

# Law Without Justice: A Futile Venture in The Nigerian Socio-Political Arena

Justine Jingoe, Temswang, Ph.D.<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

The constant yearning for justice through the application of the rule of law in Nigeria has been an issue of great concern as it battles with the problems of extrajudicial killings, jungle justice, violation of rule of law, outright negligence of checks and balance among others, leaves much to be desired in the judicial system. The judiciary that should have been the last bastion of the common man is often hijacked by the influential in government, thereby bringing to disrepute the system, where law, instead of protecting the individual, ends up exposing same: hence the futility of law devoid of justice. This article, Law without Justice: A Futile Venture in the Nigerian Socio-Political Arena, gave a contextual analysis that connects legal theory with contemporary Nigerian realities. Law without justice is not merely ineffective but morally void and futile, thereby questioning the Nigerian legal system in crisis, not solely as structural but also fundamentally ethically-rooted in a disconnection between legal formality and moral accountability in matters pertaining to justice. The harmony of legal, philosophical, and moral perspectives to justice, in the long run, must serve as the animating spirit of the law. Through this interdisciplinary lens, amidst judicial crisis in Nigeria, it proposed that legal reform in Nigeria must begin with moral renewal and civic reorientation in observing, in theory and practice, the tenets inherent in rule of law and checks and balances in building a just and lawful society. Only then can justice be seen not as an abstract concept but as a living soul of law and democracy.

**Keywords:** Law, Justice, Futile Venture, Legacy, Socio-political

## Introduction

**T**he strength of any nation or institution is not measured merely by the numbers of laws it enacts but by the justice those laws promote. Hence, the place of law in every society cannot be overemphasized, in its promotion of justice, be it civil,

---

<sup>1</sup>Department of Canon Law, Catholic Institute of West Africa, Port Harcourt – Nigeria

traditional, religious or ecclesiastical law. Law and justice, therefore, are inseparable twins upon which any moral, religious and political society rests. When law exists without justice, it loses its moral authority and becomes a tool of oppression rather than liberation. This is because law is a structured system of rules designed to regulate behavior, enforce order, and ensure justice, which is the ethical ideal of fairness and impartiality in treating people (Black, 1910). While laws are enacted by authorities, justice is a broader concept that requires these laws to be ethically applied to protect rights, punish wrongdoing, and provide fair, remedial actions.

In Nigeria, the multiplicity of legal frameworks has not translated into fairness or equity. The frequent disregards for court orders, political interference in the judiciary, and institutional corruption have turned the law into an instrument for the powerful. As Blackstone (1765) observed, "It is better that ten guilty persons escape than that one innocent suffers," emphasizing that justice, not mere legality, is the essence of any civilized system.

Law without justice loses its moral legitimacy. It becomes a sword in the hand of the powerful rather than a shield for the weak. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) lays down the principles of equality before the law, the protection of human rights, and access to fair hearing. Yet, these noble provisions are daily undermined by corruption, delays, abuse of power, and socio-economic inequalities. The question is: can law without justice serve the purpose of governance or nation building?

### **Conceptual Clarification**

For a clear understanding of this topic, it is necessary to define the principal concepts used: law, justice, and the rule of law. Each concept provides the theoretical foundation for analyzing why, in the Nigerian context, law without justice is empty and self-defeating.

#### **❖ Law**

Law is generally understood as a body of rules established by legitimate authority to regulate human behaviour in society. According to Black's Law Dictionary, law is "a body of rules of action or conduct prescribed by a controlling authority and having binding legal force" (Black, 1910, p. 756). In philosophical terms, St. Thomas Aquinas

(1912) defines law as "an ordinance of reason for the common good, promulgated by him who has the care of the community" (Q. 90, Art. 4).

In Nigeria, the supreme law is the Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999, as amended), which outlines the powers, rights, and responsibilities of all institutions and citizens. Yet, the mere existence of law does not guarantee justice. As Oba (2011) argues, "the Nigerian legal system often reflects the power structure rather than the moral aspiration of the people" (p. 45). Thus, law achieves its purpose only when it is rooted in justice and serves the good of all rather than the privileged few.

