

# VOICES FOR JUSTICE:

A Civic Lens on Nigeria's Judicial System"

Documenting Public Experiences, Opinions, & Reform Demands

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### PREFACE / BACKGROUND

his edition of the Leadership Approval Rating (LAR) report focuses on one of the most critical institutions in any democratic society - the judiciary. As the final arbiter of justice, and the constitutional guardian of rights and liberties, the judiciary plays a pivotal role in safeguarding democracy and holding power to account. However, the credibility of the Nigerian judiciary, long strained by allegations of corruption, inefficiency, and political interference, has increasingly become a subject of national discourse and concern.

This survey seeks to provide empirical insight into how ordinary Nigerians perceive the administration of justice in the country. It is a continuation of the LAR's tradition of generating citizen-driven feedback on governance across different sectors. At its core, this report is not merely a collection of statistics, but a reflection of the lived experiences, frustrations, and expectations of the Nigerian people as they engage with - or are excluded from - judicial processes.

The LAR is an initiative of the Human and Environmental Development Agenda (HEDA Resource Centre) and is grounded in the belief that public accountability must be informed by public perception. When citizens are asked what they think of their courts, their answers matter - not only as a gauge of confidence, but as a mirror held up to those who wield judicial power.

This particular edition was undertaken against the backdrop of growing questions about the impartiality and integrity of the bench, the conduct of legal practitioners, and the capacity of the judiciary to resist the pressures of political power and economic influence. It also examines how well the judiciary upholds human rights, particularly in the context of its interaction with law enforcement agencies.

The survey instrument was developed by HEDA Resource Centre (www.hedang.org), and data was collected through a national network of trained field officers. Respondents were drawn from across Nigeria's 36 states and the FCT, giving voice to perspectives that are both diverse and reflective of a broad national sentiment.

It is our hope that this report will contribute meaningfully to ongoing efforts to restore faith in the judiciary, and that it will be used by reformers within and outside the system as a tool for reflection and redirection. Indeed, if the judiciary must command the respect it requires to function effectively, then its legitimacy must rest not only on the letter of the law, but on the trust of the people.

#### Olanrewaju Suraju

Chairman, HEDA Resource Centre.



### **SUMMARY OF KEY INSIGHT**

This report presents a nationwide analysis of public perception regarding the Nigerian judiciary, built on responses from 1,357 participants across all 36 states and the FCT. The findings reveal widespread concerns over judicial accessibility, corruption, political interference, and the erosion of human rights protections.

#### **Demographic Reach**

- Age: 57% of respondents were aged 18–35, reflecting strong youth engagement.
- **Gender**: Fairly balanced 53.9% male, 46.1% female.
- Coverage: Every Nigerian state had over 30 responses; Yobe State had over 50.

#### **Access to Justice**

- 80% had never interacted with the courts.
- Only 12.6% rated courts as highly accessible, while 36.5% rated accessibility very low.
- Legal visits to courts were mostly for documents (affidavits, agreements) and disputes (land, marital, rights).

#### **Corruption Perceptions**

- Among court users, 49% admitted to sorting court officials.
- 65.4% rate judicial corruption as high or extremely high.
- Only 42.3% believe court decisions are made on merit; delays and bias are key concerns.

#### Lawyers & Judges

- 64% believe lawyers contribute to judicial corruption.
- Only 29% consider judges impartial.
- 55% believe lawyers promote justice, but 45% disagree.
- 62% feel judges are not upholding the principle of being "heard and not seen."

#### **Political Influence**

- 63.4% say political/high-profile cases expose judges to corruption.
- Political, financial crimes, land, and human rights cases are most vulnerable to undue influence.
- 48.9% say political cases get prioritized, causing delay for other matters.



#### Judicial Independence & Oversight

- 59% say financial autonomy moderately boosts judicial independence.
- Only 17% trust the National Judicial Council (NJC) to discipline erring judges.
- Over 70% are unaware of reporting channels for corruption or misconduct.

#### **Human Rights & Law Enforcement**

- 60% say courts enable police abuse and impose rights-violating bail conditions.
- Major recommendations include strict judicial oversight, enforcement of constitutional rights, and prosecution of abusive officers.

#### Media & Public Awareness

- While courts and corruption cases are reported regularly, only about **half** of respondents say these stories reach the general public consistently.
- Only 9% of Nigerians actively follow NJC-related news.

#### **Public Recommendations**

Key reform suggestions include:

- Full judicial autonomy & transparent appointments
- Better salaries & security for judges
- Strong anti-corruption mechanisms
- Use of **technology** for transparency (e.g., live-streams, body cams etc during court sessions)
- Public awareness campaigns & legal education
- Creation of special human rights courts

### INTRODUCTION

This report presents a detailed and insightful analysis of the judicial system in Nigeria based on survey responses. It explores citizens' experiences with the courts, access to justice, judicial corruption, political interference, judicial oversight, and the role of the media. The narratives provide a structured account of public perceptions, backed by survey data, to illuminate the realities of Nigeria's judiciary.

