



## **NIGERIA CUSTOMS SERVICE**

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

The attention of the Management of the Nigeria Customs Service has been to a Press Statement purportedly credited to some operators of the Tinapa Free Zone in Cross River State. In the said statement, there were some insinuations aimed at rubbishing the current efforts of the Comptroller General of Customs, Dikko Inde Abdullahi CFR at sanitizing the operations of Free Trade Zones in Nigeria with particular reference to the ones in Calabar Tinapa and Port Harcourt.

Over the years, Onne Port has served as transit facility for Tinapa bound containers. Customs has discharged its statutory role of facilitating the passage of these shipments once the extant regulations are followed. The issue currently at stake in Tinapa is about unpatriotic elements whose attempts to circumvent the laws were thwarted. Customs intelligence has revealed the intention of these operators in Tinapa to use the FTZ as a conduit for importation of contraband goods and fraudulent evasion of customs duty payment. When their attempts to import illegally have been checkmated, they have resorted to deliberate falsehood.

We therefore deem it necessary to bring to public knowledge the self serving reasons behind the blue murder cry and growing tendency for disgruntled elements in our society to link all manners of issues even operational matters to politics.

For the avoidance of doubt the operational guidelines for Free Trade Zone require among others;

- **Proper manifestation of such cargos as goods destined for FTZ.**
- **On arrival of such cargo a proper documentation requesting the transfer of such goods to the FTZ will be made to the Customs Area Controller.**
- **Where Customs examination confirms that the goods on ground conform with the documentation it is then released on transfer under Customs escort to the FTZ.**
- **Upon arrival at the FTZ a landing certificate shall be issued.**
- **In the case of goods that shall be brought in to the Customs territory (bought and brought into Nigeria for home consumption) duty shall be collected on goods with value in excess of fifty thousand naira (N50, 000).**

It should be noted that the laws setting up FTZ neither exempts collection of duty on goods brought into Customs territory nor free FTZ licensee from the liability of smuggling contrabands using the FTZ as a platform.

Transfers from Customs to this FTZ have been smooth until intelligence revealed that some licensees have abused the spirit behind the setting up of this FTZs. Ongoing investigations on cases of diversion, smuggling of prohibited items from the FTZs into the Customs territory have led to some stricter measures put in place to properly ascertain goods imported as well as safe guard government revenue have resulted to delays in releasing such containers as concerned licensees most often present improper documentation.

It is equally in the overall national interest, in view of the prevailing security situation in the country to diligently ensure that unscrupulous Importers do not hide behind loose FTZ process to import tools for propagating violence.

It is therefore, a deliberate attempt to misinform the public and discredit the ongoing sanitization efforts, that these self seeking elements are embarking on a

campaign of calumny against the service and the person of the Comptroller General of Customs.

It should be noted that in all these, compliant companies in Tinapa such as COMBINE SERVICES NIGERIA LIMITED, QUICKER NIGERIA LIMITED and SKYE RUN NIGERIA LIMITED among others have been having smooth transfers of their containers without complaints. It is only those whose illegal activities are being checkmated that are on a mission of falsehood.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Nigeria Customs Service is determined to ensure that all aspects of its operations is in line with global best practice. We will however resist attempts that will enrich only few blackmailers at the detriment of the Nation.

While calling on all licensees to go back to their books and transact their businesses STRICTLY according to the extant rules, we advice the general public to discountenance this self seeking misinformation and be assured of our readiness to do the right thing and transform Nigeria.

**SIGNED  
MANAGEMENT**