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'The People's Petition' : Wednesday, September 30, 2026

To:

- H.E.
Prof Charles Soludo, Executive Governor of Anambra State
Governor's Office, Government House, Awka
Dear Sir,

A Forwarding Letter

The attention of Your Excellency is drawn to our letters below, addressed to Your Excellency's Cabinet's SSG, Comm. for Commerce and Comm. for Local Government, Chieftaincy and Community Affairs, as well as the Legislative Arm through the Speaker of the State House of Assembly; also copied to State Commissioner of Police and Director of SSS. The letters had bordered on constitutional demand for stewardship accountability by outgoing Chairman of the Onitsha South Local Government Area, Mr. EmekaOrji and his team, said to be leaving office on October 3, 2026. From our detailed investigations, estimated N1billion was believed to have been illicitly collected in seven months of their administration-covering March to Sept 2026. The huge amount was also believed to have been raked in outside due process and collected through tearful, violent and unlawful means from vulnerable traders in Onitsha South. The mostly cash payment collected monies through are likely to have been collected and remitted outside statutory Government account(s) and un-audited; having been realized through duplicity and criminalization of taxes and levies-thereby undermining the Anambra State Government's laws on taxes and levies and statutory powers of their collecting authorities. Totality of the above demands Your Excellency Government's attention and necessary actions including sanctioning those involved and deterring the incoming Onitsha South Local Government leadership and stopping them from continuing with such abuses, misconducts and corrupt practices. Below is the substantive letter:

Demanding For Stewardship Accountability

1. Avert Imminent Breakdown Of Law And Order, Likely To Lead To Chaos In Onitsha South Over Indiscriminate Harassment, Intimidation And Extortion Of Traders And Owners Of Warehoused Goods By Outgoing Onitsha South Local Government Chairman (Emeka Orji) And His Team Using Thugs, Touts And State Armed Vigilante Outfit And Taskforces
2. Sanitize Revenue Windows And Their Collection And End Multiplicity Of Levies And Taxes Clearly Outlined In The Anambra State Revenue Collection And Taxes And Levies Laws-And Stop Further Criminalization Of Taxes And Levies And Their Collection Processes Especially In

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3. Locate, Recover And Return To Statutory State Or Affected LGA Coffers (If Statutorily Missing) The Estimated N1billion Or Its Illicitly Invested Properties (If Any) Tearfully, Violently And Unlawfully Collected From Traders As Criminal Revenues Under The Outgoing Onitsha South Local Government Chairman (Emeka Orji) And His Team Especially Between March And Sept 2026

4. Thoroughly Investigate The Administration And Finances Of The Onitsha South Local Government Area Under The Outgoing Chairman (Emeka Orji) Including All His Personal Bank Accounts And Received Statutory Remunerations And Investments Directly Or Indirectly Linked To His Names And His Proxies Especially Between March And Sept 2026

5. Investigate, Arrest And Prosecute Those Engaging In Undermining The State Revenue Administration And Taxes And Levies Laws-Particularly In Onitsha South Through Unlawful And Criminal Methods Of Forgeries, Multiplication And Criminalization Of Revenues And Diversion Of Those Criminally Collected.

6. Thoroughly Probe The Outgoing Onitsha South LGA Helmsman For Possible Serious Breach Of Anambra's Fiscal Responsibility Law, The State Government/Local Government Joint Account In Section 162 Of The 1999 Constitution, The Anambra State Local Government Law Of 2024, The State Revenue Administration Law Of 2023 And The Anambra State Approved List Of Taxes And Levies Of 2025, Among Others

7. Order For Immediate Discontinuation Of All Ongoing Extortionist Exercises Of Highlighted In The Body Of This 'People's Petition' In All The Markets And Street Arenas Under Onitsha South And Across The State And Practically Abolish Ongoing Multiplicity Of Taxes And Levies And Their Violent Or Life-Threatening Collections Across Anambra State

Above subject matters and demands refer.

Other Constitutional Grounds Behind This 'People's Petition': This 'People's Petition' is also grounded in Sections 15 (5), 13 and 22 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999. By Section 15 (5), "the State, including all authorities and persons holding Executive, Legislative and Judicial public offices in Nigeria from the Three Tiers of Federal, State and Local Government Systems, and in accordance with Section 13; shall abolish all corrupt practices and abuse of power". By Section 22, "the

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press and other agencies of the mass media and Civil Society Organizations shall at all times be free to hold the Fundamental Objectives (Social Contract in public governance) contained in the Chapter Two of the Constitution and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people”.