#### **Survey Methodology**

This report is grounded in a structured and methodologically sound public perception survey conducted by the Human and Environmental Development Agenda (HEDA Resource Centre). The objective was to gather reliable insights into the views of Nigerians on the state of the judiciary, particularly regarding transparency, corruption, access to justice, and judicial independence.

#### **Development of Research Instrument**

The research tool - comprising both structured and open-ended questions - was designed by HEDA Resource Centre. It was crafted to ensure comprehensiveness, neutrality, and sensitivity to the nuances of judicial engagement and governance. The questionnaire underwent internal review and pilot testing to validate clarity, cultural appropriateness, and relevance.

#### Fieldwork Execution

The data collection was carried out between 13 - 19 February 2025 by a nationwide network of trained field administrators who are part of HEDA's community-based volunteer structure. These administrators were equipped to ensure ethical conduct, informed consent, and accurate documentation of responses across diverse contexts.

#### **Target Population**

The survey targeted adult Nigerians (aged 18 and above) residing in various communities across all 36 States of Nigeria, including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Respondents were drawn from urban and rural areas to ensure broad representation..

#### Sample Size

A total of 1,357 respondents participated in the survey. The sample size was statistically determined to balance national coverage and demographic representation, while ensuring sufficient data for credible analysis.

#### **Sampling Method**

The survey employed a simple random sampling technique. This method gave every adult Nigerian within the target population an equal chance of being selected, regardless of age, gender, location, or socio-economic background. This approach helped to minimize selection bias and ensured that the findings reflect the general opinions of the wider population. The sample was drawn from across all 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), allowing for a balanced national representation.

#### **Survey Mode**

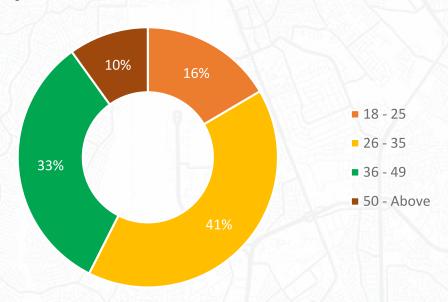
The survey was administered in person, using paper and/or digital questionnaires. Field officers engaged directly with respondents in their communities, enabling clarification of questions when necessary and reducing the risk of misinterpretation.

Therefore, this methodology was designed to produce data that is statistically robust, geographically inclusive, and reflective of Nigeria's socio-political diversity, thereby offering valuable insight into how the Nigerian judiciary is viewed by the citizens it serves.

#### **Demographic Information**

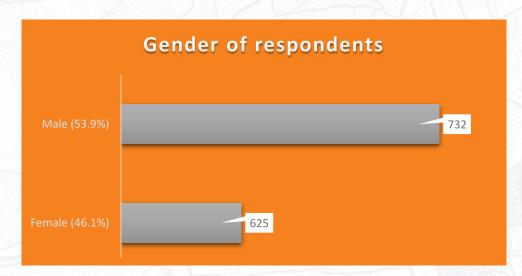
Understanding the demographic composition of survey respondents is crucial to ensuring the findings are representative of the broader population. This section outlines the demographic composition of survey respondents, ensuring representation across age, gender, and geographical location.

#### 1. Age of respondents



The survey captured responses from 1,357 individuals across Nigeria, ensuring a diverse representation of voices. Youth between 18 and 35 years formed the majority at 57%, while 33% fell within the 36–49 age bracket. Only 10% of respondents were aged 50 and above, reflecting the participation of all age groups.

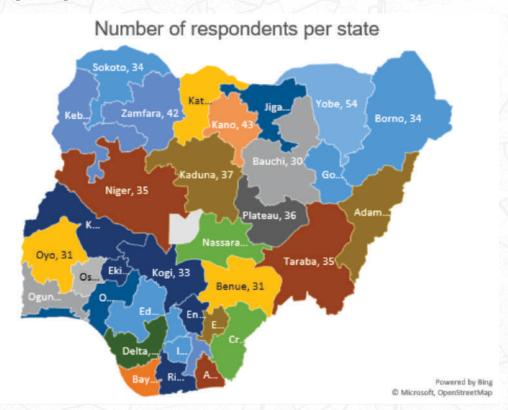
#### 2. Gender of respondents



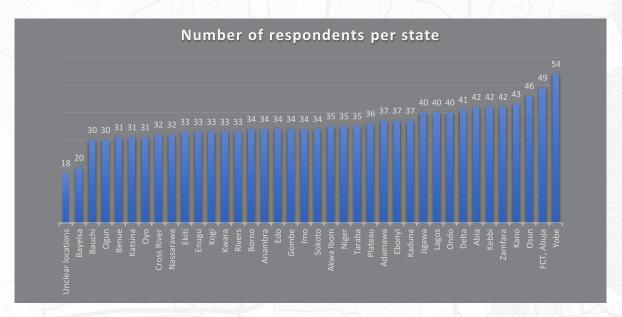
Gender distribution was fairly balanced, with 53.9% male and 46.1% female respondents. This near-equal representation ensures that perspectives from both genders are adequately captured in the findings.



#### 4. Geographical spread



Respondents were spread across all 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, covering all 774 local government areas. The wide distribution of responses enhances the credibility of the survey as a reflection of national sentiment.



