



# CLASFON

## NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

SPOTLIGHT INTERVIEW WITH:

**PAUL  
HAMMACHE  
ESQ. ▶**

VICE PRESIDENT OF CLASFON



SPONSORS OF THE MONTH



The Ever-Growing  
Christian Lawyer: Faith  
and Legal Excellence.

By Courage Iroegbute

"It is Unconstitutional,  
Unlawful, and a  
Dangerous Affront to  
Democracy" –

NBA Condemns President Tinubu's  
Suspension of Rivers Governor, Sini  
Fubara, Deputy and House Members

CASE REVIEW:  
Mr Sunday Jackson.

By Larayetan  
Tosin Sharon

# ABOUT CLASFON



The Christian Lawyers Fellowship of Nigeria (CLASFON) is a vibrant fellowship of Christian lawyers and law students in Nigeria. Our mission is to uphold and project the image of Christ through the practice of law. We believe in the power of faith to transform the legal profession and society at large.

Since our inception, CLASFON has been at the forefront of advocating for justice, promoting Christian values in the legal profession, and serving society through various legal initiatives. We aim to foster an environment where faith and law are not mutually exclusive, but where they intersect to bring about positive change in the legal system and beyond. Our members are dedicated to promoting justice, upholding the rule of law, and serving the society, especially those who are marginalized and underserved.

## OUR VISION AND MISSION

### Vision:

To project the image of Christ through the practice of law, ensuring that justice, integrity, and righteousness are embodied in every legal matter we engage in.

### Mission:

Our mission is to serve both God and society through the legal profession by engaging in mission activities such as:

- Providing pro bono legal services to the indigent.
- Distributing relief materials to marginalized communities.
- Offering Bible devotionals to prisoners.
- Advocating for the protection of religious freedom and good governance.

By serving in these ways, we aim to contribute to a more just, peaceful, and righteous society, reflecting Christ's love and grace in all our actions.

## CLASFON ANTHEM

*"KEEP YE JUDGMENT AND DO JUSTICE  
GOD'S SALVATION NOW HAS COME  
PEOPLE FALL PREY TO INJUSTICE  
RISE TO GIVE THEM ALL SUCCOUR*

*OUR REVEALING IS AWAITED  
A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE TO MAKE  
HERE WE ARE LORD, TO ADVOCATE  
MAY YOUR WILL BE DONE THROUGH US "*

## CLASFON DIRECTORATES

At CLASFON, we operate through nine key directorates, each focused on a specific area of our mission. These directorates are vital in helping us to fulfill our vision and provide structure to our work.

1. Church Collaboration and Counseling:  
Partnering with churches and providing legal counseling.
2. Religious Freedom:  
Advocating for the protection of religious liberties.
3. Legal Aid and Humanitarian Service:  
Offering pro bono legal defense and humanitarian aid to those in need.
4. Legislative Monitoring:  
Monitoring laws and policies to ensure they align with Christian values.
5. Advancement of Legal Education and Research:  
Promoting ethical legal education and encouraging research.
6. Judicial Administration:  
Engaging with the judicial system to promote fair practices.
7. Trial Law and Advocacy:  
Supporting litigation efforts based on Christian principles.
8. Alternative Dispute Resolution and Reconciliation:  
Promoting peaceful resolutions to conflicts and disputes.
9. Rule of Law, Anti-Corruption, and Good Governance:  
Advocating for justice and good governance.



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# Newsletter Chairman's Corner:

## Navigating Our Fellowship's Journey



Dear Esteemed Members of CLASFON,

As we review the activities and insights captured in this edition of our newsletter, I am reminded of the profound calling we share as Christian lawyers. Our Fellowship continues to be a beacon of hope, justice, and spiritual transformation in Nigeria's legal landscape.

This month's compilation reflects our multifaceted commitment—from our regional conferences and prison outreach initiatives to our critical work in religious freedom and professional development. Each article, each report underscores our mission to practice law not merely as a profession, but as a divine calling. While this edition offers glimpses of our work, we recognize there are many stories yet untold.

Our upcoming editions will feature more member interviews, organizational updates, and in-depth explorations of how our faith intersects with legal practice.

I encourage each member to see themselves in this narrative of service. Your individual commitment contributes to our collective

impact. Let us continue to shine as light, advocating for justice, defending the vulnerable, and demonstrating Christ's love through our professional conduct.

Faithfully yours,  
**MKPACHI-OKO XAVIER**  
**CHINAECHEREM**  
*CLASFON National Newsletter  
Committee Chairman*



# CYBER BULLYING & CYBER STALKING IN NIGERIA

In recent years, Nigeria has seen a rise in the use of the internet and social media platforms, which has unfortunately been accompanied by an increase in cyberbullying and cyberstalking. These forms of online harassment have become a significant concern, and Nigerian law has made some efforts to address them.

## Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying involves the use of electronic communication to bully, harass, or intimidate someone, often by sending harmful, threatening, or abusive messages. It typically occurs on social media platforms, through text messages, emails, or other online platforms.

## Cyberstalking

Cyberstalking refers to the use of the internet to repeatedly harass or intimidate someone by sending them unwanted and threatening messages, often with the intent of causing distress or fear. Cyberstalking can involve activities such as sending threatening emails, tracking someone's online behavior, or spreading false rumors about them.

While there is no specific law in Nigeria explicitly naming "cyberbullying" or "cyberstalking", there are several legal provisions under Nigerian law that address harassment and the misuse of communication technologies that can be applied.

**Legal Provisions Relevant to Cyberbullying and Cyberstalking**

**The Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act, 2015:**

The Cybercrimes Act is one of the most important legal frameworks in Nigeria for ad-

ressing crimes committed via electronic means, and it touches on various forms of online harassment, including cyberbullying. Notably, the law includes provisions on the following:

### Section 24:

This section defines cyberstalking and cyberbullying and makes it an offense to send offensive or menacing messages via a computer system or network. It criminalizes sending threatening, abusive, or harassing messages online. It provides thus:

(1) Any person who knowingly or intentionally sends a message or other matter by means of computer systems or network that -

(a) is grossly offensive, pornographic or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character or causes any such message or matter to be so sent; or

(b) he knows to be false, for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience danger, obstruction, insult, injury, criminal intimidation, enmity, hatred, ill will or needless anxiety to another or causes such a message to be sent: commits an offence under this Act and shall be liable on conviction to a fine of not more than N7,000,000.00 or imprisonment for a term of not more than 3 years or to both such fine and imprisonment.

(2) Any person who knowingly or intentionally transmits or causes the transmission of any communication through a computer system or network -

(a) to bully, threaten or harass another person, where such communication places another person in fear of death, violence or bodily harm or to another person;

# CYBER BULLYING & CYBER STALKING IN NIGERIA

(b) containing any threat to kidnap any person or any threat to harm the person of another, any demand or request for a ransom for the release of any kidnapped person, to extort from any person, firm, association or corporation, any money or other thing of value; or

(c) containing any threat to harm the property or reputation of the addressee or of another or the reputation of a deceased person or any threat to accuse the addressee or any other person of a crime, to extort from any person, firm, association, or corporation, any money or other thing of value commits an offence under this Act and shall be liable on conviction

(i) in the case of paragraphs (a) and (b) of this subsection to imprisonment for a term of 10 years and/or a minimum fine of N25,000,000.00; and

(ii) in the case of paragraph (c) and (d) of this subsection, to imprisonment for a term of 5 years and/or a minimum fine of N15,000,000.00.

(3) A court sentencing or otherwise dealing with a person convicted of an offence under subsections (1) and (2) may also make an order, which may, for the purpose of protecting the victim or victims of the offence, or any other person mentioned in the order, from further conduct which-

(a) amounts to harassment; or

(b) will cause fear of violence, death or bodily harm; prohibit the defendant from doing anything described/specified in the order.

(4) A defendant who does anything which he is prohibited from doing by an order under this section, commits an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine of not more than

N10,000,000.00 or imprisonment for a term of not more than 3 years or to both such fine and imprisonment

(5) The order made under subsection (3) of this section may have effect for a specified period or until further order and the defendant or any other person mentioned in the order may apply to the court which made the order for it to be varied or discharged by a further order.

(6) Notwithstanding the powers of the court under subsections (3) and (5), the court may make an interim order for the protection of victim(s) from further exposure to the alleged offences

## **The Nigerian Communications Act (2003):**

The Nigerian Communications Act empowers the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) to regulate communication services in Nigeria. The NCC can take steps to ensure that telecommunication services are not used to facilitate harassment or bullying.

