



Judicial Independence in Nigeria

Institutional Constraints, Reform Pathways, and Democratic Consequences

Issues in the News

- President Tinubu Inaugurates Bodo–Bonny Road
- Senate Approves Nigeria’s Troop Deployment to Benin
- Riley Moore Calls for Global Action on Nigeria’s Displacement Crisis
- Rivers Governor Fubara Defects From PDP to APC

Regional Update

- Violent Coup Attempt in Benin Foiled
- Chadian Judiciary Faces Fresh Magistrate Suspensions Amid Reform Drive
- Cameroonians Shift from Calls and SMS to Internet Messaging Services
- Niger, Nigeria Finalise Accord on Border Demarcation, Security Cooperation

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© Athena Perspectives, Vol. 2 Issue 27, 16-22 December 2025

Executive Summary

Nigeria's judiciary is constitutionally independent but institutionally vulnerable. The central failure is not the absence of laws or funding, but the lack of enforceable constraints on executive discretion over judicial appointments, discipline, and the release of statutory funds.

If this gap persists, judicial reform will remain cosmetic. Delayed appointments, discretionary funding releases, and procedurally irregular disciplinary actions will continue to weaken court authority, prolong case backlogs, erode investor confidence, and normalise executive non-compliance with judicial decisions—undermining democratic consolidation and the rule of law.

The most decisive reform lever is the institutionalisation of binding enforcement mechanisms: transparent, time-bound appointment rules; a ring-fenced Judiciary Fund with automatic releases; and codified disciplinary procedures backed by legal sanctions for non-compliance. Without enforceable limits on executive discretion, increased budgets and policy declarations will not translate into judicial independence in practice.

Crucially, the brief argues that judicial reform will fail unless formal rules are matched by enforceable constraints on executive discretion. Without clear sanctions for delayed funding releases, ignored appointment timelines, or procedurally irregular disciplinary actions, reforms risk remaining declaratory rather than operative.

Persistent Gaps Between Judicial Independence and Institutional Practice

Judicial independence in Nigeria has long been undermined by [structural legacies of executive dominance inherited from colonial administration and reinforced during successive military regimes](#). Although democratic rule has restored constitutional checks, the practical separation of powers remains incomplete.

Contemporary indicators confirm systemic fragility: The World Justice Project places [Nigeria 120th of 142 on the 2024 Rule of Law Index](#); this reflects weakness in constraints on executive power and civil justice delivery. Transparency International gives Nigeria a [2024 CPI score of 26 \(≈140/180\)](#), undercutting public confidence in impartial adjudication.

Operational data reinforce this diagnosis. [Superior courts reported more than 243,000 pending cases in early 2024, while the Federal High Court alone carried nearly 156,000 matters into the 2024 legal year](#). These delays impose high economic and social costs, discourage investment, and erode citizen confidence in legal remedies.

Policy instruments to date, including the National Judicial Policy (2016), have strengthened coordination but have not secured fiscal insulation, transparent appointment procedures, or robust and credible disciplinary mechanisms. [While the 2024 Appropriation increased the judiciary’s statutory transfer to N342 billion, these reforms did not fully shield fund releases from executive influence](#). As a result, fiscal allocations—despite their growth—remain non-ring-fenced, leading to delayed disbursements and continuing constraints on institutional autonomy.

Beyond underfunding, the core weakness lies in the absence of credible enforcement mechanisms. Existing legal provisions lack automatic consequences when breached, allowing discretionary delays in fund releases and appointments to persist without institutional penalty. This enforcement gap—not merely resource scarcity—sustains executive leverage over the judiciary.

Similarly, appointment and disciplinary processes remain insufficiently transparent. These reinforce perceptions of political dependence, as reflected in high-profile episodes such as the 2019 suspension of the Chief Justice of Nigeria.

Taken together, these structural weaknesses undermine the effective enforcement of the rule of law, erode public confidence in the justice system, and increase transaction and litigation costs across commercial, civil, and criminal spheres.

Table 1. Indicators of Judicial Independence and Systemic Capacity in Nigeria

Governance/ Capacity Indicator	Most Recent Value (2024)	Primary Source
WJP Rule of Law Rank	120/142	World Justice Project
CPI Score	26/100 ≈ 140/180	Transparency.org
Pending Cases (Superior Courts)	243, 253 (Q1)	The Nigeria Lawyer
Federal High Court Pending Cases	155, 969	Nairametrics
Statutory Transfer to Judiciary	N342 billion	finance.gov.ng
Approximate Number of Judges	1,300 judges	Fij

How Judicial Autonomy, Capacity, and Trust Interact

This brief adopts a causal framework linking judicial independence to democratic consolidation through three channels.

First, predictable funding and transparent appointments reduce executive leverage and strengthen impartial adjudication.

Second, operational capacity—judges, clerks, and digital systems—directly affects the speed and quality of justice delivery.