### ❖ Justice

Justice is the moral foundation of every legal system. It is that principle which ensures fairness, equality, and the protection of rights within society. The ancient Roman jurist Justinian defined justice as "the constant and perpetual will to give to each his due" (Institutes of Justinian, 535/1913, Book I, Title I). Justice, therefore, is not a sentiment but a standard by which the actions of both the ruler and the ruled are measured.

In the Nigerian context, justice remains a desired but elusive virtue. While the Constitution guarantees equality before the law, the reality is that access to justice often depends on wealth, influence, or connections (Falana, 2015). The poor and marginalized are frequently victims of selective enforcement of laws, while the politically powerful manipulate legal procedures for self-interest (Odinkalu, 2010).

As A. V. Dicey (1959) observed, the rule of law demands "equality before the law, so that every man, whatever his rank or condition, is subject to ordinary law of the realm" (p. 193). Unfortunately, Nigerian society continues to witness situations where some individuals are "more equal than the others" (Orwell, 1945, p. 112). The delay in court cases, the manipulation of the judiciary, the inconsistent judgments erode public confidence in justice. Thus, law loses its moral legitimacy when it ceases to be a vehicle of justice.

### ❖ Futile Venture

The term "futile venture" means an effort or activity that leads to no useful result. It connotes something empty, fruitless, or meaningless. Therefore, "law without justice" is a futile venture because law loses its purpose when it fails to uphold

justice; worst of all is the constant violation of the core principles and concepts of law and justice.

### ❖ **Socio-political**

This refers to the combination or interaction of social, which has to do with the community, class and culture, and then political concept involving governmental, power and policy factors. It describes issues, systems, or contexts shaped by the interaction of how people live and how they are governed, such as social movements, inequality, or public policy.

## **The Core Principles and Concepts of Law and Justice**

The basic presupposition that natural law is equally implanted in all human beings posits the conviction of the fundamental, absolute, and irreducible similarity of all humans—all individually entitled to the same fundamental human rights (Aquinas, 1912). More often than not, law ceases to be what it is if it is not directed or enacted for the promotion of justice, hence the following core principles of law in ensuring justice:

### ❖ **Rule of Law**

The rule of law is the doctrine that the law governs all persons, institutions, and entities within a state—including the government itself. It is opposed to arbitrary power and dictatorship. According to A.V. Dicey (1959), the rule of law consists of three essential principles: (1) the supremacy of law over arbitrary authority, (2) equality before the law, and (3) the protection of individual rights through ordinary courts. These mean that no one may be punished except for a breach of the law; that all persons are equal before the law; and that personal rights are protected through ordinary courts of law. In Nigeria, these principles are clearly articulated in the Constitution, which provides for the separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary.

#### • **Types of Rule of Law**

While the rule of law is a single doctrine, scholars distinguish it into formal and substantive dimensions.

### **a. The Formal Rule of Law**

This aspect focuses on procedure which states that the law must be publicly known, applied equally, and enforced through established institutions. The public knowledge, application, equality and the enforcement of the law are aimed at ensuring predictability, order, and consistency in governance. According to Joseph Raz (1979), "a legal system should be capable of guiding the behavior of its subjects through clear and stable laws" (p. 214). In Nigeria, the formal aspect of the rule of law is often present in the books but absent in reality. Delays in judicial processes, disobedience to court orders, and the manipulation of legal procedures by politicians undermine this principle.

### **b. The Substantive Rule of Law**

The substantive aspect emphasizes that the content of laws themselves must be just, fair, and respectful of fundamental rights. Lord Bingham (2010) explained that "the rule of law requires the law itself to be just and protect the dignity and rights of the human person" (p. 67). Nigeria's challenges—ranging from police brutality, arbitrary detention, to suppression of free speech—reveal a disconnect between legal norms and moral justice (Human Rights Watch, 2010).

When the rule of law fails in either form, law becomes an instrument of oppression rather than a guardian of rights. Therefore, the Nigerian legal order must uphold both the letter and the spirit of the rule of law to maintain justice and public trust.

### **c. Checks and Balances in Government**

Checks and balances are essential to prevent the abuse of power in any democratic system. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999, as amended) provides for the separation of powers among the executive, legislature, and judiciary. This separation of power is aimed at curtailing the excesses of any of the three arms of government in carrying out their functions in the affairs of governance, such that mutual respect is given to each arm, but for mutual collaboration.

