



**SPEECH BY THE HONOURABLE, THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF
NIGERIA, HON. JUSTICE MAHMUD MOHAMMED, *GCON*,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE VALEDICTORY SITTING FOR
HONOURABLE JUSTICE SULEIMAN GALADIMA, *JSC, CFR*,**

HELD AT THE MAIN COURT ROOM, SUPREME COURT OF NIGERIA, ON 10 OCTOBER 2016 AT 10:00 AM

SPEECH BY THE HONOURABLE, THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF NIGERIA, HON. JUSTICE MAHMUD MOHAMMED, GCON, ON THE OCCASION OF THE VALEDICTORY SITTING FOR HONOURABLE JUSTICE SULEIMAN GALADIMA, JSC, CFR, AT THE MAIN COURT ROOM, SUPREME COURT OF NIGERIA, ON 10 OCTOBER 2016

PROTOCOL LIST

- My Lords, Justices of the Supreme Court here present,
- My Lords, The President of the Court of Appeal and Justices of the Court of Appeal here present,
- My Lords Chief Judges of the Federal and State High Courts here present,
- My Lords, Heads of other Superior Courts of Record,
- Hon. Judges of various Jurisdictions here present,
- The Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice,
- Members of the National Assembly here present,
- Members and Management of the National Judicial Council, the Federal Judicial Service Commission and the National Judicial Institute here present,
- Members of the Body of Benchers here present,
- Members of the Legal Practitioners Privileges Committee here present,
- Traditional Rulers and Chiefs here present,
- Senior Advocates of Nigeria here present,
- Learned Members of the Bar,
- Members of the Press
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

It is indeed with great pleasure and honour that I offer a few remarks on this auspicious, yet inevitable occasion in the life of every Jurist in the land. Indeed, we are gathered today at this Special Court Session to felicitate with our Brother Justice, Hon. Justice Suleiman Galadima, *OFR, CFR*, Justice of the Supreme Court, on the completion of forty-seven years of committed, selfless service to this Nation and to wish him a well deserved retirement from the Supreme Court of Nigeria.

Without wanting to pre-empt his lordship and his biographers or indeed offer a lengthy rendition of his career, I daresay that his lordship has lived a fulfilled life and never shirked from taking responsibility, perhaps due to his sagacity, training and the scrupulous discipline that were and are still the hallmarks of his lordship. Nevertheless, it behoves upon me to reference the highlights of the career of this most amiable of Brother Justices.

Hon. Justice Suleiman Galadima was born on the 10th day of October 1946, in Shafa Abakpa Village, in the present day Nasarawa State. He was the fifth child of his father and fourth male child of his parents, Sada Madaki and Rakiya Nnema. He attended Qua Iboe Mission Primary School, Shafa from 1953 to 1957, before proceeding to Senior Primary School, Laminga. His lordship attended Katsina Ala Provincial Secondary School in 1960 till 1964, becoming the Deputy Head Boy of the School in 1964 as well as the Captain of the College Volley Ball and Rugby Teams and a member of the Athletic Team. In 1965, he proceeded to the Government College, Keffi where he later became the Senior Prefect in 1966, while taking the Higher School Certificate (HSC).

No doubt, the impartation of these positions of responsibility at an early stage contributed indelibly towards forging his lordship's future career.

His Lordship attended the prestigious Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria first bagging a Diploma in Law in 1969. He embarked upon the mainstream LLB Degree before proceeding to the Nigerian Law School, Lagos where he was called to the bar in 1978. He later on received a master's degree in Law from the University of Jos in 1985.

Hon. Justice Galadima served as a Magistrate from July 1978, rising to the rank of Acting Chief Magistrate, before being seconded to become the Deputy Company Secretary of the Ajaokuta Steel Company, then in Kwara State, where he served till November 1984. His lordship later practiced law under the firm of Galadima-Husaini & Co., until March 1990, when he was appointed Attorney General and Commissioner of Justice of the old Plateau State. In May 1991 his Lordship was elevated to the Bench as a Judge of the High Court of Plateau State.

Following the creation of Nasarawa State in 1996, Hon. Justice Galadima became the pioneer Chief Judge of the State, serving from October 1996 until 9 December 1998 when he was elevated to the Court of Appeal. His lordship acquitted himself creditably on the appellate bench, serving at various Divisions such as Lagos and Enugu, before going on to be Presiding Justice in Port Harcourt Division from September 2006 to 2010 before his well deserved appointment to the Supreme Court on 16 September 2010.

Hon. Justice Galadima is the proud recipient of the National Honours of Officer of the Federal Republic (*OFR*), which was conferred upon him in 2011. My lord was later awarded with the Honour of the Commander of the Federal Republic

(CFR). He is also the proud recipient of several accolades such as the Kwame Nkrumah Leadership Award conferred by a delegation of the All Africa Students Union (AASU), Executive Committee on 12th April, 2016.

On the Bench, Hon. Justice Galadima has been a pioneer in many ways, most notably as Chief Judge of Nasarawa State, where he initiated the structure of the judiciary of his State. Suffice it to say, all Jurists from Nasarawa State owe his lordship a great deal of gratitude for blazing the trail for others to follow. His lordship must also be applauded for the work that he has done to promote peace in Nigeria, notably while chairing a judicial commission of inquiry, which was announced by the Federal Government on 25 September 2001, to examine the causes of ethno-religious violence in Jos, Plateau State.

