

# A BILL

## FOR

AN ACT TO AMEND THE MATRIMONIAL CAUSES ACT CAP. M7 LAWS OF THE FEDERATION OF NIGERIA, 2004, TO ENHANCE THE PROTECTION OF SPOUSES BY RECOGNISING VIOLENCE AND THREATS TO LIFE AS INDEPENDENT AND SUFFICIENT GROUNDS FOR DIVORCE, TO ENSURE CLARITY AND STRENGTHEN THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR ADDRESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WITHIN MATRIMONIAL PROCEEDINGS; AND FOR RELATED MATTERS

*Sponsored by Hon. Festus Akingbaso*

[ ] Commencement

ENACTED by the National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria-

1           **1.** The Matrimonial Causes Act, Cap M.7 Laws of the Federation  
2 of Nigeria, 2004 (in this Bill referred to as "the Principal Act") is amended as  
3 set out in this Bill.

Amendment of  
the Matrimonial  
Causes Act,  
Cap. M7 LFN,  
2004

4           **2.** Section 15 of the Principal Act is amended-  
5           (a) in subsection (2), by inserting after the existing paragraph  
6 "(h)", a new paragraph "(i)"-  
7           "(i) that since the marriage, the Respondent has committed an act  
8 of violence against the Petitioner, or has threatened the life of the Petitioner,  
9 such that it is no longer safe or reasonable for the Petitioner to continue to  
10 live with the Respondent."

Amendment of  
Section 15 of the  
Principal Act

11           (b) by inserting after the existing subsection (3), a new subsection  
12 (4)-

13           "(4) For the purpose of this section-  
14 "act of violence" includes physical assault, battery, or any conduct  
15 amounting to domestic violence as defined under the Violence Against  
16 Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015;  
17 "threat to life" means any act, conduct, or communication by the

	1	Respondent that creates a reasonable apprehension of imminent danger to the
	2	life of the Petitioner."
Amendment of Section 16 of the Principal Act	3	<b>3.</b> Section 16 of the Principal Act is amended by inserting after the
	4	existing subsection"(2)", a new subsection "(3)"-
	5	"(3) Without prejudice to the generality of clause 15(2)(i), the court
	6	shall hold that the petitioner has satisfied the court of the fact mentioned in that
	7	paragraph if the Petitioner proves that the Respondent has committed any act of
	8	violence or has made threats to the life of the Petitioner, irrespective of whether
	9	the Respondent has been convicted of any criminal offence in respect of such
	10	act or threat."
Citation	11	<b>4.</b> This Bill may be cited as the Matrimonial Causes Act
	12	(Amendment) Bill, 2025.

## EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

This Bill seeks to amend the Matrimonial Causes Act, Cap. M7 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004, to enhance the protection of spouses by recognising violence and threats to life as independent and sufficient grounds for divorce to ensure clarity and strengthen the legal framework for addressing domestic violence within matrimonial proceedings.