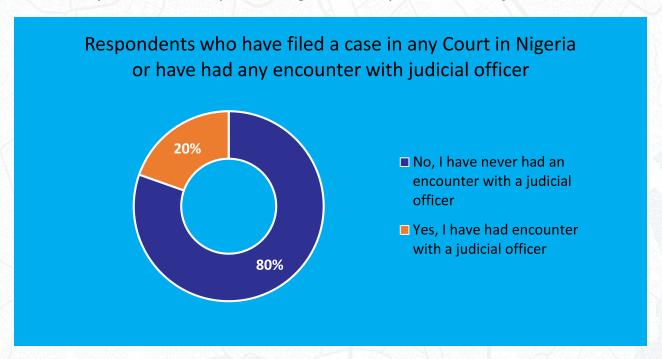
Yobe State has over 50 respondents; 10 others have over 40 respondents; 25 states have over 30 respondents; only Bayelsa has 20 respondents while some 18 respondents indicated locations which were unclear. In effect, 36 states including the FCT have over 30 respondents spread across at least seven local governments within the states.



#### **Court Experience and Access to Justice**

This section explores respondents' interactions with Nigerian courts, the nature of their legal engagements, and their perceptions of judicial accessibility.

#### 4. Have you filed a case in any Court in Nigeria or had any encounter with a judicial officer?



A staggering 80% of respondents reported never having any encounter with the courts or judicial officials. Among the 20% who had, most sought legal documentation, such as affidavits, name changes, and agreements. Others engaged in legal proceedings related to land disputes, tenancy issues, marital conflicts, and fundamental human rights cases.



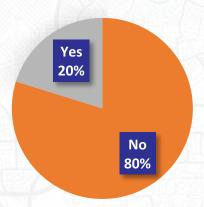
#### 5. If yes, what did you do in the court?



Respondents who indicated that they have visited the court did so for various reasons, including filing cases, defending against lawsuits, and executing legal documents. Cases ranged from civil disputes, tenancy issues, and fraud allegations to more complex matters such as inheritance, child custody, and criminal proceedings

6. Have you had an opportunity to appear before a Magistrate or Judge in a Nigerian Court?

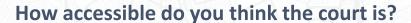
Whether respondent had appeared before a Magistrate or Judge in a Nigeria Court

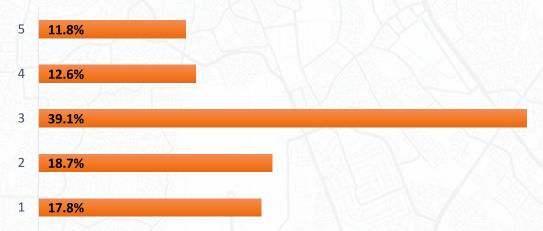


The percentage of those who appeared before a judge or magistrate closely mirrored those who had court experiences, with 20% confirming such appearances. This underscores the relatively low direct engagement of citizens with the judiciary.



#### 7. How accessible do you think the court is?



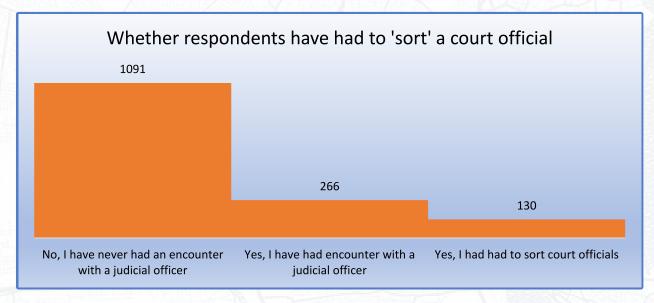


When asked to rate court accessibility on a scale of 1 to 5, most respondents leaned towards the lower end, with 18.7% rating it '2,' and 17.8% gave it the lowest score of '1.' Only 11.8% found the courts highly accessible, highlighting concerns about barriers to justice.

#### Corruption in the Judiciary

Corruption remains a pervasive concern within the Nigerian judiciary. This section explores public perceptions about the involvement of legal practitioners in fostering corruption within the system, reflecting a growing demand for integrity and ethical reforms.

8. Did you have to "sort" any official of the Court before you were attended to or able to access any service on time?



Among the 266 respondents who had direct encounters with court officials, nearly half (49%) admitted to having to "sort" officials to expedite services. This underscores a deep-seated issue where court accessibility often depends on unofficial payments.

In the context of this report, the term "sorting" is widely used by respondents to describe unofficial payments or bribes made to court officials in exchange for expedited services or favorable treatment. While often framed informally, "sorting" reflects a broader challenge of systemic corruption within the judiciary, where accessing justice may depend on one's ability to navigate unofficial channels.

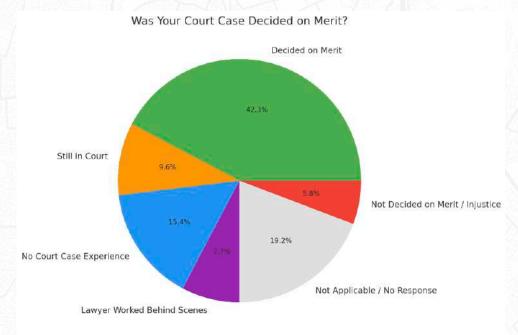
#### 9. If yes, what is your personal experience?



