

Malam Nuhu Ribadu's Undiplomatic Tirade An Embarrassment to Nigeria's Foreign Relations

By Dr. Lemmy Ughegbe

Malam Nuhu Ribadu's recent undiplomatic outburst regarding Canada's visa denial to General Christopher Musa and half of his team represents a serious diplomatic blunder for Nigeria. Publicly telling Canada "go to hell" is reckless and deeply embarrassing; a country should conduct international relations with decorum and strategic maturity. It's key to remember that General Musa's trip to Canada was to attend an invited ceremony honoring war veterans. General Musa also stated that half of his team had been issued event visas. The key question is: Why did the other half get refused entry? Rather than seeking clarification through diplomacy, Ribadu's inflammatory statement harmed Nigeria's international reputation. Although inconvenient, visa denials are commonplace and not exclusive to Nigeria. Each country, Canada included, controls its borders, deciding who can enter based on immigration laws, security, and diplomacy. Nigeria, too, exercises this right when necessary. Such vitriol from a senior national security official is undignified and shows a poor grasp of global diplomacy. Moreover, Ribadu is not the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Given his role as National Security Adviser, he should have contacted the Foreign Affairs Minister to seek diplomatic solutions. Assuming both NSA and Foreign Affairs Minister roles unilaterally undermines diplomatic protocols and portrays the government as immature, untrained, and unfit for diplomacy, which he cannot do.



His outburst reveals poor strategic thinking and questions his fitness for the job. Engaging Canada diplomatically, seeking clarification on their denial and advocating for reconsideration, would have been a more measured and calculated response. Tact, not childish tantrums, is required for diplomatic engagements. Ribadu's actions suggest a sense of entitlement, implying Nigeria deserves visas from all countries. This is not realistic. High-ranking officials are not exempt from the host country's entry requirements. In addition, that reaction might damage the bilateral ties

between Nigeria and Canada. Canada is a key partner for Nigeria, especially in trade, development aid, and education. Canada's support has spanned various sectors, including security cooperation, over the years. Severing diplomatic ties due to a visa rejection is unwise and shortsighted. Nigeria must avoid impulsive responses that could harm its global standing. Ironically, Ribadu's outburst exposes a core problem in Nigerian governance: prioritizing privilege over responsibility. Rather than reflecting on the delegation's rejection, he chose to use inflammatory language. Did security concerns, the delegation's purpose, or other undisclosed factors cause Canada to have issues? A competent national security advisor would investigate these questions instead of resorting to childish insults.

Nigerian officials need a wake-up call; this incident highlights the need for better international diplomacy. Diplomatic language is useful because it encourages productive discussions and respects all nations involved, even when there is conflict. Nigeria's reckless handling of foreign relations will only deepen its international isolation. Nigeria deserves an apology from Mallam Nuhu Ribadu for his reckless comment. His responsibility extends beyond himself; he speaks for a nation exceeding 200 million. Restraint, maturity, and strategic thinking are vital for leadership, all of which were absent from his undiplomatic rant. Nigeria needs to ensure its leaders act with decorum to earn international respect.

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