This principle aids the executive to execute laws that are legislated by the legislators, subject to the interpretation of the judiciary in an independent manner as against influence on any upon another. Herein lies the supremacy of the law enacted by the legislators, enforced by the executive and in moments of doubts and infractions, are interpreted by the judiciary with the necessary sanction for execution. The spirit of

the law, having passed through the three arms of government, makes it binding on all, hence nobody or arm is above the law, once enacted.

The principle of checks and balances in matters of law, justice and equity, therefore, is to prevent tyranny by separating powers to prevent authoritarian tendency to be exhibited either by the executive on the judiciary, the judiciary on the legislative, or the legislative on the executive (Nwabueze, 1982). This checkmating is to promote stability by enforcing collaboration between the three arms for more balanced and vetted decisions for the common good of all in the maintenance of trust in enshrining democracy as against autocracy.

### **Law and Justice in the Nigerian Context**

The term law and justice connote legality; hence the law of Nigeria consists of courts, offences, and various types of laws. Nigeria has its own constitution established on 29 May 1999 as the supreme law of the country. Furthermore, the 1999 Constitution is the supreme legal authority, governing the nation through a federal structure with separated powers among the Executive, Legislative, and Judiciary, guaranteeing fundamental rights to life, liberty and expression. Consequently, the Nigerian legal system is a hybrid structure derived from English law, Common law, Customary law, and Islamic law (Sharia), designed to uphold justice under the hierarchical judiciary led by the Supreme Court (Okonkwo, 2011). Worthy of note is that the Nigerian legal system is characterized by legal pluralism, which entails the coexistence of English law, customary law, and Islamic law, where Sharia law in Islam is seen as a personal law mostly practiced in some Northern parts of Nigeria (Oko, 2005).

This legal system is aided by a hierarchy of courts in matters pertaining to the interpretation of laws, ranging from the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, Federal High Court, State High Courts, and customary/sharia courts of appeal. These courts, in turn, are saddled with the responsibility of interpreting the law based on the stipulations from the constitution, legislation as obtained in statutes, judicial precedents best known as case law, and then customary practices.

## **The Futile Venture of Law without Justice in Nigeria**

A legal system that does not promote justice is merely a mechanism of control. Law, in its purest sense, exists to protect human dignity and ensure fairness. When this goal is compromised, the law becomes hollow. As Roscoe Pound (1922) declared, "law must be stable, yet it cannot stand still; it must serve the needs of society" (p. 1). In Nigeria, law has often failed to serve justice because of corruption, political interference, and inequality before the law (Akinola, 2020).

### **❖ Outright Violation of Rule of Law**

The fundamental principle of rule of law which should have been in active use judicially in strengthening the judicial system for an effective decimation of justice, equity, equality and fairness, where all people, including government officials, are subject to the same laws, preventing arbitrary actions, end up being tools of manipulation in the hands of government (Dicey, 1959). Furthermore, the practice often contradicts the theory. Instances abound where political officeholders disobey court orders or influence judicial decisions to suit their interests. The selective prosecution of corruption cases and the weaponization of anti-graft agencies against political opponents are symptoms of a compromised rule of law (Jibrin Ibrahim, 2015).

Moreover, the principle of presumption of innocence, where the accused is considered innocent until proven guilty, remains in theory but practically speaking, most times, the falsely accused less-privileged often end up in jail. Judgement, in the end, is the exclusive reserve of the highest bidder. Moreover, the case of sale of judgement outrightly violates the principle of right to fair trial which should have guaranteed an independent adjudication as against external influence, hence making the judiciary inaccessible in moments of seeking legal redress.

As Gani Fawehinmi (1999) rightly stated, "Where the rule of law is absent, the law of rulers prevails, and justice becomes the first casualty" (p. 23). Without genuine respect for rule of law, legal institutions lose their credibility and democracy itself is threatened.

The Nigerian judiciary, though constitutionally independent, is constantly under political and economic pressure. The appointment of judges, the funding of courts, and the influence of the executive all compromise judicial impartiality (Odinkalu,

2010). The situation is worsened by delay trials, conflicting judgments, and the perception that justice can be bought. These realities make law ineffective in delivering justice.