Third, transparency and procedural fairness translate institutional reforms into public legitimacy.

The causal pathway is sequential. Fiscal autonomy and insulated appointment processes enable capacity investments and procedural reforms. Improved performance—measured through reduced backlogs and faster disposition—reinforces public trust, which in turn strengthens democratic norms and compliance with judicial decisions.

Political Economy Constraints on Judicial Reform

Judicial reform in Nigeria is shaped by a complex political economy that determines the feasibility and durability of proposed interventions.

- The Executive retains significant influence through appointment timing, funding releases, and disciplinary leverage, often perceiving transparency as a loss of discretion.
- The Legislature controls appropriations but faces partisan and coalition constraints that weaken enforcement of ring-fencing.
- Within the judiciary, capacity and compliance vary widely across courts and states, complicating uniform reform.
- State governors exert considerable influence over state judiciaries and may resist reforms that threaten entrenched patronage systems.
- Civil society and the media play a vital watchdog role, yet their capacity to monitor technical areas such as budget execution and digital reform remains limited.

Overall, reform feasibility hinges on designing incentive-compatible mechanisms that align political actors with institutional gains, minimise perceived losses of discretion, and embed reforms within broader coalitions that can sustain momentum beyond electoral cycles.

Enforcement and Sanctions: From Formal Rules to Binding Compliance

Judicial independence cannot rest on normative commitment alone; it requires institutionalised enforcement. To close Nigeria's persistent compliance gap, reform instruments must incorporate automatic triggers and consequences for breach.

First, delays in statutory fund releases beyond prescribed quarterly timelines should trigger mandatory public disclosure by the Office of the Accountant General, followed by compulsory appearances of the Minister of Finance before the National Assembly. Second, failure to adhere to appointment timelines by any appointing authority should be subject to judicial review on procedural grounds, with standing granted to professional bodies and civil-society organisations.

Third, deviations from codified disciplinary procedures should render resulting actions voidable, reinforcing procedural discipline and deterring politically motivated interventions.

Absent such enforcement mechanisms, transparency risks becoming symbolic, and reform credibility will erode.

How Enforcement Triggers Activate

To move enforcement mechanisms from principle to practice, responsibility for activation must be clearly assigned and procedurally bounded.



Reporting Authority

Primary reporting responsibility rests with statutory and oversight institutions already embedded in Nigeria's public financial and judicial architecture.

- **The Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation (OAGF)** is responsible for publishing quarterly reports on Judiciary Fund releases and identifying deviations from statutory timelines.
- **The National Judicial Council (NJC)** reports on compliance with appointment and disciplinary procedures, including timelines and procedural integrity.



Verification Mechanism

Verification relies on documentary and procedural benchmarks rather than discretionary judgment.

- Breaches are verified through published budget execution reports, NJC procedural records, and statutory timelines codified in regulation or legislation.
- **The Auditor-General of the Federation** provides independent post-release audits, certifying whether delays, deviations, or procedural irregularities occurred.



Institutional Locus for Enforcement

Once a breach is verified, enforcement authority shifts automatically to designated institutions:

- **The National Assembly Committees on Judiciary and Finance** exercise oversight through mandatory hearings and resolutions when statutory obligations are unmet.
- **Courts** retain jurisdiction to review appointment delays or disciplinary deviations on procedural grounds, with standing granted to affected parties, professional bodies, and civil-society organisations.

This framework ensures that enforcement does not depend on political goodwill, but on predefined institutional responsibilities, verifiable benchmarks, and automatic escalation pathways.

Comparative Lessons from Judicial Reform in Other Democracies

Countries grappling with tensions between judicial independence and executive authority consistently exhibit three core fault lines that mirror Nigeria's experience:

- Design of appointment mechanisms,
- Control over funding and fiscal autonomy,
- Regulation of removal and disciplinary procedures.

Comparative analysis of how different systems have addressed these issues provides both cautionary lessons and constructive models for reform.

Poland: Politicised Appointments and Rapid De-Legitimisation

[Poland's experience since 2015 is a cautionary case of rapid politicisation.](#) The ruling party enacted laws that changed how judges are appointed and disciplined (creating a disciplinary chamber, changing National Council of the Judiciary procedures, and lowering retirement ages for judges). These measures were widely criticised as undermining judicial independence. The European Commission and EU courts intervened repeatedly, treating Poland's reforms as breaches of EU rule-of-law obligations. By 2024–2025, new political leadership signalled steps to reverse or soften earlier reforms. [These events show how appointment/disciplinary changes can quickly erode perceived independence and trigger supranational enforcement costs.](#)

Policy lesson: Changes to appointment or disciplinary rules implemented without broad institutional consensus can produce rapid de-legitimisation and direct financial penalties (as with EU fines), and reversal becomes politically costly.

