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Strengthening Accountability and Enforcement in Nigeria's Terrorism Financing Framework

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Executive Summary

The Federal Government, through the Nigeria Sanctions Committee, has released an updated list of 48 individuals and 12 entities allegedly linked to terrorism financing, representing one of the most extensive disclosures in Nigeria's counterterrorism efforts in recent years. The action, grounded in the Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, is intended to strengthen efforts to disrupt financial networks that sustain terrorist activities. It comes amid ongoing national security challenges and follows earlier disclosures, including a similar list issued in 2024.

While the publication of the list signals a commitment to transparency and enforcement, concerns persist regarding the effectiveness and consistency of follow-up actions. Previous disclosures have not always been accompanied by visible enforcement outcomes such as arrests, prosecutions, or asset recovery, contributing to public scepticism about institutional capacity and political will. In the absence of timely and coordinated action, there is a risk that the current disclosure may not achieve its intended deterrent effect.

Key issues include the lack of clear and publicly available information on enforcement progress, including the status of investigations, arrests, and prosecutions linked to both current and previous listings. Gaps in public communication, including limited disclosure of identifying details or evidentiary bases for listings, further weaken public trust and may hinder citizen cooperation. In addition, systemic constraints such as delays in the judicial process, evidentiary challenges, and potential political interference continue to undermine effective prosecution of terrorism financing cases.

These challenges bring to the fore the need for stronger institutional coordination among security agencies, financial regulators, and the judiciary, as well as improved transparency and accountability mechanisms. Without such measures, the publication of suspected financiers risks being perceived as symbolic rather than operational.

Given its constitutional oversight role, the National Assembly has a critical responsibility to ensure that counterterrorism measures translate into measurable outcomes. Legislative engagement is necessary to strengthen enforcement credibility, address institutional bottlenecks, and ensure compliance with due process and international obligations.

Accordingly, the National Assembly, through its Committees on National Security and Intelligence, Defence, Interior, Anti-Corruption and Financial Crimes, and Judiciary, may consider the following actions:

1. Convene a joint oversight hearing and invite relevant agencies, including the Office of the National Security Adviser, Nigeria Police Force, Department of State Services, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU), and the Attorney-General, to provide detailed briefings on the status of investigations into



listed individuals and entities, arrests made and planned enforcement actions, and asset freezing and financial tracking measures.

2. Demand periodic public reporting to the National Assembly and the public on progress made regarding prosecutions and convictions, asset recovery efforts and inter-agency collaboration outcomes.
3. Require that future disclosures of alleged terrorist financiers include verified identifying details (e.g., photographs where legally permissible) and a clear explanation of the basis for listing, consistent with due process.
4. Request a comprehensive audit and briefing of previously released lists (e.g., 2024 disclosures), including actions taken, outcomes achieved and lessons learned.
5. Ensure that enforcement actions comply with constitutional guarantees, preventing misuse or politicisation of terrorism-related allegations.

Background:

The Federal Government, through the Nigeria Sanctions Committee, recently released an updated list of 48 individuals and 12 entities allegedly linked to terrorism financing¹. This development represents one of the most comprehensive disclosures in Nigeria's counterterrorism efforts in recent years and aligns with the provisions of the Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, which provides the legal basis for identifying, sanctioning, and prosecuting terror financiers.

This action comes amid ongoing security challenges across multiple regions of the country and follows previous similar disclosures, including a 2024 list of suspected financiers². While the federal government has claimed over 300 convictions in terrorism-related cases, public concern persists regarding the consistency, transparency, and effectiveness of enforcement actions following such announcements³.

Historically, the publication of names of suspected terror financiers has not always been followed by known visible enforcement outcomes such as arrests, prosecutions, or asset forfeitures. This pattern has contributed to growing public scepticism and concerns about institutional capacity and political will in tackling terrorism financing.

Given the critical role of financial networks in sustaining terrorist activities, the effectiveness of Nigeria's counterterrorism strategy depends not only on intelligence disclosures but also on timely, coordinated, and transparent enforcement actions. This emphasises the urgent need for proactive legislative oversight to ensure accountability, strengthen legal processes, and restore public confidence.

