

PRESS RELEASE

11/08/2022

Important Information on the current Situation within WACSOFF and appeal to members, partners and all other WACSOFF key stakeholders for Calm and Patience

Introduction

In March 2022, representatives of a key WACSOFF Partner wrote to the WACSOFF Executive Committee Members to officially express their deep concern about a worrisome pattern of non-responsiveness to request and inquiries by Mr. Komlan Messie, then WACSOFF General Secretary, regarding project obligations of WACSOFF to them. Since Mr. Messie had not at any point prior to that shared any reports with any of the WACSOFF Executive Committee Members informing them of such contracts and agreements, they invited him to formally explain the situation, and requested him to furnish them with comprehensive information on all WACSOFF's currently running projects so that they can respond to the partner. They also requested the accountant, Mr. Olomofe Olumide Abayomi, to provide the organization's statements of accounts as part of their investigations. Both gentlemen refused to respond to the requests.

Due to the non-provision of adequate information to the Executive Committee, on the part of Mr. Messie and Mr Olomofe, recourse was made to the police authorities by the Executive Committee Members. Following questioning by the Nigeria police they promised to send all the documents and information requested, but did not comply. As a result of their sustained refusal to cooperate with these requests, the WACSOFF Executive Committee resolved to suspend both Mr. Komlan Messie and Mr. Olomofe Olumide Abayomi, and from active service to the WACSOFF Secretariat beginning from 28th April 2022 at 1:30 pm. 6th May 2022 at 12:30 pm respectively. Both Mr. Messie and Mr. Olomofe were instructed to remain within Nigeria until investigations into the matter of response to partners requests were satisfactorily determined. (Copy of both suspension letters attached)

Meanwhile, following his invitation by the Nigeria Police authorities, Mr. Komlan proceeded to shut down the WACSOFF Secretariat, instructing all Secretariat staff to stay home until further notice, and travel out of Nigeria. Since then, he has remained outside of Nigeria and away from the WACSOFF Secretariat, but has continued to arbitrarily represent WACSOFF in discussions with partners and to carry out a coordinated campaign of disinformation against WACSOFF's best interests.

The Subversive activities of Mr. Messie and Mr. Olomofe against WACSOFF

Among the subversive activities of Mr. Komlan and Mr. Olomofe are the following:

1. Komlan, single-handedly organised and held a false WACSOFF General Assembly (Peoples Forum) in Benin Republic on 30 June 2022. This event is

tagged “false” because it was never approved by the current WACSOFF Executive Committee members, neither was Members of the Regional Secretariat aware or involved in the organization of the event. Even though the Executive Committee given the General Secretary the approval to commence planning towards a people’s forum since 2020, the process was challenged by lack funds and the effect of COVID 19 lock-downs. Hence, the plans were never finalized or approved. Nonetheless, the said General Assembly resulted in the election of a group of people posing as the new Executive Committee members of WACSOFF, among which are people and entities who are not known WACSOFF Members (as per records of Members within the WACSOFF Secretariat). This act is illegal and inconsistent with the Charter of WACSOFF. **We advise all Members, Partners and stakeholders of WACSOFF to disregard the outcome of that false General Assembly.**

2. While leaving Nigeria on 25th April 2022, Mr. Komlan carted away several properties and vital information of the organization, including administrative, financial and programmatic information, including the General Secretary’s official laptop and most of the information regarding WACSOFF’s Programs and activities. These include records of contractual agreements entered into with partners, program/ project activity reports, mailing lists, etc.
3. The former WACSOFF General Secretary hijacked all of WACSOFF’s online information and communication platforms, including its social media accounts and primary website (www.wacsof-foscao.org), which he uses as a tool to spread subversive narratives, false information and malicious accusations about the organization and its Executive Committee Members
4. Mr. Komlan continues to present himself to partners and members as the General Secretary of WACSOFF, while also sending out emails, letters and communiques to partners and Members in the name of WACSOFF and with the letterhead of WACSOFF in violation of the terms of his suspension and recent contract termination
5. In conjunction with Mr. Olomofe Olumide Abayomi, the suspended accountant, Mr. Komlan requested Ecobank Bank, Fidelity Bank and Zenith Bank to freeze the bank accounts of WACSOFF using misinformation – particularly in the form of an erroneous interpretation of a court order issued on 9th May documents and signatures. **We are glad to inform you that the WACSOFF Secretariat has since regained control of all the Bank Accounts so frozen (documents regarding court process attached, sated 5th May 2022)**
6. Mr. Komlan have been manipulating WACSOFF National Platform members and other civil society organizations through misinformation that present Mr. Olomofe and himself as victims of high-handedness and abuse by the WACSOFF Executive Committee Members of which nothing of that sort is true

