surprisingly, the desperate, spurious and futile advocacy mounted and coordinated by the AGF on behalf of the so-called Paris Club Consultants to justify the plundering of the humongous sum of USD418.9m from the public treasury of the States and Local Governments continued on Saturday 20th August 2022, when Ned Nwoko, in a press statement, attempted to blur and obfuscate the real facts and legal issues in controversy by dishing out blatant lies and half-truths.

The facts are and will always remain: whether the claims of the consultants are lawful and justified under our Constitution and whether any Judgment which is a subject of a pending appeal can be enforced or executed as the consultants now attempt to do? If both questions are answered in the negative, it does not matter if the contracts leading to the claims were entered into by any public official, past or present. No person or persons can agree to blatantly circumvent our Constitution and get away with it. Neither is the period when Judgments were obtained of consequence in this case.

Undoubtedly, the salient facts on the fraud associated with the Paris Club refunds can never be changed by a thousand Press Statements by the AGF or any of the Consultants. As the Judgments of the appellate courts, particularly that of the Supreme Court have begun to expose the creepiness and unlawful nature of the consultants claims; it is not surprising that they are now afflicted by dizzy spells, seriously discomforted and are now driven by desperation to ensure that the plundering and fleecing of the State is quickly completed before the determination of the pending proceedings in the appellate and other courts in order to foist a situation of frustration and helplessness on the States. This is obvious as the consultants are not in a position to restore the funds to the States if they lose on appeal; as it is becoming apparent.

It is therefore needless joining issues with NED NWOKO or indeed any of the consultants. However, it is imperative to debunk patent lies dished out in order to disabuse the minds of the undiscerning public. While Mr. Ned Nwoko strenuously tried to single out and justify his own bogus claim of USD\$68 million; the total amount which all the consultants working in concert, collectively seek and claim from the States and Local Governments, albeit unlawfully is USD\$418,953,690.59 broken down as follows:

- i. NED MUNIR NWOKO (\$68,658,192.83)
- ii. DR. TED ISIGHOHI EDWARDS (\$159,000,000)
- iii. PANIC ALERT SECURITY SYSTEMS LTD (\$47,831,920)
- iv. RIOK NIG. Ltd (USD142,028,941.95)
- v. PRINCE ORJI ORIZU (USD1,219,440.45)
- vi. BARRISTER OLAITAN BELLO (USD215,195.36)



TOTAL – USD\$418,953,690.59

It is instructive to note that all the claims by the consultants are rooted in Suit No FHC/ABJ/CS/130/13 BETWEEN: LINAS INTERNATIONAL LTD & 35 ORS VS FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA & 3 ORS in which NED NWOKO instituted, and was awarded a bogus 20% of the sum of \$3,188,078,505.96 from the States and Local Governments Paris Club refunds. The Judgment has been challenged on appeal by the States and NGF in Suit No CA/ABJ/PRE/ROEA/CV/327M1/2022: ATTORNEY GENERAL OF ABIA STATE & 35 ORS VS LINAS INTERNATIONAL LTD & 239 ORS.

The attempt by NED therefore to separate his own claim of \$68 million as if it is not related to the claims of other consultants is being clever by half. All the consultants claim to have rendered the same or similar service of helping the States and Local Governments to recover over-deducted Paris Club refunds by the Federal Government. Their cases therefore rise or fall together. A poison of the part is a poison of the whole. What is unlawful remains unlawful. Its origin is immaterial and the part or role played by all parties separately or collectively at all times is unlawful and cannot be remedied.

As it is common with all unholy alliances, it does appear that the romance between the consultants and their determination to fight together under the AGF's tacit coordination to pull out of the States the sum of USD\$418,953,690.59 may have suffered a crack. This must have led NED to address the press alone and single out his unmerited claim of \$68 million as justifiable. This is also coming just on the heel of a similar press briefing by the AGF, a few days ago during which he stoutly defended all the consultants and berated the States for opposing or delaying the prompt payment of the sum claimed. It was thought that the AGF had done a good job of defense for all of them; but NED's decision to go solo to make his own case without reference to others suggest that the union of consultants is gradually falling apart. What however NED did not tell the public is: If all the Local Governments engaged him directly as claimed and if he acted for the States through his lawyers and the NGF requested that he extends the services to all the States as also claimed, what different service did TED ISEGHOMI-EDWARDS, his collaborator and conspirator (indicted by the EFCC) render for which he is being paid the whopping sum of \$159,000,000 also from the Paris Club refund?

