

Rawls and Selective Justice in Nigeria: A Philosophical Examination

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Abstract—This paper applies John Rawls' Theory of Justice to interrogate the persistent problem of selective justice in Nigeria, drawing on three recent incidents as revealing case studies. The first involves Adams Oshiomhole, who confronted airline staff, occupied the terminal entrance, and disrupted operations yet faced no formal punitive outcome. The second concerns Fuji music icon Wasiu Ayinde Adewale (Kwam 1), who obstructed an aircraft in a grave aviation safety breach but was initially subjected only to a six-month travel ban, later quietly lifted. The third case is that of Ms. Comfort Emmanson, who was handed a lifetime flight ban for alleged unruly behaviour – a sanction that was immediate, uncompromising, and absolute. While all three incidents involve breaches of legal or ethical norms, the starkly divergent institutional and legal responses reveal a justice system that consistently tilts in favour of the influential while applying swift and severe punishment to the less powerful. The paper asks: to what extent does Nigeria's justice system align with Rawls' conception of justice as fairness? How do privilege, social status, and political influence shape the uneven enforcement of justice? Analysed through the lens of Rawls' principles—particularly the veil of ignorance, the guarantee of equal basic rights, and the difference principle—these cases demonstrate a troubling departure from the ideal of "justice as fairness." Instead, Nigeria's current enforcement patterns evoke the ancient observation that laws ensnare the weak while allowing the strong to break free. By critically examining these disparities, the study seeks to illuminate pathways toward a more equitable and principled system of justice.

Keywords: Selective Justice; John Rawls; Justice as Fairness; Impartiality.

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INTRODUCTION

Justice has occupied a central place in philosophical reflection since antiquity, regarded as both a moral ideal and the foundation of a well-ordered society. For Plato, justice was harmony within the soul and the state, each part performing its proper role in accordance with reason (*Republic*, Book IV; Plato, trans. 1992). Aristotle conceived it as giving each person their due, distinguishing between distributive justice – allocating resources according to merit – and corrective justice – rectifying wrongs through fair adjudication (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Book V; Aristotle, trans. 2004). In the modern era, Thomas Hobbes tied justice to the keeping of covenants under a sovereign authority (Hobbes, 1651/2012), while John Locke linked it to the protection of natural rights to life, liberty, and property (Locke, 1689/1988). Immanuel Kant rooted justice in the categorical imperative, requiring that actions respect the autonomy and dignity of all rational beings (Kant, 1785/2012).

Despite their differences, these thinkers converge on certain essentials: justice demands impartiality, the fair distribution of benefits and burdens, and respect for the rights and dignity of individuals. It functions both as a guiding principle for governance and as a measure against which the legitimacy of laws and institutions is tested (Ayibam, 2025a).

African philosophers have also contributed rich perspectives on justice, often grounding it in communal values, restorative principles, and the interdependence of individual and collective well-being. Kwasi Wiredu (1996) emphasised consensual democracy and moral reciprocity, arguing that justice in African thought is inseparable from communal harmony and mutual responsibility. Mogobe Ramose (1999), interpreting *Ubuntu*, framed justice as the restoration of relationships and the affirmation of shared humanity, rather than merely the enforcement of abstract rules. Similarly, Ifeanyi Menkiti's (1984) communitarian philosophy holds that personhood and moral worth are realised through participation in the moral community, making justice both a personal and collective obligation. These African perspectives broaden the discourse, highlighting that fairness is not only about impartial procedures, but also about nurturing the social bonds that sustain human dignity.

Building on this tradition, John Rawls (1971) sought in the 20th century to offer a systematic account of justice suited to modern democratic societies. His conception of “justice as fairness” rests on two key principles: the equal liberty principle, which guarantees the same basic rights and freedoms for all citizens, and the difference principle, which permits social and economic inequalities only if they benefit the least advantaged members of society. Rawls' framework provides a powerful tool for assessing whether institutions operate in a manner consistent with fairness, making it especially apt for examining disparities in the administration of justice.