Moreover, the poor often face harsher consequences for minor offences, while powerful individuals evade punishment for serious crimes (Falana, 2015). Such imbalance destroys public confidence in legal institutions and fosters a culture of impunity. When law ceases to embody justice, it becomes a tool for exploitation—a reality that makes its enforcement not only futile but dangerous to the moral fabric of society.

As Martin Luther King Jr. (1963) once stated, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere" (para. 4). When justice is absent, the law loses its moral authority and legitimacy. Hence, in Nigeria, law without justice becomes a futile venture—a mere façade that fails to promote peace, equality, and human dignity.

Furthermore, corruption within law enforcement agencies and the judiciary undermines the purpose of legal institutions (Human Rights Watch, 2010). Many Nigerians perceive the law as a tool for the rich and powerful rather than a protector of all citizens. The high cost of litigation, delays in trials, and political interference have rendered justice inaccessible to the poor.

#### ❖ **The Absence of Effective Checks and Balances**

Checks and balances are essential to prevent the abuse of power in any democratic system. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999, as amended) provides for the separation of powers among the executive, legislature, and judiciary. However, in practice, the balance among these arms is weak. The executive often dominates the others, particularly through budget control and political influence (Nwabueze, 1982).

Ben Nwabueze (1982) notes that "the concentration of power in the executive arm has rendered the legislature and judiciary subservient" (p. 145). The Nigerian legislature, though empowered to check the executive, often fails to do so due to political alignment or corruption. The judiciary, expected to act as the guardian of justice, is constrained by inadequate funding and intimidation (Odinkalu, 2010).

Without strong institutional checks, the principle of the rule of law collapses. As Lord Acton (1948) famously warned, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely" (p. 335). When the balance of power is lost, justice becomes subject to political convenience, and the law loses its integrity.

Without effective checks and balances, justice becomes unattainable. The rule of law deteriorates into the rule of power, and the voice of judiciary is silenced. Thus, law becomes a weapon of oppression rather than a tool of justice.

### **Some Instances of Law Without Justice in Nigeria**

To ascertain the reality of law without justice, one must examine specific instances in Nigeria's political and judicial history, where a persistent gap between legal proceedings and the delivery of justice, often characterized by impunity for state actors, slow judicial processes, and the rise of vigilante violence, become the order of the day. Indeed, the act of disregard for prompt enforcement of court order makes a mockery of the Nigerian judicial system, among which are the following:

- a) The case of *Ojukwu v. Military Governor of Lagos State* (1986) demonstrates the disregard for court orders by government authorities. Despite a valid court injunction restraining the Lagos State Government from evicting Chief Ojukwu, the government went ahead to do so, showing clear contempt for the rule of law. Moreover is the case of suppression of free expression, where the ECOWAS Court of Justice found in 2024 that some regulatory actions against human rights groups were tantamount to censorship (ECOWAS Court of Justice, 2024).
- b) The case of contempt by Legislative Arms, where in 2025, reports emerged of the Nigerian Senate engaging in a violation of a court order concerning a committee report, highlighting that the legislature also faces accusations of ignoring judicial authority (Premium Times, 2025).
- c) The case of violation of the principle of trials within stipulated time has been an issue in the Nigerian court of law, where litigants are often frustrated and the accused being detained beyond the legal period before hearing. Sadly, is the case of a prolonged detention of citizens without trial, contrary to Section 35 of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to personal liberty. In cases such as that of *Omoyele Sowore v. Federal Republic of Nigeria* (2019), the government's repeated disobedience to bail orders highlighted the fragility of judicial independence in Nigeria.