Respondents were asked to narrate in short open-ended paragraphs, their experiences with the judicial workers. Respondents detailed various experiences, including bribery, procedural delays, and unfair rulings. Many felt that justice favours those who can afford to pay, while others lamented bureaucratic inefficiencies and unprofessional conduct by judicial staff. Their responses are summarised below:

- <u>Corruption & Bribery</u> Many respondents reported having to pay bribes or "extra" fees to court officials for services that should be free or already covered by official charges.
- <u>Delays & Bureaucracy</u> Several people mentioned long wait times, unnecessary adjournments, and procedural bottlenecks.
- <u>Justice & Fairness Issues</u> Some felt that justice is only accessible to those who can pay, making it difficult for the poor to get fair treatment.
- <u>Mixed Customer Service</u> While some encountered polite and helpful officials, others described unprofessionalism, nonchalance, and outright extortion.
- <u>Positive Experiences</u> A small number of respondents reported smooth and efficient services, particularly those familiar with court procedures.

#### 10. Fairness of Decision



Although 42.3% claimed their cases were decided on merit, a significant portion acknowledged that judicial outcomes were influenced by behind-the-scenes manoeuvres, raising concerns about fairness in case adjudication. Another implication is that, the corruption in the judiciary may not always be about the merit of the decision but about the long delays of justice, having to sort officials to get service or justice and similar issues.

#### 11. How high is corruption in the judiciary from your experience?



The dataset paints a troubling picture of corruption within the Nigerian judiciary. When respondents were asked about their experience with judicial corruption, a significant 36.3% described it as "high," while another 29.1% labeled it as "extremely high." This means that nearly two-thirds (65.4%) of those surveyed believe corruption is rampant in the judiciary.

Meanwhile, 26.5% of respondents rated judicial corruption as "moderate," indicating that while they acknowledge its presence, they do not see it as overwhelming. However, only a meager 8.2% believe corruption in the judiciary is "low," underscoring the rarity of encounters with an entirely clean judicial system.

These findings suggest that corruption is deeply entrenched in Nigeria's judiciary, with most people perceiving it as a major obstacle to justice. From bribery to undue influence in rulings, the survey highlights a judiciary that is struggling with integrity.

#### 12. Do you think political and high-profile corruption cases expose Nigerian judges to corruption?



The survey findings confirm a prevailing concern: political and high-profile corruption cases significantly expose Nigerian judges to corruption. A staggering 63.4% of respondents firmly believe that these types of cases make judges vulnerable to undue influence.

Meanwhile, 25.9% of participants expressed uncertainty, suggesting that while they acknowledge the possibility of judicial corruption in such cases, they are either unaware of concrete instances or unsure of its extent.

Only 10.8% of respondents dismissed the notion that political and high-profile corruption cases expose judges to corruption, indicating a small minority who trust the judiciary's ability to remain independent despite external pressures.

The overwhelming majority opinion underscores the need for urgent reforms to insulate the judiciary from political interference. High-stakes cases—especially those involving politicians, government officials, and major financial crimes—often attract intense pressure, both from powerful individuals seeking favorable rulings and from the public demanding accountability.



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#### 13. What other types of cases expose Nigerian judges to corruption



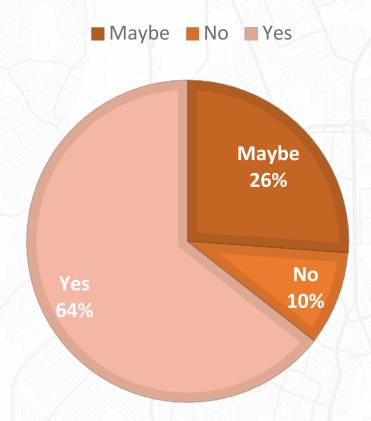
Judicial corruption in Nigeria is often linked to specific types of cases where undue influence, bribery, and political pressure are most prevalent. Survey responses identified several categories of cases that frequently expose judges to corruption, ranging from political disputes to high-profile financial crimes. Below are the key case types most associated with judicial compromise:

- **Political and election-related cases** were the most cited as exposing judges to corruption, particularly election petitions, electoral disputes, and cases involving politicians.
- **High-profile financial and criminal cases**, including money laundering, fraud, cybercrime, drug trafficking, and violent crimes involving influential individuals, were frequently mentioned.
- Land and property disputes, such as community land conflicts, real estate battles, inheritance cases, and chieftaincy disputes, were identified as highly prone to corruption.
- **Human rights and law enforcement cases**, including police brutality, extrajudicial killings, and government suppression of critics, were noted as areas where judicial compromise occurs.
- Cases involving wealthy and influential individuals, such as business disputes and conflicts between the rich and poor, were seen as major sources of judicial bias and bribery.
- **Corruption and bribery cases**, particularly those related to public fund embezzlement, government-related financial crimes, and judicial bribery in high-stakes trials, were frequently highlighted.

