

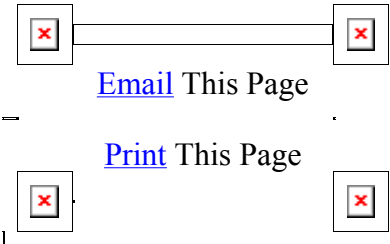
Don Campaigns For Freedom Of Information Bill

[This Day](#) (Lagos)

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Segun Fatuase
Lagos



A University don, Professor Ralph Akinfeleye, has called for a multi-media approach to the campaign efforts to ensure the passage of the Freedom of Information (FOI) bill into law within the shortest possible time.

Akinfeleye's call was part of efforts by well-meaning Nigerians and non- governmental organisations to create a groundswell of support for the bill which seeks to make public records accessible to Nigerians. The bill which was sponsored by a non-governmental organisation, Media Rights Agenda (MRA), is currently receiving attention at the National Assembly.

The don who teaches mass communications at the University of Lagos emphasised the need to adopt both the traditional and modern means of communication to convince Nigerians of the importance of a Freedom of Information law to journalists and other interested persons who seek access to public records.

He said that the traditional means of communication will involve politicians, community leaders, peer groups who can sway public opinion while the modern means of communication will entail the use of the print and electronic media as well as the Internet.

Akinfeleye also debunked the general belief that the FOI bill is meant for journalists alone and explained that it is for the benefit of every Nigerian who requires access to public records.

"Although journalists stand to benefit from a situation of legal access to public records by having access to information which they presently do not have access to, and are sometimes compelled to obtain illegally, but the ultimate beneficiary would be the public who will in the end get better and more accurate information", he pointed out.

Apart from journalists, the don added that the FOI law, when eventually passed, will benefit interested citizens who need information from public records to ensure accountability in the governance process or for purposes of research and planning.

He noted that it was also in the interest of members of the National Assembly to pass the bill into law because it would ensure for probity and accountability in governance and convince Nigerians that they have nothing to hide.

"It is in their own interest to enact the Freedom of Information law. It will augur well for probity and accountability. It will also help them articulate better and make informed decisions in the overall interest of Nigerians", he added.

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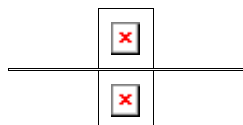
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