



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

Thursday, 22 February, 2024

1. The House met at 11.36 a.m. Mr Speaker read the Prayers.
2. The House recited the National Pledge.
3. **Votes and Proceedings**
Mr Speaker announced that he had examined and approved the *Votes and Proceedings* of Wednesday, 21 February, 2024.
The Votes and Proceedings was adopted by unanimous consent.
4. **Announcement**
Visitors in the Gallery:
Mr Speaker recognised the presence of the Forum of Clerks of Nigeria.
5. **Valedictory Session in Honour of Late Ghali Umar Na'Abba, Former Speaker, House of Representatives (1999 - 2003)**
Motion made and Question proposed, "That the House do commence the valedictory session in honour of Late Ghali Umar Na 'Abba, Former Speaker, House of Representatives (1999 - 2003)" (Hon. Julius Ihonvbere — House Leader).

Agreed to.
6. **Mr Speaker's Valedictory Remarks:**

Protocols:

2. *Today, we gather in this hallowed chamber in solemn remembrance of and to pay tribute to an extraordinary statesman and a patriot, His Excellency Rt. Hon. Ghali Umar Na'Abba, CFR, who passed unto eternal glory on December 27, 2023. Na'Abba served as the Speaker of the House of Representatives from July 1999 to May 2003. He, undoubtedly, left an indelible mark on our nation's democratic journey and will be remembered as one of the titans of our democracy.*

3. *Speaker after speaker at this session will testify to his courage, boldness, dedication to the principles of democracy, exemplary leadership and steadfast commitment to the time-honoured principles of separation of powers. Of all his qualities, what stands out the most is his simplicity, austerity, contentment and rare honesty. He was a modest and deeply religious man who gave the last full measure of devotion to his work and Nigeria. He lived a simple life but always with the end in mind. His life is, therefore, a worthy lesson for political office holders of today and generations of politicians to come.*

4. *While this is a moment of grief and national mourning, it is equally a time for sober reflection and celebration of his unblemished public service record and enduring legacy. At a more personal level, I am humbled by the enormity of his contributions and inspired by the purity of his vision. As we reflect on his life, we are reminded of the enduring strength of our democracy and the pivotal role of the legislature in that regard.*

5. *At the dawn of the Fourth Republic in 1999, Nigeria stood on the threshold of history. After long years of military rule, Nigerians longed for stability, democracy, and governance that resonated with their hopes and aspirations. It was in this context that Hon. Na' Abba assumed the position of the Speaker, guiding this House with wisdom, dedication, and unwavering commitment. His tenure laid the foundations of a robust, independent legislature, vital for the checks and balances that underpin a vibrant democratic system. His leadership was characterised by a profound understanding that the strength of a democracy is measured not just by the freedom enjoyed by its citizens but also by the strength of its institutions.*

6. *Under his stewardship, the House of Representatives emerged as a forum for vigorous debate and a powerful instrument for change and development. He championed laws and reforms that continue to impact our nation, fostering economic growth, social justice, and the welfare of all Nigerians. Additionally, he laid a solid foundation for the growth and development of this House and pursued institutional building with unparalleled vigour and passion.*

7. *Moreover, his tenure was marked by efforts to ensure the independence of the legislature, recognising that a truly democratic society thrives when its legislative arm operates without undue influence, freely articulating the will and aspirations of the people. He worked diligently with his colleagues to ensure the National Assembly budget was put on first-line charge. He also formalised the legislative aides' system we operate today, which continues to boost the capacity of legislators for enhanced performance. The vision of Hon. Na'Abba has been supported by successive administrations, with the Executive arm working in concert with the National Assembly to ensure good governance, transparency, and accountability.*

8. *The contributions of Hon. Na'Abba to legislative strengthening and institution building are indeed too numerous to mention. He established a strong bond with the people through the first Legislative Agenda of the House of Representatives, tagged, 'House Contract with the Nigerian People'. The Agenda was focussed on meeting the people's basic needs and improving public welfare and sectoral development. In his determination to realise the legislative agenda, he sponsored the 'Minimum Infrastructure Bill', a wide-ranging and amalgamated legislative master plan to foster infrastructural development in Nigeria.*

9. *During his time as Speaker, the House developed a strong and vibrant committee system that enabled it to exercise its oversight functions and promote accountability of government institutions. Alongside his colleagues from other African parliaments, Na'Abba articulated and reformed parliamentary diplomacy in Africa at the start of the new millennium in 2000. He held various positions in parliamentary bodies and organisations, including: President, Conference of Speakers of West African Parliaments; President Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (Africa Region); President, African Parliamentary Union, President, African Regional Council; and President, Global Forum for Parliamentarians on Habitat among others. He is fondly remembered in these organisations for his vision of a stronger and more united Africa and his efforts towards its*

actualisation.

