



A CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO WRITING A PUBLIC PETITION TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



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PUBLIC PETITION TO THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES**

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Introduction

Since March 2020, Nigeria and indeed the rest of the world have been gripped by the global health coronavirus pandemic known as COVID-19.

The global health pandemic has led to serious economic and social problems and challenges around the world. Some of the problems include health, economic crisis, unemployment, disruption of the education system, human rights, abuse etc.

Citizens have found their way of life affected by the COVID-19 crisis. The lockdown and restrictions on movement of citizens have also taken its toll on people.

In Nigeria, where the government has done little or nothing to promote relief to citizens, the economic and social impact of COVID-19 have been more devastating.

The Nigerian National Assembly has processes for receiving complaints or petitions regarding infractions on their rights and administrative injustice.

The House of Representatives which is one of the two arms of the National Assembly has through its Committee on Public Petitions

set up a process of treating complaints and petitions received from members of the public.

The House of Representatives Committee on Public Petitions is vested with powers to receive petitions from the public and provide redress for infractions.

With peoples complaints against public institutions and agencies likely to increase during and post COVID-19, there is an important need to create awareness for citizens to understand the process and procedure for pursuing complaints on infractions of their rights.

This Guide is issued to simplify and create knowledge for citizens who intend to use the public petitions process in the House of Representatives to pursue redress against administrative injustice, human rights abuse or other infringements suffered by them especially in the COVID-19 period.

It also seeks to create understanding of the public petitions process, so that citizens who may not know of its effectiveness or even its availability may know and take advantage of it.

Guidelines on How to Write a Petition : What Should be Included in a Petition

● Address

- The Petition should be directly addressed to the House of Representatives through the Member representing the petitioner's constituency any Member of his/her choice or Chairman of the Committee on Public Petitions

● Body

- Describe the action / situation in which the petitioner is making a complaint
- Conclude the petition by clearly stating the prayer (request), which is the action the petitioner wishes the House of Representatives to take
- The content of a petition should be written in a respectful, concise and polite manner
- The petition should be edited for errors
- The petition should be written in English language, and when written in another language, it should be accompanied with a written English translation certified to be correct by the member who presents it

● Signatures

- The petition should contain original handwritten signatures on every page containing the petition (the request)

- If signatures are affixed to sheets other than that containing the petition itself, such sheets should carry at the head, the prayer (the request) of the petition
- Signatures must be in the same handwriting of the person signing the petition
- A corporation should sign a petition with its common seal
- Signatures and marks must follow with the addresses of signees
- All marks on the petition should be witnessed
- If signatures are not affixed, or marks are not witnessed, the petition must contain addresses of persons signing or making a mark

What Should Not be Included in a Petition

- Erasures and cancellation
- Attachments, letters, affidavits, photos or supporting documents. (The Committee will ask the petitioner to provide any document or material, that is necessary to determine his/her case)
- Printed, photocopied, faxed, electronic or non-written hand signatures

A Template on how to Draft and Address Petitions

The Speaker
House of Representatives
National Assembly
Three-Arms Zone
Abuja

Through

Line 1: (Insert the name of Honorable Member representing you, or any Member of your choice or Chairman Committee on Public Petitions)

Line 2: (Insert the Constituency of the Honourable member addressed in Line 1 above)

National Assembly
Three-Arms Zone
Abuja.

Dear XXXX,

**PETITION BY (NAME OF THE PETITIONER) AGAINST (NAME OF THE RESPONDENT)
ON THE (TITLE OF THE PETITION)**

{**Paragraph 1** : INTRODUCTION - This petition of (insert name of residents or citizens of Nigeria) from (insert name of Local Government Area) of (insert State of Origin)}

{**Paragraph 2** : FACTS OF THE PETITION - briefly state the action petitioned for which the petitioner(s) wish the House of Representatives to consider or address}

{**Paragraph 3** : ACTION PETITIONED FOR – clearly set the request/prayer by stating the remedy or actions the petitioners wish the House of Representatives to take or refrain from taking}

{Paragraph 4 : CLOSING - I/We, the undersigned is/are concerned citizen(s) prays the House of Representatives to Intervene into my/our plight, to ensure that justice is done in my/our case}

{Paragraph 5 : SIGNATURE - Signatures must be in original writing and the last page containing the prayer/request must be signed}

Signed;¹

Name	Gender	Address	Signature , Thumb Impression or Corporation seal	Occupation	Date

{Subsequent pages : Repeat the prayer or request from the first page of the petition} *facts and evidences can be stated in subsequent pages but the prayers should only appear on the last page.*

Signatures

(Must be signed in your original writing,

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

Addresses:

(Provide full residential address) the page containing the petition must be signed)

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

Note:

- i. Petitioners can send their petitions through courier or by hand to the House Committee on Public Petitions before it can be laid at plenary and referred back to the Committee on Public Petitions for Investigative Hearing.
- ii. Petitioners should include his/her phone number, immediately after his / her address.

¹ Although this is required by the Standing Rules, customarily, a name, phone number and signature suffices.

Sample of Petition

9th December 2020

The Honorable Speaker,
Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila,
House of Representatives,
National Assembly Complex,
Three Arms Zone,
Abuja.

Through

The Chairman,
House of Representatives Committee
On Public Petitions,
National Assembly Complex,
Three Arms Zone,
Abuja, Nigeria.

