PRESS STATEMENT

CISLAC warns against unscrupulous persons/entities operating as civil society

In recent times, attention of the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) has been drawn to the unregistered, illegally operated, politically motivated, falsified, pretentious persons/entities permeating civil society atmosphere in Nigeria.

We observed that the so-called persons/entities operate in pocket-serving and abusive manners grossly not conformed to the fundamental objectives establishing credible civil society organisations which are: non-governmental, non-profit making, effective liaise between government and the electorate, relentless pursuit of transparency, accountability and good governance at all levels.

We find it worrisome that years of tireless struggles by genuine civil society towards achieving democratization and provide enabling platform for people’s participation in the democratic process have been flooded and disregarded by some unscrupulous persons/entities disguising as civil society.

Although the basic procedures and requirements for certifying an organisation and its activities are provided and regulated by relevant authorities and legislation in the country, we find it disrespectful that relevant authorities such as Corporate Affair Commission (CAC)—an autonomous body charged with the responsibility to regulate the formation and management of entities in Nigeria, and Special Control Unit against Money Laundering (SCUMUL)—a structure for curtailing money laundering and terrorist financing, and other institutions, are boycotted and neglected by the illegally operated entities entitled civil society.

We therefore urge relevant authorities, media and the general public on proper surveillance and exhaustive interrogation prior to engaging unidentified civil society to avoid falling victim of saboteurs, who operate in fulfillment of personal interest, and not that of the country.

We call on the media to promptly distinguish certified civil society organisations from fake and unregistered ones and avoid giving needless attention, publicity and coverage of any form to unidentified or unregistered entities; and ensure such are only accorded to organisations duly registered and certified by relevant authorities.

We further demand exhaustive investigation by the relevant certifying authorities to fish-out all illegally operated civil society organisations and impose appropriate sanction and punishment against erring persons/entities.

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