India: Insulation Through the Collegium—and Its Legitimacy Trade-Offs

India's post-colonial appointment debate illustrates a different pathway. [The Supreme Court created the collegium system \(judges selecting judges\) through a series of judicial decisions to protect independence from executive nomination.](#) A statutory and constitutional attempt to replace the collegium with a broader National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) (via the 99th Amendment and NJAC Act, 2014) was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2015, which held that the NJAC undermined judicial independence. The episode underscores tensions between judicial self-governance, demands for greater transparency, and calls for external accountability. Subsequent incremental transparency measures are used to balance independence and legitimacy.

Policy lesson: Insulating appointments from political capture can be achieved through internal mechanisms (collegium), but these require concurrent transparency and clear criteria to sustain public legitimacy; [heavy-handed statutory "solutions" risk constitutional invalidation.](#)

Kenya: Constitutional Redesign with Mixed Implementation Results

Kenya's 2010 Constitution deliberately redesigned judicial governance: it created a reconstituted Judicial Service Commission (JSC), strengthened vetting mechanisms, and established statutory mechanisms for a Judiciary Fund to improve financial autonomy. These reforms improved formal institutional insulation of the bench and created clearer appointment/removal procedures.

However, practical challenges persist (implementation of funding autonomy, capacity gaps, and occasional executive friction). Kenya's reform shows how [constitutional redesign paired with statutory instruments](#) can create durable governance arrangements, provided enforcement and budgetary practice follow.

Policy lesson: [Constitutional entrenchment of appointment and funding mechanisms can materially strengthen independence](#), but only if fiscal practice respects legal design and if oversight institutions are resourced to enforce rules.

South Africa: Constitutional Protection Anchored by Institutional Norms

South Africa’s post-1994 Constitution provides extensive safeguards for judicial independence (clear constitutional language, a Judicial Service Commission for appointments, and a tradition of robust judicial review). The Judicial Service Commission appointment model and sectioned protections have underpinned a relatively independent judiciary, though funding constraints, occasional political friction, and legacy inequalities create ongoing governance challenges. [South Africa demonstrates the value of constitutional design](#) plus strong norms of separation.

Policy lesson: Constitutional entrenchment combined with strong institutional norms and public legal culture is a resilient bulwark, but it must be supported by predictable funding and administrative capacity.

Table 2. Comparative Judicial Reform Models and Lessons for Nigeria

Country Case	Core Reform Approach	Policy Implications for Nigeria
Poland	Rapid statutory changes to appointments and disciplinary procedures	Shows risks of politicisation and swift loss of independence
India	Collegium systems + transparency measures	Internal insulation works if paired with legitimacy-enhancing transparency
Kenya	Constitutional entrenchment + Judiciary fund + JSC	Demonstrates durable fiscal and procedural insulation if implemented with oversight
South Africa	Constitutional guarantees + JSC + judicial culture	Independence is resilient when combined with norms, funding fidelity, and operational capacity

Cross-cutting lesson: Institutional design alone is insufficient. Durable judicial independence emerges only where legal architecture is paired with enforceable fiscal rules, binding procedural timelines, and credible sanctions for non-compliance. Countries that neglected enforcement—even with strong formal guarantees—experienced rapid erosion of judicial legitimacy.

Policy Options: Reform Pathways and Trade-Offs

Outlined below are two complementary policy tracks that respond directly to the identified challenges relating to judicial appointments, funding, removal procedures, institutional capacity, case backlogs, and transparency.

What Must Happen First: Reform Sequencing Imperatives
Not all reforms can proceed simultaneously. Evidence from comparative experience suggests that sequencing is decisive. Three actions must precede or accompany all others:

 **Enforceable appointment transparency**, including published criteria and fixed timelines.

 **Operationalisation of the Judiciary Fund with automatic releases**, prior to large-scale capacity expansion.

 **Pilot backlog-reduction interventions** in high-volume courts to demonstrate early gains and build reform credibility.

Capacity expansion without fiscal insulation, and transparency without enforcement, will reproduce existing failures at higher cost.

Option A: Strengthening Existing Frameworks Through Implementation Reform

This option builds on the National Judicial Policy (2016). It seeks to close implementation gaps (appointment transparency, fiscal autonomy, and discipline procedures) while avoiding constitutional conflict and ensuring rapid, measurable reforms. This approach offers rapid gains at relatively low political cost but depends heavily on sustained compliance and oversight.

Policy Components and Instruments

1. Appointment Transparency & Meritocracy

- Publish NJC shortlists, selection criteria, and scorecards for all superior-court vacancies; require public notice and 21-day comment period. (Increases legitimacy as in India/Kenya comparative lessons).
- Standardise timelines: NJC to issue recommendations within 90 days of vacancy; President to act on recommendations within 30 days; Senate confirmation hearing within a further 30 days.