Overall, political and election-related cases stood out as the most frequently mentioned, followed by high-profile financial crimes and land disputes, with human rights, corporate fraud, and gender-based violence cases also noted but less frequently.

#### 14. Do you think lawyers contribute to corruption in the judiciary?

# DO YOU THINK LAWYERS CONTRIBUTE TO CORRUPTION IN THE JUDICIARY?

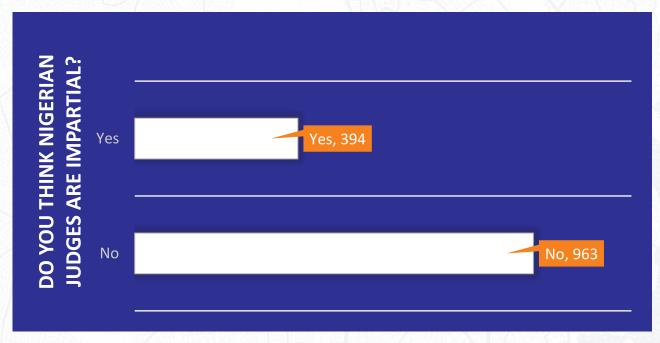


The survey reveals that a significant majority of Nigerians—64%—believe that lawyers contribute to corruption in the judiciary. An additional 26% were uncertain, responding with "maybe," while only 10% disagreed. This finding highlights a widespread perception that legal practitioners, who should serve as custodians of justice, are instead seen as enablers of unethical practices within the judicial system.

#### Judicial Independence and Political Interference

The independence of the judiciary is a cornerstone of democracy and the rule of law. This section evaluates public opinion on whether Nigerian judges are impartial, the impact of financial autonomy on the judiciary's independence, and the extent of political interference in judicial operations.

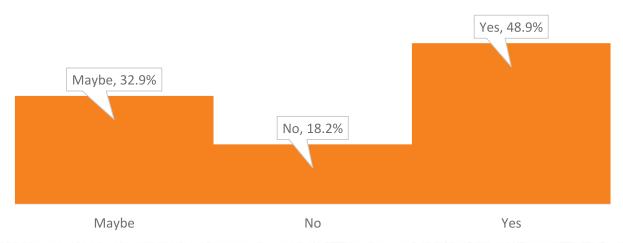
#### 15. Do you think Nigerian judges are impartial?



Only 29% of respondents believe that Nigerian judges are impartial, while 71% think otherwise. This lack of confidence in judicial neutrality is a troubling indictment on the judiciary's perceived vulnerability to influence and bias.

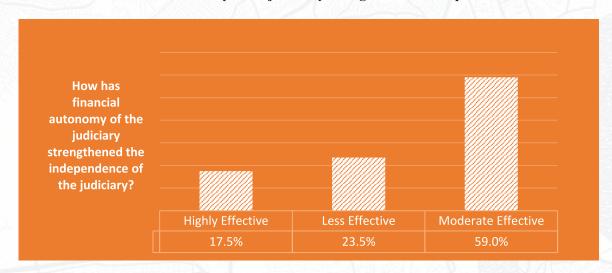
### 16. Do you think Nigerian judges give more importance to political cases and neglect other cases to suffer long adjournments?

Do you think Nigeria judges give more importance to political cases and neglect other cases to suffer long adjournment?



About half of the respondents (48.9%) think that judges prioritize political cases. Another 32.9% indicated "maybe," suggesting that they also think that it happens that judges prioritise political case but the respondents may just not be sure. These views add up to underscores a broader concern that political interests may be dictating the court's schedule, to the detriment of ordinary citizens seeking justice, thereby resulting in long adjournments for other matters.

#### 17. How has the financial autonomy of the judiciary strengthened its independence?



More than half of the respondents - 59% - believe that financial autonomy has been moderately effective in strengthening the judiciary's independence. Another 17.5% consider it highly effective. However, about a quarter of the sample - 23.5% - remain unconvinced, indicating that while autonomy is a step forward, it is not sufficient on its own to guarantee impartiality and integrity.

#### 18. How else do you think the judiciary can be protected from political interference?



Respondents offered robust recommendations for insulating the judiciary from political control. Dominant suggestions include judicial autonomy, financial independence, and merit-based appointments, all aimed at curbing political patronage. The call for transparent selection processes and tenure security for judges was loud, along with demands for better salaries to reduce vulnerability to corruption. Equally emphasized were strict accountability mechanisms and legal protections for whistleblowers. Less dominant but noteworthy ideas included judicial oversight bodies, civil society engagement, legal reforms, livestreaming proceedings for transparency, and international collaboration.

These recommendations can be grouped into dominant and less dominant ones. The most prominent terms reflect the dominant recommendations, such as judicial autonomy, financial independence, merit-based appointments, security of tenure, and accountability.

#### **Dominant Recommendations (Most Mentioned)**

#### A. Judicial Autonomy and Independence

- Grant full autonomy to the judiciary, ensuring it operates independently from the executive and legislature.
- Strengthen separation of powers to prevent undue political influence.
- Ensure financial independence by allowing the judiciary to control its budget without executive interference.

