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NIGERIA'S VOTER DATA: **ACCESS OR PRIVACY?**

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From the **Editor's Desk**

Transparency is not tested when it is convenient. It is tested when it is uncomfortable. The Freedom of Information Act was enacted to deepen democracy, strengthen accountability, and ensure that public institutions remain open to the people they serve. Yet, as this edition reveals, the true challenge of access to information is not found in the text of the law—but in its implementation.

This volume examines the controversy surrounding the ₦1.5 billion demand for access to Nigeria's national voters' register. Beyond the headline figure lies a more profound constitutional question: Can cost become a barrier to a statutory right? When administrative procedures produce outcomes that effectively discourage access, we must pause and reflect on whether the spirit of the law is being upheld. Through legal analysis, comparative global insights, expert commentary, and civic perspectives, this publication explores the intersection of governance, compliance, and public trust. We interrogate not only the arithmetic behind the figures but also the broader implications for electoral transparency and democratic participation.

Access to information is not a commercial transaction. It is a democratic safeguard. When citizens seek public records, they are not making purchases; they are exercising rights. Institutions entrusted with public confidence must therefore balance procedural requirements with the constitutional duty of openness. This edition invites policymakers, public officials, civil society actors, lawyers, journalists, and engaged citizens to consider a simple but critical truth: transparency should never become a luxury item. It must remain accessible, practical, and protected.

Editor-in-Chief
President Aigbokhan



THE BILLION-NAIRA REGISTER

The Battle For Access To Nigeria's Voters' Data



Nigeria has a voting population of 93.4 million and these records are stored by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in both hard and digital formats. A recent request by Messrs. VC Ottaokpukpu & Associates to INEC has generated significant public debate. The law firm requested access to the complete national voters' register and the list of existing polling units in all electoral wards across Nigeria.

In response, INEC estimated the cost of processing the request at ₦1,505,901,750.00 (One Billion, Five Hundred and Five Million, Nine Hundred and One Thousand, Seven Hundred and Fifty Naira Only). This staggering figure has raised questions about transparency, cost justification, and compliance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2011. The Ottaokpukpu case has spotlighted the urgent need for a campaign to enforce

proactive disclosure mandates on public institutions and ensure budgetary appropriations for record management and public access.

Under the FOIA, every public institution has a statutory obligation to organize and maintain its records in a way that facilitates easy access. Even where the applicant does not specify a preferred format for delivery, the Commission still bears a legal duty to manage information efficiently and transparently. INEC's response and recent further clarification on the cost raises a broader issue of an indirect denial of access by imposing exorbitant costs which violates both the spirit and letter of the FOIA.

The key benchmarks for measuring FOIA compliance are clear and non-negotiable: every public institution must establish a dedicated FOI Desk or Unit, respond

...INEC's cost raises a broader issue of indirect denial of access by imposing exorbitant fees.

promptly and fully to information requests, submit annual compliance reports to the Attorney General of the Federation, update their websites with accurate and accessible public information, treat requesters with professionalism and courtesy, and continuously train staff on FOI standards and obligations.

These are not procedural niceties, they are the core indicators of transparency and accountability in public service. FOIA operates reactively in Nigeria, dependent almost entirely on individual requests while proactive disclosure remains weak across most MDAs. Yet, Section 8(1) of the Act clearly stipulates that FOI processing fees must be limited to standard charges for document duplication and transcription (where applicable). For comparison, the United Kingdom records an average processing time of seven and a half hours per FOI request, with detailed cost-accounting systems. Applying this logic to Nigeria's electoral data, a national voters' register of 93.4 million names, at roughly 40 names per A2 page-paper, would amount to about 2.3 million sheets. By INEC's arithmetic, each sheet costs ₦250 to duplicate, bringing the grand total to over a billion naira. At that price, one might expect the papers to be printed on gold leaf, not A2 sheets. The figure sent to VC Ottaokpukpu reads "production fee" more like an election budget forwarded to the National

Assembly. Clearly, someone at the Commission needs a refresher in both transparency and basic mathematics.

In Nigeria, calculating the precise cost of FOIA compliance is difficult because public officers are not remunerated based on time spent per task, and most agencies do not track administrative costs. Does the Commission maintain accurate records of the hours spent by public officers on FOI matters and the associated non-labour costs such as consultations, printing, or data retrieval? The absence of such accounting practices has resulted in inflated and inconsistent FOI processing fees across Nigerian MDAs.

Globally, the cost of administering FOIA is largely absorbed by governments, not applicants. In the United States, the total cost of all FOIA-related activities across federal agencies in the 2024 fiscal year was estimated at \$725.8 million, with only 0.3% recovered through user fees. In the United Kingdom, the average administrative cost per FOI request is £293, with printing costs at 10 pence per black-and-white A4 page and 50 pence for colour. In Canada, the average annual processing cost is about CA\$30 million, while in Ireland, total FOI administration over twelve years cost €66.6 million. In all these cases, governments cover approximately 99% of the operational costs, recognizing that access to information is a public good, not a revenue source.