10. *The journey since then has not been without its challenges. Nigeria has faced and continues to confront a myriad of issues and challenges. Yet, the resilience of our democracy, strengthened by the contributions of Rt. Hon. Ghali Umar Na' Abba and many others who followed him have allowed us to navigate these tumultuous waters with hope and determination.*

11. *As we honour his legacy, let us also acknowledge our collective responsibility to build on the foundations he laid. The legislature remains a vital organ of our democracy, with the potential to drive Nigeria towards unprecedented growth and development. As legislators, it is incumbent upon us to ensure that the House continues to serve as a forum for meaningful dialogue, a catalyst for change, and a protector of the rights and freedoms of our citizens.*

12. *Honourable Colleagues, Distinguished Guests, and Fellow Nigerians, I wish to take this opportunity to underscore the paramount importance of fostering a harmonious relationship between the Executive and the Legislature. This relationship, rooted in mutual respect and shared commitment, is the bedrock upon which the edifice of our democracy and the future of our nation rests. In the face of current difficulties facing the country, the House of Representatives reaffirms its unwavering commitment to supporting the Executive to tackle these challenges speedily and bring forth a new dawn of development and prosperity for all Nigerians.*

13. *Our democracy is designed on the principle of separation of powers, yet it thrives on the synergy between these arms. This is not a design for division but a formula for collaboration. It is imperative, therefore, that we, as the legislative arm, work in concert with the Executive to address the multifaceted challenges facing our nation. Our collective goal must be to chart a new course of development. The commitment of the House of Representatives to this cause is unequivocal. Whether legislative, Executive or Judiciary, there is **Only One Government Under The Leadership Of The President, Bola Ahmed Tinubu.***

14. *We in the House pledge to expedite the passage of critical legislation that will empower the Executive and support the President in tackling our nation's economic challenges. Through constructive partnership grounded in dialogue and cooperation, we can address the present difficulties and lay out the blueprint for a new Nigeria that is the economic powerhouse of the region and the world.*

15. *In closing, I call on all of us to recommit ourselves to the ideals that Ghali Umar Na' Abba held dear: democracy, justice, and the unwavering belief in the potential of Nigeria and its people. Let us pledge to honour his memory by embodying the values he represented. Let us continue his legacy of service and strive for a better Nigeria for today and future generations.*

16. *To our distinguished former Speaker, we say thank you. Your legacy is a testament to the enduring power of leadership, vision, and commitment to the greater good. Your journey on earth may have ended, but your spirit lives on in the lives you touched and the enduring legacy of service. On behalf of the House of Representatives, I extend our deepest condolences to the family, friends, and loved ones of Rt Hon. Umar Ghali Na'abba. His legacy transcends the confines of material wealth; he lived a life that was a testament to the enduring power of a good name and an unblemished reputation. Today, we are reminded ever more eloquently of the profound truth that the true measure of a life well-lived is not found in the accumulation of wealth but in the legacy of service one leaves behind. May his family and friends find comfort in the knowledge that his legacy will endure in the hearts and minds of all who knew him and generations to come.*

17. *Even as we mourn, we seek solace in believing that we all are from Almighty Allah (SWT) and to Him is our return. May Allah (SWT) forgive his shortcomings and grant the departed soul 'jannatul firdaus'. May He also grant his family, friends, associates and the nation the fortitude to bear the loss.*

18. *Thank you, and God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.*

7. **Valedictory Speeches**

On the Invitation of Mr Speaker, Hon. Members took turns to extol the virtues and qualities of the Late Ghali Umar Na'Abba in the following order:

- (i) Rt Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila — *Former Speaker (2019-2023) and Chief of Staff to the President;*
- (ii) Rt Hon. Aminu Bello Masari — *Former Speaker (2003-2007);*
- (iii) Rt Hon. Chibudom Nwuche — *Former Deputy Speaker (1999-2003);*
- (iv) Hon. Bawa Bwari — *Former Chief Whip (1999-2003);*
- (v) Hon. Jerry Igbokwe — *Former Member (1999-2003);*
- (vi) Sen. Binta Masi Garba — *Former Member (1999-2011);*
- (vii) Sen. Hadi Sirika — *Former Member (2003-2007);*
- (viii) Hon. Kingsley Chinda — *Minority Leader;*
- (ix) Hon. Ali Isah J.C. — *Minority Whip;*
- (x) Hon. Abdullahi Ibrahim Ali — *Deputy House Leader;*
- (xi) Hon. Julius Ihonvbere — *House Leader;*
- (xii) Rt Hon. Benjamin Okezie Kalu — *Deputy Speaker.*

They eulogize his leadership style and spoke glowingly of his courageous, and dynamic, pursuit for legislative independence, and revolutionary approach towards the running of the House during his era as Speaker. They enjoined everyone present to emulate the good works of Late Ghali Umar Na'Abba.

(See the Verbatim Report of Thursday, 22 February, 2024 for details).

8. **Vote of Thanks**

By leave of the House, Mr Speaker called on a Member of the family of Late Ghali Umar Na'Abba to give a vote of thanks.

In his response, Ahmed Ghali Na'Abba, son of the Late Former Speaker expressed his appreciation on behalf of the family and thanked Mr Speaker and the Hon. Members present for the support given to the family at the time of grief and prayed for God's protection upon everyone.

9. **Adjournment**

That the House do adjourn till Tuesday, 27 February, 2024 at 11.00 a.m. (Hon. Julius Ihonvbere — House Leader).

The House adjourned accordingly at 1.45 p.m.

Abbas Tajudeen
Speaker