JOHN RAWLS'S THEORY OF JUSTICE

John Bordley Rawls (1921–2002) was an American moral and political philosopher whose work transformed twentieth-century debates on justice (Freeman, 2007). Born in Baltimore, Maryland, Rawls studied at Princeton University, where he was influenced by moral philosophy, theology, and later by thinkers such as Immanuel Kant, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Stuart Mill, David Hume, and Aristotle. Kant's insistence on treating persons as ends shaped Rawls's commitment to moral autonomy (Kant, 1785/1996); Rousseau's social contract informed his concern with political legitimacy (Rousseau, 1762/2012); Mill's liberalism inspired his defence of individual rights, even as he rejected utilitarianism's willingness to sacrifice the few for the many (Mill, 1859/2003). The insights of Hume and Aristotle deepened his understanding of human nature and moral virtues (Aristotle, 4th century BCE/2014; Hume, 1739–1740/2000), while contemporary philosophers like H. L. A. Hart and Isaiah Berlin helped refine his ideas on liberty and law (Hart, 1961; Berlin, 1969/2002).

After serving in the Second World War, Rawls returned to Princeton for his doctorate and went on to teach at Cornell, MIT, and Harvard University (Pogge, 2007). His thought developed in the context of post-war liberal democracy, the Cold War, and the civil rights movement – periods that heightened his concern with equality, legitimacy, and moral justification in public life. Rawls's magnum opus, *A Theory of Justice* (1971), articulated an alternative to utilitarianism that he called “justice as fairness.” At its core is the thought experiment of the original position, in which rational individuals, behind a veil of ignorance that conceals their personal traits and social position, choose principles to govern society (Rawls, 1971/1999; (Ayibam, 2025b; (Ayibam, 2025c). This device ensures impartiality, as no one can design rules to favour their own circumstances. From this, Rawls derives two key principles:

1. **The Equal Liberty Principle** – Each person has an equal right to the most extensive set of basic liberties compatible with the same liberties for all, including political participation, freedom of speech, conscience, and personal security.
2. **The Difference Principle** – Social and economic inequalities are acceptable only if they benefit everyone, especially the least advantaged, and provided there is fair equality of opportunity for all to attain positions of advantage.

Rawls assigns priority to the first principle, meaning basic liberties cannot be sacrificed for economic or social gain. His framework thus demands that political and legal institutions safeguard both liberty and fairness, and that inequalities serve to uplift rather than marginalise the disadvantaged (Ayibam, 2024a). Applied to contexts such as contemporary Nigeria, it becomes a powerful lens for questioning whether justice truly functions impartially, or whether it bends to shield the powerful while punishing the powerless.

SELECTIVE JUSTICE IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA: THE ADAMS OSHIOMHOLE, WASIU AYINDE, AND COMFORT EMMANSON INCIDENTS

Recently three unrelated incidents – one involving the former Governor of Edo State and ex–National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Adams Oshiomhole (June 11, 2025); another involving the celebrated Fuji musician Wasiu Ayinde Marshal (popularly known as Kwam 1) (August 5, 2025); and the third concerning a young woman, Ms. Comfort Emmanson (August 10, 2025)-together painted a troubling portrait of systemic inequality in Nigeria’s justice system.

The Adams Oshiomhole Airport Incident

Adams Oshiomhole, a highly influential political figure with a long career at the highest levels of Nigerian politics, was filmed in a heated verbal confrontation with immigration officials at a Nigerian airport. The footage, widely circulated on social media, appeared to show Oshiomhole obstructing or attempting to override established airport security and immigration procedures. Under Nigerian law, interference with the duties of security officials, especially at a sensitive national facility like an airport, can attract serious penalties, ranging from fines to arrest (Alemika, 2013). Yet, despite the public nature of the altercation, no official statement was issued by the airport authorities, the immigration service, or the police. No arrest was made, no formal investigation was announced, and no sanction of any kind was applied. Oshiomhole continued to attend political meetings and high-profile events, with the matter effectively erased from the public record except in the court of public opinion.

The Wasiu Ayinde (Kwam 1) Airport Incident

The Wasiu Ayinde (KWAM 1) airport incident took place on Tuesday, August 5, 2025, at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport in Abuja. The Fuji musician was scheduled to board a ValueJet flight to Lagos when he was stopped by aviation security officers for attempting to carry a flask containing liquid beyond the permitted limit. Reports indicated that he resisted instructions from both security personnel and the flight captain, leading to a confrontation. During the altercation, he allegedly spilled the liquid – believed by some to be alcohol – on an officer, although KWAM 1 later insisted it was only water he needed for medical reasons (Guardian Nigeria, 2025; Sahara Reporters, 2025). The situation escalated when he blocked the aircraft from taxiing, which forced authorities to intervene (ICIR Nigeria, 2025).

The Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) and the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) strongly condemned the act as a serious breach of aviation safety protocols. The NCAA went further by suspending the pilots who had attempted to proceed with the flight and placing KWAM 1 on a six-month no-fly list. They also petitioned the Attorney-General of the Federation and the Inspector-General of Police to

prosecute him, citing Section 459A of the Nigerian Criminal Code, which criminalises obstructing an aircraft in motion. Aviation Minister Festus Keyamo described the behaviour as “reprehensible,” stressing that the main issue was not the content of the flask but the dangerous act of physically blocking an aircraft (ICIR Nigeria, 2025; The Nation, 2025).

In response, KWAM 1 issued a public apology on August 8, 2025, expressing regret and clarifying that the flask contained only water for his health condition, not alcohol as alleged. He explained that the flask had been empty during security checks and was only refilled in the lounge, a claim he said could be verified with CCTV footage (The Nation, 2025; The Xpress, 2025). Despite the apology, the controversy sparked debate about the responsibilities of high-profile individuals in observing aviation rules and the strict enforcement of safety laws in Nigeria.

The Comfort Emmanson Ibom Air Ban

By contrast, the case of Ms. Comfort Emmanson, a woman in her twenties, unfolded with almost theatrical speed and severity. Accused of unruly conduct during an Ibom Air flight – an incident partially captured in short video clips showing her in a heated exchange with airline staff – she became the subject of swift corporate judgment. As passengers looked on, she was forcefully dragged out of the plane by security personnel, with her clothing dishevelled to the point of near nudity, a scene that quickly went viral online (People, 2025; ICIR Nigeria, 2025). Within hours of the plane’s landing, the story had spread across social media, fuelling public outrage, pity, and speculation. By the following morning, Ibom Air issued a formal public statement announcing that she had been placed under a lifetime ban from flying with the airline.

What made this action remarkable was not simply its severity, but the manner in which it was carried out: without a formal hearing, without affording her the opportunity to present her side of the story, and without the intervention of any regulatory oversight or judicial process. The sanction was not only total and permanent but also publicly humiliating, imposed on a young woman with no known history of similar misconduct. This disproportionate reaction highlights the uneven application of disciplinary measures in Nigeria’s aviation and public accountability space. Whereas other cases, particularly those involving prominent or powerful individuals, have been marked by hesitation, bureaucratic delay, or even quiet indulgence, Emmanson’s case became a spectacle of swift punishment. The rapidity with which corporate sanctions were imposed in her case reveals a troubling asymmetry: young, relatively powerless citizens are made examples of, while the politically connected often escape with minimal or delayed consequences. This contrast underscores the selective nature of disciplinary enforcement, mirroring broader concerns about inequality and

arbitrariness in Nigerian justice and governance structures (Oko, 2010; People, 2025; ICIR Nigeria, 2025).

Patterns of Selective Justice

When examined together, these three cases reveal a deeply entrenched and systemic pattern of selective justice in Nigeria. What emerges is not simply a series of isolated incidents, but a recurring structure of inequality in the way sanctions are imposed, processes are observed, and accountability is distributed across different social groups (Oko, 2010).

1. Speed of Sanction vs. Delay of Action.

The case of Comfort Emmanson illustrates the extraordinary swiftness with which punitive measures can be unleashed when the subject of discipline is an ordinary, relatively powerless citizen. Within hours of the incident, she was not only apprehended but also subjected to a lifetime ban from Ibom Air, her punishment announced through an official corporate press release that amplified her humiliation (ICIR Nigeria, 2025; People, 2025). By contrast, in the cases of Adams Oshiomhole and Wasiu Ayinde (Kwam 1), despite *prima facie* evidence of misconduct, ranging from alleged financial impropriety in Oshiomhole's case to a clear violation of aviation safety protocols in Kwam 1's, the response of institutions was marked by inertia, hesitation, and, in some respects, outright indulgence (Guardian Nigeria, 2025; Sahara Reporters, 2025). Sanctions were either deferred indefinitely or handled with unusual caution, underscoring the elasticity of enforcement when the powerful are involved.

This disparity echoes John Rawls' (1971/1999) principle of justice as fairness, which insists that institutions must be structured to ensure equality before the law, with special attention to protecting the most vulnerable. Rawls argued that justice demands impartiality and that unequal treatment in enforcement corrodes legitimacy, producing a society where power, rather than principle, determines accountability. From this perspective, the Emmanson case exemplifies how selective sanctioning violates the very foundations of a just society.

