



Hon. Justice John Inyang Okoro, JSC

JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT
JUSTICE'S CHAMBERS
SUPREME COURT OF NIGERIA
P.M.B. 306, ABUJA, NIGERIA

17th October, 2016

The Honourable, the Chief Justice of Nigeria and
Chairman,
National Judicial Council,
Supreme Court Complex,
Three Arms Zone
Abuja.

INVASION OF MY OFFICIAL RESIDENCE BY OPERATIVES OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE SECURITY SERVICE

On Friday, the 7th day of October, 2016, at about 9.00 pm, I received a phone call from an unfamiliar caller. He introduced himself as an official from the Presidency. He told me he had a letter for me from Mr. President. I immediately left my study room and went to open the door. Upon the door being opened, I saw so many heavily armed men with an inscription "DSS" on their uniform. One of them who was in mufti told me they were to search my house. I requested that I be allowed to inform the Chief Justice of Nigeria but they rebuffed, rather, they seized my phone from me.

My Lord, the operatives of the Department of State Security searched all the rooms in the house meticulously. They also searched the boy's quarters and my official vehicles parked outside. At the end of the search, which lasted till about 1.30am of 8th October, 2016, they took away the following items:

1. One (1) iPad.
2. Three phones (only one active).
3. USD 38,800 (Thirty eight thousand, eight hundred dollars).
4. N3.5 (Three million, five hundred thousand naira) only.
5. Cheque books (Four in number).

The above items were documented on the back page of the search warrant they produced and we signed.

Also, the DSS operatives informed me that their Director-General wanted to see me that night. I requested to visit their office upon the break of the day but they refused. In view of the presence of the heavily armed men who accompanied them and who were pointing their gun at me from all angles, I had no choice than to follow them to their office that night. I was detained by them in their office till Sunday, 9th October, 2016 and upon your Lordship's intervention that Sunday, they released me in the evening of that Sunday.

My Lord, I noticed that they also brought other judicial officers (serving and retired) to their office. So, before releasing us, they asked me to make a statement concerning the money found in my house. I told them that having received the sum of USD24,000.00 (Twenty four thousand dollars) and £10,000 (Ten thousand pounds) a year for the past three years of my sojourn in this court as annual medical/vacation allowances, and having not spent more than £5,000 (Five thousand pounds) on each of three trips I have so far made abroad, I was entitled to have more than the amount recovered from me. Put differently, My Lord, the money was the balance of my estacode received from this court for the past three years. This is quite outside the estacodes I have received for the International Conferences I have so far attended since joining the bench of this court.

My Lord, as at the time of writing this report, the DSS has not confronted me with any petition or complaint from any quarters whatsoever. Rather, they have grilled me, asking questions on some none existing properties around the country. They have also doubted the age of my children alleging that they are toddlers. This is sad and unbelievable.

My Lord, I strongly believe that this my travail is not unconnected with the verbal report I made to you on 1st February, 2016 about the visit to my official residence by H/E, Rotomi Amaechi, former Governor of Rivers State and now Minister of Transportation. In that

report, I told you My Lord, that Mr. Amaechi said that the President of Nigeria and the All Progressives Congress mandated him to inform me that they must win their election Appeals in respect of Rivers State, Akwa Ibom State and Abia State at all costs. For Akwa Ibom State, he alleged that he sponsored Mr. Umana Umana, candidate of All Progressives Congress for that election and that if he lost Akwa Ibom appeal, he would have lost a fortune. Mr. Amaechi also said that he had already visited you and that you had agreed to make me a member of the panel that would hear the appeals. He further told me that Mr. Umana would be paying me millions of Naira monthly if I co-operated with them. My response, as I told you on that date was that it does not lie within my power to grant his request and that I would do all within my power not to be in the panel for Akwa Ibom State. My Lord graciously left me out of the panel for Akwa Ibom State. That notwithstanding, the All Progressives Congress in Akwa Ibom State which lost the appeal at the Supreme Court believe that my presence in the Supreme Court made them to lose the appeal. Could I have resigned from the Supreme Court simply because people of Akwa Ibom State had a matter before it?


My Lord will recall that I also reported that Mr. Umana Umana visited my residence before Amaechi's visit. He also made the same request of assistance to win his appeal at the Supreme Court. Mr. Umana talked about "seeing" the Justices who would hear the appeal. Pastor (Dr) Ebebe Ukpong who led Mr. Umana Umana to my house intercepted and said that the issue of "seeing" the justices was not part of their visit and that as a Pastor, he would not be part of such a discussion. Mr. Umana apologized. I advised them to go and pray about the matter and get a good lawyer. That was how they left my house.

My Lord, up till now, I do not know what I have done. Over the years, from the Magistracy till date, I have done my best to eschew all forms of corrupt practices. I have not received any bribe from anybody. My Lord is quite aware of my position as regards those who take bribe in the judiciary. I detest it and have no room for any adjustment. That is the truth.

I urge my Lord and the National Judicial Council to disregard all the lies and media campaign orchestrated by those who felt I purposely refused to help them win their election appeals in the Supreme Court. I am confident that God will vindicate me at the end of this ordeal. I take it as a temporary set-back. I remain loyal to my oath of office and the need to be just and fair in handling matters before me.

My Lord, thanks for your kind attention.

Please, accept my assurances of the highest regards.



**Hon. Justice John Inyang Okoro,
Justice, Supreme Court.**