¹ Akogun, D. & Busari, A. (2026, April 12). Nigerians demand action as FG unveils 48 terror sponsors. *Punch*. <https://punchng.com/nigerians-demand-action-as-fg-unveils-48-terror-sponsors/>

² Yakubu Mohammed, Y. (2024, March 22). Inside details of 19 'terrorism financiers' indicted by Nigerian govt. *Premium Times*. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/679583-inside-details-of-19-terrorism-financiers-indicted-by-nigerian-govt.html>

³ *ibid*

**Issue:**

Despite the publication of a comprehensive list of alleged terror financiers, there are significant concerns regarding the absence of clear, immediate, and transparent follow-up actions. Previous experiences suggest that such disclosures are sometimes not matched with known swift arrests, prosecutions, or asset recovery measures, raising questions about enforcement credibility.

There are also gaps in public communication, as Nigerians are often not informed about the outcomes of earlier listings, including the status of investigations, arrests made, or convictions secured. Furthermore, the lack of publicly identifiable details, such as verified identities or supporting evidence, can weaken public trust and limit citizen cooperation.

Additionally, systemic challenges persist, including delays in the judicial process, evidentiary constraints, and potential political interference. These issues collectively risk undermining the deterrent value of the current disclosure and may allow suspects to evade accountability if timely action is not taken.

Rationale for Legislative Actions:

Legislative intervention is necessary to ensure that the fight against terrorism financing is credible, effective, and aligned with the rule of law.

1. The National Assembly has a constitutional responsibility to exercise oversight over national security institutions to ensure that executive actions translate into measurable outcomes. Without such oversight, there is a risk that the publication of names becomes symbolic rather than operational.
2. Effective enforcement of terrorism financing laws requires strengthened institutional coordination among security agencies, financial regulators, and the judiciary. Legislative engagement can help identify and address structural and legal bottlenecks that hinder prosecution.
3. Transparency and accountability are essential for sustaining public trust. Ensuring that Nigerians are regularly informed about progress, such as arrests, prosecutions, and asset freezes, will enhance confidence in government efforts and encourage public cooperation.
4. Given the transnational nature of terrorism financing, legislative scrutiny is critical to ensure compliance with international obligations and standards, including financial intelligence sharing and sanctions enforcement.

Recommendations to the National Assembly:

The National Assembly, through its Committees on National Security and Intelligence; Defence; Interior; Anti-Corruption and Financial Crimes; and Judiciary, may wish to consider the following actions:

1. Convene a joint oversight hearing and invite relevant agencies, including the Office of the National Security Adviser, Nigeria Police Force, Department of State Services, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU), and the Attorney-General, to provide detailed briefings on the status of investigations into listed individuals and entities, arrests made and planned enforcement actions, and asset freezing and financial tracking measures.



2. Demand periodic public reporting to the National Assembly and the public on progress made regarding prosecutions and convictions, asset recovery efforts and inter-agency collaboration outcomes.
3. Require that future disclosures of alleged terrorist financiers include verified identifying details (e.g., photographs where legally permissible) and a clear explanation of the basis for listing, consistent with due process.
4. Request a comprehensive audit and briefing of previously released lists (e.g., 2024 disclosures), including actions taken, outcomes achieved and lessons learned.
5. Ensure that enforcement actions comply with constitutional guarantees, preventing misuse or politicisation of terrorism-related allegations.

Conclusion:

The release of the list of alleged terrorism financiers represents an important step toward transparency in Nigeria's counterterrorism efforts. However, its effectiveness will ultimately be judged by the extent to which it leads to concrete outcomes such as arrests, prosecutions, convictions, and dismantling of financial networks.

Proactive legislative oversight is therefore essential to bridge the gap between policy declaration and enforcement action. By ensuring accountability, strengthening legal frameworks, and promoting transparency, the National Assembly can play a critical role in restoring public trust and enhancing Nigeria's capacity to combat terrorism financing effectively.

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