



# Dr. Sam Amadi

Former Chairman,  
Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC)

July 31, 2024

Inspector General of Police  
Louis Edet House  
Central Business District  
Abuja

Hon. IGP, Sir,

## PETITION AGAINST 'LAGOSPEDIA' AND OTHERS FOR HATE SPEECHES AND MOBILIZATION OF MASS VIOLENCE AGAINST NIGERIANS OF IGBO DESCENT

1. I write this petition as a patriotic Nigerian and legal practitioner who believes in the unity and peace of the country based on observance of its constitutional order of justice and freedom. This petition is in respect of several hate speeches made against Nigerians of Igbo ethnic origin who are daily demonised and characterised as non-Nigerians who deserve to be attacked and despoiled of their property.
2. This petition seeks the intervention of the Nigerian Police Force through its anti-cyber crime unit to investigate, arrest and prosecute the offender herein listed. This petition is based on the provisions of the 1999 Constitution, the Criminal Code and the Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, Etc.) Act 2024.

### Particulars of Alleged Crimes:

3. On July 27, 2024, the person behind the popular Twitter handle @lagospedia posted the following statements on his handle:  
*"Logosians and every Southwest stakeholder should prepare for the massive protest of #Igbomustgo on the 20th- 30th August. They have 1 month from now to leave and relocate their business from all S'west states. We urge all Yoruba living in the S'east to return home"*
4. On July 29, 2024, the same person posted on the same X handle (Lagospedia) this message:  
*"This is another warning to ibos that Yoruba won't condone their shenanigans anymore in Yorubaland. I still stand by my conviction, any mistake from them will spell their doom. We've had enough and we want them gone. #Igbosmustgo #Igbosmustgo"*
5. The owner of the X handle, @Lagospedia claims to be "proclaiming the virtues of Lagos", and boasts of significant followers on social media. These hateful posts have received massive reposts and have made its way into other social media

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platforms like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and Tik Tok, etc.,. These posts are driving endless traffic of hate speech and violence against Igbos in Nigeria and outside Nigeria.

6. Clearly, the express intention of the posts is to instigate and mobilize mass violence against Igbo people for just being Igbo. @Lagospedia is not alleging any specific misconduct against the Igbos in Lagos and the Southwest region of Nigeria. Their only offence is being Igbo, and the solution is to drive them out from a region of Nigeria.

#### **Violation of the Constitution and Cybercrime Act:**

7. The two posts from @Lagospedia are expressly hateful. They are also criminal in their intent and expression. The call for forceful eviction of Igbos in Lagos and Southwest States is a fragrant attack and violation of Section 41 of the 1999 Constitution which guarantees that ***“Every citizen of Nigeria is entitled to move freely throughout Nigeria and to reside in any part thereof, and no citizen of Nigeria shall be expelled from Nigeria or refused entry thereby or exit therefrom”***. Although the owner of the handle, @Lagospedia, is not a state actor and his or her actions do not amount to state action, but his or her statements are a direct call for violation of the constitution. He is asking Nigerians to violently deprive other Nigerians of a particular ethnic origin their constitutionally guaranteed right of citizenship. Taking such direct action to procure violation of constitutionally guaranteed right is an unconstitutional act that should trigger legal prosecution.
8. The messages in these posts amount to hate speech against Igbos and an outright mobilization of mass violence against fellow Nigerians on the basis of their ethnicity. What is a hate speech? The UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech defines hate speech as...***“any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor.”*** This definition has been incorporated into Nigerian law through the Cybercrimes Act. There is no doubt that the posts by @Lagospedia is an attack against Igbo citizens of Nigeria and a clear mobilization of mass violence against them solely on the basis of their ethnicity.
9. Beside the fact that these posts offend international proscription against hate speeches, they are a fragrant violation of Nigeria’s Cybercrimes Act 2024 which the Nigerian Police Force has prosecuted those who offend against it. Section 26 of the Act states that ***“A person who with intent- (a) distributes or otherwise makes available, any racist or xenophobic material to the public through a computer system or network; (b) threatens through a computer system or network (i) persons for the reason that they belong to a group distinguished by race, color, descent, national or ethnic origin, as well as, religion, if used as a pretext for any of these factors, or (ii) a group of person which is distinguished by any of these characteristics; commits an offence and is liable on***



**conviction to imprisonment for a term of not more than 5 years or to a fine not more than N10,000,000.00 or both fine and imprisonment".** The posts by @Lagospedia on July 27, 2024 and July 29, 2024 are clear criminal actions that should lead to criminal prosecution.

