



## For Immediate Release

Contact: Chris Tunde Odediran  
[admin@citizensforigeria.com](mailto:admin@citizensforigeria.com)  
<http://citizensforigeria.com/>

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## PRESS RELEASE: The Choreographed Dismissal of Nuhu Ribadu

**New Jersey, United States** –The bold and insensitive dismissal of Mr. Nuhu Ribadu, the former Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), by the Nigeria Police marks the end of pretention by the Umaru Yar'Adua administration and the beginning of reality and truth regarding what Nigeria is about to become. This president is neither a pathfinder nor a savior, but a protector of the ugly past. It is time for well-meaning Nigerians to wake up from an 18-month slumber to do whatever it would take to crush the stumps of the past before it regrows.

The Citizens for Nigeria (CFN) saw the dismissal coming and warned, right from the time President Umaru Yar'Adua appointed Mr. Michael Aondoakaa, a defense attorney for EFCC's accused politicians, as the chief federal law officer. How can we forget so soon that Aondoakaa, without doubt acting with the consent of the President, had gone to court to fight the EFCC within a few months of his appointment? The storm had gathered since, and the culmination is the dismissal of Mr. Ribadu by one of the worst police institutions in the history of the world, the Nigeria Police Force.

If according to the Police Service Commission, which sat on Mr. Ribadu's case, he was fired because of improper behavior, it has acted even more improperly by taking action on a case that is still in litigation. No one in the police is capable of casting a stone at Ribadu, since we know how morally and legally distressed the police has always been. Not even its highest officer, Mike Okiro, would be spared if placed on the same pedestal upon which Mr. Ribadu was crucified.

The blame for the dismissal is not for the Nigeria Police, as we all know the institution is a colossal failure which needs help, prayers and pity more than anything else. The Nigeria Police is a spent force that is now competing with the Odua People's Congress (OPC) for the protection of Nigerians against crime. It has such gigantic problems that the dismissal of Mr. Ribadu should not be its priority at this time.

We blame not the police, since it has no value, respect, leadership nor comprehension of its own space within the national framework. The nation's police, the world knows, is corrupt and shameless from the sole of its feet to the tip of its head. It's the same police which Mr. Ribadu had fought from within and turned upside down when its former head, Mr. Tafa Balogun, was exposed, and drawn before the courts like a common criminal. How can one be surprised that the leadership of such a corrupt institution will not hold grudges against the one who defied its internal traditions of corruption by prosecuting from the very top.

We should not focus on the pathetic institution called the Nigeria Police. If we do, we fall for the trap of President Yar'Adua and his men, who like us to believe they have nothing to do with the

victimization of the former EFCC Chairman. The truth is that the police, being a weak and disliked institution, was used as a necessary route for the delivery of an action which the Federal Government had intricately woven and gradually executed.

Having separated the Nigeria Police from the issue of Ribadu's dismissal, we take the ball straight to the doors of the Presidency, where plans to get rid of Mr. Ribadu had been hatched from the very beginning, unknown to most Nigerians, under the "Yar'Adua rule of law." We call it a ruse of law, because it is a gimmick to reverse the few strides of the preceding Obasanjo administration.

The Citizens for Nigeria was a bit, but not altogether, surprised by the attempt to 'weed' off Mr. Ribadu, considering the high-profile mention of his victimization by Mr. Gani Fawehinmi and Professor Wole Soyinka in public comments after their federal awards. Both eminent citizens accused the Yar'Adua administration of being dishonorable and dishonest about the war against corruption by its vendetta against Mr. Ribadu. Although no response came from the Presidency to the well-publicized comments of these respected Nigerians, dismissing the symbol of the war on corruption within the same news cycle is a slap on the face and a complete disregard for the sentiments and aspirations of Nigerians.

The administration of Mr. Yar'Adua has declared a readiness to take on the civil society by this dismissal and it should prepare its hands to behave like its predecessors by using the law enforcement agencies to brutalize and dehumanize those who will have good reasons to rise up against the retrogressive policies that it unleashes. In the end, the administration will earn its own reputation and record its history.

