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Saturday, January 24, 2026

RT. Honorable Tajudeen Abbas
Speaker of the House of Assembly
House Chambers,
National Assembly Complex
Three Arms Zone,
Abuja

Dear Mr. Speaker,

OPEN LETTER - RE: RECENT REPORTED CONFERMENT OF GCON NATIONAL HONOUR ON MR. GILBERT CHAGOURY.

The Presidency is reported to have recently confirmed the conferment by Mr. President of the Grand Commander of the Order of the Niger (GCON) National Honour on Mr. Gilbert Chagoury, allegedly on the occasion of his birthday, 8th January 2026.

In addition to concerns about the substantive merits of this conferment, about which several serious and legitimate public questions have already arisen, the circumstances surrounding the award raise additional issues that warrant the attention and scrutiny of the Honourable House.

First, public knowledge of the conferment appears not to have come through any official Presidential or Government channel. Rather, the award only became known incidentally, following a congratulatory message issued by a private individual on Monday, 19th January 2026, more than one week after the stated date of conferment. This unusual mode of disclosure is troubling, particularly in light of the widely reported close personal association between the award recipient and Mr. President.

Second, while the President's powers under the National Honours Act are undoubtedly broad, they are not unfettered. The law requires that such powers be exercised pursuant to a Warrant. Specifically, the National Honours Warrant, a subsidiary legislation made under the Act, provides that "the President shall, by notice in the Federal Gazette, signify his intention of appointing a person to a particular rank of an order."

It is acknowledged that the President may, in appropriate circumstances, proceed by way of a special warrant containing different provisions. However,

even this alternative procedure must necessarily be evidenced by a duly issued and documented enabling warrant. As at date, it is not evident that any such warrant was issued or gazetted in respect of this conferment, nor has any explanation been offered for the apparent departure from established statutory procedure.

Third, an Instrument of Conferment currently circulating widely in the press and public domain, which instrument has not been disowned or contradicted by either the Presidency or the reported recipient, states that the award was "Given at Abuja, under my Hand and the Public Seal of the Federal Republic of Nigeria this 8th day of January, 2026." This raises a further and troubling question, as it is a matter of public knowledge that Mr. President was outside the country and not in Abuja on that date. The president's power in this regard not being delegable, the very validity of the award is thereby called into question.

In light of the foregoing, I respectfully call upon the National Assembly, and in particular the House of Representatives, to examine this matter in the exercise of its constitutional oversight responsibilities. Issues relating to National Honours, especially those of the exalted rank of Grand Commander, speak directly to the values, integrity, and collective honour of our Nation.

In the words of our National Pledge, we all, including the President, are required "to uphold her honour and glory."

May God help us to do so.

Yours faithfully,



Funso Doherty

cc:

The Honorable Attorney – General of the Federation

The Secretary to the Government of the Federation (as Registrar of National Honours)