Governments should therefore avoid passing the administrative costs of transparency onto citizens. The cost of responding to FOI requests is typically five times higher than the fees payable, yet these expenses are justified as essential to democracy, accountability, and civic participation. The INEC case underscores a pressing question: Where is a private citizen or law

...to prevent future controversies, public institutions must budget explicitly for FOIA implementation.

firm expected to raise over one billion naira to access public information? Denying access based on such costs effectively disenfranchises citizens from participating in governance.

To prevent future controversies, public institutions must budget explicitly for FOIA implementation. There must be specific percent-based budgetary allocations for FOI processing. Adequate financial resources are required not only to respond to individual requests but also to develop the proactive disclosure infrastructure envisioned under the law.

As the new INEC Chairman takes office, he must immediately withdraw the excessive fee demand and order the publication of the national voters' register, including names, photographs, ages, and sex, on the Commission's official website. Doing so will not only fulfill INEC's proactive disclosure obligation under the Freedom of Information Act but also send a clear message that a new sheriff has indeed assumed the highest seat of the electoral umpire, one committed to openness, accountability, and public trust.



Professor Joash Ojo Amupitan (SAN)
New INEC Chairman Appointed

INEC Clarifies Cost of Voters Register & Polling Units Request

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) wishes to clarify matters concerning the recent request by Messrs V.C. Ottaokpukpu & Associates for Certified True Copies (CTCs) of the National Register of Voters for all 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), as well as the existing polling units in the electoral wards across the country.

The Commission received the request on 8th October 2025 and responded on 13th October 2025, approving the application while outlining the cost for processing and issuance. The sum quoted – 1,505,901,750 Naira – has become a subject of media attention and public inquiry. INEC emphasizes that the cost is determined strictly in line with the provisions of Section 8(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2011, which states that:

"Where access to information is to be given under this Act, the public institution may charge an amount

representing the actual cost of document duplication and transcription.”

In accordance with INEC Guidelines for the Processing and Issuance of Certified True Copies (CTC) of Documents, which draws authority from Section 15 of the Electoral Act 2022, the applicable charge is 250 Naira per page. The applicable charge is 250 Naira per page.

For clarity, the National Register of Voters for all 36 states and the FCT contains 93,469,008 registered voters, with 16 voters per page, requiring 6,018,661 pages. Additionally, printing the existing polling units in the electoral wards across the country, covering 176,848 polling units, will require 4,946 pages. The total number of pages to be printed for both requests is therefore 6,023,607, at a unit cost of 250 Naira per page, resulting in the total sum of 1,505,901,750 Naira.

The Commission wishes to assure the public that this figure reflects only the actual costs of document duplication and transcription and does not include any other charges. INEC remains committed to transparency, accountability, and the responsible management of public resources.

Mr. Edetaen Ojo Press Release

Lagos, Thursday, October 16, 2025: Media Rights Agenda (MRA) today condemned the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for attempting to frustrate a legitimate Freedom of Information (FOI) request by demanding an outrageous fee of over N1.5 billion for a copy of the National Register of Voters and list of polling units in Nigeria, describing its demand as a blatant attempt to weaponize cost as a tool for denying access to vital public information.

In a statement issued in Lagos, MRA's Executive Director, Mr. Edetaen Ojo, noted that “the National Register of Voters and the list of polling units are arguably the most essential public records needed by civil society organizations, political parties, election observers, and the media to effectively monitor the electoral process,” arguing that by “placing such a colossal financial barrier in the way of a requester, INEC is deliberately hindering the public's right and ability to scrutinize its operations, thereby compromising transparency and avoiding accountability.” MRA's statement followed a letter





...INEC is weaponizing cost as a tool for denying access to vital public Information

He pointed out that in the exercise of his powers under the FOI Act, former Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Mr. Mohammed Adoke (SAN) issued Guidelines for public institutions on the Implementation of the Act, in which he stipulated the fees chargeable for duplication of records under the Act, limiting photocopy or scanning and printing to a maximum of N10 per page.

Mr. Ojo argued that the list of 93,469,008 registered voters and list of 176,846 polling units in the country could not number up to 150 million pages, for the cost of duplicating those lists to amount to over N1.5 billion at the legally permissible rate of fees.

Besides, he noted, In November 2017, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights adopted the Guidelines on Access to Information and Elections in Africa, as a soft law instrument "to provide guidance to States on the categories of information on the electoral process that must, at the minimum, be proactively disclosed." According to him, Paragraph 17(e) of the Guidelines requires any election management body in Africa, during pre-election periods, to proactively

from INEC, dated October 13, 2025, and signed by Ms Rose Oriaran-Anthony, Secretary to the Commission, in response to an October 8, 2025 request filed by the law firm of V-C Ottackpukpu & Associates, in which it demanded the payment of N1,505,901,750.00 as cost of producing the Voters Register and list of all polling units in Nigeria as a condition for releasing the information.

Describing the charge as excessive, prohibitive and a clear violation of the spirit and letter of the FOI Act, Mr. Ojo said: *"Section 8(1) of the FOI Act clearly stipulates that fees shall be limited to standard charges for document duplication and transcription, where necessary. The staggering amount of over N1.5 billion cannot be a standard charge for duplication and is a clear and deliberate attempt to make public data inaccessible to the public. This is an affront to transparency and democratic accountability."*

disclose “Voters roll containing information allowing the unique identification of each voter, including the full name, identity number, photograph (where it exists), gender and age of each voter, and any subsequent amendments to this information”.