In his desperation to justify his claim, NED peddled untruths that his team was a member of the Federal Government Committee constituted to reconcile figures under the Paris Club refunds to the States and Local Governments. That is patently false. The report of that committee dated May, 2007 shows that only the FMF, OAGF, CBN, DMO and RMFC (secretariat) were members. Private persons who were not privy could not have been included in a committee that was meant to examine purely public financial records. It was this Committee that did all the work now claimed by NED and the other consultants.

While it is possible that the unlawful scheme hatched by the consultants to feast on public funds may have over the years been executed with the cooperation of enemies of the State without anyone raising an eye brow; the bubble has now burst and the time to account has come. It is an irony that NED and other consultants who flaunt Judgments of courts as justification for payment are now uncomfortable and jittery when the same Judgments are tested on appeal. An appeal is not a circumvention of a Judgment as NED may want the public to believe. It is a constitutional right. The consultants have no choice but to pursue



the various appeals. While NED has vowed to fully enforce the Judgment in FHC/ABJ/CS/130/2013; may we remind him that the law does not permit the enforcement of a Judgment that is on appeal. Let him reserve all his vituperations against the NGF Chairman and canvass them on appeal as the law may permit him.

Understandably, the Supreme Court (SC) has in its Judgment dated 3rd June, 2022 sent a clear signal in SUIT NO 337/2018: RIOK NIG LIMITED VS NGF 7 ORS that the claims of the consultants are unequivocally unconstitutional as funds of States and Local Governments cannot be attached in the Federation account in the manner approved and pushed by the AGF. Let the consultants therefore have their day in court with the NGF and upon victory; they can seek to be paid. It is absurd to pursue payment in the face of all pending cases. While the consultants are strangely emboldened by those who should ordinarily oppose the payment and protect public trust; the law is not silent. It upholds the truth at all times no matter how long it takes.

No professional advocacy or media campaign to hoodwink the public can change the law. We are not unmindful of the ridiculous claim by one of consultants that it was his media campaign that swayed a Federal High Court Judgment in favour of the NGF. Interestingly, the public which is the greatest victim in the mismanagement of scarce public resources has since been well informed and is on red alert to avert and stop what is apparently an attempt by some ravenous rent seekers masquerading as consultants to further exacerbate the economic woes of citizens under the prevailing dire economic situation. The use of libelous language on the person of the Chairman of NGF, who has refused to be compromised and has firmly stood his ground on the unconstitutional and unlawful nature of the consultants' claims, is not helpful to their case either.

The NGF is an apolitical organization that operates under defined principles targeted at good governance. Its role in the whole of this Paris Club refund debacle to consultants is to ensure that Nigeria citizens are not unlawfully deprived of resources meant for their development. NGF will not therefore waste its valuable time to defend unsubstantiated allegations against individuals or persons who are in a position to defend themselves. If NED is sure of his facts, he is at liberty to approach the necessary authorities to bring to justice on any person or persons and all conspirators (including himself) who were allegedly involved in misappropriating public resources for campaign financing. The NGF hereby states unequivocally that it has not at any time been involved in or been in receipt of USD\$100m or any other funds from NED Nwoko to finance elections in any State.

Perhaps, confirming our fears and that of the public that the AGF has abdicated his role as public defender and trustee and become the strongest advocate to the consultants is now evident in NED NWOKO's press statement wherein he praised the role played by the AGF describing it as inevitable. NED cannot say that the consultants have no official Platform to canvass their case, when the AGF has, in spite of public protestation, provided the strongest and most virulent platform to campaign for the expeditious payment of the sums claimed. The AGF has addressed and issued over half a dozen press statements justifying why the consultants should be immediately paid. Not even NED'S solicitors could have done any better.



The NGF and its leadership remain focused and determined to diligently pursue all appeals on the Judgments on the Paris Club refunds. All that it requests of the AGF and the consultants is to allow the appeal processes to run and be exhausted. It may be that the consultants will successfully defend the appeals after which they will be paid. However, if they lose as RIOK NIGERIA LTD has lost; which is the most likely verdict that shall befall all the other consultants; let the public funds in issue remain protected.

We urge NED and the other consultants to end the media war and direct all energies towards defending the appeals.

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