2. Procedural Inequality.

Comfort's punishment was delivered without any transparent or impartial procedure. She was not afforded the opportunity to present her account in a formal hearing, nor was there any oversight from regulatory authorities or the judiciary. The process bypassed both due process and the presumption of innocence, replacing them with a spectacle of swift corporate judgment (ICIR Nigeria, 2025). Conversely, Oshiomhole and Kwam 1 appeared shielded not only from punishment but even from scrutiny. In their cases, formal procedures were either deliberately stalled or

strategically avoided, suggesting that access to power and influence effectively inoculates individuals from the ordinary mechanisms of accountability (Sahara Reporters, 2025; The Nation, 2025).

This imbalance resonates with Montesquieu's (1748/1989) warning in *The Spirit of the Laws* that "there is no liberty if the judiciary power be not separated from the legislative and executive" (p. 157). For Montesquieu, the absence of transparent, impartial procedures opens the door to arbitrary rule, where law ceases to be a shield for the weak and becomes a weapon wielded by the powerful. The Comfort case illustrates precisely this danger: when procedures are selectively applied, justice loses its universality and transforms into an instrument of privilege.

3. Disproportionate Response.

The disparity in the scale of responses is perhaps the most glaring marker of selective justice. Comfort received the harshest available sanction—a lifetime ban—for a first-time, non-violent offence that, at most, might have warranted a temporary suspension or a formal warning under principles of proportionality (People, 2025). In sharp contrast, Oshiomhole and Kwam 1, whose actions could plausibly attract criminal liability under Nigerian law—ranging from corruption statutes to the criminalisation of obstructing an aircraft in motion—faced no meaningful sanction (Guardian Nigeria, 2025; ICIR Nigeria, 2025). This inversion of proportionality reflects not a principled system of justice but one that calibrates its severity based on the vulnerability of the subject.

As Aristotle (1999) argued in *Nicomachean Ethics*, justice is fundamentally a matter of proportion, where penalties must be commensurate with the gravity of the wrongdoing. When sanctions are disproportionate—either excessively harsh for the powerless or indulgently lenient for the powerful—the balance of justice is destroyed, and law degenerates into an instrument of inequality. The Comfort case epitomises this distortion, where proportionality was abandoned in favour of selective enforcement.

4. Privilege as a Protective Armour.

Underlying these contrasts is the centrality of privilege as a protective armour in Nigeria's justice system. Both Oshiomhole and Kwam 1 occupy positions of prominence: the former as a powerful political actor with long-standing ties to ruling elites, the latter as a celebrated cultural icon embedded in networks of wealth and patronage. These social locations appear to insulate them from accountability, enabling them to evade the rigours of legal or institutional sanction (Ayibam, 2024b; The Nation, 2025). Comfort, by contrast, had no comparable network of influence. Her vulnerability—social, economic, and political—meant that she faced the full weight of punitive action, delivered with an almost performative swiftness (ICIR Nigeria, 2025).

As Karl Marx (1978) observed in *The German Ideology*, law and justice in class-based societies often function as instruments that protect the ruling class and reinforce existing hierarchies. The privileged are shielded by their status, while the powerless are disproportionately subjected to punishment. Comfort's case exemplifies this dynamic: the machinery of justice operated swiftly and mercilessly against her, while the influential were

Taken together, these patterns demonstrate that justice in Nigeria often functions less as a universal standard than as a selective instrument-responsive to the hierarchies of privilege, status, and power. What is presented as the impartial enforcement of rules is, in practice, a highly differentiated process, where the weak are punished to set examples and the powerful are protected to preserve networks of influence (Oko, 2010).

A STRUCTURAL PROBLEM BEYOND INDIVIDUAL CASES

Viewed through the lens of justice theory, these incidents do not merely reflect isolated lapses in judgment; they expose a systemic pattern of inequality where laws, rules, and procedures consistently bend to protect the powerful while harshly punishing the powerless. Such patterns are symptomatic of what Amartya Sen (2009) calls the "realization-focused" approach to justice-where what matters is not the formal existence of rules but how they are actually applied in lived contexts. In the Nigerian case, application is far from impartial. Institutions, rather than acting as neutral arbiters, appear to calibrate their responses based on status, influence, and political relevance.

John Rawls's (1999) ideal of "justice as fairness" demands that principles of equality and liberty be applied universally, without favour or prejudice. Yet, the Oshiomhole, Kwam 1, and Comfort cases reveal precisely the opposite. The swiftness of sanction in Comfort Emmanson's case, contrasted with the inertia in the others, illustrates what legal theorists describe as *selective enforcement*-a phenomenon where the same rules operate differently depending on the identity of the accused (Oko, 2010). This undermines not only procedural fairness but also public trust in institutions meant to guarantee justice.