Mr. Ojo stressed that the requested documents, the National Register of Voters and the list of polling units, are public records that are fundamental to electoral transparency and are likely already digitized and centrally stored, which means that the cost of reproducing such electronic data is negligible and would certainly not be in millions of Naira.

He warned even on a charitable interpretation of INEC’s action, with its mandate to conduct free, fair, and credible elections, which hinges on public trust and transparency, the response of the Commission sends a strong signal that it is prioritizing bureaucracy and profit over its constitutional and statutory obligations

to the Nigerian people, or that it is deliberately impeding public scrutiny of its operations.

Mr. Ojo said: “The primary objective of the FOI Act is to make public records and information freely available. If allowed to stand, this action by INEC sets a dangerous precedent, which will encourage other government agencies to impose exorbitant fees, effectively nullifying the gains of the FOI Act and rolling back this transparency initiative in Nigeria.”

He therefore called on INEC to immediately and unconditionally withdraw the outrageous fee demand and provide the requested information either completely free of charge, in accordance with the principle established by the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, or at a fee that strictly adheres to the provision of Section 8(1) of the FOI Act and the Attorney-General’s FOI Implementation Guidelines.

A photograph of Mr. Edetaen Ojo, a Black man with glasses, wearing a dark shirt, speaking and gesturing with his hands. The background is dark and out of focus.

..the primary objective of the FOI Act is to make public records and information freely available.

Mr Edetaen Ojo
Journalist

When Transparency Becomes Luxury: INEC and ₦1.5B FOI Controversy.

Chike Walter Duru

When the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) recently demanded a staggering ₦1.5 billion from a law firm for access to the national register of voters and polling units, many Nigerians were left bewildered. The request was made under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act, 2011 – a law designed to make public records accessible, not to commercialize them. INEC's justification, couched in legalese and bureaucratic arithmetic, raises a deeper question: Is Nigeria's electoral umpire genuinely committed to transparency and accountability?

At the heart of this controversy is a simple statutory principle. Section 8(1) of the Freedom of Information Act clearly stipulates that where access to information is granted, the public institution may charge *"an amount representing the actual cost of document duplication and transcription."*

The framers of this law envisioned modest fees; not financial barriers. INEC, however, appears to have stretched this provision beyond reason. By invoking its internal guideline of ₦250 per page, the Commission arrived at the colossal figure of ₦1,505,901,750 for 6,023,607 pages – supposedly the total pages needed to print the entire national voters' register and polling unit list. It is a mathematical exercise that may be sound on paper, but absurd in context and intent.



Let us be clear: transparency is not a privilege that comes with a price tag. It is a fundamental right. The Freedom of Information Act exists precisely to ensure that institutions like INEC cannot hide behind bureaucracy or cost to deny citizens access to information that belongs to them. INEC's justification, however elaborate, falls flat against the law's overriding provisions. Section 1(1) of the FOI Act affirms every Nigerian's right to access or request information from any public institution. More importantly, Section 1(2) establishes that this right applies *"notwithstanding anything contained in any other Act, law or regulation."*

This means that no internal guideline, regulation, or provision of the Electoral Act can supersede the FOI Act, within the context of access to information. By relying on Section 15 of the Electoral Act 2022 and its own *"Guidelines for Processing Certified True Copies,"* INEC seems to have elevated its internal processes above a federal statute – a position that is both legally untenable and administratively misguided.

Civil society organisations have rightly condemned INEC's response. The Media Initiative Against Injustice,

Violence and Corruption (MIIVOC) called the fee arbitrary and unlawful, while the Media Rights Agenda (MRA) described it as a deliberate attempt to frustrate legitimate requests under the FOI Act. These reactions are not misplaced. Charging ₦1.5 billion for public records is tantamount to weaponising cost – turning what should be a transparent process into a pay-to-play system.

The Attorney-General of the Federation's FOI Implementation Guidelines pegged the standard charge for duplication at ₦10 per page. Even at that rate, printing the same documents would not amount to anything close to ₦1.5 billion.

Moreover, in an age of digital data, it is difficult to believe that the only way INEC can share information is through millions of printed pages. It is worth noting that the National Register of Voters is a digital database – already compiled, stored, and backed up electronically. The polling unit list is also digitised and publicly available. What, then, justifies this astronomical fee? Democracy thrives on openness. The credibility of any electoral body depends not just on the conduct of elections, but also on the degree of public confidence in its processes. If the cost of accessing basic electoral data runs into billions, how can civil

society, researchers, or ordinary citizens participate meaningfully in democratic oversight?

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights' Guidelines on Access to Information and Elections in Africa (2017) are explicit: **election management bodies must proactively disclose essential electoral information, including voters' rolls and polling unit data. Nigeria, as a signatory to this framework, is obligated to promote – not restrict access to such information.**

By placing financial barriers in the way of public access, INEC risks undermining not only its own credibility but also Nigeria's broader democratic integrity. Transparency should not be a privilege of the rich or the powerful. It should be a right enjoyed by all.