## **The Child Rights Act, 2003:**

Although the Child Rights Act focuses primarily on the protection of minors, its provisions on the right to dignity and protection from harm can apply in cases of cyberbullying where children are involved. Children subjected to cyberbullying can seek redress under this Act, especially if the bullying involves threats, insults, or harmful content

## **The Nigerian Penal Code:**

Although it doesn't explicitly mention cyberstalking, the Penal Code criminalizes offenses such as criminal intimidation, defamation, and threats. These provisions can be applied



# CYBER BULLYING & CYBER STALKING IN NIGERIA

to cases where cyberstalking includes threats or harm to someone's reputation or personal safety.

## The Nigerian Constitution:

While not directly addressing cyberstalking, the Constitution of Nigeria guarantees the right to dignity and protection from harm, which could be invoked in cases of online harassment or stalking.

## Enforcement and Challenges

Despite the existence of these legal frameworks, enforcement of laws concerning cyberbullying and cyberstalking in Nigeria remains a challenge. Some of the key issues include:

### 1. Lack of Awareness:

Many individuals are not fully aware of the laws that exist to protect them from cyberbullying and cyberstalking. Legal education and awareness campaigns could play a significant role in reducing incidents of online harassment.

### 2. Anonymity of the Internet:

The anonymity provided by the internet makes it difficult to track and apprehend perpetrators of cybercrimes. Online platforms often lack accountability mechanisms, which can result in cases going unreported or unresolved.

### 3. Digital Evidence Challenges:

Collecting and preserving digital evidence can be difficult, as the nature of online harassment often involves messages or content that can be easily deleted or altered. Investigating these cases requires specialized knowledge and access to digital tools.

### 4. Slow Legal Process:

Like other areas of Nigerian law, there is sometimes a slow legal process in handling cybercrimes, which may discourage victims from coming forward or cause delays in the pursuit of justice.

## Conclusion

Nigeria has taken steps to address cyberbullying and cyberstalking through the Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act, which criminalizes these acts and provides avenues for legal recourse. However, challenges in enforcement, awareness, and the evolving nature of digital crimes still make it difficult to completely eliminate online harassment.

By Anita Davies



# THE EVER GROWING CHRISTIAN LAWYER: FAITH & LEGAL EXCELLENCE

By Courage Iroegbute, AICMC



In courtrooms across the world, a unique breed of legal professionals is emerging – lawyers who seamlessly integrate their Christian faith with their legal practice. These "ever growing Christian lawyers" represent a powerful intersection of professional excellence and spiritual commitment, navigating the complex terrain of law while being guided by biblical principles.

## Faith in Practice

The legal landscape presents distinctive challenges and opportunities for Christian lawyers. Attorney Adebayo Oluwaseyi explains, "Being a Christian lawyer means approaching cases with integrity even when corruption tempts many in our profession. I've found that clients increasingly seek lawyers whose ethical standards are rooted in something deeper than just professional codes."

This sentiment echoes across the global legal community, where Christian lawyers are distinguishing themselves through ethical practice and compassionate service, particularly in human rights cases and advocacy for vulnerable populations. Many point to Micah 6:8 as their guiding principle: "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

Organizations like the Christian Lawyers Fellowship of Nigeria (CLASFON), the Christian Legal Society in the United States, and the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship in the United Kingdom provide support networks for legal professionals seeking to integrate faith and practice. These associations represent thou

sands of members committed to seeking justice with the love of God.



## Excellence as Testimony

International human rights lawyer Helena Kowalski observes, "Christian lawyers worldwide are increasingly recognizing that excellence in legal practice isn't just about winning cases, it's about transforming systems to better reflect God's justice and care for human dignity."

This growing movement reflects a recognition that legal expertise can be a powerful vehicle for living out Christian values. From corporate boardrooms to rural courthouses, Christian lawyers are demonstrating that faith and professional excellence are not mutually exclusive but mutually reinforcing.

The pursuit of excellence finds strong biblical support. Colossians 3:23-24 offers a powerful framework: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, .

not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."

This perspective transforms the practice of law from mere profession to calling – a sacred trust to be executed with diligence and excellence. For Christian lawyers, this means thorough case preparation, continuous professional development, and commitment to the highest ethical standards.

Similarly, Proverbs 22:29 promises, "Do you see someone skilled in their work? They will serve before kings; they will not serve before officials of low rank." This ancient wisdom affirms that excellence in one's profession opens doors of influence and opportunity.

### **Challenges and Growth**

The path of the Christian lawyer is not without challenges. Christian lawyers sometimes face pressure to compromise ethical standards in systems where corruption remains prevalent. They must navigate increasingly secular legal frameworks that may conflict with faith-based values.

These challenges, however, represent opportunities for growth. Attorney Chioma Nwankwo notes, "Each ethical dilemma I face strengthens my spiritual muscles. I'm constantly growing in discernment and courage."

This growth extends beyond individual practice to systemic impact. Christian lawyers are increasingly involved in legal education, judicial reform, and policy development – bringing faith-informed perspectives to reshape legal systems from within.

### **A Future of Impact**

The path forward for Christian lawyers emerges clearly from the integration of faith and legal practice. First, developing intentional mentorship relationships becomes essential – experienced Christian attorneys guiding newer professionals through ethical dilem-

mas and practical challenges. These relationships multiply impact across generations and strengthen resolve during difficult cases.

Christian lawyers must also actively participate in bar associations and legal reform initiatives rather than withdrawing from seemingly secular institutions. Their presence in these spaces allows biblical perspectives on justice and mercy to influence policy development and professional standards. As Proverbs reminds us, the skilled serve "before kings"—positions of influence require excellence.

Strategic networking among Christian legal professionals creates powerful collaborative opportunities. When attorneys specializing in different practice areas connect around shared faith principles, they can address complex social issues from multiple angles. This collaborative approach mirrors the biblical concept of the body of Christ — diverse functions united in purpose.

Finally, Christian lawyers should embrace opportunities to articulate the philosophical foundations of their practice. In a profession often defined by pragmatism, the ability to explain how biblical principles inform legal reasoning offers a compelling alternative worldview. This intellectual engagement honors the scriptural call to "be prepared to give an answer" for the hope that lies within.

By pursuing these paths, Christian lawyers fulfill their dual calling—maintaining the highest standards of legal practice while serving as ambassadors of reconciliation in a fractured world. Their work becomes not merely a career but a calling, transforming both individual lives and legal systems through the powerful combination of professional excellence and spiritual conviction.





# KINGDOM LAWYERS SHINING AS LIGHT- AN EASTER REFLECTION

~ By Barnabas Madoghwe

As Christian lawyers, our purpose transcends the mere practice of law; it is fundamentally to know God and make Him known. This principle aligns with the central message of Rick Warren's book "The Purpose Driven Life". Making God known requires us to shine as light in every sphere of our lives and careers. In Matthew 5:16, Jesus commands us thus: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

Thus, our profession as lawyers is not just a career but a calling to reflect God's glory. To truly shine, we must first understand God's character and nature, whose light we bear. The best way to do this is by looking at Jesus Christ's life, especially in the context of Easter, when Christ demonstrated love and sacrifice.

## The Nature of Light: Understanding the Character of God

God is light, and in Him, there is no darkness (1 John 1:5). As Kingdom lawyers, we must embody this divine nature by living out the virtues and principles of Christ. The season of Easter reminds us of two foundational attributes of Christ that are essential for our calling: Love and Sacrifice. These two virtues are the essence of Christ's mission on earth. As we reflect on Easter, we must examine how love and sacrifice shape our lives and our professional conduct.

The love of Christ is the core of the Gospel. In John 3:16, we see the ultimate expression of divine love: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." In the same way, as believers, the love of Christ that we profess should

compel our actions and conduct and teach us to say no to any iota of sin or conduct that is against the faith we profess. By this we show love first to Christ, and then we can be able to replicate that love around.

Easter is not just about Christ's resurrection; it is about the price He paid for our redemption. Philippians 2:5-8 reminds us of his humility and obedience unto death. As Christian lawyers, we are called to a life of sacrifice, which may manifest in various ways:

1. Defending the weak even at personal cost (Proverbs 31:8-9).
2. Refusing to engage in unethical legal practices, despite financial temptations (Micah 6:8).
3. Choosing righteousness over popularity, as Daniel did (Daniel 6:10).

Sacrifice means we stand for truth and justice, regardless of the consequences. It means we put the interests of God's kingdom above personal gain, reflecting the selflessness of Christ.