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Abuses, Misconducts And Statutory Violations Warranting This Public Petition:

- That contrary to the Anambra State Fiscal Responsibility Law, the State/Local Government Joint Account contained in Section 162 of the 1999 Constitution, the Anambra State Local Government Administration Law of 2024, the Anambra State Revenue Administration Law of 2023, and the Anambra State Approved List of Taxes and Levies of 2025; the outgoing Onitsha South Local Government Chairman, Mr. Emeka Orji, caused an unlawful directive to be issued to his Local Government Secretary, Mr. Onuachalla Paul, directing him to issue a written directive, dated Feb 25, 2026, to all market leaders and unions under Onitsha South, to the effect that “there will be revalidation of market stalls exercise in all the markets under Onitsha South, between March 11 and June 11, 2026”.
- That on further investigation, we discovered that the written directive was ultra vires and entire the exercise extortionist and a conduit pipe. Our investigation also revealed that the unlawful exercise was aimed at raking in hundreds of millions of naira from more than 20,000 market stalls and their owners, among other extraneous extortions. The extortionist exercise programed on cash payment included: “checking names of market stall owners in the Government Ledger-N5000, rejection of old allocation papers and purported issuance of fresh allocation papers-N40,000 per half lockup stall and mandatory revalidation cash fee of N12,000; totalling N57,000” for each of the affected half lockup stall.
- That in the end, from our investigative checks, estimated 5000 market stalls and their owners had their previous allocation papers rejected or new ones renewed with cash payment of N45,000 each-translating to more than N225m while estimated 20,000 stalls or more were forced to make cash payment of N12, 000, translating to more than N240m; forcibly collected in cash within the interval of March to Sept 2026 (seven months)-bringing the total to not less than N465m-N500m.
- That our rough checks also indicated that there was a motley of unlawful and criminal levies forcibly collected and outside the law and due process by the Onitsha South Local Government under outgoing Chairman, Emeka Orji and his team, likely to

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have amounted to more than N500m; involving: “warehouse permit”, “warehouse parking permit”, “sanitation fee”, “development fee”, “lockup construction and amendment fee”, etc.

- *That among the more than 20,000 market stalls targeted for such extortion under Onitsha South, cutting across Onitsha Bridgehead, Ochanja and Ose, among others; more than 10,000 including up and down stalls are most likely located at Bridgehead Market alone, including Ogbogwu, Tools, Plumbing Market Unions, etc.*

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- *That the Onitsha South Local Government outgoing Chairman’s imposed and forcibly collected cash payment of N12,000 and extraneous extortionist others highlighted above were forced on all the affected market unions with threats of 50% penalty for non-compliance or delayed compliance, invasion of the markets for arrest and abduction.*
- *That as a result of the above, the Onitsha South Local Government agents since March 2026 recorded more than 90% forced compliance in the collection of the cash payment, during which only N10,000 of the N12,000 was belatedly and reluctantly receipted, and N2000 per person/stall openly and instantly not accounted for.*
- *That as at our last check on Tuesday, Sept 29, 2026, the Onitsha South Local Government agents were still loitering around the affected markets’ union halls, numbering not less than 26 unions at Onitsha Bridgehead Market alone, forcing the remaining traders to pay*
- *That in clear and serious breach of the laws highlighted above, the outgoing Onitsha South Local Government Chairman and his team went ultra vires by imposing and using “CASH COLLECTION” method, thereby raising serious fears of such ‘collected cash sums’ ending up outside the statutory accounts of the Onitsha South Local Government or the Anambra State/Local Government Joint Account.*
- *That imposition and forcible collection by the outgoing Onitsha South Local Government Chairman and his team, of the above highlighted sundry levies associated with market stalls, is a clear act of **Meddlesome Interloper**, having been fundamentally ousted by the above highlighted laws and the State’s list of approved Taxes and Levies and their clearly defined and categorized **Collecting Authorities***
- *That the way and manner the motley of unlawful and criminal levies have been imposed and collected unchecked and hundreds of millions of naira questionably raked in or realized, have not only emboldened the outgoing Onitsha South LGA Chairman and his team, but also their successors to continue to run riot on the affected vulnerable traders.*

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This is to the extent that the outgoing LGA Chairman seem to have delayed leaving office after the statutory terminal date, following his statutory replacement since August 29, 2026.