This incident presents an opportunity for reflection and reform. INEC must immediately review its internal cost guidelines for information requests and align them with the FOI Act and the Attorney-General's Implementation Guidelines. More importantly, it should embrace proactive disclosure by publishing the national register of voters and polling units in digital formats that

are freely accessible to the public. There is no reason why information already stored electronically should require billions to access. Doing so not only contravenes the spirit of the FOI Act but also erodes public trust in the Commission's commitment to open governance.

Access to information is the lifeblood of democracy. It empowers citizens to hold institutions accountable and ensures that governance remains transparent. INEC's ₦1.5 billion charge is not merely excessive; it is a dangerous precedent that could embolden other public institutions to commercialize public data and silence scrutiny.

If Nigeria must advance its democratic gains, the culture of secrecy and bureaucratic obstruction must give way to openness and accountability. INEC should lead that transformation, not stand in its way. The Commission owes Nigerians not just elections, but the truth, transparency, and trust that sustain democracy.

THE COST OF ACCESS

Examining Nigeria's ₦1.5 Billion FOI Controversy

When access becomes expensive, transparency weakens.

When a public institution demands ₦1,505,901,750 to release the National Register of Voters under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the issue goes beyond arithmetic. It raises a deeper governance concern: **whether cost recovery is being applied in a way that weakens the right of access itself.**

Section 8(1) of the FOI Act allows public institutions to charge only the actual cost of duplication and transcription. The law was never intended to create financial barriers to public information.

Transparency should not be priced out

Section 8(1) of the Freedom of Information Act permits public institutions to charge only the actual and reasonable cost of duplication and transcription when granting access to information. The intent of the law is clear: **fees are meant to cover basic administrative reproduction, not to generate revenue or create financial hurdles for citizens seeking public records.**

Transparency is a democratic obligation, not a commercial transaction. Excessive fees risk becoming indirect denial of access, undermining the spirit of the Act. Public information, especially when digitally stored, should remain affordable and accessible to all.

₦1,505,901,750

Total Duplication Estimate



6,023,607
Pages

₦250
Per page

Duplication Cost Breakdown

This illustrates a compliance model heavily dependent on physical reproduction rather than digital transparency.

99.8%

Printing /Duplication Charges

0.2

Administrative Processing

0.0%

Digital Distribution

*Data derived from INEC official statement (2025)
Analysis by FOI Counsel*

GLOBAL COST COMPARISON

How Democracies Fund and Manage FOI Costs

Across established democracies, the cost of administering access-to-information laws is treated as a governance investment. Transparency is funded as a public obligation — not commercialized.

Governments absorb the vast majority of compliance costs to protect citizens' right to information.

**IRELAND**

Ireland spent **€66.6 million** over 12 years

Govt. covered operational cost, funding request

Transparency treated as public expenditure

**UNITED STATES**

\$725.8 million

Only 0.3% recovered from applicants

Government funds over 99%

**UNITED KINGDOM**

Cost per request **£293**

£0.10 per black-and-white page

Strong digital disclosure systems

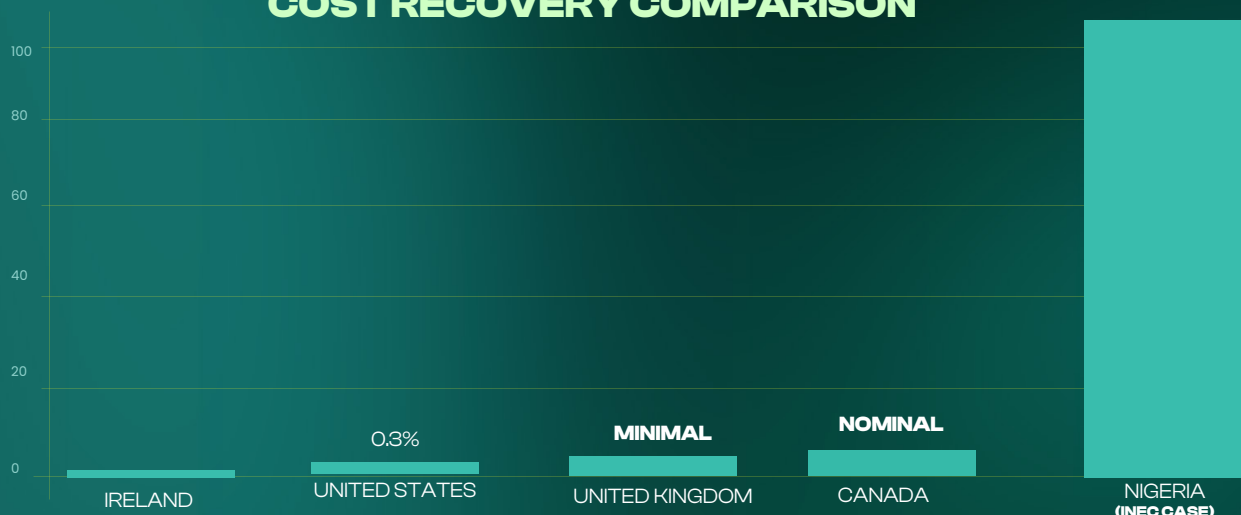
**CANADA**

Approx. **CA\$30 million** annually

Centralized cost-tracking mechanisms

Majorly government-funded

COST RECOVERY COMPARISON



International FOI practices derived from UCL Constitution Unit research and official government FOI guidelines (UK ICO, Ireland FOI).