## Kingdom Citizenship and Legal Advocacy

Through Christ's death and resurrection, we have been adopted as sons and daughters of God (Ephesians 1:5). This adoption brings:

1. Access to the Father – We can boldly approach God's throne for wisdom and direction (Hebrews 4:16).
2. Joint Heirship with Christ – We share in His inheritance and authority (Romans 8:17).
3. Citizenship in God's Kingdom – We are called to represent Christ on earth (Philippians 3:20).
4. Ambassadors of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20)

With this identity which we have in Christ Jesus, we must ensure that our legal practice reflects our heavenly calling. Our advocacy should promote justice, mercy, and humility before God (Micah 6:8). Let your career please God.

What then should be our response to Christ's love?

As believers and legal practitioners, we are to respond to Christ's love by putting on a great commitment to the reason we are called- to know Christ and make him known. As Kingdom lawyers, our purpose is not only to succeed professionally but to glorify God through our legal practice. Apostle Paul in Colossians 3:23 instructs: "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men." This should be our attitude, do all things as Christ

twill want it done.

**Conclusion**

Easter reminds us of the ultimate love and sacrifice of Christ. As lawyers called into His kingdom, we must live purposefully, shining as light in a world that desperately needs justice and truth. Our daily lives should reflect Christ's love and sacrifice, ensuring that through our legal profession, God is glorified. Matthew 5:14 declares: "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden." As a believer, and a Legal practitioner, remember that you are first "LIGHT" and you are mandated to use your career as a tool to "SHINE" surely, your light cannot be hidden, not even darkness, no matter how thick can stop your light.



# Spotlight Interview

WITH PAUL HAMMACHE ESQ.

**CLASFON NEWSLETTER:** Good evening Sir. This is Doris from CLASFON NEWSLETTER. Please can we meet you?

**PAUL HAMMACHE:** My name is Mr. Paul Haniel Hammache Esq. I am a Lawyer and a Christian and by privilege, the Vice President of CLASFON

**CLASFON NEWSLETTER:** We would like to ask you some few questions, if you oblige us.

**PAUL HAMMACHE:** It will really be a pleasure. You can go ahead.

**CLASFON NEWSLETTER:** Could you share your Christian faith journey and how it has influenced your career as a Legal Practitioner?

**PAUL HAMMACHE:** By the grace of God, my journey as a Christian started on the 18th of February, 1994. That was when I gave my life to Christ. Before then if I was a church goer and was committed in my local church. It was Lutheran Church and I got baptized as an infant in line with the doctrine of the church. And in my early teens I got confirmed after completed my catechism. But my journey as a Christian started actually when I came face to face with my inadequacy, my sinful nature and the need for me to accept Christ as my Lord and Savior and that was in February 18th 1994. It's been a wonderful time, God has really helped me in the sense that if not for that I don't think I'll be where I am today, because I came from a humble background and so the thought of going through the four walls of the University wasn't there; This is because my older siblings terminated their schooling after Secondary school education. But when I yielded my life to Christ, it helped me to have faith in God and to pursue tertiary education. Yes, my being a Lawyer today has been seriously impacted by the fact of

my Christian journey. I remember as a child, I knew at a time what I wouldn't want to be, professionally speaking, but what I really wanted to be I did not know. Like is said, I knew what I didn't want to be and that was, to be a lawyer. The reason is not far-fetched, then we believed "All lawyers are liars" and the Bible says that "all liars shall have their place in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone". But after I yielded to Lordship of Jesus Christ, in my church, Deeper Life, I joined the prayer team and our prayer leader then was a Lawyer, so I began to think that it is possible to be a lawyer and a Christian at the same time. My perception started changing and this was solidified when we had a career session in the youth section of the church that brought professionals from different fields, including a lawyer, my mind started warming up towards law and I knew that I can be a lawyer and a Christian at the same time. To cut the long story short, I applied for the first time and I got the admission. Being a Christian has helped to focus on the interest of my clients as against mine. I see law as my pulpit where I can serve God acceptably just like a clergy will do in the church for the scriptures says "so whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" eating or drinking we should do all to the glory of God". Yes, being a Christian has greatly impacted my work as a lawyer. So, to me Professional Ethics are reinforcement of the teachings of Christian Faith I receive as a Christian.

**CLASFON NEWSLETTER:** How did you first discover CLASFON, and what were your initial impressions of the fellowship?

**PAUL HAMMACHE:** I first discovered CLASFON initially in my 200 level and that was my first year because I came into the University through direct entry. I saw CLASFON at the university from my background, Deeper Life, as unserious Christians



Christians and so I distanced myself from CLASFON. However, one day one brother Miji Jonah (He is now of Abuja branch), then approached me and asked if he could ask me a personal question and I answered in the affirmative. He said "I noticed that you're a serious Christian but why is that you don't attend CLASFON?" I never expected that question, so I answered him by prevaricating around the real reason. But not very long, there was a Students' National Conference at Ilorin and Brother Ishaku Daniel Yanta came from the University of Maiduguri to our school, University of Jos, alongside two other brothers. They were on their way to the conference and so he asked if I was attending the conference and I answered in the negative. He then said something that captured my attention "you don't know what you're missing and if you attend this Conference, you wouldn't want to miss any other Conference again". That statement convinced me and I made up mind to attend the conference. The remaining they say is history. Yes, after the conference, I joined the fellowship and I became very serious with fellowship to the point that I immediately became the General Secretary and soon thereafter, I became its President. I therefore had the privilege of leading my school fellowship to the national conference at University of Maiduguri the following year. This was my how my journey in CLASFON started and since then it's been great very great



**CLASFON NEWSLETTER:** *What specific aspects or values of CLASFON convinced you to become a CLASFONITE, and what has sustained your commitment to the fellowship over the years.*

**PAUL HAMMACHE:** Yes, the value I most appreciate in CLASFON is the fact that it is a fellowship that brings all Christians from various denominational background together. Being a member of Deeper and if you understand Deeper life very well, you'll know that they don't easily mingle with other Christians, and I came with that mindset. But when I joined CLASFON, it made me appreciate the fact that there are serious Christians who are not members of my church and it made me to be more open minded towards other Christians. CLASFON also helped me to always remember that I am Christian lawyer. These values made want to continue with CLASFON even after the Law School. I remember, when I started practicing in Jos, I came wholeheartedly to embrace CLASFON, but somehow for some reason there was no information about CLASFON meetings until when I met a member and I was like what's happening? Do you have CLASFON here, why are there no information concerning the fellowship? And I was so happy when I got all the information I wanted and I continued with this great family in Jos. So, it's been great and I value associating with other believers; and enjoy seeing great people in CLASFON who are standing tall and whom I count as my mentors

**CLASFON NEWSLETTER:** *Having served as a National exco in 2 administrations now as both the North-East Regional Coordinator & Vice-President, what would you say are the most significant challenges and rewards of leadership within CLASFON?*

**PAUL HAMMACHE:** It's a privilege to have served in the two preceding Exco, first as North-East Regional Coordinator and as the Vice President. Let me face it this way. The challenge of being a Regional Coordinator is to very expansive geographic terrain. This was made more daunting owing to the Boko Haram security issues. But to the glory of God, things are getting better now. The glowing testimony is that those challenges did not slow us down ; in the midst of them, we were still able to visit the branches and carry out work in the different branches. I found the work very rewarding in the sense that it helped me to work like a missionary just like the person my parents named me after - Paul. As Vice President, I just started and have very little to say about this position. I'm still learning on the job and it's quite a rare privilege to occupy

the position of the Vice President of this great fellowship. As for me, I know for sure, that it is not based on merit and I would not have merited it. The beautiful thing about it is that God doesn't give it to people that are worthy or that deserve it. He gives it to people He wants to qualify and use. So for me the challenge is first of all to organize befitting conferences across our six regions. It's not really easy: it's challenging but with the team I have, the NCCC, we will overcome every obstacle and shall post very successful regional conferences to the glory of God. The reward in service? We're still on the job and I trust God and believe that one cannot truly quantify the reward. The rewarding experience is to be called upon to serve God in whatever capacity for the expansion of God's kingdom. And I know for sure that God will one day wipe our tears and reward us handsomely for His word says "God is not unrighteous to forget the labour of our love..."

**CLASFON NEWSLETTER:** *From your unique perspective how has CLASFON evolved over the years, and what changes have you witnessed in its mission and impact.*

**PAUL HAMMACHE:** I can say that CLASFON has evolved greatly because from the time I joined CLASFON, that is the Lawyer's Body, sometime in 2007, to the present time, there is a noticeable positive change. My first National Conference as a lawyer, was in 2008 in Enugu, the National Conference in Enugu. There is a great world of difference between our conferences then and our conferences now. We have greatly improved on our governance and the way we conduct PiC meetings. Our PIC now are much more structured and organized that we used to have it before. God has helped greatly. We used to spend a great deal of time paying courtesy calls and ending up having very small time to have our deliberations and we often have our meetings into early hours of the mornings of Saturdays, the days of our departure. Our fellowship has greatly evolved to the point that we have leadership talks during our PiCs which has greatly impacted on our leadership.