2. Fiscal Autonomy (practical ring-fencing):

- Convert the statutory transfer into a Judiciary Fund (ring-fenced, multi-year appropriation) with explicit release rules (quarterly tranches tied to published performance metrics) and parliamentary audit oversight. Recent FG increases (₦342bn in 2024) show availability of resources but not predictability.
- Mandate annual published accounts and an independent external audit.

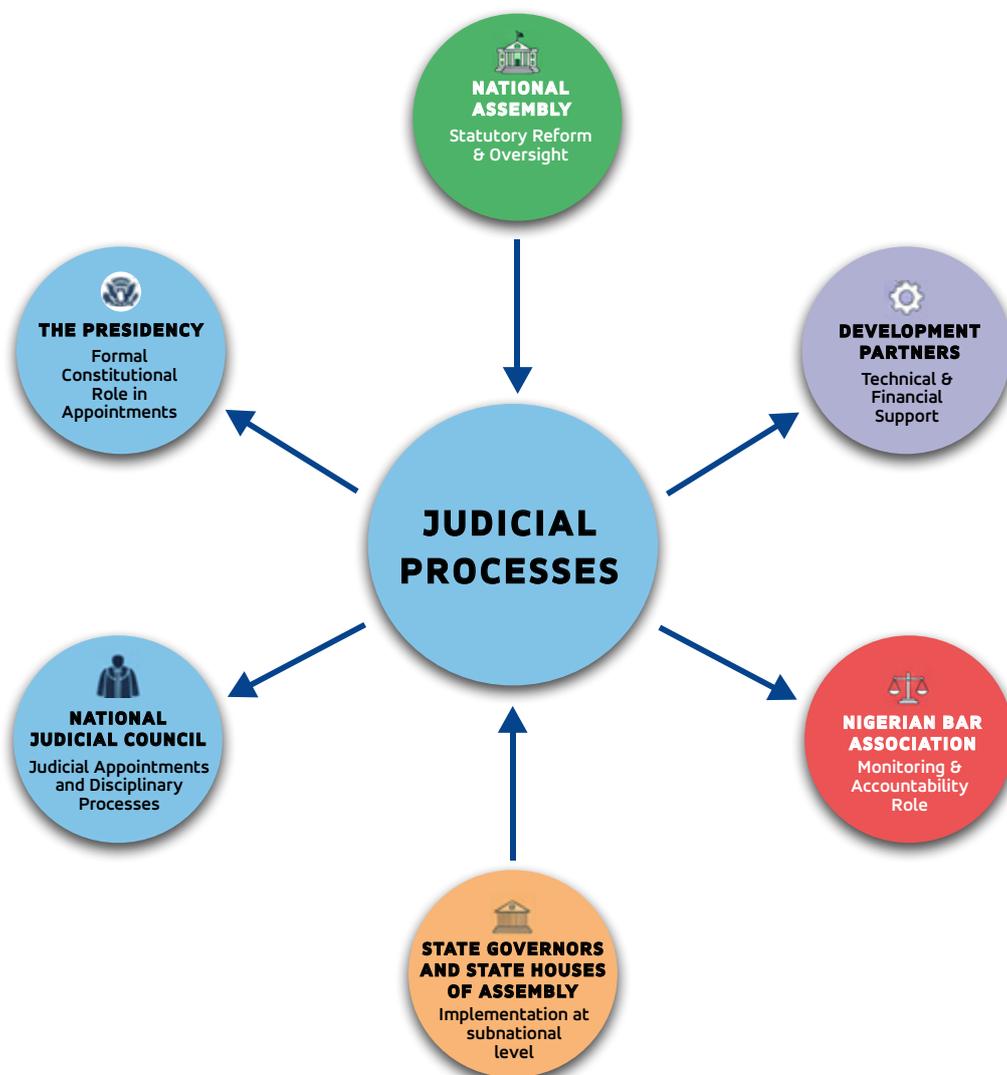
3. Removal & Disciplinary Process

- Codify NJC investigatory timelines and publish anonymised complaint data; require [NJC recommendation as a mandatory precondition for any prosecutorial or removal steps against a serving judge](#) (this protects due process; addresses past politicised removals).
- Create an Independent Judicial Discipline Tribunal (IDT) comprising retired judges and legal scholars to hear appeals from NJC disciplinary decisions (this adds procedural fairness and appeal rights).

4. Capacity and Case Management

- Short-term: Establish surge benches (temporary increase in panel sizes) for appellate dockets; create specialist commercial and administrative divisions.
- Medium-term: Deploy a national digital case-management system, funded from the ring-fenced Judiciary Fund, to reduce delays and improve data for policy evaluation

Institutional Roles and Accountability Key Stakeholders in Judicial Governance & Reform



Option B: Legislative Consolidation Through a Judicial Independence and Efficiency Act (JIEA)

A second pathway consolidates reforms into a single statute establishing transparent appointment rules, a statutory Judiciary Fund with multi-year budgeting, mandatory NJC involvement in disciplinary actions, and enforceable performance obligations. Conditional grants would incentivise states to reduce backlogs and adopt digital systems. Although politically more demanding, this route offers greater durability and legal clarity.

