

A CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO WRITING A PUBLIC PETITION TO THE SENATE



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PUBLIC PETITION TO THE SENATE**

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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 Senate which is one of the two arms of the National Assembly has through its Committee on Ethics, Privileges and Public Petitions

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

The Senate Committee on Ethics, Privileges and Public Petitions is vested with powers to receive petition 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 Senate 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 Senate through the Member representing the petitioner's constituency/any Member or Chairman Committee on Ethics, Privileges and 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 relief the petitioner seeks
- 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 an English translation and duly certified to be correct by the Senator 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, the prayer of the petition or summary should be written at the top of each subsequent sheet

- 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 residential addresses of the persons signing or making the marks
- All marks on the petition should be witnessed and attested to as required by law

What Should Not be Included in a Petition

- A request for the grant of public funds without the recommendation of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
- Writing a Petition of which there is a judicial remedy (where a court has enforced a right, imposed a penalty for the harm of a wrongful act inflicted on an individual)
- A printed, photocopied, faxed or electronic signature

Sample Template on how to Draft and Address Petitions

Date
The President of the Senate
National Assembly
Three-Arms Zone
Abuja

Through

Line 1: (Insert the name of Senator representing you, or any Member of your choice or Chairman of the Senate Committee on Ethics , Privileges and Public Petitions)

Line 2: (Insert the Constituency of the Senator 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 Senate to consider or address}

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

{Paragraph 4 : CLOSING - I/We, the undersigned is/are concerned citizen(s) prays the Senate 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;

| | | | | | |
|------|--------|---------|-----------|------------|------|
| Name | Gender | Address | Signature | 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 Senate Committee on Ethics, Privileges and Public Petitions before it can be laid at the plenary and referred back to the Committee for Investigative Hearing.
- ii. Petitioners should include his / her phone number, immediately after his / her address.

Sample of Petition

9th December 2020

The President of the Senate,
Senator Ahmad Lawan,
Senate,
National Assembly Complex,
Three Arms Zone,
Abuja.

Through

The Chairman,
Senate Committee on Ethics, Privileges and Public Petitions,
National Assembly Complex,
Three Arms Zone,
Abuja, Nigeria.

Dear Senator Ahmad Lawan,

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

My name is Dexter Ogochukwu and I am from the Delta North Senatorial District in Delta State. On the 20th of May 2019, I was recruited into the Federal Road Safety Corps as a Route Commander.

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 that 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. The 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 Senate to intervene into my plight to ensure that justice is done in my case.