- *That it is also likely that given the way the monies were questionably collected, most of them may not have been remitted into statutory coffers of the Onitsha South Local Government or the State/Local Government Joint Account as contained in Section 162 of the 1999 Constitution.*

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- *That indiscriminate imposition of these unlawful and criminal levies and taxes using violent entities are found to have been killing businesses and breeding violent crimes particularly in Onitsha and environs; chasing many interstate customers away and forcing many intrastate others out of legitimate businesses and into membership of the violent criminal class.*
- *That by the provisions of the “Approved Taxes and Levies List of Anambra State 2025”, the Onitsha South Local Government Area under outgoing Chairman, Emeka Orji and his team have been found to have dabbled into revenue windows outside the power and authority of the Onitsha South Local Government Area, clearly outlined in “Paragraph 6 of the Part 111 Schedule” of the Anambra State Government Taxes and Levies Law of 2025. As a matter of fact, under its “Economic Development Levy”, including Business Premises, Market Levy, Traders’ Levy, Development Levy, Sanitation Levy, Fire Service Levy, among others; “Collecting Authority” is exclusively vested on ‘Anambra State Board of Internal Revenue (AIRS), a joint State and Local Government Revenue Board. Onitsha South Local Government Area under Emeka Orji is a **Meddlesome Interloper** and has no right or power to dabble into them.*
- *That duplicity and criminalization and commercialization of taxes and levies in the instant case also became manifest going by the fact that the Government of Anambra State, through the Ministry of Commerce and Industry also on March 7, 2026, printed and distributed free copies of “Registration of E-Enumeration/Digitization (E-Market Stall Ownership Database) Forms” to all market stalls across the State and its 21 Local Government Areas; to be filled and returned free of charge. The free distribution of the forms followed the State Government’s recent physical enumeration exercise across all markets in the State.*
- *That all of the above is more so when the Executive Governor of Anambra State (Prof Charles ChukwumaSoludo) has recently directed that “all approved taxes and levies must be collected centrally by AIRS (Anambra State Internal Revenue Service) through AIRS accredited agents to eliminate touting and double taxation”.*

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Fresh Imposition Of "Market Store Fee Of N5,000 And Sanitation Fee Of N3,600":

- That as if all of the above highlighted misconducts, abuses and statutory violations by the outgoing Onitsha South LGA Chairman and his team were not enough, further public announcements made two weeks ago with threats of sanctions including penalties and sealing of shops; ordering traders to pay "N500,000 store fee and N3,600 sanitation fee".

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That as a matter of fact, all the traders trading under Onitsha South Local Government Area were ordered to embark on immediate payment of "market store fee of N5,000 and sanitation fee of N3,600" (N8,600 per half market stall).

- That the above is another brazen violation of the laws highlighted above and nothing short of duplicity, commercialization and criminalization of taxes and levies.
- That this is more so when the Onitsha South Local Government under Emeka Orji is aware that the N8,600 being freshly and unlawfully demanded is different from the annual statutory stallage of more than N60,000 per stall, statutorily collected by the State Government through its prescribed arrangements.
- That the statutory market stallage fees of over N60,000 per full stall include "stallage, traders' levy, development levy, capitation, fire service, warehouse and sanitation fees"; shared between the State and Local Government using agreed sharing formula.

Warehoused Goods Owners In Onitsha South Groan Under Multiplicity Of Taxes And Levies:

- That warehoused goods owners in Onitsha South particularly at Fegge and environs are groaning under multiplicity of taxes and levies in the hands of the outgoing Onitsha South Local Government Chairman (Emeka Orji) and his team; duplicated and enforced using different names or titles or sub-titles; in clear and serious breach of the Anambra State Approved List of Taxes and Levies of 2025 and the Anambra State Local Government Financial Management Law of 2024.
- That the Onitsha South under its outgoing Chairman, Emeka Orji and his team are strongly accused of having gone to the extent of indiscriminately duplicating most, if not all the revenue items listed in the State/Local Government Joint Revenue Board, with Anambra State Internal Revenue Services (AIRS) as the collecting authority, using criminal and other violent means including thugs and

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touts and members of the State armed vigilante outfit and taskforces. The criminal confiscation method in use is found to have included impoundment, confiscation and seizure of cartons of goods worth tens of millions of naira on daily basis as well as imposition of criminal penalties and forced payment of the same before being released. In some cases, their owners and their servants are mercilessly beaten up and left with bruises, during which cartons of the confiscated goods get lost or diverted and sold in black market.

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- That despite paying for “Economic Development Levy-State-wide”, pegged at N110,000 per warehoused goods apartment or store on annual basis and into the official account of ‘AIRS’, the Onitsha South Local Government Area under outgoing Chairman, Emeka Orji, have indiscriminately resorted to issuance of motley of revenue demand notices-including “demand for Warehouse Permit of N100,000 per apartment or store”; “Local Government Development, Sanitation and Fire Service levies and Parking and Offload/On-Load Permit levies”, among others.
- That asides all of the above, every resident of the State is also mandatorily required to pay additional tax and levy items, numbering more than 20, including: “Personal Income Tax (at least seven taxable items)”, “Economic Development Levy (at least seven taxable items)”, “Property Tax (at least four taxable items)”, “User Charge (at least five taxable items)” and “Market Stallage Fees (at least five taxable items)”, among others.
- That the list of revenues approved for collection by the State’s 21 Local Government Areas under Anambra State Approved List of Taxes and Levies of 2025 are the following: “Street Shop & Kiosk Fees”, “Slaughter Slab Fees”, “Domestic Animal Fees” and “Merriment & Road Closure Fees”. These are provided for in Paragraph Seven of the Part 111 Schedule of the State Taxes and Levies Law 2025.
- That some concerned importers of goods in Onitsha South had on Sept 17, 2026, filed a strong protest-letter against indiscriminate extortions, intimidation, imposition and forcible collection of criminal levies and taxes by the outgoing Onitsha South helmsman and his team and others working for the Government of Anambra State.