Policy Components and Actions

1. Transparent Appointments Act

- Action: codify NJC publication of criteria, vetting process, public inputs, and fixed timelines; require Senate to base confirmation only on the NJC's vetted list (this reduces ad-hoc political nominations).
- Output metrics: % vacancies with published shortlists; average time from vacancy to swearing-in.

2. Judiciary Fund & Multi-Year Budgeting

- Action: Establish the Judicial Independence Fund (JIF) with statutory ring-fencing, minimum annual indexation, multi-year budget envelopes, and automatic quarterly releases unless an explicit parliamentary resolution pauses disbursement. ([This addresses unpredictable release practice](#)).
- Action: Create a “capital window” within JIF for ICT, court infrastructure, and recruitment.

3. Fair Removal and Discipline Code

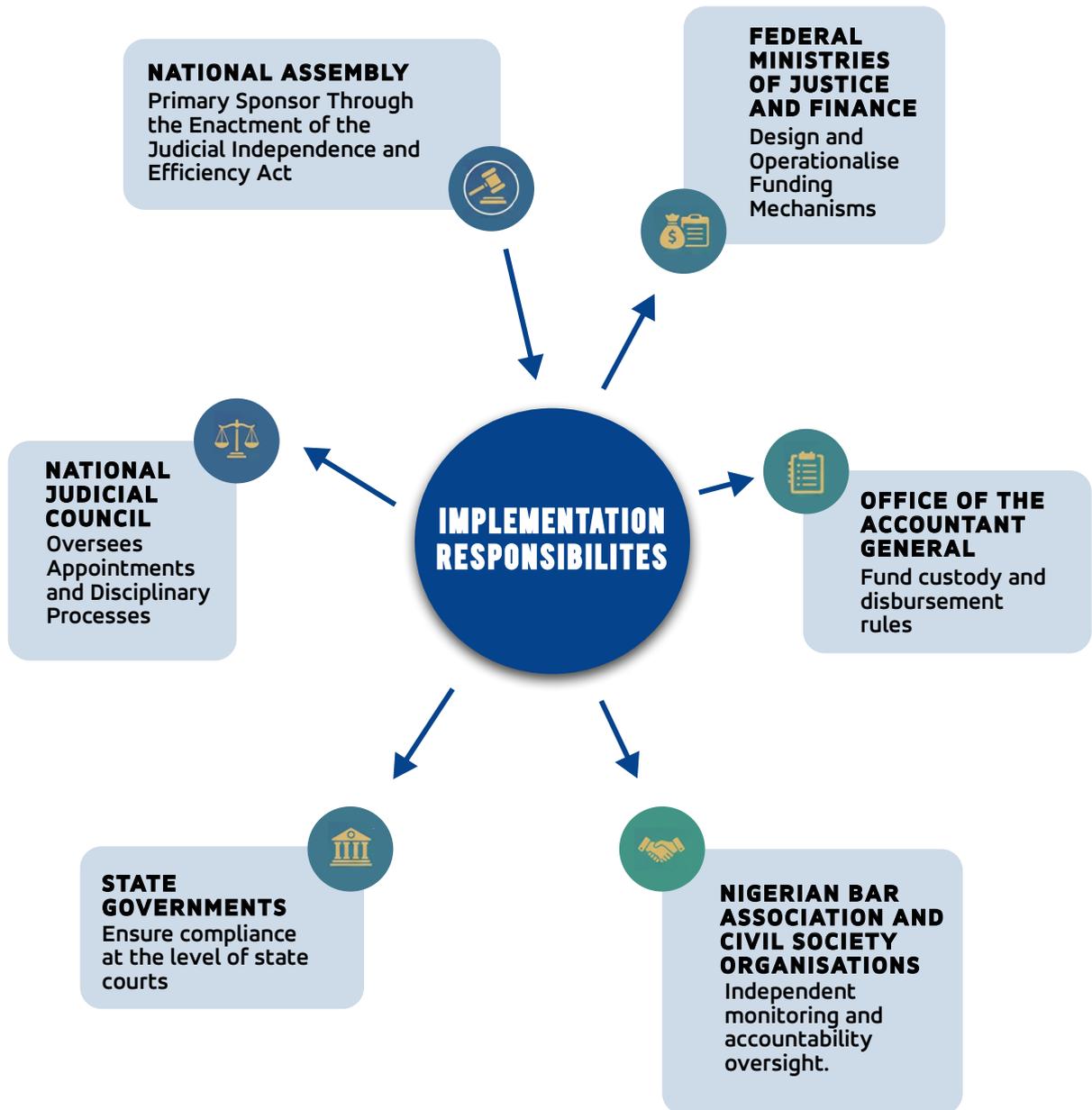
- Action: Make NJC recommendation mandatory before any criminal investigation or removal process against judges (parliamentary amendment); establish transparent investigative procedures, public reporting, and independent appeals.