## **B.** Transparent and Merit-Based Appointment Process

- Judges should be appointed based on merit, experience, and integrity, not political connections.
- The National Judicial Council (NJC) or an independent judicial body should handle appointments instead of political officeholders.

• Chief judges should not be appointed by the president or governors.

#### C. Security of Tenure and Protection for Judges

- Judges should have security of tenure, ensuring they cannot be removed arbitrarily.
- There should be strict laws against politically motivated dismissals.
- Provide adequate security for judges and their families to protect them from political threats.

#### D. Increased Salaries and Welfare Packages

- Better wages, benefits, and allowances for judges to reduce susceptibility to bribery and political pressure.
- Judiciary staff should receive incentives to enhance their independence.

### E. Strict Accountability and Anti-Corruption Measures

- Strict disciplinary actions against corrupt judges.
- Regular audits and public accountability measures.
- Strengthen whistleblower protection for reporting judicial corruption.

## Less Dominant Recommendations (Less Frequently Mentioned)

#### A. Judicial Oversight and Monitoring

- Establish an independent judicial regulatory body to oversee the judiciary.
- Frequent audits and financial scrutiny to detect corruption.

#### B. Public and Civil Society Engagement

- Raising awareness on the role of the judiciary in democracy.
- Encourage media and civil society watchdogs to monitor judicial activities.

#### C. Legal and Constitutional Reforms

- Amend the 1999 Constitution to guarantee true judicial independence.
- Implement stricter laws preventing executive influence over the judiciary.

#### D. Technological and Structural Reforms

- Live-stream court proceedings to ensure transparency.
- Introduce automated case assignments to prevent manipulation of judges handling political cases.

#### E. International Support and Oversight

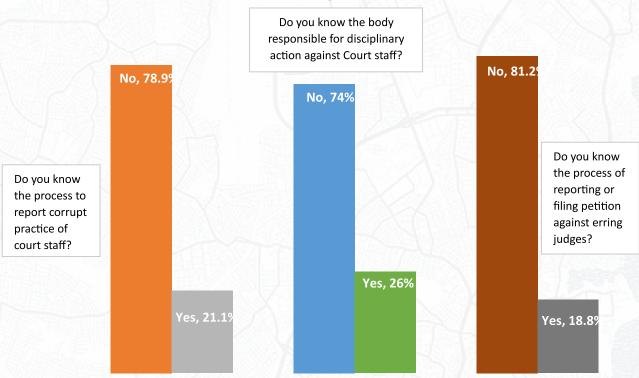
- Collaborate with international legal bodies to uphold best practices.
- Participate in global judicial independence rankings for evaluation.

#### Judicial Oversight and Accountability

For any justice system to maintain legitimacy, it must not only be independent but also accountable. This section examines public awareness of disciplinary bodies, procedures for reporting misconduct, and the perceived effectiveness of the National Judicial Council (NJC).

#### 19. Level of people's awareness

# Level of people's awareness of judicial oversight and accountability framework

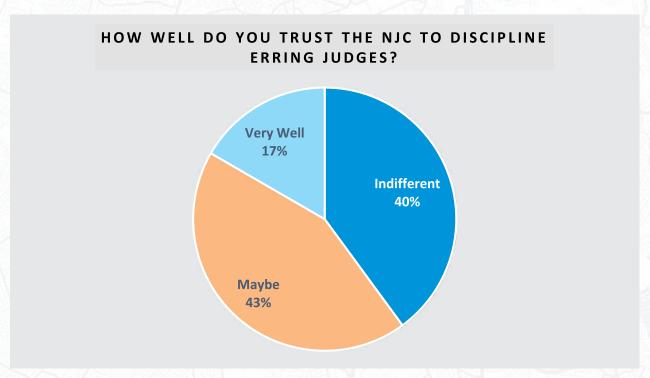


Do you know the body responsible for disciplinary action against court staff? Respondents were asked. Only 21.1% of respondents said they know the responsible body, while 78.9% admitted ignorance. This gap reflects a pressing need for public education on judicial oversight mechanisms.

Again, respondents were asked: do you know the process to report corrupt practices of court staff? Just 26% of respondents are aware of the reporting process, while 74% are not. The lack of awareness serves as a significant barrier to transparency and accountability within the judiciary.

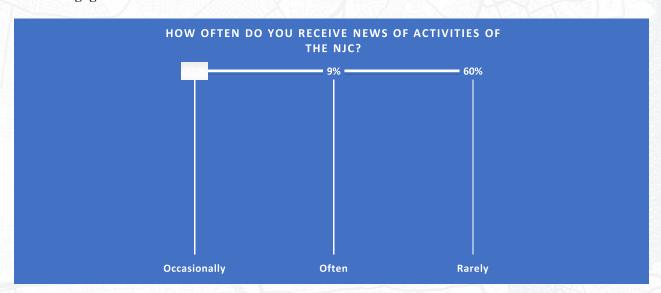
Do you know the process of reporting or filing petition against erring judges? Again, public knowledge is low—only 18.8% understand the process, while 81.2% do not. This suggests that even when judicial misconduct occurs, many Nigerians lack the knowledge to act on it.