Figures reflect a mix of administrative costs and fee structures across jurisdictions.

Making FOI Work

Digital Disclosure: Searchable digital records cut processing costs and prevent excessive fees for applicants.

Budget Allocation: Dedicated funding ensures agencies don't pass operational costs onto citizens.

Standardized Fees: A national fee framework avoids arbitrary charges and treats transparency as a public good.

Proactive Publication: Publishing common information online reduces requests and administrative burden.

Institutional Reform: Compliance monitoring protects public access and prevents FOI from becoming a revenue source.

Law Nuggets

“In learning the law, you don’t just gain knowledge—you sharpen judgment and grow in understanding.”

— Roscoe Pound

1. Boundary Commission: Powers and Limitations

The Boundary Commission is not a court of law but a judicial tribunal under Section 22 of the 1963 Constitution. Its main role is to determine boundaries, not to give ownership or title to land. Only a court can declare who owns land. However, the Boundary Commission can look into issues related to boundaries, including ownership interests.

2. The proliferation of committees in National Assembly is not only adding to its overhead cost, but also going to make the work of other arms of government more cumbersome. Ministers and head of agencies are compelled to make multiple presentations and appearance before multiple committees overseeing them which inalienably creates an avenue for corruption. – Barr. President

3. There is automatic membership of the Bar Association on a lawyer upon being called to the Bar.
CHINWO V OWHONDA (2008) 3 NWLR (pt. 1074) 341 CA @ 359, paras. E–F

4. Idris, J.C.A (as he then was) in WEIKUN v. F.R.N. [2014] 18 NWLR Pt. 1970 Paras. E – G @ 220

The fact that the appellant is standing trial on the charge of bribery before the High Court of Sokoto State does not prevent him for being tried for money laundering before the Federal High Court. I do not see how bribery and money laundering are similar as argued by the appellant’s counsel. The two charges were filed under separate laws and before different courts, and what is more the ingredients for proving bribery and money laundering are totally different. I therefore hold that the charge is not an abuse of court process.

5. Procedural Flexibility in Fundamental Rights Enforcement – President Aigbokhan & 36 Ors v. Niger Delta Development Commission & 3 Ors (FHC/B/CS/21/2015).

Having brought these applications under several statutory and constitutional provisions each of which might have several procedural Rules for commencing an action, it is only reasonable that in so far as the claims are connected to a common subject matter, the action could

be brought under any procedural rules. In the instant case, the Applicants contend that the right to information is corollary to the right of expression or opinion, under Section 39 of the Constitution which is redressible by a proceedings commenced under Section 46 of the Constitution. In my view, once a claim under Chapter IV is invoked, any other claim or community of claims touching on the same subject matter of infringement, whether or not they are fundamental right violations captured under Section 46 of the Constitution pursuant to the Fundamental Right (Enforcement Procedure) Rules 2009, such an action cannot be defeated on technical grounds. This is regardless of the merit of the claim. Judgment delivered on 16th December 2016.

6. Procedural Flexibility in Fundamental Rights Enforcement – President Aigbokhan & 36 Ors v. Niger Delta Development Commission & 3 Ors (FHC/B/CS/21/2015).