When Yar'Adua came to power, his promises were to be a servant leader. The humble entrance was probably necessitated by his low moral percentage to rule, having crawled upon a massively rigged election into power. Along with other Nigerians, the CFN believed at the time that the President meant well and would do well. After 18 months in power, we no longer can trust this President. And conclusion is not based emphatically on the removal of Mr. Ribadu. Mr. Yar'Adua is failing in every way.

In fact, this is perhaps the most lethargic administration in Nigeria's history - far lazier and more docile than the Sani Abacha regime, although not as brutal. If it took government months just to replace government officials, how long will it take to repair a nation badly in need of rehabilitation? Except anyone thinks there is something to show for the last 18 months of the Yar'Adua administration, it is fair to say he has not started to rule. Well, maybe he will now begin to rule, since he has promised to deliver on his promises in 2009. While the CFN likes to think the administration can deliver, facts don't support such optimism. A careful look at the list of new ministerial team -the composition of which took forever to mature - makes it difficult even in wild patriotism to expect anything spectacular. What we see is a team of weak individuals with no proven record, spent forces, round pegs in square holes and political carpetbaggers given another chance to steal.

There is nothing demonstrated by this administration, either in human resource or stated vision to expect Nigeria to achieve rapid development and find its right place among nations in a decade or two.

Contrarily, this government is looking more and more like the ones that have led Nigeria to bleed nearly unto death.

Just who would be happy with Ribadu's removal? Ibrahim Babangida would be a happy dude because he is back in the safe zone after a few brushes with the EFCC. Ayodele Fayose would be glad he is not only facing light charges from the EFCC, he could even continue to play politics in Ekiti State. Lucky Igbinedion would be hosting parties to celebrate the slap on the arm of a paltry 3.6 million naira he has to return for alleged theft running into billions of naira. James Ibori would be glad it is not Ribadu who is still investigating him for theft of public funds. The state governors whose cases had been ready for prosecution before Mr. Yar'Adua came to power would be joyful that not only do they have nothing to worry about, they can actually dine with the President in the State House. Mr. Ribadu's ouster has bred a large number of happy people, who will not only escape answering charges of corruption, but get political appointments as a reward.

The Yar'Adua-Aondoakaa plot has matured. Mr. Ribadu has been disgraced, demoted and dismissed. He got the 'Three D' treatment under the "new improved" rule of law. The same rule of law has not found thousands of ordinary Nigerians sitting in the prisons under inhumane conditions, many of whom did not even commit any offence. But the law is sharp and strong when it applies to Mr. Ribadu.

We suspect the former EFCC Chairman dropped part of his litigation against the police as a result of some insider negotiation or assurances given to him. Whatever the true story may be, the withdrawal was ill-advised and had strengthened the hand of the government against him. Even if he has committed any mistakes, Mr. Ribadu remains a legend, a national icon, whose records cannot be embellished nor erased from the national mind. The end has not come for him in his service to the nation. Rather, after the dark period he now faces, light will emerge. He has only been dismissed from the services of a bad government, not the minds and hearts of Nigerians who love him and cherish his dedication and patriotism. We want him back someday.

Nigerians will not always be tolerant of misrule and bad governance. When Nigerians see the light in large numbers, they will enforce their own rights and freedom and beat any administration in line with their expectations and aspirations. The administration of Mr. Yar'Adua may continue to exert the force of state against the citizens, the media and citizen journalists, but he is fast losing a unique opportunity to be the hope that Nigeria has, and the answer to the prayers they have patiently awaited to pass.

The Citizens for Nigeria will not be one of those sitting by idly for the government to do well on its own. We will force it to do the right thing, together with other civic groups and right-thinking people. The battle starts.



Released by: Chris Tunde Odediran, New Jersey, USA.

**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.