20. How well do you trust the National Judicial Council (NJC) to discipline erring judges?



Only 17% of respondents trust the NJC, while a majority - 83% - are either indifferent or unsure. This widespread distrust indicates a credibility crisis that the NJC must urgently address through transparent disciplinary actions, public engagement and critical reforms.

## 21. Is the National Judicial Council (NJC) doing enough to improve level of awareness and citizen engagement?

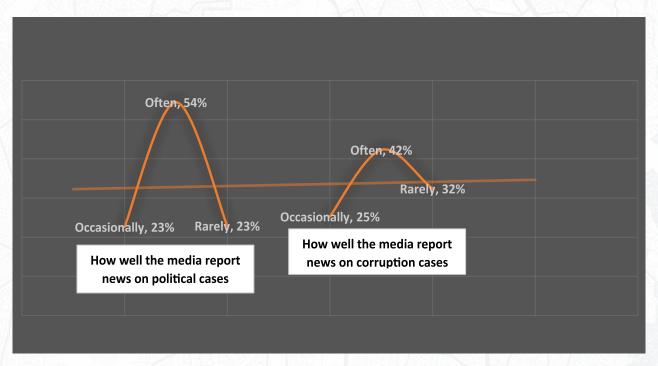


60% of the respondents rarely receive news relating to the NJC. Another 31% occasionally catch news about NJC. Only 9% are familiar with NJC news. This trend indicates a gross awareness gap, necessitating a strategic public awareness intervention by the NJC.

#### Role of the Media in Administration of Justice

The media plays a critical watchdog role in a democratic society, particularly in matters of justice and governance. This section explores public perception of how well the media reports on political and corruption cases.

#### 22. Media report on political cases Vs Media report on corruption cases

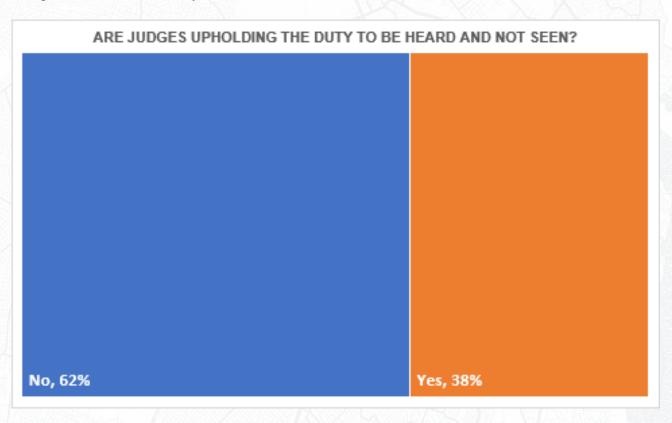


Respondents noted that media often report both political and corruption cases, although they report political cases more often. About a quarter of the respondents believe that the media occasionally report both political and corruption cases. Only 23% and 32% respectively think that the media rarely reports political and corruption cases. There is no fundamental discrepancy in the frequency of reporting for both political and corruption cases, thus suggesting that the media narrative for both type of cases is often. However, only about half of the respondents opine that the media often report these cases, this may indicate that perhaps only a section of the media which apply to a particular class of people have been reporting political and corruption cases more often.

#### A Vote on Legal Practitioners

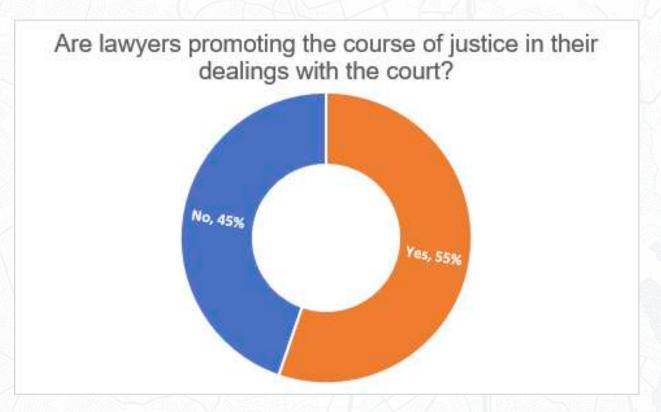
Legal practitioners are meant to be defenders of justice, but public perception suggests a complex, and at times, disappointing relationship between lawyers and the pursuit of fairness. This section captures how the public views the conduct of judges and lawyers.

23. "Judges can only be heard and not seen." Do you think judges are upholding this statement in the performance of their duty?



Only 38% believe judges are upholding the principle of being apolitical and silent outside the courtroom. The remaining 62% think otherwise, indicating concern over judges engaging in public or political controversies.

#### 24. Do you think lawyers are promoting the course of justice in their dealings with the court?



This chart highlights public sentiment regarding whether lawyers in Nigeria are actively promoting the course of justice in their interactions with the court. According to the data, 55% of respondents believe that lawyers are indeed contributing positively, suggesting that a majority still holds faith in the legal profession's role within the justice system.

However, a notable 45% of respondents disagree, indicating that nearly half of the population perceives a lack of integrity, fairness, or diligence among legal practitioners in court dealings. This significant split points to concerns about professionalism, ethics, or possible systemic corruption within legal practice.