- d) Many cases abound of individual extrajudicial killings by some law enforcement agencies, like the case of Onyeka Ibe (2025-2026) who was shot in Delta State for refusing a bribe, with legal proceedings dragging; the case of Mene Ogidi (2026) who was killed extrajudicially in Delta State, leading to the dismissal of officers involved but pending full prosecution; the case of Igbo-Jah (2026), a musician killed by a police officer in Enugu State, resulting in the dismissal of the officer and the state intervention (Amnesty International, 2026).
- e) The case of sham trials (2025), where Amnesty International documented the trial of several individuals in Maiduguri, Borno State, who were sentenced to five years imprisonment for "forming a group...to take up arms" and related charges after what they described as a sham trial (Amnesty International, 2025).
- f) The case of jungle justice has become the order of the day owing to the lack of trust on the judiciary to fair hearing, speedy judgement and the enforcement of sanctions. This is seen in the rise of vigilante killing owing to loss of trust in the formal justice system, leading to mob justice where suspects are burned or lynched before trial. Sometimes, innocent and vulnerable people become target of such instances in reprisal cases, especially in moments of attacks by so-called "unknown" gunmen, where passersby often end up being victims as a result of the failure of government to arrest the culprit (Human Rights Watch, 2010).
- g) Financial control and compromised autonomy by the executive towards the judiciary and the legislative arms have posed a great challenge, where tools like starving the judiciary of funds as well as the case of executive-funded infrastructure and the inducement of vehicles to judges, undermine judicial independence. To this practice, the Nigerian Bar Association frowns at and has recently called to halt this practice (Nigerian Bar Association, 2026).
- h) The case of political interference and pressure on Supreme Court Justices, where as of April 2026, reports have surfaced regarding the presidency mounting pressure on Supreme Court Justices regarding leadership disputes in opposition parties, the allegation of the influence of the executive in the investigation of Federal High Court Chief Judge by the Code of Conduct Bureau, as well as the constant and unending chaotic legal battles in political cases (Premium Times, 2026).

This very act of investigation of the Chief Judge portrays the case of a selective targeting and allegations of bias, especially on judges with "unfavourable" rulings as perceived by the government. A clear case is that which transpired in 2024, where the NJC launched investigations into judges who delivered conflicting orders, often in cases where the executive had a vested interest in the outcome (National Judicial Council, 2024).

These among other actions of influence of the executive on other arms of government frequently lead to a crisis of confidence, reducing public trust and undermining the rule of law, as superior physical power or force are used to subvert judicial decisions. In the final analysis, corruption and scandals involving high-profile politicians who evade justice due to "technicalities" have eroded trust in the legal system. When the law is manipulated or ignored, justice is denied, and where justice is denied, law itself becomes a futile venture, hence the relationship between law, morality and the mediatory role of justice.

### **The Relationship between Law, Morality and the Mediatory Role of Justice**

Law, justice, and morality are three interrelated concepts that together sustain social order and human dignity. While law provides the framework for a healthy, peaceful and harmonious society, morality, on the other hand, supplies the ethical foundation, and then the mediatory role of justice in ensuring firmness in their harmony. According to Thomas Aquinas (1912), "An unjust law is no law at all" (Q. 95, Art. 2). He insists that any legal system divorced from morality loses its legitimacy.

In Nigeria, the moral foundation of law has been weakened by corruption and impunity. Many laws are enacted without consideration of their ethical implications for the poor and vulnerable (Akinola, 2020). Consequently, when legal rules favor the rich and protect the corrupt, thereby exposing the poor, innocent, weak and the vulnerable in the society to manipulation, exploitation and oppression, justice becomes an illusion. The judiciary, as the custodian of justice, therefore, is saddled with the responsibility of upholding both the letter and the spirit of the law in its interpretation, irrespective of status, color, creed or position. As Chinua Achebe (1983) remarked, "The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership" (p. 1). This failure extends to moral leadership in law enforcement and governance.

Hence, without morality, laws are but figments of the mind of the legislator where justice in reality is reduced to a slogan; without justice, law becomes an instrument of tyranny. The alignment of law with moral conscience, mediated by justice, is therefore indispensable for true justice to flourish in Nigeria.

## **The Way Forward**

The pursuit of justice in Nigeria demands urgent reforms in both structure and attitude in a bid to strengthen judicial independence, such that judges must be appointed based on merit, not political patronage, and their financial autonomy must be guaranteed to eliminate external pressure (Odinkalu, 2010). There must be effective enforcement of court judgments because when government agencies or political figures disobey lawful court orders, it sends a message that the law is powerless.