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- That the concerned importers with warehoused goods at Fegge, spoke in a strong-worded letter to Governor Charles Soludo and the Police AIG of Zone 13, at Ukpoko, dated Thursday, Sept 17, 2026.
- That strong allegations levelled against Onitsha South Local Government Area included “the use of touts to impose and embark on the collection of the unlawful levies and taxes such as: “illegal warehouse levy and illegal Business Premise Levy, among others”. The group also highlighted other misconducts, abuses and statutory violations by the Local Government and its outgoing Chairman and his team to include: “forgery of the State Government revenue demand notices, illegal seizure and carting away of traders’ goods and other illegal revenue collections using touts and illegal agents in violation of the Anambra State Revenue Administration Law of 2023”.

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The concerned importers had written the protest letter through the Law Firm of Dr Gerald Abonyi & Associates of No 3 Onyeama Lane, Ogui Layout, Enugu (+23480372024/+2348023275473).

- That some of the affected importers at Fegge who spoke to InterSociety also strongly alleged that payments made to the recalcitrant and lawful agents of the Onitsha South Local Government Area through bank transfers showed that the payments were made into private bank accounts given to them under threat or duress.

Additional Demands: In addition to our demands in paragraphs 1-7 of the second and third pages of this “People’s Petition”, we are further demanding for a joint ‘Executive Investigation’ of the abuses, misconducts and statutory violations complained of, particularly against outgoing Chairman of the Onitsha South Local Government Area, Emeka Orji and his team.

Our Petition’ to the Executive Arm of the Government of Anambra State is hereby demanded to be jointly, expeditiously and meritoriously handled by the Secretary to the Government of Anambra State, the Commissioner for Commerce and the Commissioner for Local Government, Chieftaincy and Community Affairs.

On the other hand, our Petition to the Legislative Arm of the State through the Hon Speaker of the State House of Assembly is demanded to be referred to relevant House committees including House Committees on Public Petition, Corruption and Abuse of

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Power, etc.; for appropriate investigations and deterrent legislative actions or measures against those petitioned against.

It is our appeal that this 'People's Petition' should not be treated with laxity or subjected to "armchair" or "white-elephant" investigations. Processes of such demanded investigations should include fact-finding visits to meet with some of the affected traders in some of the affected markets, for purposes of gathering more evidence including testimonies and material facts.

Date:.....

In Service to Humanity

For: International Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of Law

- **EmekaUmeagbalasi (Criminologist)**
Board Chair, International Society for Civil Liberties and Rule of Law

- **ChinweUmeche Esquire (Attorney)**
Head, department of Democracy and Good Governance
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- **Chidinma Evangeline Udegbonam Esquire (Attorney)**
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1. The Commissioner of Police, Anambra State

The State Command Headquarters, Awka

2. The Director of SSS, Anambra State

The State SSS Directorate, Amawbia, Awka

Attachments:

- Extracts of Anambra State's Approved Taxes And Levies List 2025
- Copy Of The Onitsha South LGA Embarking On Unlawful And Extortionist 'Market Stall Revalidation' Exercise, Dated Feb 25, 2026

- Copy Of 2023 State Government Collectible Stallage Fees Issued Invoice Itemizing Five Collectible Revenue Items Paid By Traders: "Stallage, Trader's Levy, Capitation, Development, Fire Service, Warehouse And Sanitation Fees". Sanitation Fee Is Paid And Receipted Differently
- Copy Of Receipted Onitsha South's "Traders' Consolidated Local Government Levy 2025", Incorporated Into The State-Local Government Joint Stallage Fees
- Copy Of Anambra State Government Distributed "Registration Of E-Enumeration/Digitization (E-Market Stall Ownership Database" Form
- Copy Of Onitsha South Local Government-Issued "Demand Notice On Warehouse Permit"; A Clear Evidence Of Duplicity, Double And Criminal Taxation
- Copy Of Electronic Receipt Of Annual Payment Of Anambra State Government-Demanded "Warehouse Levy Of N110,000" Per Warehoused Goods' Owner At Fegge, Onitsha For 2026; Duly Paid Into AIRS Account. This Is The Same 'Warehouse Levy Onitsha South LGA Is Imposing And Violently Collecting Another N100,000 Per Annum'