

PRESS RELEASE

RE: CITY LAWYER MAGAZINE PUBLICATION WITH THE TITLE - AJUMOGOBIA ACCUSES OLANIPEKUN'S LAW FIRM OF MISCONDUCT; AND ALL OTHER RELATED PUBLICATIONS IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA.

Introduction

I have read, with great perplexity and utter bewilderment, a number of sensational, conflicting and grossly inaccurate headlines and comments, being spread across various social media platforms (Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram etc.), in respect of a recent event which involved me as an active player.

The email which I sent to Saipem SPA ('**Saipem**') on **20th June, 2022**, seeking to get the law firm of Messrs. Wole Olanipekun & Co. ('**the firm**') involved in a case between the company and the **Rivers State Government**, has generated great controversy, consternation and condemnation. Ordinarily, this should not have been a matter for public debate, discussion and comments, but since it has somehow found its way into the public domain, and is now being circulated by persons whom I thought would have exercised better discretion, maturity and judgement, I believe it is absolutely necessary for me to set the records straight, so as to forestall and prevent any unwarranted anger against innocent persons.

My admission as a Partner

I was admitted into the partnership of the firm in **December 2021**, to supervise and oversee the firm's corporate & commercial practice, having worked on various transactions in that area for over 12 years. I have never really played an active role in the Nigerian litigation space, and largely unfamiliar with a lot of its inner intricacies. My limited knowledge of litigation is mainly based on the experience which I garnered during my early years of practice, and my occasional appearance in court to watch some of the finest, brilliant and refined minds in the legal profession – my father, **Mr. Oluwemimo Ogunde SAN**, the Founding Partner of the firm, **Chief Olanipekun SAN, OFR**, and other distinguished persons in the legal profession, display their impeccable and almost-flawless oratory and legal skills. I am therefore not conversant, to any great extent, with what goes on in the litigation circles - at least as far as legal matters/cases in court are concerned. I will explain the relevancy of this information shortly.

However, as a responsible partner in the firm, I was committed to securing business for the firm, by leveraging on all its combined strengths in various sectors of the Nigerian economy. However, at no time have I ever been asked, much less pressured, to secure clients or briefs for the firm, as the firm is, without any doubt, sufficiently prominent to attract such briefs on its own.

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The Email to Saipem

It was based on this commitment, and perhaps with great enthusiasm and exuberance, that I wrote an email to **Saipem** on **20th June, 2022**, without the consent or knowledge of either the Founding Partner or the Managing Partner of the firm, **Mr. Bode Olanipekun SAN**. I found out about the **Saipem** matter through an online article, and I unilaterally reached out to **Saipem** about the said matter, which unknown to me, was no longer before the court. My limited knowledge about the litigation space came to bare because, had I consulted with other persons conversant with the recent happenings in the litigation circles, I would have been informed that the matter between **Saipem** and the **Rivers State Government** had been settled out of court about two (2) months prior to my email of **20th June, 2022**. Therefore, as at the time of writing the said email, there was no such pending matter before the court.

Further, I made certain careless representations and inferences in my email of **20th June, 2022**, that could have been easily interpreted to mean that the firm could help secure some advantage in the court for **Saipem**. I must therefore retract such representations and state categorically that, since joining the law firm in **December 2021**, I have never seen any person at the firm (including its Founding and Managing Partners), engage in any unwholesome or unethical practice, in the manner that will suggest that the firm can somehow 'influence' judicial outcomes by improper means.

The Steps I have taken

As it has turned out, given the barrage of calls and messages I have received in the last 24 hours, my email of **20th June, 2022** (although done in exuberance, but in good faith and with altruism) has caused great distress, embarrassment and trauma to the people I hold and will continue to very dearly – the Founding Partner of the firm, **Chief Wole Olanipekun SAN, OFR**, the Managing Partner of the firm, **Mr. Bode Olanipekun SAN**, and my dearest parents, **Mr. Oluwemimo Ogunde SAN** and **Mrs. Yinka Ogunde**.

In order to remedy the situation, I reached out personally to **H.Odein Ajumogobia, SAN, OFR**, via email and WhatsApp messages sent to the Learned Silk on **24th June, 2022**, to apologize to him for this error of judgment. My partners at the firm, **Chief Wole Olanipekun, SAN, OFR** and **Mr. Bode Olanipekun SAN**, also reached out to **H.Odein Ajumogobia SAN, OFR**, separately, via various messages sent to the Learned Silk on **24th June, 2022**, to apologize for the entire situation. My father, **Mr. Oluwemimo Ogunde SAN**, also reached out to **H.Odein Ajumogobia SAN, OFR**, to apologize on his daughter's behalf. I also reached out to persons that have personal relationships with the Learned Silk, including a classmate of mine at the University of Hull, United Kingdom, because of the Learned Silk's avowed reputation for mentoring younger lawyers. With those measures taken, I believed that the matter was already settled as the

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Learned Silk had represented to different persons, who had reached to him to explain that I made an honest but regrettable mistake. I was therefore shocked and distressed to see and notice the unusual media attention the event had garnered in the last twenty-four (24) hours especially, considering the fact that the various correspondence were largely private.

Therefore, the aim of this statement is set the records straight for future references, and, hopefully, put to rest, once and for all, this entire event, by stating, to the best of my ability and in all truthfulness, the correct facts of the event. The firm of **Wole Olanipekun & Co.**, which I have been proud to be a part of, is not known, and has never been known, to engage in any unethical or corrupt practice to gain favours in respect of cases or matters in court.

I must not fail to use this medium to appreciate my friends, family, senior colleagues, and other concerned persons who have reached out to me regarding this event. The last 48 hours have, for me, been very disturbing, distressing and sobering. The unfortunate circumstances are regretted and difficult lessons have been learnt. I will continue to aspire to the most exemplary conduct in the legal profession.

Thank you all and God bless you.

Signed
Adekunbi Ogunde