

## **ECOWAS COURT TO DELIVER RULING ON HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION FILED BY MEDIA EXECUTIVE ALLEGING THE DESTRUCTION OF MEDIA HOUSE BY NIGERIAN OFFICIALS**

The ECOWAS Court of Justice will on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2019 rule on whether it has jurisdiction to hear a case brought by a Nigerian business and media executive alleging the gross violation of his fundamental human rights by the Federal Republic of Nigeria following the destruction of his television station and newspaper outfit by agents of the government on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1994.

A three member panel of the judges of the Court led by the President. Honorable Justice Edward Amoako Asante, will deliver the ruling and also rule on whether the matter is status barred in line with the argument of the Defendants.

In the suit, Mr. King Rich, who owns CONGRESS INDEPENDENT TELEVISION and CONGRESS NEWSPAPER said the invasion and destruction of the two media outfits located on Allen Avenue in Lagos during the regime of former military leader, the late General Sani Abacha, constituted a gross violation of his fundamental human rights; right to fair hearing; right to property; right to personal liberty, freedom of movement and dignity of the human person.

Mr. Rich, who is represented by his counsel, Mr. Chijioke Kanu said the action violated the provisions of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the (Ratification and Enforcement) Act Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 1990.

The plaintiff averred that the invasion took place in the course of his normal and lawful business, and claimed that the agents 'completely and irretrievably destroyed both the television station and the newspaper outfits and carted away money and equipment worth about the sum of N20 Billion Naira.' He also alleged that he was arrested during the invasion, detained and subjected to various kinds of torture by the agents resulting in his being permanently sick.

He said that the Oputa Panel set up by the government in 2000 to hear and determine cases of human violations awarded him compensation in sum of N10.2Billion Naira after confirming the claim against the Defendant which has so far failed to pay the compensation, even after a Federal High Court in Abuja had recommended that the Attorney General of the Federation and the Minister of Finance take appropriate steps to effect the compensation.

Among the reliefs sought by the Plaintiff from the Court is an order on the Defendant to pay the N10.2 Billion compensation with a 10% interest annually from 2002.