Yours faithfully

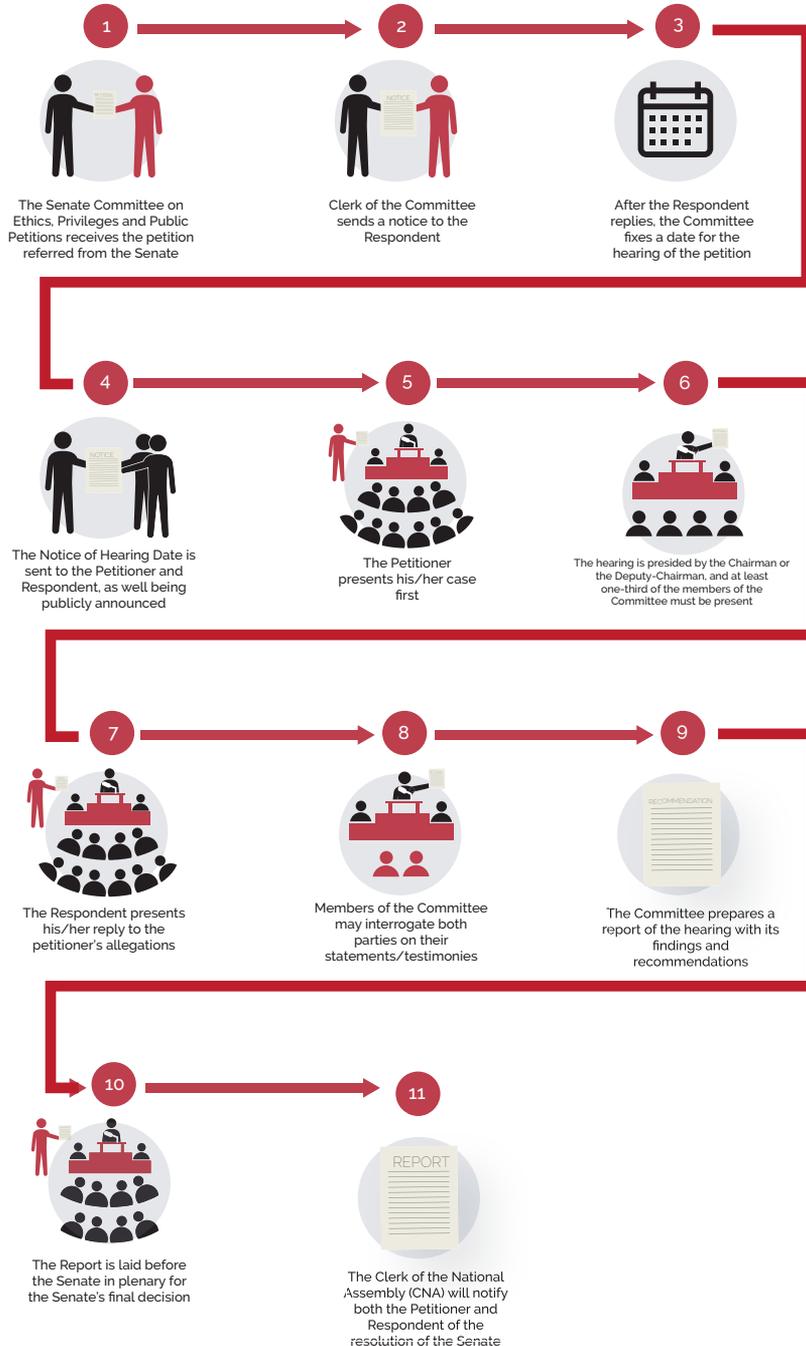
Signature

Dexter Ogochukwu, Female

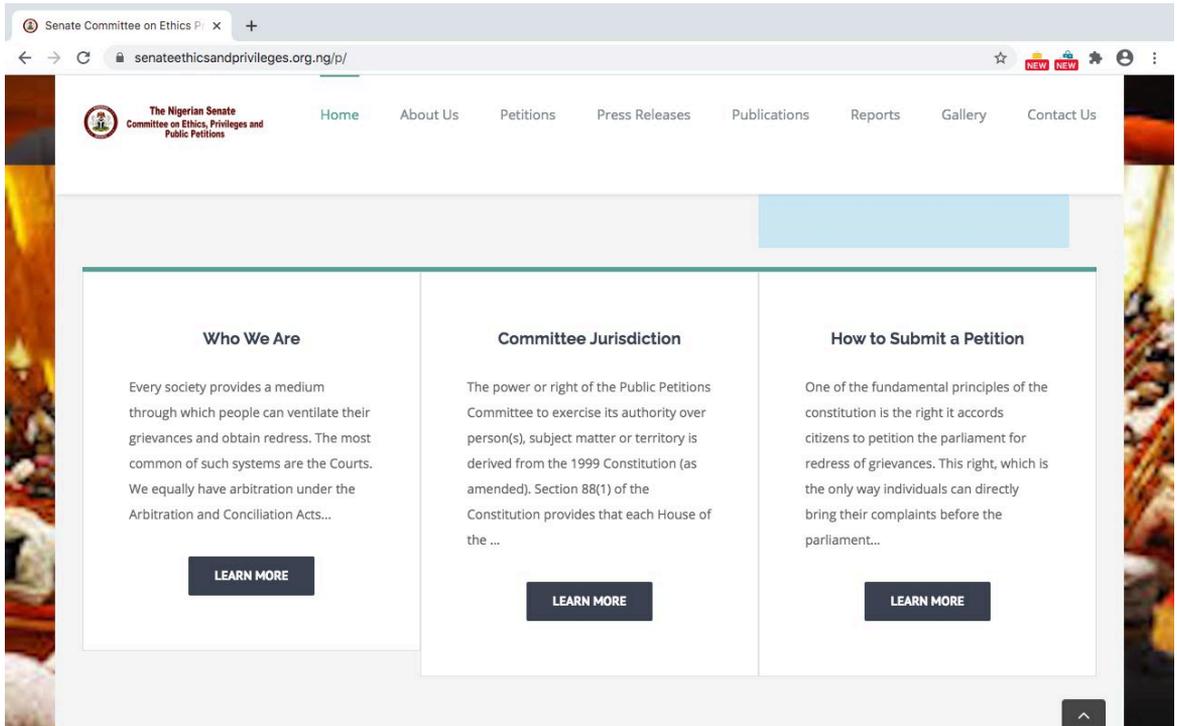
No.3 Ushafa Street Bwari, Abuja

+234(0)666666666666

The Public Petitions Process in the Senate



For more information on the work of the Senate committee on Ethics, Privileges and Public Petitions, visit www.senateethicsandprivileges.org.ng



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.

Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC)

Plot 451 Gambo Jimeta Crescent off Nasir El-Rufai Crescent,
Guzape District, Abuja.

Website: www.placng.org

Email: info@placng.org

Phone: 08091899999

Twitter: @placng

Instagram: @placng