



For Immediate Release

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PRESS RELEASE: Ribadu Must Remain at the EFCC

New Jersey, United States— The **Citizens for Nigeria**, a group of Nigerian professionals across the world, has sent an urgent and passionate message to President Umaru Yar'Adua, asking him to take a tough stance on corruption by ensuring that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Chairman, Mr. Nuhu Ribadu, is not sacrificed at the altar of political fortune seekers.

In a second letter in two weeks, partly titled: "Support Mr. Ribadu," sent by DHL to the Aso Rock Presidential Villa on July 6, 2007, the CFN demanded that the President should not yield to persistent pressure to remove Mr. Ribadu, noting that there was no reason to change the EFCC leadership when it had accomplished so much in the last few years.

It wrote: "We are aware of the intense mobilization among the political elite, the very group that is responsible for most of the corruption in our nation, to replace Mr. Ribadu with a less formidable anti-corruption czar. This is a disingenuous move your administration cannot afford to entertain. You must appreciate the flood of hope that came with your asset declaration, and must continue in the same path. Most Nigerians see Mr. Ribadu as a strong force against corruption, and want his role preserved.

For these reasons, we strongly believe that Mr. Nuhu Ribadu's abrupt replacement will do irreparable damage to the fight against corruption."

A hesitant President Yar'Adua had declared his assets, a first in Nigeria's history by a president, only days after receiving a CFN letter urging him, among other requests, to do so.

This time, however, the organization was specifically focused on the war against corruption which the previous administration of Olusegun Obasanjo had started with the creation of the EFCC with Mr. Ribadu in the saddle.

It remarked that Mr. Ribadu, was the best man for the job because of his fearless execution of cases of corrupt enrichment and other financial crimes, which had won him worldwide acclaim and helped to improve Nigeria's profile in the international community.

“The credibility of the Nigerian government in the international arena has been boosted in no small way by the hard work and selfless service by the likes of Mr. Nuhu Ribadu. We therefore request that Mr. Nuhu Ribadu, who is locally and internationally respected, be given all the support and tools he needs by your government to continue his reputed battle against corruption. Progress has been made, and further progress is possible.”

The CFN added that the fight against corruption is a major yardstick by which the Yar’Adua administration will eventually be judged, and that its success will have far-reaching ramifications for Nigeria’s future.

As in its first letter, the organization urged the President not to unwind the corruption investigations against former governors – his colleagues - and other public officials, but widen it because “public good must take precedence over all other interests.”

It therefore asked President Yar’Adua to demonstrate serious commitment to the war on corruption by not only supporting Mr. Ribadu but giving him additional resources to succeed.

The professionals said they decided to communicate with the President because “we see in you a golden opportunity for Nigeria to turn the corner of progress once and for all.” It, however, warned, that its support “will be solely predicated on the actions you take, especially in the area of corruption, rather than promises.”

“The time to convince well-meaning Nigerians that you mean business, and will do well is now,” the CFN concluded.

Editor’s Note: The Citizens for Nigeria (CFN) has a central objective of bringing ordinary Nigerians into the political process, whether they are at home or abroad. The CFN was formed out of the realization that Nigerians are suffering because the leaders have hijacked power completely from the citizens, and voters have lost hope in the democratic process. The CFN comes to restore hope by simple, dedicated and targeted actions that would bring real Nigerians back into the political process.