**CLASFON NEWSLETTER:** *Looking back at your CLASFON journey, could you share one or two defining moments that have particularly shaped your experience with the fellowship?*

**PAUL HAMMACHE:** CLASFON is full of memories and some of them are pleasant memories. The first one I can say the most important and impactful memory was my First National Student Conference in Ilorin. At the conference I met many important personalities some of which are still friends till today. That helped in my decision to join the fellowship and eventually became the General Secretary and eventually I became the President of the fellowship before graduating. It is so memorable in the sense that the tradition then was to elect the President of the fellowship from 400 level but before and at the time of elections into the various offices, I was heading to 500 level which technically excluded me but the Staff Adviser then asked as to why I was not among the candidates to be interviewed and we informed him of the tradition. He then said no, that tradition cannot operate and that I should be interviewed. Immediately the tables turned against me and a hitherto member of panel of interviewers, I became one to be interviewed by the panel I was part of. The elections took place and eventually I emerged the President of the fellowship. Remember you started by asking what was my initial impressions about the fellowship and you can imagine someone who was looking at the fellowship members as not been serious becoming the President of the very same Fellowship, is quite transformative and memorable. Another one that really touched me was the one that transpired at the Law school, I joined the fellowship late because I had to raise my school fees but eventually, God gave me the privilege of leading the Fellowship as the President and God has helped us a Fellowship. It was a wonderful experience then at the Law school affording me the privilege of meeting lawyers from CLASFON Abuja branch, brethren like Brother Omanuwa and one sister Kolo.

**CLASFON NEWSLETTER:** *What is your vision for CLASFON's future, and what advice would you give to young lawyers or Law Students who are still considering joining the Fellowship?*

**PAUL HAMMACHE:** My vision of CLASFON in the future, is a fellowship providing mentorship to our young lawyers and transformative leadership at the bar. It just dawned on me that there are quite a number of Lawyers, new wigs that don't know their left from their right. From my interactions with many

young lawyers there is the need for serious mentorship and we need to be more deliberate in this mentorship. I know there are attempts at that, and as a Fellowship I think it is something we should really look into to provide real mentorship, if not we're really losing it. I see CLASFON as a platform for our members to provide transformative at the bar both at the centre and our branches. Finally, I will like to advise for Young Lawyers and students is that please not just see CLASFON as something you just do in your university or Law School, rather, see CLASFON as a lifetime engagement. It should be something your real profession of Faith. I believe you're not considering stopping being a Christian in the near future or anytime at all. Your full package of blessings awaits you in CLASFON and God wants to bless you.

**CLASFON NEWSLETTER:** *What has been the positive benefits of attending several CLASFON National & Regional Conferences with your family over the years and what is your advice to young married CLASFONites?*

**PAUL HAMMACHE:** Talking about the benefits of attending several CLASFON National and Regional Conferences with my family all these years. I've

not had the privilege of attending with my family always; but I've had the privilege of attending the first Northeast Regional Conference, 2018 which took place in Bauchi 2 with my family and I can still recall what my wife shared with me after the conference of the positive impressions she had of Mrs. Gloria Alozie, the wife of our former President Mr. Alozie Echenwu during their spouses sessions. I remember the wife of Dr Moses Arome Okwori, Mrs. Victoria Okwori, now of blessed memory, was also at the Conference. I know the children enjoyed the picnic at the Yankari Game Reserve and I can tell the children had great fun. From my interactions with other spouses, our conferences have been a blessing to them. So CLASFON is providing a unique platform for family intimacy and integration into the Fellowship. Our spouses no longer feel detached but part of the fellowship. I am advising the young and the old couples to make it a tradition to attend our Conferences with our families because the benefits are immense.

**CLASFON NEWSLETTER:** *It was really an awesome time having you.*

**PAUL HAMMACHE:** Thank you for having me



# PRESIDENT-IN-COUNCIL MEETING

## ADDRESSING CRITICAL LEGAL CONCERNS

The Christian Lawyers Fellowship of Nigeria (CLASFON) convened its President-in-Council (PIC) meeting in Kano State this March, focusing on pressing issues affecting justice, rule of law, and fundamental rights across the country. The three-day deliberative session produced several noteworthy positions on matters of national importance.

**Key Issues Addressed:**

### *Constitutional Crisis in Benue State*

The assembly strongly condemned attempts by the Benue State House of Assembly to remove the State Chief Judge through unconstitutional means. CLASFON emphasized that such actions fundamentally undermine judicial independence and violate established constitutional procedures for the removal of judicial officers.

### *Religious Rights in Educational Institutions*

The council expressed serious concerns regarding the arbitrary closure of schools in multiple Northern states during Ramadan fasting, affecting both Muslim and non-Muslim students alike. CLASFON has formally urged the governments of Bauchi, Jigawa, Kano, and other affected states to immediately review these decisions and allow students to resume their academic activities without further disruption.

### *Judicial System Inequities*

Following careful observation of court practices in several Northern states, CLASFON advocated for the proper separation of Sharia/A

rea Courts from Customary Courts. This recommendation aims to prevent the current problematic practice where Area Courts simultaneously function as both Sharia and Customary Courts, effectively subjecting non-Muslims to Islamic law and proceedings against their constitutional rights.

### *Protection of Vulnerable Persons*

The council took a firm stance against the documented cases of forced abduction, religious conversion, and marriage of Christian girls without consent. These practices were unequivocally condemned as human rights violations that constitute religious persecution.

### *Campus Religious Freedom*

CLASFON noted with concern that Christian law students in certain Nigerian universities face restrictions on their right to peacefully assemble for fellowship meetings. The organization emphasized that such prohibitions directly contravene the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended).

### **Call to Action**

The PIC concluded with a formal call for relevant authorities to review discriminatory laws, with particular emphasis on State Child Rights Laws. These reforms are deemed essential for promoting peace, unity, democratic development, and national cohesion.



## ***Cultural Engagement and Interfaith Relations***

Before concluding their stay in Kano, PIC members participated in a cultural picnic at the historic Kano Dye Pit, a heritage site dating back to 1498. This cultural experience provided members with insights into the rich historical tapestry of Northern Nigeria. Additionally, the delegation paid a courtesy visit to the Leadership of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) in Kano, reinforcing the collaborative relationship between the two Christian organizations working to address religious freedom concerns.

## ***Official Communiqué***

A comprehensive communiqué detailing the resolutions and positions taken during the meeting has been formally issued and is published in this newsletter. Members are encouraged to review the full document for a detailed understanding of CLASFON's official stance on these critical national issues.

## **PRISON OUTREACH INITIATIVES ACROSS NIGERIA**

### **Port Harcourt Branch Visitation**

*March 4, 2025*

The Port Harcourt branch conducted an impactful correctional facility visitation, bringing legal assistance and spiritual encouragement to inmates.

### **Aba Branch Prison Ministry**

CLASFON members in Aba visited the local Correctional Facility, distributing over 300 copies of "In the Secret Place" devotionals to inmates. The visit created a meaningful atmosphere of fellowship that strengthened the inmates' faith and restored hope. Members described the experience as "a moment of reflection, fellowship and immense contribution to humanity."

### **Kuje Correctional Centre Outreach**

*March 21, 2025*

The Abuja Branch carried out a comprehensive outreach program at Kuje Correctional Centre, providing various relief materials and distributing 500 copies of CLASFON devotionals. The initiative combined practical support with spiritual encouragement for the incarcerated.

### **Member Spotlight: Commitment to Justice**

CLASFON member Uchenna Chisom Nwagor shared insights from his decade-long commitment to providing legal aid to prisoners since 2015. Motivated by his Christian faith, Nwagor expressed profound satisfaction in addressing cases of false accusations and injustice. His dedicated service has earned recognition from correctional facility officers, who warmly welcomed him during the recent visitation.



# "CLASFON, I CAME, I SERVED AND I AM BLESSED"

- DR. CHUKWUMA A. J. CHINWO

By Mkpachi-Oko Xavier Chinaecherem

Dr. Chukwuma A. J. Chinwo, the seventh President of the Christian Lawyers Fellowship of Nigeria (CLASFON), offers readers a compelling historical account of the organization's formation in Chapter 2 of CLASFON, I Came, I Served and I Am Blessed. With an engaging narrative, he transports us to the pivotal moments that led to the birth of CLASFON, emphasizing its spiritual and professional foundation.