4. Efficiency and Access

- Action: National rollout of electronic filing/case-management, creation of specialist fast-tracks commercial courts, and conditional grants to states that meet backlog-reduction targets. (Use donor financing and technical assistance for initial rollout. [Kenya used World Bank & donor support successfully.](#))



Institutional Roles and Accountability Judicial Independence and Efficiency Act (JIEA)



Sequencing and Implementation Timeline

Reform should proceed in phases. Short-term actions (0–6 months) focus on transparency rules and pilot surge benches. Medium-term steps (6–18 months) establish the Judiciary Fund and roll out digital systems in high-caseload courts. Longer-term measures (18–36 months) consolidate reforms through legislation and nationwide ICT deployment, followed by evaluation and adjustment over a 3–5-year horizon.

Table 3. Phased Implementation Timeline

Phase	Key Actions	Timeline
Phase 1	NJC transparency rules, public vetting, surge benches	0-6 months
Phase 2	Judiciary Fund legal establishment, ICT pilot rollouts	6-18 months
Phase 3	JIEA legislative consolidation, nationwide digital systems	18-36 months
Phase 4	Backlog reduction targets, public reporting, midline evaluation	3-5 years

Fiscal Requirements and Capacity Targets

Baseline funding would build on the 2024 statutory allocation, indexed modestly to inflation and protected through ring-fencing.



Fiscal Stress Scenario: To preserve judicial autonomy during revenue shocks, the Judiciary Fund should include a protected minimum funding floor, below which appropriations cannot fall without an explicit supermajority resolution of the National Assembly. Capital expenditures may be deferred in downturns, but recurrent operational funding should remain insulated to prevent executive re-leverage during fiscal crises.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Performance Indicators

Key performance indicators include reductions in time-to-disposition, improved judge-to-case ratios, full publication of appointment processes, and predictable fund disbursement.

Table 4. Key Performance Indicators and Monitoring Framework

Indicator	Target	Measurement
Average time-to-disposition	-20% in 3 years	NJC Case-Management System
Judge-to-case ratio	1:150	NJC Reports
Transparency Compliance	100% vacancies published with criteria	NJC Reports
Judiciary Fund disbursement	100% on quarterly schedule	NJC Reports
Public confidence	+10% (per WJP citizen survey)	Annual Survey

Risks to Reform and Mitigation Strategies

Risks—executive resistance, fiscal unpredictability, and institutional inertia—can be mitigated through parliamentary oversight, civil-society monitoring, and phased incentives.

Table 5. Reform Risks and Mitigation Measures

Risk	Probability	Mitigation
Executive resistance to transparency	High	Parliamentary enforcement + CSO monitoring
Fiscal unpredictability	Medium	Ring-fenced, multi-year fund + audit
Judicial resistance to digital adoption	Medium	Training + incentives + pilot demonstration
Political backlash on appointments	High	Consultative phased rollout; public vetting

Public Trust and Strategic De-Legitimation Risks

Public confidence in the judiciary is not shaped solely by performance metrics; it is also contested through political rhetoric and elite signalling. Courts may be delegitimised through selective allegations of corruption, procedural controversy, or public defiance of rulings. To counter this risk, the judiciary should adopt structured public reporting norms, including regular publication of performance data, anonymised disciplinary outcomes, and clear explanations of major constitutional decisions. Strategic communication, grounded in transparency rather than advocacy, is essential to sustaining legitimacy during reform.

Equity, Inclusion, and Access to Justice

 EXPAND ACCESS	 ENHANCE REACH	 MEASURE IMPACT
Expand legal aid and e-access for rural, female, and marginalised litigants.	Integrate mobile access and court-community liaison officers.	Disaggregate KPIs by state, court type, and demographic group.

This is about fairness, reach, and legitimacy, not control or compliance.

Policy Recommendations

To strengthen judicial independence, enhance operational capacity, and restore public confidence in Nigeria's justice system, the following measures are recommended. These recommendations are sequential, not merely cumulative. Their effectiveness depends on strict adherence to enforcement, funding predictability, and procedural discipline.

1. Transparent, Time-Bound Appointments

Mandate the publication of National Judicial Council (NJC) shortlists, scoring criteria, and a 21-day public comment period for all superior-court vacancies. Require the National Assembly to confirm only NJC-vetted nominees. This approach would institutionalise merit-based selection and limit political interference, ensuring appointments are transparent and accountable.

