



Nigeria: Wabara Accuses Kalu of Diverting Local Governments Allocations

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SENATE President, Adolphus Wabara yesterday accused Governor Orji Kalu of Abia State among other unnamed Governors of conniving with civil servants to divert statutory allocations to the local governments in their states. Amplifying his call for the withholding of allocations to States that are yet to inaugurate newly elected council chairmen and councilors, Senator Wabara dismissed the excuses offered by the Abia State government for delaying the inauguration of the newly elected councils in Abia State as self serving and unacceptable.

In a statement issued by his chief press secretary, Mr. Henry Ugbolue, the Senate President dismissed as "frivolous and unacceptable, claim by the Abia State Government that democratically elected local government chairmen and councilors in the state were not sworn-in as at when due because they needed to be trained first."

Noting the excuse of the State government that many of the elected council officials "could not even minute on files," the Senate President said that excuse "is not just false but a poor attempt to mask the real intentions of the Abia State Government."

Wabara asserted that since no one foisted training on Governor Kalu and other elected state officials, it was illogical to foist such training on other elected officials. While appreciating the need for training for elected public officials, Wabara affirmed that such training could not have stopped the inauguration as he said that there was always opportunity for elected officials to receive training after assumption of office. He cited the case of the recent training of elected PDP chairmen and councilors organized by the national secretariat of the PDP. According to him, the PDP waited until the officials were sworn-in before organizing the training.

The statement equally dismissed explanations of the State government that the Abia State Independent Electoral Commission (ABISEC) prevailed on Governor Kalu to allow the elected council officials undergo training before being sworn-in.

"No law in the country empowers the State Electoral Commission to offer such advise to the Abia State Governor," Senator Wabara said yesterday as he insisted that the elected officials be sworn-in without delay.

Justifying his call for the withholding of council allocations to Abia and some other states that have not entrenched democracy in their local councils, he said that his call was "informed by findings that clearly showed that affected state governors have

been conniving with Heads of Personnel Management in these local government councils to misapply, misappropriate and award spurious contracts with monies due to these local government areas."