The chapter opens with an illuminating recount of an interview with Dr. George Ogunyomi, the Pioneer National General Secretary of CLASFON. Through this interview, the reader is introduced to the dramatic yet humble origins of the fellowship—an upper room gathering of eleven passionate young students at the Nigerian Law School in 1979. This small but determined group, led by Dr. Ogunyomi and Hon. Justice Thomas Yakubu, laid the foundation for a movement that would later become an influential force in the Nigerian legal profession.

The image of eleven young Nigerian Law School students gathered in an "Upper Room" in 1979 resonates with spiritual symbolism. Through Dr. Ogunyomi's recollections, we learn that this gathering, initiated by himself and Hon. Justice Thomas Yakubu, was driven by a profound vision: to integrate Christian faith with legal practice. Their declaration—"As Christian Lawyers, we wanted to practice our vocations as part of our Calling from God"—reveals the spiritual foundation upon which CLASFON was built.

The chapter transitions from origins to organizational structure, outlining CLASFON's vision, mission, and core values, alongside the responsibilities of its leadership. This content

Dr. Ogunyomi's reflections provide a rare and valuable glimpse into the motivations of CLASFON's founding fathers. They envisioned a body of Christian legal practitioners who would approach their careers as a divine calling. Their primary mission was clear: to visit prisons, evangelize among lawyers, and become a resounding voice for Christ within the legal profession. These aspirations, shaped by deep convictions and a sense of duty, set the course for what CLASFON represents today.

One of the chapter's most thought-provoking aspects is its critique of historical amnesia within African societies. Dr. Ogunyomi laments the lack of a strong culture of history and record-keeping, a deficiency that has often resulted in the loss of vital institutional memories. He underscores the importance of preserving the story of CLASFON's origins, ensuring that future generations of Christian lawyers can understand where they come from, assess their present trajectory, and chart a purposeful path forward.

Dr. Chinwo takes this conversation further, raising a concern that has persisted within CLASFON: the transition gap. While many university and Nigerian Law School students identify with CLASFON during their academic years, a significant number fail to maintain their affiliation after being called to the Nigerian Bar. This discontinuity, he argues, has hindered the fellowship from reaching its full potential. He passionately advocates for a sustained membership culture, stressing that if every CLASFON student transcended into the professional body, the fellowship would be far more robust, influential, and deeply

# "CLASFON, I CAME, I SERVED AND I AM BLESSED"

- DR. CHUKWUMA A. J. CHINWO

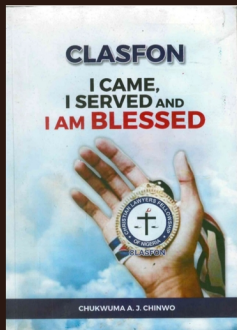
By Mkpachi-Oko Xavier Chinaecherem

Beyond historical reflections, the chapter also provides a concise yet profound exposition of CLASFON's vision, mission, and core values. It serves as a guidepost for both new and existing members, reminding them of the essence of the fellowship and the responsibilities shouldered by its leaders. Dr. Chinwo's words are both a call to remembrance and a charge to action—urging Christian lawyers to remain steadfast in their faith-driven legal practice. In sum, Chapter 2 of CLASFON, I Came, I Served and I Am Blessed is more than a historical narrative; it is a wake-up call. It highlights the power of purpose-driven legal practice and challenges the present generation to build on the foundations laid by their predecessors. Dr. Chinwo's engaging storytelling and incisive reflections make this chapter an invaluable read for anyone seeking to understand the heart and soul of CLASFON. As CLASFON members reflect on this history, they are reminded that

their commitment is not just to a fellowship but to a divine mandate that calls for unwavering dedication and growth.

The chapter succeeds in balancing historical narrative with organizational insight, personal reflection with institutional analysis. Dr. Chinwo's perspective as the 7th President of CLASFON (2008-2011) lends authority to his observations while revealing his deep commitment to the Fellowship's growth and sustainability.

For CLASFON members, this chapter serves as both inspiration and challenge—a reminder of founding principles and an invitation to strengthen the Fellowship through improved continuity between student and professional membership. For general readers, it offers valuable insights into the intersection of faith and legal practice in Nigerian society, demonstrating how professional communities can be vehicles for spiritual witness and social change.



**D**r Chukwuma A. J. Chinwo is a Port Harcourt, Rivers State based legal practitioner, academic, researcher, writer and public analyst. He was found by Jesus Christ on May 12, 1986 and served for six years as a Pastor in the Deeper Life Bible Church until December, 1998. He served as Rivers State Branch Chairman (December, 2000 - September 2005); National Vice President (2005 - 2008) and 7th National President of the Christian Lawyers Fellowship of Nigeria. He is the author of several books including four Christian books: 'Abundant Blessings for You', 'Fear Not', 'Unity, Liberty and Charity in the Body of Christ' and 'The Christian, Christian Minister and Politics'.



**T**he book, *CLASFON: I CAME, I SERVED AND I AM BLESSED* while written essentially as a memoir of the author during the period 2000 to 2011 draws from interviews and other sources to tell the story of the Christian Lawyers Fellowship of Nigeria as much as the author could. It is written in a very readable non-dogmatic manner and surveys the past, present and future of the Fellowship.

Challenge Press, Inc.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

CLASFON remains committed to providing opportunities for learning, growth, and fellowship. Below are some upcoming events for 2025:

## CLASFON REGIONAL CONFERENCES 2025 : 6TH - 10TH OF AUGUST

HOST: Christian Lawyers' Fellowship of Nigeria

THEME: THINE IS THE KINGDOM (Matthew 6v13)

LOCATIONS:

1. North-West Regional Conference

Host: KADUNA

2. South-East Regional Conference

Host: ABAKALIKI

3. South-West Regional Conference

Host: ABEOKUTA

4. South-South Regional Conference

Host: UYO

5. North-Central Regional Conference

Host: MAKURDI

6. North-East Regional Conference

Host: YOLA

## THE CHRISTIAN LAW STUDENTS' FELLOWSHIP OF NIGERIA (CLASFON) REGIONAL PRAYER AND LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE 2025

HOST: Christian Law Students' Fellowship of Nigeria

THEME: THINE IS THE KINGDOM (Matthew 6v13)

1. North-East Regional Prayer and Leadership Conference

DATE: 27th-29th March 2025

HOST: GOMBE STATE UNIVERSITY

2. South-East Regional Prayer and Leadership Conference

DATE: 2nd-5th April

HOST: Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State.

VENUE: Kingdom City Prayer Camp (KCPC)

3. South-South Regional Prayer and Leadership Conference

DATE: 10th-11th April

HOST: Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma, Edo State

4. North-Central/North-West Regional Prayer and Leadership Conference

DATE: 24th-27th April

HOST: Benue State University

VENUE: Pastoral Center, Makurdi, Benue State.



# DIRECTORATES CORNER:

THE DIRECTORATE OF  
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

## The Directorate of Religious Freedom: Championing Religious Liberty in Nigeria

### Safeguarding a Fundamental Human Right NWEZI JENNIFER KOSISOCHUKWU

Religious freedom stands as a cornerstone of human dignity—a fundamental right that protects the conscience of all people and allows individuals to think, express, and act upon their deeply held beliefs. Despite international recognition of this right, its implementation faces significant challenges across Africa, particularly in Nigeria.

The Christian Lawyers' Fellowship of Nigeria (CLASFON) established the Directorate of Religious Freedom as a specialized body dedicated to advancing and protecting religious liberty throughout the nation. This initiative responds to the increasing restrictions placed on religious organizations and individuals expressing their beliefs and serving in society.

#### Constitutional Foundation

Nigeria's legal framework explicitly protects religious freedom through Section 38(1) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended):

"Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and in public or private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance."

The Constitution further guarantees that:

- No person in any educational institution shall be required to receive religious instruction or participate in ceremonies of faiths other than their own or those approved by their parents/guardians

- Religious communities maintain the right to provide religious instruction to their members in educational institutions they maintain
- Religious freedom extends to both private and public expressions of faith

Despite these robust constitutional protections, implementation gaps persist, creating a disconnect between legal guarantees and lived experiences of many Nigerians.

#### Strategic Mission and Structure

Led by National Director Joseph Bata Danbogi, the Directorate operates with a comprehensive strategy organized around four core pillars:

##### 1. Institutional Development and Monitoring

The Directorate works to develop frameworks that entrench religious freedom principles within Nigeria's institutional structures while maintaining vigilant monitoring of religious freedom practices nationwide. This approach ensures systematic documentation of both progress and violations across all faith communities.