2. Ring-Fenced Judiciary Fund

Transform statutory transfers into a protected, multi-year Judiciary Fund with automatic quarterly releases linked to publicly reported performance metrics and subject to independent parliamentary audit. By insulating funding from executive influence, this mechanism would provide predictable resources, enabling sustained operational improvements.

3. Codified Removal and Disciplinary Procedures

Institute a mandatory NJC recommendation process before any investigation, suspension, or removal of judges. Establish a transparent investigatory timeline and an independent appeals tribunal to uphold due process and prevent politically motivated actions against the judiciary.

4. Targeted Capacity Enhancement

Rapidly deploy surge appellate benches, specialist commercial divisions, and a national digital case-management and e-filing system, initially piloted in high-caseload states. Funding through the Judiciary Fund would address backlogs, improve case disposition times, and modernise court operations for greater efficiency.

Conclusion: From Formal Independence to Effective Justice

Nigeria's judiciary remains central to democratic consolidation, yet constitutional guarantees of independence have not consistently translated into institutional practice. Persistent case backlogs, opaque appointment and disciplinary processes, and fiscal vulnerability have eroded public confidence and limited the judiciary's capacity to act as an effective check on political power.

Three interrelated constraints underpin this fragility. First, operational capacity is strained: excessive caseloads and procedural delays reduce the remedial value of judgments and impose economic and social costs. Second, institutional leverage persists, as recent budgetary increases—including the 2024 rise in statutory transfers—have not yielded predictable, ring-fenced, multi-year financing or timely disbursements sufficient for strategic planning or insulation from executive pressure. Third, procedural weaknesses in appointments and removals, exemplified by events such as the 2019 suspension of the Chief Justice, illustrate how ad hoc or politicised processes undermine judicial independence.

This brief proposes a focused, implementable reform agenda: transparent, time-bound appointment processes; a protected, multi-year Judiciary Fund with independent audit; codified disciplinary and removal procedures; and targeted capacity enhancements, including surge benches, specialist divisions, and ICT-enabled case management. Complementary efforts to strengthen public legitimacy and equity are vital to converting institutional reform into lasting trust.

Ultimately, Nigeria's challenge is not the absence of constitutional safeguards, but the persistence of discretionary power unchecked by enforcement. Without binding limits on executive influence over funding, appointments, and discipline, judicial reform will remain cosmetic—visible in statutes and budgets, absent in practice. Democratic consolidation depends on a judiciary that is not only independent in law, but insulated in fact, operationally capable, fiscally secure, and governed by transparent, rule-bound procedures.





President Tinubu Inaugurates Bodo–Bonny Road

President Bola Tinubu on 8 December 2025 temporarily opened the 37.9-kilometre Bodo–Bonny Road for public use, offering significant relief to residents who for decades have relied on hazardous river crossings and costly helicopter trips. The project, undertaken by Julius Berger, began in 2017 and is now almost 91 per cent complete. Speaking through the Minister of Works, Dave Umahi, Tinubu hailed the road as a major achievement of his Renewed Hope Agenda and a long-cherished aspiration for both the Bonny and Bodo communities.

Only light vehicles are permitted to use the road between 7 am and 7 pm, while heavy trucks and motorcycles remain prohibited until its full completion, expected in March 2026.

<https://guardian.ng/news/tinubu-opens-bodo-bonny-road-ending-decades-of-river-crossings-expensive-helicopter-transport/>

Senate Approves Nigeria's Troop Deployment to Benin

The Senate on 9 December approved President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's request to deploy Nigerian troops to the Republic of Benin on a peace mission aimed at restoring democratic order. The decision followed a plenary review of the President's letter, which stated that Benin had recently faced an attempted coup and

urgently required external assistance. Tinubu noted that Nigerian forces had already been dispatched on Sunday to help stabilise the situation.

Citing the Constitution and consultations with the National Defence Council, the President sought Senate consent, highlighting Benin's formal request for immediate air support. The Senate, recognising Nigeria's close ties with Benin and the collective security commitments within ECOWAS, subsequently granted approval.

<https://thenationonlineng.net/just-in-senate-approves-tinubus-request-to-deploy-troops-to-benin-for-peace-mission/amp/>



Riley Moore Calls for Global Action on Nigeria's Displacement Crisis

United States Congressman Riley Moore has called on the international community to intensify its response to Nigeria's escalating displacement crisis following his visit to several internally displaced persons (IDP) camps in Benue State. Moore, who toured the camps earlier this week, said he heard harrowing accounts from survivors of violent attacks that wiped out entire families.

Writing on X on 10 December, he described meeting a woman who witnessed the murder of her husband and five children, another whose unborn child was taken from her womb, and a man whose relatives were hacked to death as he fled with life-changing injuries.

According to Moore, more than 600,000 displaced Christians currently reside in camps across Benue, a state long

afflicted by cycles of violence involving armed groups and farming communities. During his visit, he also met with Catholic leaders, including the Bishops of Makurdi and Katsina-Ala, as well as Tiv traditional ruler James Ioruzo, to discuss the worsening humanitarian and security situation.