Dear Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila,

**PETITION OF DEXTER OGOCHUKWU ON NON PAYMENT OF
SALARY BY THE FEDERAL ROAD SAFETY CORPS**

My name is Dexter Ogochukwu and I am from Anambra East Local Government Area in Anambra State. On the 20th of May 2019, I was recruited into the Federal Road Safety Corps. The appointment letter that was given to me was also signed by the Corps Marshal of the Federal Road Safety Corps on the said date.

I got my appointment letter after going through the application process which was advertised in three national newspapers and after being called to sit for a computer-based test (CBT) which I passed and an oral interview. My signed appointment letter is attached and marked as "EXHIBIT A".

However, since May 2019 when I received my appointment letter, no salary has been paid to me for over a year that I resumed work. I have also written severally to the Management to work; hence this petition. 6 Letters written to the Management of the Federal Road Safety Corps is attached and marked as "EXHIBIT B"

MY PRAYERS:

- 1) I humbly pray that the House looks into my plight with a view of granting me fair Hearing in this matter.
- 2) That all my arrears of salaries from the date my Appointment letter was given to me till date be paid to me.

I pray the House of Representatives to intervene into my plight to ensure that justice is done in my case.

Yours faithfully

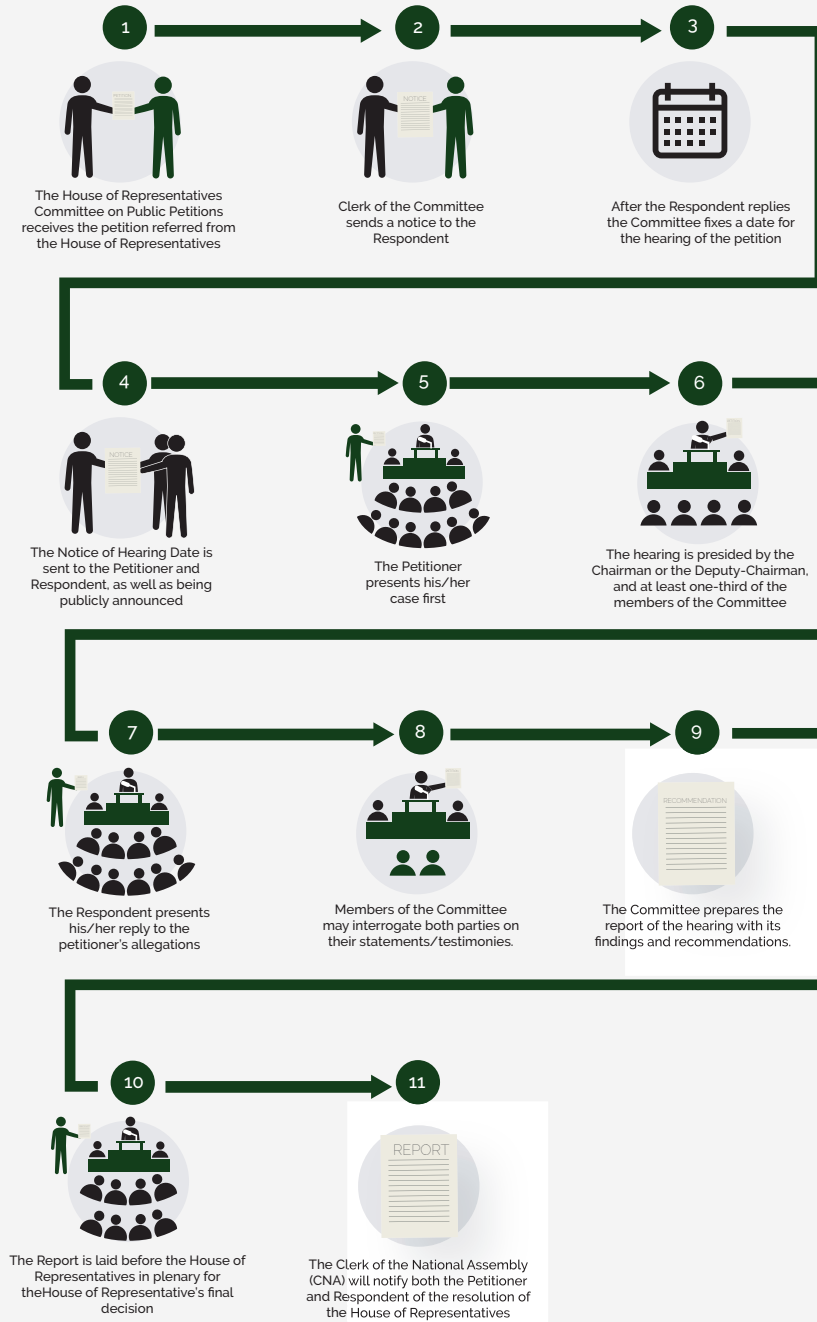
Signature

Dexter Ogochukwu, Female

No.3 Ushafa Street Bwari, Abuja

+234866666666

The Public Petitions Process in the House of Representatives



For more information on the work of the House Committee on Public Petitions, visit www.nasspublicpetitions.org

House of Reps Committee on P x +

nasspublicpetitions.org

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC PETITIONS

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The House Committee on Public Petitions provides a mechanism for citizens to bring their complaints against public institutions free from the financial burden and formality of a court system

About PLAC

Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC) is a non-governmental organization committed to strengthening democratic governance and citizens' participation in Nigeria. PLAC works to enhance citizens' engagement with state institutions, and to promote transparency and accountability in policy and decision-making processes.

The main focus of PLAC's intervention in the democratic governance process is on supporting the capacity development of the Legislature and reforming the electoral process. This Guide is developed with the support of the European Union.

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