##### 2. Research and Documentation

Through rigorous investigation methodology, the Directorate:

- Documents cases of religious freedom infringement throughout Nigeria
- Analyzes patterns of religious discrimination
- Tracks judicial, legislative, and customary developments affecting religious liberties
- Prepares evidence-based position papers to inform CLASFON's advocacy initiatives

##### 3. Education and Capacity Building

Recognizing education as essential to sustainable change, the Directorate:

#### 4. Advocacy and Public Engagement

The Directorate amplifies its impact through:

- Producing informative resources for government agencies, institutions, and religious bodies
- Contributing expertise to national policy discussions
- Participating in multi-stakeholder dialogues on religious coexistence
- Supporting legal interventions in precedent-setting cases

#### Addressing Implementation Challenges

Despite Nigeria's 63 years of independence and constitutional guarantees, the gap between legal protections and practical implementation of religious freedom remains concerning. The Directorate's work addresses this implementation deficit through strategic legal and educational interventions.

CLASFON fulfills its organizational mission "to practice law as a vocation and calling, and to use our calling as a tool for legal, social and economic engineering in society" by confronting religious extremism and injustice through this dedicated Directorate. All CLASFON members are encouraged to engage with at least one of the organization's nine directorates, with Religious Freedom serving as a cornerstone of its human rights work.

#### International Collaboration

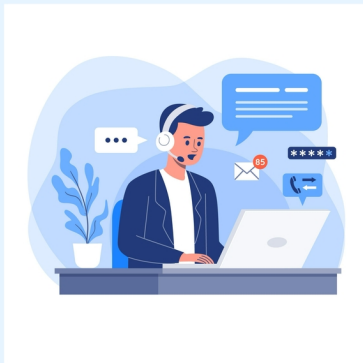
The Directorate welcomes partnerships with international organizations committed to advancing religious freedom globally. Through collaborative research, information sharing, and joint advocacy initiatives, CLASFON seeks to connect Nigeria's religious freedom landscape with global best practices.

#### Contact Information

For inquiries, collaborations, or to report religious freedom concerns:

- **National Director:** Joseph Bata Danboyi (+234 7032942441)
- **Secretary:** Matthew Godfree (+234 8139102473)

*The Directorate of Religious Freedom remains committed to ensuring that every Nigerian can freely practice their faith without fear of persecution or discrimination, contributing to the nation's journey toward greater inclusivity, tolerance, and adherence to constitutional principles.*





## ***"It is Unconstitutional, Unlawful, and a Dangerous Affront to Democracy"***

**— NBA Condemns President Tinubu's Suspension of Rivers Governor, Sim Fubara, Deputy and House Members**

BY ADMIN JOSH · PUBLISHED MARCH 18, 2025 ON BARRISTERNG

The Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) has sounded the alarm over what it describes as an unprecedented assault on democracy following President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's declaration of a state of emergency in Rivers State.

The NBA has strongly condemned the President's purported suspension of Governor Siminalayi Fubara, his deputy, and members of the Rivers State House of Assembly, calling it a flagrant violation of the Constitution and a dangerous precedent for Nigeria's democracy.

In a strongly worded statement, NBA President Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN, declared that the Constitution does not grant the President the power to remove elected officials under the guise of emergency rule.

"Such an action is an outright violation of democratic principles and Nigeria's federal structure," he said.

The NBA stressed that while the Constitution allows the President to declare a state of emergency under Section 305, it does not authorize the suspension or removal of elected officials. Any attempt to do so, the association warned, amounts to a dangerous usurpation of power and a direct attack on Nigeria's democratic system.

President Tinubu justified the emergency declaration by citing escalating political tensions and recent acts of pipeline vandalism, but the NBA has questioned whether these circumstances meet the constitutional threshold required to impose such drastic measures. The association pointed out that Section 305(3) of the 1999 Constitution outlines specific conditions under which a state of emergency can be declared, including war, external public order, or a natural disaster. According to the NBA, political disagreements and



legislative conflicts do not meet these criteria and should be resolved through legal and constitutional mechanisms rather than executive overreach.

The NBA has also reminded the National Assembly that under Section 305(2), a state of emergency proclamation is not automatically valid—it must be ratified by the legislature within a specified timeframe. Without legislative approval, the emergency declaration remains unconstitutional and ineffective. The association has urged the National Assembly to reject any unlawful attempt to remove the Rivers State Governor and his administration, warning that approving such a move would set a dangerous precedent that could be misused to unseat elected governments across the country.

Furthermore, the NBA has called on all stakeholders—including the judiciary, civil society, and the international community—to closely

monitor the situation in Rivers State and ensure that democratic principles are upheld. It has warned that allowing the unconstitutional removal of a governor under the pretext of emergency rule could pave the way for future abuses of power, eroding Nigeria's hard-won democratic gains.

The NBA has reaffirmed its commitment to upholding the rule of law and protecting Nigeria's democracy from unlawful political interference.

"A state of emergency is an extraordinary measure—not a political weapon,"

the association declared. The NBA also vowed to resist any attempt to subvert constitutional governance and has called on all relevant authorities to act in accordance with the law. The Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) has taken due notice of the declaration of a state of emergency in Rivers State by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, as contained in his address to the nation today, 18th March 2025. This declaration according to the President is due to the prevailing political tension in the state and due to the "vandalization of pipelines between yesterday and today." This development has far-reaching constitutional and democratic implications, particularly in light of the provisions of Section 305 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), which governs the procedure for the proclamation of a state of emergency and which the President purported to have relied upon. Section 305 of the Constitution indeed vests the President with the power to declare a state of emergency, the Section stipulates strict conditions and procedural safeguards that must be followed to ensure that such extraordinary measures do not infringe on democratic governance and fundamental human rights.

The NBA is of the opinion that for a state of emergency to be validly declared in a state, the facts and circumstances enumerated in Section 305 subsections (3)(c), (d) and (e)), of the Constitution, must be fulfilled. These circumstances include: (c) actual breakdown of public order and public safety in the Federation or any part of such extent as to require extraordinary measures to restore peace and security. (d) a clear and present danger of an actual breakdown of public order and public safety in the Federation or any part thereof requiring extraordinary measures to avert such danger. (e) an occurrence or imminent danger or the occurrence of any disaster or national calamity affecting the community or a section of the community of the Federation."

For a state of emergency to be declared, Section 305(3) of the Constitution outlines specific conditions, including:

1. War or external aggression against Nigeria.
2. Imminent danger of invasion or war
3. A breakdown of public order and safety to such an extent that ordinary legal measures are insufficient.
4. A clear danger to Nigeria's existence.
5. Occurrence of any disaster or natural calamity affecting a state or a part of it.
6. Such other public danger that constitutes a threat to the Federation.

The NBA questions whether the political crisis in Rivers State has reached the level of a complete breakdown of law and order warranting the declaration of a state of emergency. We think not! Political disagreements, legislative conflicts, or executive-legislative tensions do not constitute a justification for emergency rule. Such conflicts should be resolved through legal and constitutional mechanisms, including the judiciary, rather than executive fiat.

The essence of a state of emergency as can be seen from Section 11(1) of the Constitution is to empower the National Assembly to make laws for the Federation or any part thereof with respect to the maintenance and securing of public safety and public order and

The declaration which the President stated was to forestall further breakdown of law and order in the State bedevilled by political crisis for almost a year now, does not meet the threshold stated in Section 305 of the Constitution. Thus, the purpose or objective of the declaration of a state of emergency by a President is to among other things enable the Federal Government to take extraordinary measures to restore peace and security to such a state, and forestall a clear and present danger of an actual breakdown of public order and public safety in the state requiring extraordinary measures to avert such danger, and not to suspend, take over or assume governance over the state. This is clearly reinforced by Section 11(4) of the Constitution which provides that "Provided that nothing in this Section shall be construed as conferring on the National Assembly power to remove the Governor or the Deputy Governor of the State from the office".

The power given to the President under Section 305 of the Constitution does not empower the President to suspend a Governor, Deputy Governor or other democratic organs of government. By the clear provision of Section 11 of the Constitution, while "the National Assembly may make laws for the Federation or any part thereof with respect to the maintenance and securing of public safety and public order and providing, maintaining and securing of such supplies and services as may be designated by the National Assembly as essential supplies and services", there is nowhere the President is empowered or authorised to suspend other elected State officials or legislature. It is therefore unconstitutional for the President to purport to have the power to suspend the Governor and his Deputy as well as suspend the House of Assembly for six months or any period whatsoever.

While we concede that the National Assembly may make laws for a state in which a state of emergency has been declared, we reiterate that the Rivers State House of Assembly could still make laws for the state. This is why

why it is expressly provided in Section 11(2) of the Constitution that "Nothing in this section shall preclude a House of Assembly from making laws with respect to the matters referred to in this section, including the provision for maintenance and securing of such supplies and services as may be designated by the National Assembly as essential supplies and services."