10. It is important to note that the Nigerian Police Force has prosecuted many persons who have allegedly made similar statements against individuals. A notable case is Mr. Nnamdi Chude who is currently undergoing trial for allegedly violating the Cybercrime Act in respect of personal statement made about a Nigerian businessman. Similarly, an Igbo Chief in Okoto, Fredrick Nwajagu, Eze of Ajao Estate, was arrested by the Nigerian Police Force for inciting statements and is now undergoing trial. Why does the Nigerian Police Force not arrest and prosecute those who openly spread hate speech against Igbos and mobilize mass violence against them?

**Background Facts:**

11. The Inspector General should note that since the 2023 general elections, there has been heightened spreading of hate speeches against Igbos in Nigeria. The immediate context of this bigotry and demonization of Nigerians of Igbo ethnicity is the fact of Mr. Peter Obi's presidential aspiration which was not well received by some politicians and their supporters. Prior to 2023, Mr. Peter Obi has been a Governor of Anambra State for eight years and Vice Presidential Candidate to Alhaji Atiku Abubakar under the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). He also served as Honorary Special Adviser to President Goodluck Jonathan. None of these roles as public officer generated a viral trend of hate speeches against Igbo people. But as soon as Mr. Peter Obi became a candidate for the Office of the President in 2023 Presidential election and won Chief Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the Presidential Candidate of APC and former Governor of Lagos, in Lagos State, some politicians and their supporters unleashed orchestrated attacks on Igbo people.
12. Such attacks on Igbo people grew to the extent of affecting the Labour Party Governorship Candidate in Lagos State, Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour, whose offence is having an Igbo mother. There was a strident campaign against Igbos to the extent that the current Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy who was then Spokesperson of the Tinubu Presidential Campaign Council openly mobilized hatred against Igbos in Nigeria through multiple hate speech against Igbos. In one instance, Bayo Onanuga warned Igbo against involvement in Lagos politics and stating that 2023 will be the last time Igbos will get involved in Lagos politics.
13. Bayo Onanuga's statement was so abhorrent that a leading Yoruba leader, Chief Bode George, spoke out against him. He said, "**Why should we lower our standards and degrade ourselves? Making that kind of statement publicly and saying he has no apology. They should take him to the international court of justice for hate speech because when it starts we don't know it will end. We either live together as human beings or we go to the animal kingdom**".



Unfortunately, the Nigerian Police Force did not even invite Mr. Bayo Onanuga to explain his statement.

14. There were also comments from Musiliu Akinsanya, famously known as M.C. Oluomo, who threatened Igbo people if they voted against APC in Lagos. The Police did not investigate or take any action when the viral video and comments were reported to the Police Public Relations Office, SP Benjamin Hundeyin.

**The Danger: Beyond Law Enforcement:**

15. I am petitioning the Nigerian Police Force to investigate and take action against @Lagospedia for crimes against the Cybercrimes Act because the statements are dangerous as they constitute deliberate and targeted harm against Igbos in Lagos and elsewhere in Nigeria. The essence of the Cybercrimes Act is to discourage such damaging speeches that have led to mass violence in the past, and that have the capacity to throw the Nigerian society into grave crisis. Whereas, every Nigerian has the right to free speech, no Nigerian has the right to use privileged political or social platform to mobilize hatred against a Nigerian group on the basis of its ethnicity. The law must be firmly and fairly enforced. If we can prosecute Igbo citizens who offend against the Cybercrimes Act, we should not hesitate to prosecute non-igbos who offend against the same law. If we can arrest and prosecute Igbos who incite hatred against other Nigerians, we should equally arrest and prosecute non-Igbos who spread hate speech and mobilize mass violence against Igbos to grossly deny them of their citizenship.
16. The reason for action against the owner of the X handle @Lagospedia is that the consequence of this sort of hate speech goes beyond criminal justice. It borders on national security and the unity of Nigeria. The continuing demonization of Igbos on account of the presidential candidature of Mr. Peter Obi in 2023 Presidential Election poses a major security threat to Nigeria. The fact that these few dangerous bigots seem to be enabled by the political establishment since the 2023 elections, raises the prospect of mass violence against Igbo people on account of viral hate speeches that condition a negative national mentality against them. The free spreading of falsehood like the claim that the proposed national protest is a pretext for Igbos to destroy Lagos and other major cities in Nigeria, is likely to ignite massive violence against Igbos of a scale that could become a genocide. This is why the Nigerian Police Force should classify this sort of speeches as 'highest degree of national security threat'.
17. It is important to always learn from our history and the history of other countries in the matter of managing dangerous public communication. ***The Nigerian civil war that set the country back by decades was a result of similar demonization by privileged political actors who schemed to gain political advantages by unleashing violence against other Nigerians on the basis of ethnic identity and political differences. Rwanda continues to be a reminder to us never to overlook the danger of hate speeches that mobilize mass violence against a people on the basis of their ethnicity.***