7. Messrs Komlan and Olomofe have both separately and jointly instituted several legal actions against WACSOF Executive Committee Members, some agents of the Nigeria Police Force as well as an Abuja High Court Judge. **We are glad to inform you that one of those cases have been ruled in favour of the WACSOF Executive Committee Members**

Actions Taken by the WACSOF Executive Committee to address the situation

Under the above outlined circumstances, and considering Messrs Messie's and Olomofe's general lack of cooperation with the WACSOF Executive Committee Members and WACSOF's Partners, particularly their failure to share documents on WACSOF's programs and activities with them, the WACSOF Executive Committee has taken the following decisive actions:

1. Terminated the contracts appointing Mr. Messie as WACSOF General Secretary and Mr. Omolofe as Accountant and to initiate processes towards recruiting a new General Secretary to head the WACSOF Secretariat from 5th August 2022
2. Initiated processes towards carry out an independent financial audit of the organization's accounts and institute appropriate legal processes to prosecute Mr. Messie Komlan and Mr. Olomofe Olumide Abayomi, if they are found wanting and in order to retrieve all WACSOF properties and information that still remains in their possession.
3. Reopened the WACSOF Secretariat in Abuja, beginning from 13 May 2022 and are making progress towards normalizing the administrative and programmatic activities of the WACSOF Secretariat including through the re-establishment of contact with various WACSOF National Platforms, Members and Partners in order to ensure the smooth discharge of WACSOF's programs and activities
4. Initiated the process of re-establishing appropriate information and communication platforms for easy dissemination of credible information about the organization. Accordingly, a new website controlled by the WACSOF Secretariat IT Unit, statutorily based in Abuja, has been created in the interim to cater for WACSOF's communications needs. Other online communication tools and platforms are in the process of being re-established. You can find the website used of WACSOF at: www.wacsof-foscao.net, which will forthwith be the primary source of authentic information about WACSOF and its activities.
5. Initiated the process of liaising with all partners and members in order ascertain all key information concerning WACSOF's obligations under contractual agreements with partners in order to put in place modalities towards meeting them. This will enable us to restore, rebuild and strengthen the relationships of trust with them.

6. Instructed the Secretariat to commence the process towards holding a proper WACSO F Peoples' Forum in accordance with the salient provisions of the subsisting WACSO F Charter in order to adopt strategic programmatic thrusts for the Forum in consultation with Members and Partners as well as to select a new substantive Executive Committee to lead the organization into a greater future
7. Engaged the services of an experienced civil society engagement specialist to advise WACSO F on the process towards addressing all the challenges and difficulties created by the current situation as well as to advice on the management of WACSO F's Regional Secretariat operations, particularly the implementation of its programs and activities

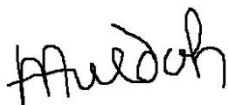
In light of the above situation, we hereby appeal for all WACSO F stakeholders to remain calm and understanding in the most unfortunate downturn of circumstances for WACSO F. We also wish to invite all Members, Partners and stakeholders of WACSO F to join hands with us in rebuilding the battered image of WACSO F as a result of the unfortunate situation of the organization over the past 4 months. We specifically appeal to all as follows;

1. Disengage from any and all communication with Mr. Komlan Messie, in which he poses as a representative of WACSO F. Equally disregard all forms of communication with any other persons purporting to represent WACSO F's interests aside members of the WACSO F Secretariat located in Abuja or the 'known' WACSO F Executive Committee Members (whose status has not changed since their appointment in 2016)
2. Without any delay, we advise all partners with outstanding commitments to be fulfilled by WACSO F under contracts or agreements previously signed, when Mr. Komlan was on Seat as WACSO F General Secretary to contact the WACSO F Secretariat in Abuja. For all official matters, please contact the WACSO F Secretariat using the following email addresses info@wacsof-foscao.net, seceretariat@wacsof-foscao.net or contact@wacsof-foscao.net.

Finally, we wish to assure you of our unshakable commitment to serve the best interests of the entire family of Civil Society in West Africa to the best of our ability going forward.

Aluta Continua!

For Executive Committee:



Mrs. Margret Udoh
1st Vice President



Mr. Pereira Dionisio
2nd Vice President