The NBA is therefore gravely concerned about the purported suspension by the President of the Governor of Rivers State, the Deputy Governor, and the Members of the Rivers State House of Assembly for six months. We have no doubt the pronouncement in this regard is unconstitutional.

The 1999 Constitution does not grant the President the power to suspend or otherwise prevent an elected governor, deputy governor, or members of a state's legislature from exercising the functions of their offices, under the guise of a state of emergency. Rather, the Constitution provides clear procedures for the removal of a governor and deputy governor as per Section 188. Similarly, the removal of members of the House of Assembly and dissolution of parliament is governed by constitutional provisions and electoral laws, none of which appear to have been adhered to in the present circumstances. These provisions have not been followed in this instance.



We reiterate that a declaration of emergency does not automatically dissolve or suspend elected state governments. The Constitution does not empower the President to unilaterally remove or replace elected officials—such actions amount to an unconstitutional usurpation of power and a fundamental breach of Nigeria's federal structure. The NBA firmly asserts that the situation in Rivers State, though politically tense, does not meet the constitutional threshold for the removal of elected officials.

The purported suspension of Governor Fubara, his Deputy, and members of the Rivers State House of Assembly is therefore unconstitutional, unlawful, and a dangerous affront to our nation's democracy. The same goes for the appointment of an Administrator to govern the State. The Constitution neither justifies the respective suspensions nor the appointment of an Administrator. These provisions provide that a state of emergency declared by the President does not assume automatic validity. It requires legislative ratification within a defined timeframe to remain in effect. The NBA, therefore, emphasizes that the National Assembly should not approve the declaration of a state of emergency in Rivers State as the same is unconstitutional.

In light of the foregoing, **the Nigerian Bar Association:**

- a. Calls on the President to rescind the part of his declaration suspending of Governor Siminalayi Fubara and his Deputy and the Rivers State House of Assembly for a period of six months as the same is unconstitutional.
- b. Calls on the President to ensure strict adherence to constitutional provisions in implementing the state of emergency and to act within the framework of the law. Any deviation from the laid-down constitutional process would set a dangerous precedent for democratic governance in Nigeria.
- c. Urges the National Assembly to perform its constitutional duty diligently by independently reviewing the President's proclamation

and ensuring that it meets the legal and factual requirements before granting any approval as well as refusing approval to the parts of the declaration we have shown to have violated the Constitution. In fact, the National Assembly must critically examine whether the crisis in Rivers State justifies such extreme measures and whether the suspension of elected officials aligns with constitutional provisions.

d. Warns against arbitrary executive actions that may undermine the rule of law or result in excessive use of force by security agencies under the guise of enforcing emergency measures. The rights of citizens must be always protected, even in situations of emergency.

e. Emphasizes the need for political dialogue and institutional solutions to address the underlying issues fuelling the crisis in Rivers State. Resorting to emergency rule should not become a default mechanism for resolving political conflicts, as democracy thrives on dialogue, respect for the rule of law, and adherence to due process.

f. Encourages all stakeholders, including the judiciary, civil society, and the international community, to closely monitor the situation in Rivers State to ensure that fundamental rights, democratic principles, and the independence of institutions are not compromised.

The NBA remains committed to upholding the Constitution, defending democratic governance, and ensuring that the rule of law prevails in Nigeria. A state of emergency is an extraordinary measure that must be invoked strictly within constitutional limits. The removal of elected officials under the pretext of emergency rule is unconstitutional and unacceptable.

We call on all relevant authorities to act in accordance with the law and the best interest of the country. Nigeria's democracy must be protected at all costs, and the Constitution must be upheld as the supreme legal authority in all circumstances.

**Mazi Afam Osigwe, SAN**  
*President, Nigerian Bar Association*

# CASE REVIEW:

## MR SUNDAY JACKSON

### I. Introduction & Case Background

Mr. Sunday Jackson, a Christian farmer, has been sentenced to death by the Nigerian Supreme Court for defending himself against an armed Fulani herdsman attacker in 2015. Despite sustaining injuries, Jackson overpowered his attacker, resulting in the latter's death. In 2021, after spending over six years in pre-trial detention, Jackson was sentenced to death. On March 7, 2025, the Supreme Court upheld his conviction, despite glaring legal and constitutional irregularities. His case has garnered international attention, with legal experts and human rights advocates highlighting the injustice of the trial and the broader implications for religious and ethnic tensions in Nigeria.

### II. Legal Issues & Constitutional Analysis

#### Right to Self-Defense Under Nigerian Law

Self-defense is a fundamental legal principle enshrined in Nigerian law. Section 32(3) of the Criminal Code Act provides that a person is not criminally responsible for using reasonable force in defending themselves from an unlawful attack. However, in Jackson's case, the courts failed to apply this principle adequately, effectively criminalizing his attempt to save his own life.



### Procedural Irregularities in Trial and Appeal

The trial proceedings were marred by several procedural breaches. A major infraction was the trial court's failure to deliver judgment within 90 days after the adoption of final written addresses, as required by the Nigerian Constitution. Instead, judgment was delayed by 167 days, violating Jackson's right to a fair and expeditious trial.

### Violation of Constitutional Rights

Jackson's prolonged pre-trial detention of over six years before sentencing contravenes the provisions of Section 35(4) of the 1999 Constitution, which mandates that criminal trials be conducted within a reasonable time-frame. This delay constitutes a miscarriage of justice and a violation of his fundamental human rights.

### III. Statutory & Case Law Review

#### Comparative Analysis of Similar Cases

Numerous cases in Nigeria and globally have upheld self-defense as a legitimate defense to homicide. In *Ugwu v. State* (2013) LPE-LR-20017(SC), the Nigerian Supreme Court emphasized the necessity for courts to properly evaluate claims of self-defense. Similarly, in *DPP v. Morgan* (1976) AC 182, the UK House of Lords affirmed that a defendant's honest belief in the need for self-defense must be considered. Jackson's conviction starkly contrasts with these precedents.

### Precedents on Fair Trial Rights

The African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights has ruled in *Lohé Issa Konaté v. Burkina Faso* (2001) A.C.H.R. 40, 41 (2001), emphasizing the right to a fair trial and the importance of a timely judgment.

ina Faso (2014) that delayed judicial processes infringe upon the right to a fair trial. Jackson's case, marked by excessive delays and procedural inconsistencies, aligns with similar cases where convictions were overturned due to due process violations.

#### **IV. Human Rights & International Law Nigeria's Obligations Under International Treaties**

Nigeria is a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). Both treaties guarantee the right to a fair trial, protection against arbitrary detention, and the right to life. The upholding of Jackson's death sentence contravenes these international legal obligations.

#### **UN Positions on Fair Trial Rights and the Death Penalty**

The United Nations Human Rights Committee has repeatedly condemned the imposition of the death penalty in cases where fair trial standards are not met. The UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary, or Arbitrary Executions has criticized cases like Jackson's, where individuals are sentenced without due consideration of self-defense claims and procedural fairness.

#### **V. Historical & Societal Context The Fulani Herdsmen Conflict and Religious Persecution Concerns**

The Fulani herdsmen crisis has fueled tensions between Muslim herders and Christian farmers, particularly in Northern Nigeria. Reports from organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch indicate that Christian farmers have been disproportionately targeted, with the government and judiciary often failing to protect them. Jackson's case is emblematic of this broader issue, where victims of violence are criminalized instead of receiving justice.

#### **The Role of the Judiciary in Politically Sensitive Cases**

The Nigerian judiciary has been criticized for succumbing to political and societal pressures in cases involving religious and ethnic conflicts. The perceived bias in Jackson's trial

raises concerns about the independence and impartiality of the judicial system in cases involving vulnerable groups.

#### **VI. Legal Remedies & Recommendations Possible Legal Recourse**

Jackson's legal team should explore options such as:

**Petition for Clemency:** The Governor of Adamawa State has the constitutional authority to grant clemency under Section 212 of the 1999 Constitution.

**Appeal to Regional Human Rights Courts:** The case could be taken to the ECOWAS Court of Justice or the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights to challenge the procedural violations and denial of fair trial rights.

**International Advocacy:** Engaging international legal bodies and human rights organizations can increase pressure on the Nigerian government to rectify the miscarriage of justice.

**Policy Recommendations for Legal Reforms**  
**Judicial Accountability:** Stricter enforcement of constitutional time limits for delivering judgments.

**Protection for Self-Defense Claims:** Clearer legislative protections to ensure self-defense is adequately considered in homicide cases.