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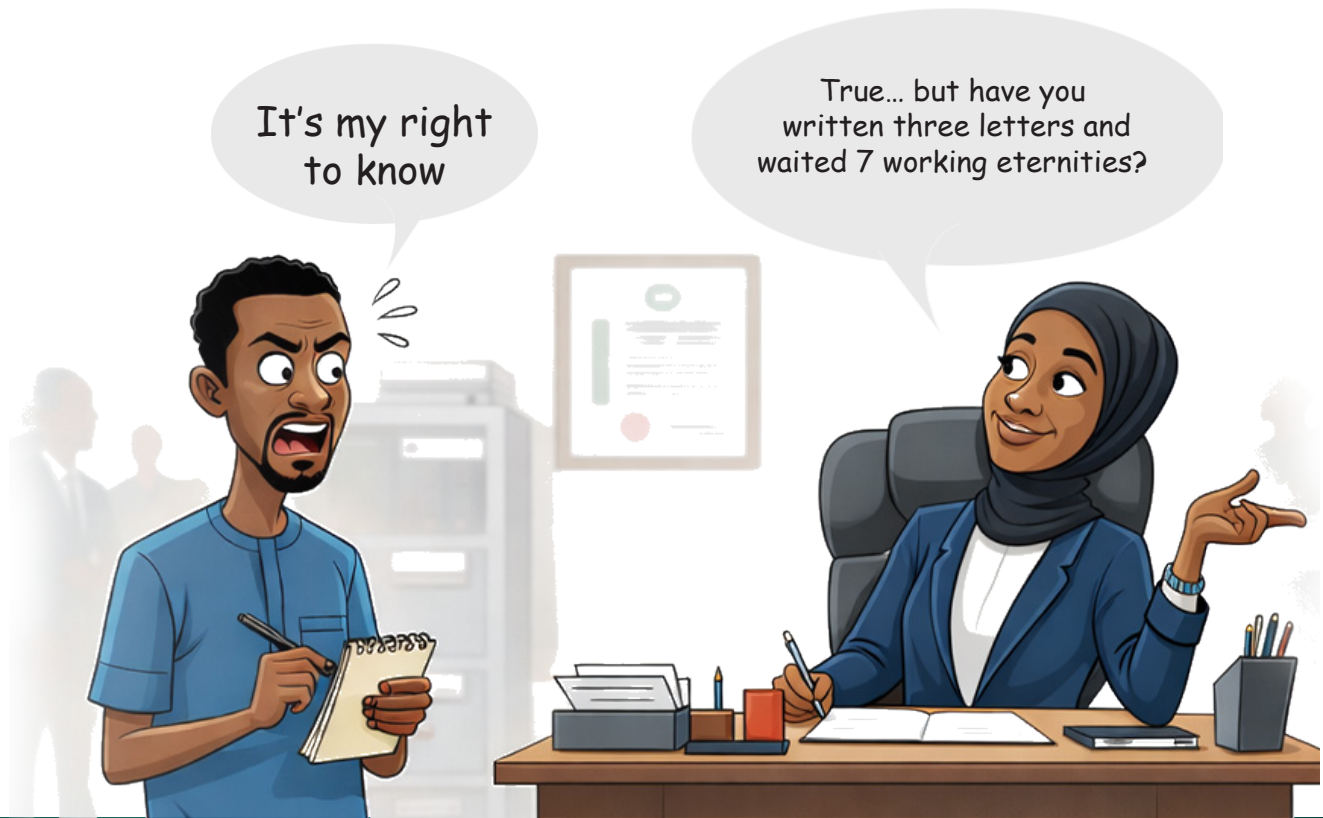


action cannot be defeated on technical grounds. This is regardless of the merit of the claim. Judgment delivered on 16th December 2016.

7. Honourable Chinedu Joshua Obika v. Federal Character Commission. Suit No. NICN/ABJ/148/2024. Judgement delivered on 18th of June 2025.

The High Court of FCT has held that FCT indigenes are either Nigerian citizens (not by naturalization) who cannot claim any other state; and persons born in the FCT and whose descendants lived in the area presently constituting the FCT before 26 February 1976 and have continued to reside in the FCT after that date.