Based on findings and critical reflections, the following propositions, if adhered to, will lead to an effective judicial system where the law is respected by all, both in its spirit, text and context for the administration of justice as a fruitful venture. This will aid in restoring the relationship between law and justice in Nigeria by reinforcing the rule of law, strengthening institutional integrity, and reawakening moral consciousness among legal actors and citizens.

### **1. Strengthening Judicial Independence**

For justice to prevail, the judiciary must operate free from political influence and executive interference. The Nigerian Constitution guarantees judicial independence, yet, in practice, appointments, promotions, and funding often depend on political loyalty rather than merit (Nwabueze, 1982). Judicial autonomy must therefore be defended by establishing independent judicial commissions and ensuring full financial autonomy for the courts.

### **2. Reformation of Law Enforcement Agencies**

Law enforcement agencies, especially the police, should be trained and monitored to uphold human rights and resist corruption. The culture of extortion, arbitrary detention and selective enforcement of laws must be replaced with professionalism and accountability (Human Rights Watch, 2010). Institutions such as the Police Service Commission should be empowered to discipline erring officers effectively.

### **3. Legal Education and Civic Reorientation**

Legal education in Nigeria should move beyond technical mastery to include moral and ethical formation. Law students, lawyers, and judges should be educated in the philosophy of justice, human dignity, and the social responsibility of law. Likewise, civic education should be reintroduced at all levels to instill respect for justice, equality, and the rule of law among citizens, where citizens are enlightened about their rights and responsibilities. A society ignorant of its rights cannot demand justice. As Nelson Mandela (1994) noted, "To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity" (p. 345).

### **4. Transparency and Anti-Corruption Mechanisms**

Anti-corruption institutions such as EFCC and ICPC must be strengthened and insulated from political manipulation (ICPC, 2021). Public officials should be held accountable to the same laws that govern the ordinary citizen. Transparency in governance is not a luxury but a necessity for justice to thrive. As such, anti-corruption agencies must be reformed to act independently and transparently. Justice should not depend on one's political alignment but on truth and evidence. The realization of justice in Nigeria's legal system will restore faith in democracy and promote national unity.

### **5. Promotion of Ethical Leadership**

Justice cannot flourish in a morally bankrupt society. Nigeria needs ethical leadership—leaders who see law not as an instrument of oppression but as a tool for justice and development. As Chinua Achebe (1983) aptly noted, "the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership" (p. 1). Hence, the moral integrity of those who make and enforce laws must align with the principles of justice they claim to uphold.

### **6. Swift Administration of Justice**

Only when justice is seen as the goal of every legal action can Nigeria rebuild a society based on equity, fairness, and peace. Undue delay in court processes must be addressed through improved case management, adequate funding, and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms (Oko, 2005).

## Conclusion

The Nigerian experience reveals a tragic irony: a nation richly endowed with legal frameworks with great and world-renowned legal luminaries, yet starved of justice in practice. However sad is the reality where the constitution, statutes, and judicial institutions that are meant to uphold justice, ended up being used as objects of manipulation. In the end, the law married to conscience, rather than being an instrument of justice, became an instrument of subjugation, manipulation and suppression: it is manipulated for personal, ethnic, or political interest, hence stripping the law of its relevance to a mere empty shell. Law without justice, therefore, is a futile venture because it defeats the very reason for the existence of law, the aim of which is to protect human dignity, preserve social order, and promote the common good.

Justice, as a matter of fact, gives moral legitimacy to law, without which, law becomes a tool of oppression rather than liberation. In Nigeria, the failure of justice is evident in widespread corruption, judicial delays, selective prosecution, and abuse of power (Falana, 2015). These vices have eroded public confidence in the legal system and weakened democratic governance. A society where the rule of law is ignored becomes a breeding ground for inequality, violence, and anarchy.

Therefore, to make law meaningful in Nigeria, justice must be restored as its soul and guiding principle. The government, judiciary, and citizens must work together to rebuild the moral foundation of the nation. Legal reforms, however necessary, will remain ineffective if not anchored on ethical renewal as true progress begins when every Nigerian, either rich or poor, powerful or powerless, can stand before the law and find fairness without fear or favor, as law without justice is not merely futile; it is dangerous. It erodes faith in governance and destroys the moral compass of society. Justice must therefore cease to be a slogan and become a living reality where the law serves all and protects the least, based on moral conscience.