**Independent Oversight of Capital Cases:** Establishing an independent legal review committee to oversee death penalty cases and prevent wrongful convictions.

#### **VII. Conclusion**

Mr. Sunday Jackson's case represents a severe miscarriage of justice and a failure of Nigeria's legal system to uphold fundamental human rights. The violations of due process, denial of a fair trial, and disregard for self-defense protections underscore the need for urgent legal reforms. As international attention grows, there is a pressing need for intervention from legal practitioners, human rights organizations, and policy-makers to prevent the execution of an innocent man. Immediate steps must be taken to rectify this injustice and ensure that the principles of justice and human rights are upheld in Nigeria's judicial system.

# Professional Development Opportunities for Nigerian Lawyers in the 21st Century Global World

NWAFOR IFEANYICHUKWU EMMANUEL

## Introduction

The legal Profession has undergone significant changes over the years. This has been necessitated by the ever rapidly changing world. It is therefore pertinent that Lawyers seeking to stay relevant must be commercially aware of the rapidly changing climate that society and technology has deemed fit to bring our way. This is particularly true for lawyers in Nigeria where the profession has undergone significant transformation in the 21st century, driven by globalization, technological advancement, and evolving client expectations. Nigerian lawyers today face both unprecedented challenges and opportunities in an increasingly interconnected global legal landscape. To remain competitive and relevant, legal practitioners must continuously develop their skills, knowledge, and professional networks beyond traditional boundaries. It is in a bid to position Nigerian lawyers to be uniquely suited to face this challenges head-on, weather the storm and emerge victorious that necessitated this article.

## International Legal Education and Certification

### Foreign LLM Programs and Specialized Certifications

Nigerian lawyers can significantly enhance their credentials through postgraduate education abroad. The truth is, technology has made the entire world one global village, and as such, there is no limit to what a lawyer in Nigeria can achieve in the global stage if they position themselves for it. Prestigious universities in the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, Australia, and increasingly, Asia and continental Europe offer specialized LLM programs tailored to various practice areas that

can enable lawyers stand the test of time, and give a full account of themselves whenever the need arises. The Continuing Legal Education always organized is a golden opportunity to remain abreast with changes in the world. Many of these programs offer scholarships specifically targeting African legal professionals, such as the Chevening Scholarships (UK), Fulbright Scholarships (US), Commonwealth Scholarships etc..



## Online Learning and Remote Certification

The digital revolution has democratized access to international legal education:

- Prestigious universities now offer online LLM programs and certificates with flexible scheduling.
- Platforms like Coursera, edX, LinkedIn Learning etc. provide specialized legal courses taught by leading global institutions.
- Virtual attendance at international legal conferences and workshops has become increasingly mainstream.

Suffice it to say that there is no excuse for a lawyer that is interested in professional development not to get better.

## Global Professional Networks and Associations

Another very important way to remain particularly relevant is being an active member of various professional bodies. Most of these organizations provide access to various materials and conferences, where a lawyer can more or less, drink from the fountain of knowledge of those lawyers that have positively crossed the Rubicon in their field and are leading the charge in the global sphere. Some notable organizations are the International Bar Association (IBA), Commonwealth Lawyers Association (CLA), International Association of Young Lawyers (AIJA), African Bar Association, African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) initiatives, various practice-specific international associations in areas such as intellectual property, arbitration, energy law, sports law, immigration law (a personal favorite), maritime law etc. The world has seen the emergence of many new areas that lawyers can be the difference maker in the field. The world is our oyster, we just have to take it.



## Technology and Legal Innovation

It will be ludicrous not to highlight the ever-growing trend, the increasing importance that Artificial Intelligence and Technology in general plays in our profession. Technological competence has become essential for legal practice. Some things that

would have been seen as an anomaly, are now receiving wide spread approval like, E-discovery platforms and document automation, Legal research software and AI-assisted legal tools, Virtual courtroom technologies, Blockchain and smart contract applications, to mention but a few.

## Legal Tech Entrepreneurship

The question, "Is law practice a business or a profession" is beginning to age like fine wine, with numerous discourses on it. Nigerian lawyers are however, increasingly establishing themselves as legal tech innovators. There are various tech related platforms having lawyers as the pioneers. This can be continued through; Development of Africa-focused legal tech solutions, Participation in legal tech incubators and accelerators, Partnerships with global legal tech companies to adapt solutions for African markets etc.

One of the beauties of this century is that it presents lawyers with opportunities to work remotely. Lawyers can leverage on this to make use of platforms that offers remote opportunities like upwork, flexjobs etc. to further complement the theoretical with practical application

## Specialization in Emerging Practice Areas

Many amazing practice areas are rising from the ashes like a phoenix being reborn. This thus presents lawyer with the perfect window of opportunity to be a rising star. In law, the opportunities are limitless. Some of these areas are;

- i. International Arbitration and Alternative Dispute Resolution.
- ii. Cross-Border Practice Areas like energy and natural resources law, International finance and capital markets, telecommunications and technology law, International trade and customs, Entertainment and sports law, climate change and environmental law, immigration law etc.
- iii. International Development and Human Rights.
- iv. Professional Exchange Programs and Secondments. An example that quickly comes to mind was the collaboration by the Nigerian



Bar that afforded lawyers the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in some global firms.

v. Judicial and Governmental Exchanges with various international bodies.

vi. Academic and Research Fellowships.

• Coincidentally, Nigeria's status as Africa's largest economy creates unique advantages that can be leveraged on like being a leader in African legal harmonization initiatives and a gateway to West African legal markets among others



### **Innovation in Local Practice with Global Standards**

Successful Nigerian lawyers increasingly implement international best practices in local law firms and develop global service standards while maintaining cultural competence. Most of the top tier firms are practical examples of this.

### **Strategic Professional Development Planning**

#### **Continuous Legal Education**

Beyond mandatory requirements, strategic CLE involves focusing on international and comparative law, mastering emerging technologies and innovation, developing cross-cultural communication skills for global business environments, and acquiring foreign language proficiency relevant to target markets to enhance competitive advantage and client service capabilities.

### **Personal Branding and Global Visibility**

Creating international recognition through publication in international legal journals, delivering speaking engagements at global conferences, establishing a digital presence through legal blogs and social media, and taking on leadership roles in international professional associations to enhance visibility and credibility in the global legal community.

### **Mentorship and Sponsorship**

Building relationships with established international practitioners through formal mentorship programs offered by bar associations, leveraging alumni networks from foreign education institutions, engaging in practice-specific mentoring initiatives, and securing sponsorship for international opportunities that can open doors to global legal practice and career advancement.

### **Conclusion**

The 21st century presents unprecedented opportunities for Nigerian lawyers willing to embrace global perspectives and continuous professional development. By strategically pursuing international education, building cross-border networks, embracing technological innovation, and developing specialized expertise, Nigerian legal professionals can position themselves at the forefront of Africa's integration into the global legal marketplace. As Nigeria continues to assert its economic and political leadership on the continent, its legal professionals have the opportunity to shape not only the domestic legal landscape but also to influence international legal norms and practices. The path to global relevance requires investment in ongoing professional development, cultural adaptability, and a commitment to international best practices while maintaining the unique perspectives and experiences that Nigerian lawyers bring to the global legal community.

Nigerian lawyers who successfully navigate these professional development pathways will be well-positioned to lead Africa's growing influence in the global legal profession, representing clients across borders and contributing to the evolution of international legal frameworks in the decades ahead.

# CLASFON REGIONAL CONFERENCE 2025 DETAILS



CHRISTIAN LAWYERS'  
FELLOWSHIP OF  
NIGERIA

CRC  
25

Thine  
Kingdom  
MATTHEW 6:13

## CLASFON REGIONAL CONFERENCE 2025

# Thine IS THE Kingdom

← MATTHEW 6:13 →

FROM 6TH - 10TH OF AUGUST

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*A new legal profession anchored on Christ*

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Your partnership is invaluable as we strive to be faithful witnesses of Christ in the legal profession.

## PRAYER POINTS

Please join us in praying for the following:

- **National and Regional Conferences:** That these events will be fruitful and inspire members to deeper commitment in the legal profession.
- **For Faithful Witnesses:** That all members will be steadfast in their faith and serve as true ambassadors of Christ in their legal practices.

## CLOSING THOUGHTS

As we move forward into 2025, let us keep our eyes on the Kingdom of God and our hearts set on reflecting His love, justice, and righteousness in all we do. Together, we can make a significant difference in the legal profession and in society. Stay blessed, stay inspired, and continue to be a faithful witness in the legal community.

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With warm regards,  
**The CLASFON Media and Publicity Team.**