LAW COMIC

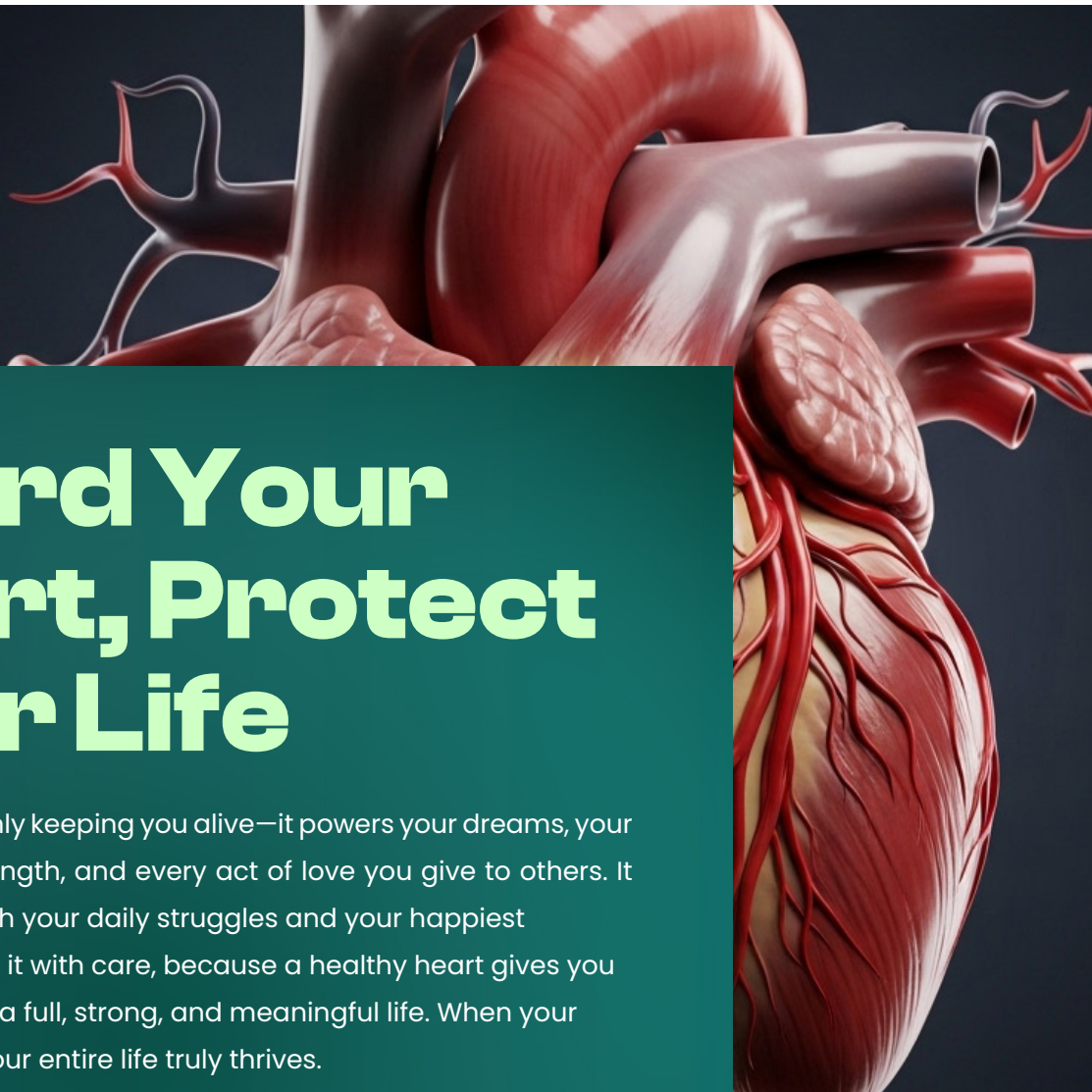


The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act guarantees every citizen the right to access public records held by government institutions. At its core, it promotes transparency, accountability, and active civic participation by empowering citizens to ask questions and demand clarity.

Yet, the practical experience of accessing information often differs from the promise of the law. Although the Act requires institutions to respond within a specified timeframe (usually 7 days), many applicants face delays, administrative hurdles, repeated correspondence, or even silence. What should be a simple civic process can become prolonged and frustrating.

This illustration highlights that tension — the confident assertion of a legal right meeting procedural resistance. It reflects a broader issue: the gap between legal entitlement and real-world access. Transparency should not be burdensome. For the FOI Act to truly serve its purpose, implementation must be timely, efficient, and citizen-friendly — ensuring that the right to know is practical, not exhausting.

Health Talk



Guard Your Heart, Protect Your Life

Your heart is not only keeping you alive—it powers your dreams, your laughter, your strength, and every act of love you give to others. It carries you through your daily struggles and your happiest moments. So treat it with care, because a healthy heart gives you the chance to live a full, strong, and meaningful life. When your heart is healthy, your entire life truly thrives.

They say health is wealth, but the truth is, real health begins with a healthy heart. Your heart is not just an organ—it is the powerful engine that keeps your entire body alive and active. Every second of the day, it pumps oxygen, nutrients, and life through your veins, making sure every part of you functions properly. Without your heart doing its job faithfully, nothing else in the body can truly work.

Yet, despite how important it is, many people only remember their heart when something goes wrong. In today's fast-paced world, stress, poor eating habits, and unhealthy lifestyles have become normal routines. People push their bodies beyond limits, ignore rest, and treat their health like something they

can “fix later.” But the heart doesn’t always give loud warnings at first—it starts with small signals, and if those signs are ignored, the results can be dangerous.

Why the Heart Matters

Your heart beats about 100,000 times every single day. That means in one year, it beats over 35 million times. It never sleeps, never pauses, and never takes a break. It keeps working even when you are tired, asleep, or unaware. That alone should remind us how valuable and hardworking the heart truly is.

But just like every engine, it needs proper maintenance. When you fuel your body with unhealthy food, carry stress without relief, avoid exercise, or engage in habits like smoking and excessive alcohol consumption, you begin to strain your heart. Over time, these poor habits can clog the arteries, raise blood pressure, and weaken the heart’s ability to pump effectively. This can eventually lead to serious health conditions such as hypertension, stroke, heart attack, or heart disease.

The sad part is that many heart problems could have been prevented if people took their heart health seriously early enough.

Sometimes, the heart doesn’t scream immediately—it whispers. And those whispers are warning signs your body sends before a major breakdown happens. Some common signs include:

- Persistent fatigue or weakness
- Shortness of breath, even after little activity
- Chest pain, pressure, or tightness
- Dizziness or fainting spells

These symptoms are not things to overlook or excuse. They may be your body’s way of saying: “*Something is wrong. Pay attention.*” Ignoring them can turn a manageable condition into a life-threatening emergency.

Keys to a Healthy Heart

The good news is that protecting your heart doesn’t require complicated steps. It requires discipline, awareness, and consistent habits.

1. Eat Smart

Your heart depends heavily on what you eat. Choose foods that support your cardiovascular system such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. Reduce salt, sugar, and processed foods because they increase cholesterol levels and raise blood pressure.

2. Stay Active

Regular exercise strengthens your heart and improves blood circulation. Aim for at least 30 minutes daily—walking, jogging, dancing, skipping, or even home workouts. Physical activity helps reduce bad cholesterol and keeps your blood pressure stable.

3. Manage Stress & Rest Well

Too much stress can overwork your heart and raise blood pressure. Learn to rest, sleep well, and take breaks. Practice stress control through prayer, meditation, deep breathing, or simply reducing overthinking. A calm mind supports a healthy heart.

DID YOU KNOW

that Nelson Mandela spent 27 years in prison — and came out without bitterness, becoming South Africa's first Black president?

