



Deliberations on a bill seeking an amendment to the 2010 Electoral Act to make it possible for

Nigerians living abroad to vote during the country's general elections, suffered a

setback in the House of Representatives as it was stepped down abruptly.

The bill was sponsored by the head of the House Committee on Diaspora, Abike Dabiri-Erewa,

Seeking an amendment to three sections of the Act pursuant to granting the

Independent National Electoral Commission(INEC) powers to conduct elections beyond the

shores of Nigeria, as well as allow Nigerians living outside the country to vote in all general

elections. Indications that the bill would suffer a setback emerged immediately after

Dabiri-Erewa concluded her lead debate on the general principles of the proposed amendment

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Bill. The Deputy Leader of the House, Leo Ogor raised concerns that Nigeria was not ripe for such an exercise, citing the cost implication as one of the reasons.

Dabiri- Erewa had in her submissions argued that the amendment was necessary to give the

over eight million Nigerians living abroad, who, according to her repatriate over twenty

billion dollars yearly into the nation's economy, a sense of belonging. She argued that about

115 countries in the world, 28 of them African countries, allow their citizens abroad to vote in

their foreign locations, so Nigeria should not be an exception.

NIGERIANS IN THAILAND CRY FOR HELP.

The Nigerian Community Association Thailand (NCAT), an umbrella body of Nigerians living in

Thailand, has petitioned President Goodluck Jonathan, saying they deserve a better deal from

the Nigerian ambassador to the Asian country. They alleged that the ambassador, Umaru Suleiman Azores, in collaboration with another Nigerian, Mr. Jerry Chike Obinabo is making life difficult for them.

They claim the duo connive with the Thai police to arrest, detain, torture and imprison

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Nigerians on trumped-up-charges, they maintain that the ambassador is usually indifferent

to the plight of his countrymen in Thai prisons, unlike his predecessor, Mr. Henry Offor.

Furthermore, they allege that the ambassador consistently refuse to get involved when a

Nigerian dies, pending the arrival of the deceased family. Another issue raised is the way

money raised by the community for Nigerian prisoners and given to the ambassador is

managed.

The letter specifically calls on President Jonathan to stop Azores from further submission of

Nigerian passports to the Thai authorities and subsequent ordering of their arrest by the

police. The community is also asking the INTERPOL to bring Mr. Obinabo and officials of the NCAT to Nigeria where they would both have a level play ground to prove their cases.

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NIGERIAN LOWER LEGISLATIVE HOUSE STEPS DOWN BILL TO ALLOW NIGERIANS ABROAD RIGHT TO

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