## References

- Achebe, C. (1983). *The trouble with Nigeria*. Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- Akinola, R. A. (2020). Justice and governance in Nigeria: A moral appraisal. *Nigerian Law Review*, 17(2), 45–62.
- Amnesty International. (2025). *Nigeria: Sham trials and arbitrary detentions in Borno State*. Amnesty International Publications.
- Amnesty International. (2026). *Nigeria: Extrajudicial killings and police brutality*. Amnesty International Publications.
- Aquinas, T. (1912). *Summa theologiae* (Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Trans.). Burns Oates. (Original work published ca. 1265–1274)
- Bingham, T. (2010). *The rule of law*. Penguin Books.
- Black, H. C. (1910). *Black's law dictionary* (2nd ed.). West Publishing.
- Blackstone, W. (1765). *Commentaries on the laws of England*. Clarendon Press.
- Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended).
- Dalberg-Acton, J. E. E. (1948). *Essays on freedom and power*. Beacon Press.
- Dicey, A. V. (1959). *Introduction to the study of the law of the constitution*. Macmillan.
- ECOWAS Court of Justice. (2024). *Judgment on freedom of expression and association in Nigeria*. ECOWAS Court of Justice.
- Falana, F. (2015). *The Nigerian legal system and human rights*. Legal Review Press.
- Fawehinmi, G. (1999). *The rule of law in Nigeria*. Nigerian Law Publications.
- Human Rights Watch. (2010). *Corruption in the Nigerian police force*. Human Rights Watch.
- Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission. (2021). *Annual report 2021*. ICPC.
- Jibrin Ibrahim, J. (2015). Democracy and the challenge of governance in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Political Studies*, 9(1), 112–130.
- King, M. L., Jr. (1963). *Letter from Birmingham jail*. African Studies Center, University of Pennsylvania.
- Mandela, N. (1994). *Long walk to freedom*. Little, Brown and Company.
- National Judicial Council. (2024). *Report on conflicting judgments and judicial investigations*. NJC.
- Nigerian Bar Association. (2026). *Statement on judicial independence and executive interference*. NBA.
- Nwabueze, B. (1982). *The presidential constitution of Nigeria*. C. Hurst & Co.
- Oba, A. (2011). *Law and justice in Nigeria: A critical appraisal*. Malthouse Press.
- Odinkalu, C. (2010). Justice and the rule of law in Nigeria: A fragile balance. *African Human Rights Law Journal*, 8(2), 401–420.
- Ojukwu v. Military Governor of Lagos State, 1986 NWLR (Pt. 18) 621 (Nigeria).
- Oko, O. (2005). Seeking justice in traditional societies: An analysis of the problems and failures of the judiciary in Nigeria. *Brooklyn Journal of International Law*, 31(1), 1–38.

Okonkwo, C. O. (2011). Introduction to Nigerian law. Spectrum Books.

Omoyele Sowore v. Federal Republic of Nigeria, FHC/ABJ/CS/915/2019 (Nigeria).

Orwell, G. (1945). Animal farm. Secker & Warburg.

Pound, R. (1922). An introduction to the philosophy of law. Yale University Press.

Premium Times. (2025). Senate accused of ignoring court order on committee report. Premium Times.

Premium Times. (2026). Presidency accused of pressuring Supreme Court justices. Premium Times.

Raz, J. (1979). The authority of law: Essays on law and morality. Clarendon Press.

Article Information:

|                  |             |
|------------------|-------------|
| <i>Received</i>  | 17-Jun-2026 |
| <i>Revised</i>   | 7-Aug-2026  |
| <i>Accepted</i>  | 11-Aug-2026 |
| <i>Published</i> | 30-Sep-2026 |

---

Declarations:

Author's Contribution:

- **Conceptualization, and intellectual revisions. Data collection, interpretation, and drafting of manuscript**
- The author agrees to take responsibility for every facet of the work, making sure that any concerns about its integrity or veracity are thoroughly examined and addressed

▪ **Conflict of Interest:** NIL

▪ **Funding Sources:** NIL

Correspondence:

Justine Jingoe, Temswang, Ph.D.

Temswangj@gmail.com

---