



## **PRESS STATEMENT**

### **NIGERIA CIVIC SPACE PROTECTION ALLIANCE (NCSPA) DEMANDS UNCONDITIONAL AND IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF THE LAWYER (BARRISTER INIBEHE EFFIONG) IMPRISONED BY AKWA IBOM STATE CHIEF JUDGE.**

Nigeria Civic Space Protection Alliance (NCSPA), an alliance of CSOs, working for the protection and promotion of a conducive civic space across Nigeria and beyond, hereby, condemn, without reservation, “the imprisonment” and continued detention of citizen Inibehe Effiong by the Chief Judge (CJ) of Akwa Ibom state. Just recently, citizens of Nigeria rose in unison to support welfare of their Lordships at the Supreme Court, when issues about their welfare and related petition came to public knowledge. Citizens never knew, a shocker, was awaiting them, when attacked on the civic space became ferocious, with a (human rights) Lawyer sent to prison for carrying out his constitutional responsibility.

Citizen Inibehe Effiong, a human rights lawyer, representing his client has been remanded in prison’s custody on the orders of the state chief judge, who alleged contempt of court or (whatever) against the human rights lawyer. Akwa Ibom State is a “Dakada State”, with the state government, projecting the state as a regional tourists’ hub. Dakada means, rise up for good and prosperity, which is the opposite of what a human rights defender will achieve in prison. This is equally a blatant attack on the civic space. Nigeria Civic Space Protection Alliance (NCSPA) condemn this sad development wholly. Judiciary is known as the temple of justice...It should, therefore, not be allowed to suffer from democratic inadequacies. The National Judiciary Council (NJC) and Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) should intervene, in view of the expected sacredness of their brand towards justice.

We urge Her Lordship to harken to social justice through democratic remediation by reversing the order.

NCSPA is an alliance of civil society organizations and social accountability stakeholders across Nigeria and beyond. It has a mandate to promote and protect civic space and democratic sustainability in Nigeria. The alliance have a membership strength of over 100 members and was unveiled on the 16<sup>th</sup> of July 2022 through the FAIR’s Nigeria program by NDEBUMOG.

**E-Signed dated July 29<sup>th</sup> 2022:**

High Chief (Dr) George-Hill Anthony

**Convener.**

Stiv Obodoekwe

**Member.**