//

Nelson Mandela once reminded the world that holding onto anger only destroys the person carrying it. He said, "Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies." This powerful truth reflects the kind of leadership Mandela embodied—after spending 27 years in prison, he understood that bitterness would only keep him trapped, even outside the prison walls. Instead, he chose forgiveness, not because the injustice was small, but because freedom without peace is not true freedom.

Mandela's life teaches that real strength is not proven through revenge, but through the courage to rise above pain and still choose unity. His decision to forgive helped heal a broken nation and showed the world that leadership is not about power, but about purpose. In a world where many respond to hurt with hatred, Mandela's story reminds us that forgiveness is not weakness—it is one of the greatest victories of the human spirit.



Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela remains one of the most respected and admired figures in modern history. Born on July 18, 1918, in a small village in South Africa, Mandela grew up witnessing the harsh realities of racial segregation under apartheid — a system that brutally discriminated against Black South Africans. Determined to fight for justice, he joined the African National Congress (ANC) in the 1940s and became In 1962, Mandela was arrested and later sentenced to life imprisonment for his anti-apartheid activism. He spent 27 long years behind bars — most of them on Robben Island, where he endured hard labor, isolation, and harsh conditions. Yet, even in captivity, his spirit



remained unbroken. He continued to educate himself and others, turning his prison cell into a place of reflection and leadership.

What makes Mandela's story extraordinary is what happened next. When he was finally released in 1990, the world expected anger, revenge, or rebellion. Instead, Mandela chose the path of forgiveness. He famously said,

"As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I'd still be in prison."

In 1994, he made history as South Africa's first democratically elected Black president, leading a nation once divided by hate toward unity and peace. Rather than punishing those who oppressed his people, Mandela worked with them to rebuild a new South Africa. His presidency focused on reconciliation, equality, and hope. Mandela's life teaches us that true strength isn't just in fighting oppression — it's in forgiving, rebuilding, and inspiring others to do the same. He showed that one person's courage can transform a nation's destiny, a voice for equality, freedom, and human rights.

Mandela's impact reached far beyond South Africa, becoming a global symbol of justice, reconciliation, and moral courage. Even after his presidency, he continued to champion human rights and equality, inspiring generations to pursue freedom with integrity and compassion.

PHOTO GALLERY

A curated collection of moments from FOI activities, award presentations, and newsletter engagements by our staff and Senior Counsel.

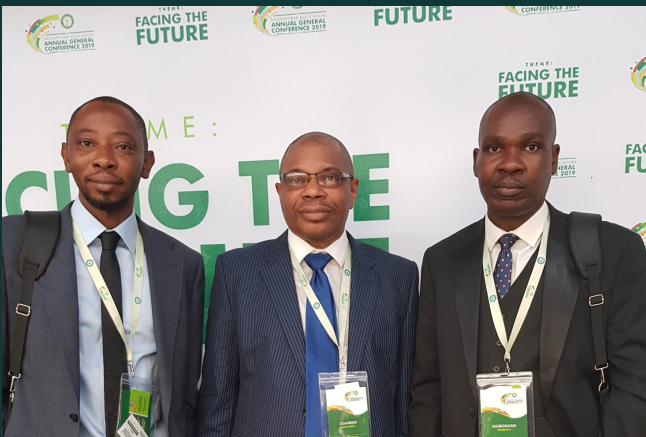
These images reflect our commitment to making the Freedom of Information more accessible, while empowering citizens to understand their rights and actively engage in FOI-related actions.



President Aigbokhan receiving award of excellence from LAWSA (Law Students Association) of University of Benin



Mr David Ajayi representing FOI COUNSEL at ID4D Project organised by the Fed. Govt in partnership with World Bank and the European Investment bank



A Group Photograph, From Right: President Aigbokhan, Esq; Rotimi Oguneso, SAN and Ralph Asuquo, Esq at NBA National Conference



President Aigbokhan presents a copy of his book on FOIA to the president of the National Youth Council of Nigeria.



Photograph of Academic and Non-Academic Staff of AAU after a training on FOIA, Public Procurement and Ethics, organized by FOI Counsel.



About Us

FOI Counsel is a law group established primarily to provide legal assistance to NGOs and the media seeking for information, under the Freedom of Information Act 2011. We are also, the first Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Litigation-specialized firm in Africa. As the demand for our services increased we billowed into four thematic areas of work and these are:

FOI Advocacy & Litigation



We focus on ensuring transparency and accountability in government processes. This includes challenging government agencies that have refused to disclose information and litigating on behalf of individuals and organizations seeking to obtain government-held information.

Human Rights Litigation



We protect the fundamental rights of individuals and groups who have been subjected to violations involving a wide range of issues such as discrimination, police brutality, and freedom of speech, among others, and seek to bring justice to those who have suffered harm through legal means.

Land reforms & rural development



We promote equitable access to land resources and support the sustainable growth of rural communities. This involves advising on land ownership and tenure, supporting land-based livelihoods, and advocating for policies and programs that support rural development and the rights of rural communities.

Research & Policy Advocacy



We empower change and justice through in-depth analysis of laws, precedents, and regulations, and effective advocacy strategies to shape policies and promote equitable outcomes in society.

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THE
PRESIDENT'S
NEWSLETTER



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