<https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/841924-us-congressman-visits-benue-urges-global-response-to-displacement-crisis.html>

Rivers Governor Fubara Defects From PDP to APC

Rivers State Governor Siminalayi Fubara on December 9 defected from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC). He announced the move during a stakeholders' meeting at the Government House in Port Harcourt on Tuesday.

Fubara stated that the decision was necessary to openly support President Bola Tinubu, adding that all his supporters would also be joining the APC. His defection came a day after he visited the President at the State House in Abuja.

The governor's switch follows months of political tension in Rivers State. Earlier this year, President Tinubu declared a state of emergency, suspended the governor and lawmakers, and appointed an administrator to restore order. Fubara later returned to office and embraced reconciliation to stabilise the state.

<https://punchng.com/just-in-fubara-defects-to-apc/>





Violent Coup Attempt in Benin Foiled

A violent coup attempt in Benin on December 7 was an attempt to destabilise the country's thriving democracy. The mutineers, after being repelled from the presidential residence by the Republican Guard, seized the national television station, where they declared the impeachment of President Patrice Talon and announced the formation of a Military Committee for Refoundation (CMR) led by Lieutenant Colonel Tigri Pascal. Loyalist forces quickly regained control. The rebels retreated to the Togbin base with armoured vehicles, but were neutralised by precision air strikes conducted by the Nigerian Air Force, avoiding a ground assault in a densely populated area. The base was subsequently secured by the ECOWAS standby force, including Nigerian troops and a special unit from Côte d'Ivoire.

<https://fr.apanews.net/news/benin-la-cedecao-salue-le-retour-au-calme-apres-lechec-du-putsch/>

Chadian Judiciary Faces Fresh Magistrate Suspensions Amid Reform Drive

The Chadian judiciary has been unsettled by a series of magistrate suspensions, including three more on Monday.

By a new order signed on December 8, the Minister of Justice, Dr Youssouf Tom, suspended three magistrates

for a period of three months. They are Adam Mbodoum Adam, Ibrahim Abbo Abakar, and Mahamat Ibrahim Issa, all advisors at the Court of Appeal of N'Djamena.

As with the previous suspensions, the Minister of Justice cited their failure to fulfil the duties of their office. The decision, welcomed by judicial actors, forms part of the Ministry of Justice's efforts to strengthen discipline, ethics, and transparency within the Chadian judiciary, in line with existing regulations and ongoing institutional reforms.

<https://fr.apanews.net/news/tchad-trois-nouveaux-magistrats-suspendus/>

Cameroonians Shift from Calls and SMS to Internet Messaging Services

Cameroonians are increasingly abandoning traditional calls and SMS in favour of internet-based communication, according to the Telecommunications Regulatory Agency (ART). The regulator's latest report indicates that the use of classic GSM calls and text messages has declined by 14 per cent, as more subscribers turn to over-the-top (OTT) services such as WhatsApp and Messenger. ART notes that the trend corresponds with a steady rise in active internet subscriptions nationwide.

On the streets of Douala, many users say traditional calls and SMS are gradually becoming obsolete, with cost cited as the main reason for the shift.

"When I make a WhatsApp call, I'm not worried my air-time will run out. It uses megabytes and is cheaper. With traditional calls, you have to rush what you're saying, even when you have a bundle," one user explained.

<https://cameroonnewsagency.com/cameroonians-turn-to-internet-calls-as-traditional-gsm-usage-drops/>

Niger, Nigeria Finalise Accord on Border Demarcation, Security Cooperation

Nigeria and Niger Strengthen Border Demarcation and Security Cooperation

Nigeria and the Republic of Niger have formalised a strategic agreement to advance the re-demarcation of their shared boundary and enhance security coordination, following a high-level session of the Joint Standing Committee of Experts (JSC) in Zinder from 8 to 10 December 2025.

The decision was announced in a statement released on Thursday. Officials reviewed progress on the ongoing demarcation exercise, adopted the technical report on recent work, and outlined a new programme of activities for the 2025/2026 cycle. The meeting confirmed the construction and assessment of several intermediate boundary pillars and set priorities to complete outstanding tasks, including joint inspection missions and additional pillar construction.

The accord places strong emphasis on improved cross-border engagement and strengthened security cooperation to reinforce peace, stability, and socio-economic development in border communities.

Delegates proposed enhancing local cross-border workshops, joint socio-cultural activities, infrastructure upgrades, and a bolstered security presence. Plans were also advanced for a Cross-Border Security Meeting in early 2026 to address emerging threats, with both sides reaffirming their commitment to peaceful relations and deeper bilateral collaboration.

<https://medafricatimes.com/43311-nigeria-and-niger-seal-accord-on-border-demarcation-and-security-collaboration.html>

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