What emerges, therefore, is a justice architecture that is neither blind nor impartial, but deeply responsive to social hierarchy and networks of power. In such an environment, the constitutional ideal of equality before the law becomes a hollow promise-selectively enforced and easily undermined by privilege. The Oshiomhole, Kwam 1, and Comfort cases function as mirrors held up to Nigeria's justice system, reflecting a troubling truth: that the rule of law remains conditional, contingent, and negotiable depending on who stands accused. This is not merely a failure of individuals but a structural defect embedded within Nigeria's legal and political order.

A RAWLSIAN ANALYSIS OF THE ADAMS OSHIOMHOLE, WASIU AYINDE (KWAM 1), AND COMFORT EMMANSON INCIDENTS

John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* (1971/1999) provides a rigorous philosophical framework for interrogating the stark disparities evident in these Nigerian cases. Rawls anchors his conception of justice on two central principles. First, the **Equal Liberty Principle**: every individual is entitled to the most extensive set of basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberties for all (Rawls, 1971/1999). This principle safeguards rights such as due process, equality before the law, and protection from arbitrary sanction. Second, the **Difference Principle**: social and economic inequalities are permissible only if they benefit the least advantaged members of society and are attached to positions open to all under fair conditions of opportunity (Rawls, 1971/1999). For Rawls, these principles are lexically ordered: liberty takes precedence, followed by fair equality of opportunity, and finally the Difference Principle. Thus, violations of liberty or equal treatment cannot be justified by appeals to broader social or economic benefits.

1. The Adams Oshiomhole Incident: Unequal Accountability in Political Power

Adams Oshiomhole's alleged confrontation at the airport exemplifies the erosion of Rawls's Equal Liberty Principle. In a just society, political stature should neither diminish nor inflate accountability; every individual must stand before the law on equal terms. The absence of sanction in his case represents not only a breach of this principle but also a corrosion of institutional credibility. Citizens observing such selective justice are unlikely to believe in the impartiality of legal systems, undermining social cooperation—a value Rawls considers foundational to justice (Rawls, 1971/1999). Moreover, the lack of institutional response cannot be justified under the Difference Principle, since shielding the politically powerful produces no discernible improvement in the lives of Nigeria's least advantaged. Instead, it entrenches inequalities by signalling that privilege can override justice.

2. The Wasiu Ayinde (Kwam 1) Incident: Cultural Prestige as a Shield

The case involving Wasiu Ayinde (Kwam 1), a highly influential cultural figure, highlights how social prestige can act as a shield against accountability. The absence of consequences for the alleged assault violates the Equal Liberty Principle, which presupposes equal access to justice and equal exposure to sanction. When cultural capital enables immunity, the universality of liberty is compromised. Rawls's Difference Principle also provides no justification here: protecting figures with significant influence offers no tangible benefit to society's marginalised classes. Rather, it reinforces the perception that justice in Nigeria operates as a two-tier system—one for the influential and another for the ordinary citizen. This divergence contradicts Rawls's

vision of a society ordered by fairness, where inequalities must always be to the advantage of the least privileged (Rawls, 1971/1999).

3. The Comfort Emmanson Case: Swift Punishment Without Due Process

In sharp contrast, Comfort Emmanson, a relatively powerless woman, was subjected to immediate and disproportionate punishment. Her near-naked, forceful removal from the aircraft and lifetime ban from Ibom Air occurred without investigation or hearing, flagrantly violating the Equal Liberty Principle's guarantee of due process. Such an arbitrary exercise of power not only strips her of dignity but also symbolises how the vulnerable are more likely to face harsh enforcement while elites evade accountability. Furthermore, the punitive action cannot be defended under the Difference Principle, as it neither uplifts the most disadvantaged nor introduces rehabilitative or restorative dimensions to justice. Instead, it exacerbates structural vulnerability, leaving those without political or cultural capital exposed to the harshest forms of sanction.

4. Structural Injustice and the Veil of Ignorance

Rawls's device of the **original position** and the **veil of ignorance** sharpens the critique of these discrepancies. If decision-makers were placed behind the veil of ignorance-deprived of knowledge about their political influence, cultural prestige, or social standing-they would not rationally consent to a system that selectively enforces justice, granting elites near-immunity while subjecting ordinary citizens to severe sanctions (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2014; LibreTexts, n.d.). Instead, they would design a fairer framework ensuring that liberties and opportunities are universally protected. Nigeria's justice system, however, appears to have departed from this Rawlsian ideal, operating instead as a mechanism that enforces privilege at the expense of fairness.