Having worked with his lordship for six memorable years in this Court, I have been a first-hand witness to the immense contributions that his lordship has made to the stability of our Nation and its citizens. Perhaps reflecting the rich human resource in his state, his lordship's mastery and judicious use of legal reasoning was tempered by the virtues of courtesy and decorum in service, which are worthy of emulation by all members of the Legal Profession.

His contributions to the Judgments of the Supreme Court were often rendered in effable, clear and concise language, both in support of or leading his Brethren's Judgments, while hitting the bull's eye of the law squarely in order to dispense justice fairly in enhancing our jurisprudence.

His lordship's lead judgments are akin to the works of a law professor and we see his lordship at his most instructive in the case of ***INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION V OGBADIBO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA***

(SC.30912014) (2015), where he reminded us that "for a party to establish locus standi, he must show that the matter is justiciable- capable of being disposed of judiciously in a court of law and the existence of dispute between parties",

There was a consistent clarity in his dicta and this is aptly seen in the case of ***ALL PROGRESSIVE GRAND ALLIANCE (APGA) VS SENATOR CHRISTIANA N.D. ANYANWU & 2 ORS (Se. 2012013) (2014)***, where Hon. Justice Galadima, JSC, tutors the parties to the fact that *"the basic) broad) and general principle of law is contained in the old latin maxim- UBI JUS VBI REMEDIUM. "JUS" here signifies the legal authority to do or demand something and REMEDIUM means the right of action) or the means given by law for the recovery or declaration. Simply put, wherever the law gives a right, it also gives a remedy, conversely, wherever a plaintiff is claiming a remedy, that remedy must be joined on a legal right."*

His lordship gave justice to many, punished the guilty in accordance with the law and granted rehabilitation to those deserving of same. He was the untrammelled and refined face of justice.

Far from the courtroom, his lordship was apt to project a positive mood at all interactions with his Brother Justices, regaling us with his sharp wit and native humour that struck a chord with us all regardless of origin and orientation.

On a personal note, I have always found his lordship to be an astute and insightful man, who is morally upstanding, genuinely amiable and a gentleman in all senses of the word. I also know his lordship to be a dedicated family man whose serenity and strict upbringing is fully reflected in his family.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the members of the family of Hon. Justice Suleiman Galadima, JSC. Indeed, they have borne the proverbial burden as my lord has traversed the Nation on official duty to his Country. I wish to thank

you for your patience, endurance and the care, which meant that his lordship was as fit as a fiddle and always jovial in Chambers. Behind every successful man is a stable home and it is this stability that has allowed his lordship to thrive for all these years. Indeed, your Country owes you a debt of gratitude.

May I, on behalf of the entire Nigerian Judiciary, particularly the Justices of the Supreme Court, convey to the family of this eminent jurist our utmost gratitude for sacrificing much for his lordship to embark upon the meritorious service rendered to the Nation. I know that those hours spent away on national assignment may have been hard, but you should be doubtless consoled by the knowledge that his lordship has left his words in the chronicles of history, for posterity to benefit from. Indeed, I must assure you that his lordship's numerous accomplishments were a worthy price to pay for those years of sacrifice.

Ladies and Gentlemen, permit me to extend our gratitude to the good people of Nasarawa State for producing one of the Nation's more notable exponents of the law.

Upon reflection on your lordship's contribution to the cause of Justice, our great Nation, the Judiciary and indeed the people of Nasarawa State can say with pride that Hon. Justice Suleiman Galadima, JSC, was a commendable servant of his people. Rest assured, the legacy of your work will continue to endure in the annals of your State and in the jurisprudence of the Nation.

To younger members of our noble Legal Profession, I say that Hon. Justice Galadima, JSC, is an embodiment of hard work, dedication and a single-minded devotion to his Maker and his calling. I am therefore encouraging those inspired by this wonderful jurist to follow the path of distinction that he charted throughout his

long and distinguished career.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentleman, it was Theodore Rubin who remarked that *“Happiness does not come from doing easy work but from the afterglow of satisfaction that comes after the achievement of a difficult task that demanded our best”*. My lord, you served your Nation admirably for forty-seven years and your lordship deserves a well-earned rest from your labours.

Our Nation's Judiciary owes you a debt of gratitude and I am sure that the teeming numbers of the legal profession that have benefitted from your mentorship, your dicta and your aphorisms, will concur when I opine that your contribution to our Jurisprudence has been inestimable. Our Nation's Judiciary will always support you and we are confident that when we knock on your door, you will answer.

My lords, invited guests, ladies and gentlemen, not to detract from this occasion, it is indeed very saddening and deeply regrettable, the distressing and unfortunate incident which occurred on Friday 7 October and Saturday 8 October 2016. However, I must ask all Nigerians to remain calm and prayerful, as an emergency meeting of the National Judicial Council, which will take place tomorrow, will comprehensively look into the matter. Furthermore, I must express my sincere appreciation to the executive of the Nigerian Bar Association ably led by the President, Abubakar B Mahmoud, SAN, and indeed all members of the Legal Profession, for their prompt action and continued support.

My lord, Hon. Justice Galadima, once again, please accept the profound gratitude of the Nigerian Judiciary, well-wishers, and invited guests for your immeasurable and invaluable contribution to the Judiciary, Government and People of Nigeria. I pray that the Almighty Allah shall continue to be with you and grant you strength for the rest of your days.

I also pray that the Almighty Allah will grant you a retirement of simplicity, good health and serenity for the rest of your days.

Thank you and May God bless all of us.

Mahmud Mohammed, *GCON*
Chief Justice of Nigeria