



# Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic & Social Council of the United Nations

B-117, First Floor, Sarvodaya Enclave, New Delhi – 110 017  
Tel: 91-11-2686 4678, 2685 0523, 26528152 Fax: 91-11-2686 4688  
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## Advisory Committee

Sam Okudzeto  
Ghana (Chair)

Eunice Brookman-  
Amissah  
Kenya

Murray Burt  
Canada

Jean Corston  
UK

Maja Daruwala  
India

Alison Duxbury  
Australia

Nihal Jayawickrama  
Sri Lanka

B. G Verghese  
India

Zohra Yusuf  
Pakistan

**Prime Minister Tony Blair**  
**10 Downing Street**  
**London**  
**SW1 2AA**  
**United Kingdom**

11 April 2007

Dear Prime Minister Blair,

### **Re: Presidential Assent to Nigeria's Freedom of Information Bill 2004**

I write as director of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), to bring your urgent attention the status of Nigeria's Freedom of Information Bill 2004 and to urge you to ask President Olusegun Obasanjo to give his assent to the law at the very earliest.

For over seven years civil society groups in Nigeria have been advocating for an effective right to information regime and have worked closely with the Government to have the current FOI Bill 2004 drafted and introduced. As a result of their continued efforts, the Bill has been passed by both Houses of the National Assembly and is ready to become law. Yet it has stalled at its last hurdle - Presidential assent. With elections drawing close on 21 April and assent yet to be given, there is a very real threat that the Bill will not become law and the process of passing the law will need to start again with a new Government.

I am therefore writing to urge you to press President Olusegun Obasanjo to give his assent to the Bill which has already been through all the necessary legislative processes. CHRI has also written to the President as have many other concerned national and international organisations.

I hope you will add your voice and efforts to this. I look forward to a word in response.

Yours sincerely

Maja Daruwala  
Director

Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative  
B117, First Floor, Sarvodaya Enclave  
New Delhi 110017, India  
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Zohra Yusuf  
Pakistan

**The Office of Mr. Nelson Mandela**  
**Private Bag X70 000**  
**Houghton**  
**Johannesbury**  
**South Africa**  
**2041**

12 April 2007

Dear Mr. Mandela,

### **Re: Presidential Assent to Nigeria's Freedom of Information Bill 2004**

I write as director of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), to bring your urgent attention the status of Nigeria's Freedom of Information Bill 2004 and to urge you to ask President Olusegun Obasanjo to give his assent to the law at the very earliest.

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Zohra Yusuf  
Pakistan

**President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki**  
**Private Bag X1000**  
**Union Buildings**  
**Government Avenue**  
**Pretoria 1001**  
**South Africa**

12 April 2007

Dear President Mbeki,

### **Re: Presidential Assent to Nigeria's Freedom of Information Bill 2004**

I write as director of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), to bring your urgent attention the status of Nigeria's Freedom of Information Bill 2004 and to urge you to ask President Olusegun Obasanjo to give his assent to the law at the very earliest.

For over seven years civil society groups in Nigeria have been advocating for an effective right to information regime and have worked closely with the Government to have the current FOI Bill 2004 drafted and introduced. As a result of their continued efforts, the Bill has been passed by both Houses of the National Assembly and is ready to become law. Yet it has stalled at its last hurdle - Presidential assent. With elections drawing close on 21 April and assent yet to be given, there is a very real threat that the Bill will not become law and the process of passing the law will need to start again with a new Government.

I am therefore writing to urge you to press President Olusegun Obasanjo to give his assent to the Bill which has already been through all the necessary legislative processes. CHRI has also written to the President as have many other concerned national and international organisations.

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India

Zohra Yusuf  
Pakistan

## Mr. Hafez Ghanem

Country Director for Nigeria

## Ms. Galina Y. Sotirova

Country Program Coordinator, Nigeria

## Mr. Chukwudi Okafor

## Mr. Obadiah Tohomdet

2 April 2007

Dear Sirs and Madam,

### Re: Presidential Assent to Nigeria's Freedom of Information Bill 2004

I write as director of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), to bring your urgent attention the status of Nigeria's Freedom of Information Bill 2004 and to urge you to ask President Olusegun Obasanjo to give his assent to the law at the very earliest.

The present Bill is a product of long efforts by civil society and a process of consultation with government. The World Bank has been encouraging of a Freedom of Information law and has been known to make such a law a conditionality of further aid disbursements. Nigeria committed to enacted the Freedom of Information Bill in its poverty reduction strategic paper where it stated that the 'Right to Information Act will foster openness and feedback by streamlining and rationalizing the system for information collection, collation, storage and dissemination on a timely basis.' However CHRI is concerned that Presidential assent is yet to be given. Elections are looming and there is a very real threat that the Bill will not become law in time and the process of passing the law will need to start all again with a new Government.

I am therefore writing to urge your organisation to once again press President Olusegun Obasanjo to give his assent to the Bill which has already been through all the necessary legislative processes. CHRI has also written to the President as have many other concerned national and international organisations.

I hope you will add your voice and efforts to this. I look forward to a word in response.

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