18. We do not preserve our national unity by allowing a privileged few to demonize any part of us. We do not secure Nigeria if we give a privileged few the license to freely spread hatred and violate others in the name of politics. A nation is preserved through judicious acts of law enforcement that guarantees to all citizens the responsiveness of state agencies to any threat to their citizenship.

**My Request:**

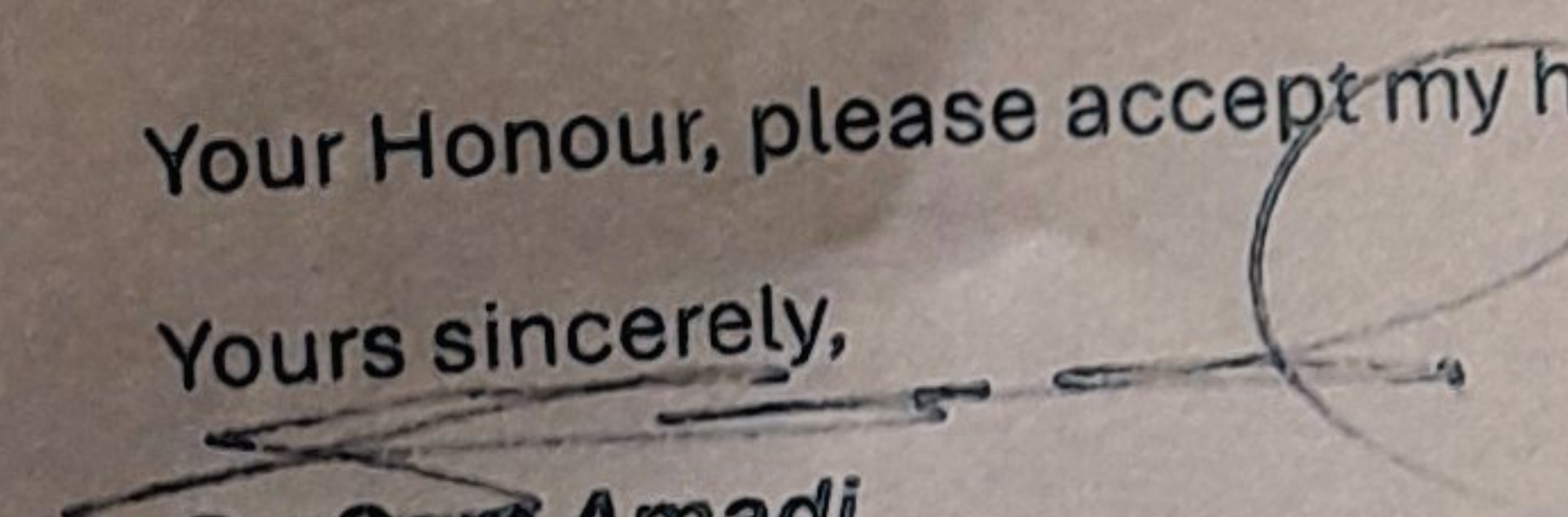
19. I humbly request the Inspector General of Police to mandate the Anti-Cybercrimes Unit of the Nigerian Police Force or such other appropriate unit to unmask the owner of X (otherwise called 'Twitter') handle *@Lagospedia* who severally has spread hate crime and violated the *Cybercrimes Act 2024* with a view to prosecuting him or her under the law.

20. I humbly request the Inspector General of Police to designate such posts and statements like the one made by *@Lagospedia* as '*Highest National Security Threat*' and establish a fast-track procedure to investigate and prosecute such statement as a deterrence to further such provocation and incitement.

21. I also humbly notify the Inspector General of Police that if I do not receive a response to this petition in 14 days time, I would assume that you have refused to carry out your function under the law and I would henceforth seek judicial order of mandamus to enforce the law and save the country from possible outbreak of genocidal violence.

Your Honour, please accept my highest regards and best wishes

Yours sincerely,

  
**Dr. Sam Amadi**