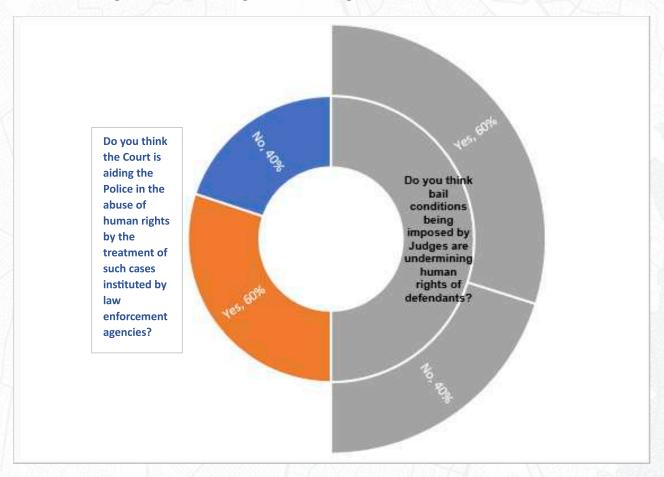
The chart reveals a critical trust gap—while more than half believe lawyers uphold justice, the near-equal opposition reflects growing demand for increased accountability, transparency, and reforms in legal conduct.



#### **Human Rights and Law Enforcement Agencies**

The interface between the judiciary, law enforcement, and human rights is critical to justice. This section investigates public sentiment on whether the courts protect or undermine human rights, especially in relation to police conduct.

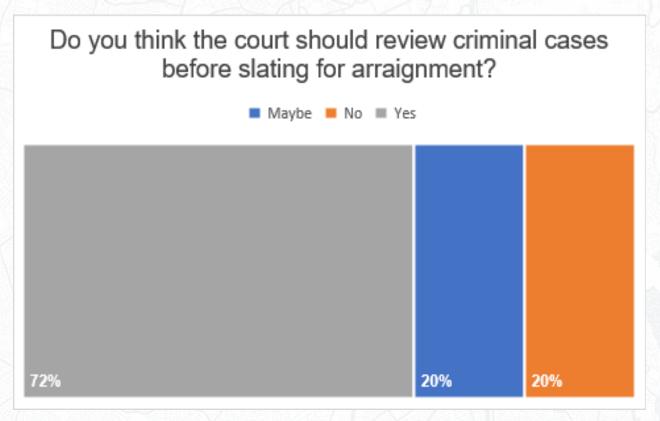
#### 25. Is the Nigerian Court for or Against Human Rights?



An alarming 60% of respondents think courts enable police abuses, compared to 40% who disagree. This strong sentiment signals a disturbing trend where courts are perceived as complicit in perpetuating impunity.

Again, exactly similar sentiments were shared on the question on bail conditions. Majority of the respondents – 60% - think that the bail conditions being imposed by the judges are undermining human rights of defendants. Only 40% think otherwise. This paints a grim picture of a judiciary seen as detached from the struggles of ordinary Nigerians seeking justice.

#### 26. Do you think the court should review criminal cases before slating them for arraignment?



The chart presents public opinion on whether the Nigerian judiciary should review criminal cases before they are slated for arraignment. An overwhelming 72% of respondents believe that yes, the courts should conduct such reviews, signalling strong public demand for preliminary judicial oversight. This perspective likely reflects concerns over wrongful arraignments, case backlog, and the efficiency of the criminal justice system.

Meanwhile, a significantly smaller portion of respondents—20%—expressed uncertainty ("Maybe"), and another 20% outright disagreed, indicating there is still some debate around the practicality or necessity of such a measure.

This result underscores a growing public interest in judicial reforms in Nigeria, particularly around pre-trial justice and due process, suggesting that enhancing case screening mechanisms could increase judicial efficiency and public trust in the legal system.

27. How do you think the Court can stop law enforcement agencies from abusing human rights and intimidating Nigerians?



In this regard, the most dominant recommendations from respondents reflect key terms such as judicial oversight, accountability, prosecution, human rights enforcement, and constitutional rights with the key point highlighted below:

#### **Dominant Recommendations (Most Mentioned)**

- Strict enforcement of constitutional rights to protect citizens from law enforcement abuses.
- Prosecution of law enforcement officers found guilty of human rights violations.
- Judicial oversight and accountability to monitor police actions and enforce compliance.
- Imposing strict sanctions and legal penalties on guilty officers and institutions.
- Ensuring judicial independence to prevent political interference in human rights cases.
- Raising public awareness and legal education to help citizens understand their rights.
- Monitoring detention centers and police operations to prevent unlawful arrests and abuse.

- Less Dominant Recommendations (Less Frequently Mentioned)
- Legislative reforms to clearly define penalties for human rights violations.
- Collaboration with civil society organizations to strengthen human rights monitoring.
- Using technology, such as body cameras and CCTV, to enhance law enforcement transparency.
- Encouraging whistleblowing by protecting those who report abuses.
- Creating special human rights courts to fast-track cases of abuse.
- Live-streaming court proceedings to build public trust in the judicial process.
- Providing free legal representation to victims of police brutality and unlawful detention.

