

How Hadi Sirika ran Aviation sector down in 8 years without board for parastatals against Buhari's directives

NIGERIA'S minister of aviation, Senator Hadi Sirika has continued to receive knocks from key players across the sector following his unpopular policies which have put the sector in avoidable chaos. The unpopular policies ranging from the model engaged to set up a new national carrier, Nigeria Air, airport concession plan, move to demolish two gigantic private hangars at the international wing of the Lagos airport, demolition of the Lagos head office of the Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau (NSIB), formerly Accident Investigation Bureau (AIB), fresh plans to demolish Lagos head offices of all the aviation agencies and the relocation of the aviation workers to Abuja without alternative arrangements, the controversial aerotropolis project, the refusal of the minister to inaugurate the governing boards for the agencies for eight years and many other controversial policies.

Many of the key players who spoke to Tribune Aviation have in particular took a swipe at the minister for running a one-man show for eight years without the governing boards. Condemning this, one of the renowned Labour leaders in the sector, Comrade Olayinka Abioye accused the minister of showing total disrespect to the office of the President by failing to obey the directives from the President to inaugurate the boards. He did not spare the members of the appointed boards for allowing the minister to subdue them by refusing to challenge the minister in court over the shenanigans.

According to Abioye: "As far as I am concerned, no matter the irregularities as espoused, it was absolutely wrong and unwholesome for the Minister to have disrespected the office of the Commander in Chief and President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria by refusing and or neglecting to inaugurate those Boards. "Unfortunately, those Board Members also became Lilly livered by not reverting to the Courts to seek for judicial intervention. Without the Boards, the Minister became the alpha and omega of the whole sector and awarded contracts to whomsoever he desires at whatever costs without anyone asking

questions. When questions are asked, no one answered. That was the situation we have found ourselves but all will be well soon." He used the opportunity to task the incoming government to appoint a minister who will be willing to carry all stakeholders along.

His words: "For the incoming Minister, it is our hope that he will be a Minister for all Nigerians, who will do his work as a true aviation sector supervisor, accountable to the people and ready to sit and talk with stakeholders at all times. Anything less than this will throw the industry into serious chaos."

Also speaking on the minister's move to demolish the aviation agencies' Lagos offices under the guise of building aerotropolis at the airport, the managing director of Centurion Security Services, Group Captain John Ojikutu, retired, said the minister does not possess such powers except the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN). "First, has the minister the statute right to do what he planned to do? I think that it is only FAAN that has the statute right and could have been so directed. The National Assembly may not or could not have dabble into it except the matter is brought to its notice. Secondly, has the NCAA that has the statutory authority for structural development in the Airport approved the plan of building Aerotropolis within the Airport Area?"

He expressed his fear about the efforts of the minister to hurriedly relocate the offices of the agencies to Abuja querying "There was something in the rush to move all the agency's headquarters to Abuja and rush many other projects in the last year of this administration which must be guided by to avoid the mistakes we made about the MM2 and the international terminal 2 projects. MM2 passenger's terminal building should have been where its car park is to give more space to aircraft parking areas. "The car park building should have moved to the location of the uncompleted hotel. These were my suggestions then which if taken would not have caused any losses to the terminal operator.

The Aerotropolis that the minister is planning for the area should be stopped by the NCAA for security reasons. It will further cause gridlock of traffic that is supposed to be Airport Service Road but now use as a public road within the Airport land Area. The Aerotropolis should be taken to the Shasha/Akowonjo /Ejigbo end where FAAN has more than enough land to take whatever the Aerotropolis is bringing along with it including moving the cargo terminals and the GAT there to give further expansion of the international and local terminals in future