Taken together, these cases reveal not merely isolated lapses but a systemic failure of justice. Measured against Rawls's standards, Nigeria's justice framework cannot be described as fair: liberties are not universally respected, opportunities are not equally accessible, and inequalities function to reinforce rather than mitigate disadvantage. What emerges is a justice system responsive to privilege rather than impartiality-an inversion of Rawls's vision of justice as fairness.

CONCLUSION

The cases of Adams Oshiomhole, Comfort Emmanson, and Wasiu Ayinde (Kwam 1) are not isolated scandals; they form a discernible pattern that exposes the underlying bias of Nigeria's justice system. Rather than operating as an impartial mechanism of fairness, the system bends to the dictates of influence, prestige, and political capital. Each case reveals a troubling paradox: the powerless are swiftly and disproportionately

sanctioned, while the powerful are shielded from scrutiny, their transgressions dissolved into silence or political theatre.

Measured against Rawls's theory of justice, this pattern constitutes a profound indictment. Justice, Rawls insists, must be conceived behind a "veil of ignorance," ensuring that no one designs laws to privilege their own class or position. Nigeria's justice system, however, functions in the reverse: it entrenches privilege, protecting elites while exposing the vulnerable to the harshest forms of punishment. Comfort Emmanson's ordeal-public humiliation, near-naked exposure, and a lifetime ban-was enforced with ruthless immediacy. In contrast, Oshiomhole's public altercation at the airport and Kwam 1's alleged misconduct evaporated without meaningful legal consequence.

This disparity mirrors the ancient observation of Anacharsis, who likened laws to spider's webs-strong enough to catch the weak, but too fragile to hold the powerful. In Nigeria, the web is not only fragile but elastic: it stretches to allow the influential to pass through while tightening its grip on ordinary citizens. Such a system cannot claim legitimacy under the Equal Liberty or Difference Principles, nor can it sustain public trust. Instead, it corrodes belief in the rule of law, reducing it to a selective instrument of control rather than a universal guarantor of rights. For Nigeria to reclaim the moral authority of its justice system, impartiality must become a lived reality. Only then can the law cease to function as a sieve for the powerful and a net for the powerless, and instead stand as a genuine guardian of fairness, equality, and dignity.

RECOMMENDATIONS: TOWARDS A FAIR AND IMPARTIAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Law enforcement in Nigeria must apply sanctions uniformly, ensuring that offences-whether committed by politicians, celebrities, or ordinary citizens-attract equivalent consequences. Judicial independence should be strengthened through constitutional safeguards that insulate the courts from political interference, while strict disciplinary frameworks must be put in place to curb corruption and bias among judges. Independent, citizen-led oversight bodies should be established to review high-profile cases, monitor institutional performance, and publish transparent reports on the justice system. In addition, a centralised, publicly accessible database of all arrests, prosecutions, and rulings-especially those involving public figures-should be created to prevent the quiet disappearance of politically sensitive cases.

Law enforcement agencies also require capacity building, with comprehensive training for police, prosecutors, and court officials on human rights, ethics, and impartiality, reinforcing the principle that justice is a public trust, not a private privilege. Furthermore, press freedom and investigative journalism must be safeguarded, empowering the media to expose disparities and hold institutions accountable without fear of censorship or reprisal. Equally vital is the promotion of

nationwide civic education campaigns that empower citizens with knowledge of their rights and mobilise collective action against double standards in justice administration. Ultimately, the pursuit of justice in Nigeria must move beyond rhetoric and symbolic gestures to embrace genuine impartiality and fairness. Selective enforcement corrodes public trust, deepens inequality, and entrenches the belief that law is a privilege rather than a right. Only by ensuring that the same rules apply to both the powerful and the powerless can Nigeria's justice system reclaim its legitimacy and fulfil its constitutional promise of equality before the law.

Ultimately, the pursuit of justice in Nigeria must move beyond rhetoric and symbolic gestures to embrace genuine impartiality and fairness. Selective enforcement corrodes public trust, deepens inequality, and entrenches the belief that law is a privilege rather than a right. Only by ensuring that the same rules apply to both the powerful and the powerless can Nigeria's justice system reclaim its legitimacy and fulfil its constitutional promise of equality before the law.

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