

A BILL

FOR

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR MEDIA COVERAGE OF NIGERIA COURTS PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PURPOSE OF GATHERING AND DISSEMINATING NEWS TO THE PUBLIC AND FOR RELATED MATTERS, 2016

Sponsored by: Hon. Daniel Reyenieju

[] Commencement

BE IT ENACTED by the National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria-

1 1. As from the commencement of this Act, the Presiding Judge in
2 a proceeding of any court in the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall permit the
3 broadcasting, televising, electronic recording, streaming or photographing
4 of judicial proceedings for the purposes of gathering and disseminating
5 news to the public or for the purpose of education, unless-

6 (a) The Presiding Judge finds that allowing such broadcasting,
7 televising, electronic recording, streaming or photographing of the
8 proceeding would interfere materially with National Security; and

9 (b) The determination under subsection (1)(A) is hitherto made
10 under exceptional circumstances.

11 2. Without prejudice to the provision of this Act, the National
12 Judicial Council of the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall within 30 days of
13 commencement of the Act provide guidelines with respect to the
14 management and administration of broadcasting, televising, electronic
15 recording, streaming or photographing described under section (1).

Role of National
Judicial Council

16 3. In the interests of justice and fairness, the Presiding Judge of
17 each court of the Federal Republic of Nigeria-

Procedures

18 (a) May provide rules and regulations for the courtroom use of any
19 form of media or media equipment and the acquisition or distribution of any
20 of the images or sounds obtained in the courtroom;

1 (b) The Presiding Judge may require any media representative
2 intending to cover the proceeding to demonstrate adequately in advance of the
3 proceeding that the equipment that will be used meets the light and sound
4 standards of the court.

Interpretation

5 4. In this Act-

6 "Presiding Judge" as referred to in this Act means the judge presiding over a
7 proceeding in a court of competent jurisdiction in Nigeria;

8 "Court" as referred to in this Act means any court of civil or criminal
9 jurisdiction established by any law or deemed to be so established;

10 "Judicial Proceedings or Proceedings" as referred to in this Act includes all
11 procedurals and hearings before a court, or a tribunal or administrative board
12 that performs judicial functions;

13 "Media Coverage" includes broadcasting, televising, electronic recording, or
14 photographing of judicial proceedings for the purpose of gathering and
15 disseminating news to the public or for the purpose of education.

Citation

16 5. This Bill may be cited as the Coverage on the Nigerian Courts Bill,
17 2016.

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

The Bill seeks to provide for media coverage of all court proceedings in all Courts of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It seeks to further public access to court proceedings by permitting presiding judges at all court levels to open their courtrooms for media coverage.