

# Nigeria's Challenges to Democratic Governance in the wake of Political Transition

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**Abstract:** *There is no denying that systemic dysfunction and instability have posed the biggest obstacles to national progress. Over the years, it appeared that efforts to bring about political stability and, by extension, democratisation in Nigeria had failed. Politicians' threats, most notably their misuse of the constitution and disregard for democratic principles, two key pillars of democratic stability and governance, appear to have put the democratic system to the test. This essay aims to investigate the nature and characteristics of the fourth republic's political transition, the subsequent constitutional abuse committed by politicians throughout these years of democratic practise, and their apparent consequences for the continued existence of democracy in Nigeria today. Data was acquired from papers and other pertinent secondary sources, and the study follows the Liberal Democratic Theory, which is the foundation for the democratic system and ideals. The document makes many recommendations, including that internal party democracy be respected when selecting candidates and that the legislative and executive branches of government uphold the rule of law and adhere to the constitution.*

**Keyword:** Political Transition, Democratic Government, Constitutionalism

## Background of Study

A major political shift always takes place when a country goes from dictatorial military control to open political struggle between competing political parties under a democratic system. Considering the tumult and complexity surrounding politics and the quest for political power under civilian government in Nigeria, the situation remains essentially the same. The nondemocratic leadership that lacks the attributes of effective government under Nigeria's fourth dispensation poses the biggest obstacle to democratic transition. These leaders are distinct from those who fought for this nation's independence, which was won in 1960, and who created the First Republic in 1963.

Unfortunately, the political leadership at the levels of the executive, the legislature, and their political appointees and members of their cabinet are found wanting in unprecedented and massive corruption, embezzlement, and looting of public funds intended for developmental projects and employment opportunities in the twenty-three years since the return to democracy and the inauguration of the fourth republic in Nigeria. Massive unemployment, extreme poverty, appalling living conditions, and rising crime rates are the results, and they are nearly dragging Nigeria to its knees.

Despite the most typical characteristic of instability associated with it, the popular preference for democratic administration in Nigeria has not been deterred by this. Over the years, Nigeria's attempts at democratic government have been marred by failures. Perhaps the failure can be correctly attributed to the nature of Nigerian politicians and the widespread misunderstanding of what democratic administration actually entails. It is, to put it mildly, unarguable that the misuse of the constitution and disrespect for democratic principles by individuals in Nigeria's political and power circles led to democratic instability. When laws are broken, corruption results, yet the offenders are never punished. Over time, as poverty increases, the nation has experienced an increase in insecurity and political unrest generally.

The overwhelming manipulation of the court and judicial process, the contempt for accountability, and the legalising of corruption, especially by self-centred government officials, is some of the explanations for Nigeria's problematic democratic governance and constitutional situation.

Without a doubt, Nigeria's attempts at democratisation and national development since independence have been beset by the difficulties of discontinuity, changes, and challenges, as well as disappointments, failure, and crises that characterise a general political instability. The First, Second, and Third Republics' civilian administrations falling and being replaced by military dictatorships provide a clear explanation for the aforementioned situation. Nigeria is without a doubt experiencing a severe democratic recession.

With the People's Democratic Party (PDP) serving sixteen years and the All Progressives Congress (APC) serving seven, the twenty-three years since the restoration to democracy in 1999 have been far from the principles of accountability, transparency, and good governance. The majority of Cabinet members, Ministers, political advisors, and other office holders were not chosen based on merit. They were swiftly "cleared" by the National Assembly after being selected on the basis of "political imperatives" (Musa, 2013).

Therefore, it follows that the same group of politicians, or "locusts," who turned Nigeria into a "drought republic," proceeded to use previously unheard-of levels of corruption, fraud, and general economic misappropriation and waste mania to control the government. Due to this, there is widespread poverty, deteriorating healthcare and educational systems, hardship, insecurity, and overall political instability in the nation.

Therefore, the overall goals of this essay are to chronicle Nigeria's political transition from military control to a democratic government, paying particular attention to the obstacles the fourth republic faced. Some of these issues stem from the ruling elite's disregard for the constitution, widespread corruption, and theft of public funds, all of which have contributed to widespread poverty, appalling living conditions, crimes, and general insecurity as people struggle to survive in the harsh conditions of poverty.

### **Review of Literatures**

There has been much discussion over the military's role in Nigeria's quest for democratic administration that can be sustained. However, conceptually speaking, given its organisational ideals and innate tendencies, the military is the least prepared to further the cause of democracy. The struggle for democracy in Nigeria raises the paradoxical situation of an institution that is fundamentally anti-democratic being tasked with not only building but also demonstrating a clear commitment to an enduring social and political order (Musa, 2013).

Observing the fast nature of the political transition, notably by the military in Nigeria, would definitely raise doubts about the military administrations' attempts to achieve real democracy. However, the notion of insincerity is pervasive, which partly explains the seeming scepticism and even cynicism toward Nigeria's transitional programmes. The idea that it would be unreasonable for persons in positions of political influence to truly launch initiatives that would assure their own self-liquidation might serve as the basis for the perception of insincerity (Onuoha, 1994).

Theoretically, transition refers to a fundamental or qualitative shift in the state of being of the relevant entity, the revolutionary overturning of the social structures and relationships that are currently in place and their replacement with a significantly higher-quality, more advanced network of ideas and symbols (IDEA, 2001).

A political transition entails a change in the leadership structure, whether or not there is also a significant socio-political and economic rebuilding. It requires either grafting new values onto an existing social order or, even worse, a rejection of new values and protection of outdated, even hated, improper practises and political behaviour patterns (Onuoha, 1994).

Given that the same group of leaders continue to dominate the Nigerian political landscape, political transformation there was more of an opposition to new principles and a defence of the old. The Abdussalami military regime's 1999 political transition to democracy in Nigeria appears to have been influenced by this. Due to the newly elected civilian and democratic authorities' apparent constitutional violations and disdain for the law, led by a former military general named Obasanjo, the polity fell into a significant socio-political deadlock, which resulted in the economic crisis and current insecurity in Nigeria.

The term "political transition" refers to the whole transformation of Nigeria's sociocultural, economic, and political ideals, experiences, and processes under societal change from the first day of colonial contact to the present. No matter how thorough, protracted, and extensive the political transition programme may be, it is more than just a mere military transfer of political authority to an elected administration. Nigeria's current political transition is more like a class war in a developing society.

The class nature of the political elite in Nigeria today has to be understood. The self-serving nature of the ruling elite compels those in positions of authority to ignore the fundamental problems plaguing the educational system, including the six-month strike by university professors, the collapse of the national power grid, rising levels of poverty, and rising crime waves across the nation. If Nigeria's issues are to be resolved, they must be approached from the appropriate angles. Checking the moral fibre of the governing class by the electorates is essential to achieving this.

The transition programme under Babangida offers the finest historical perspective on Nigeria's political change. The dictatorship employed a number of tactics to maintain control without truly launching a meaningful transition strategy that would have led to true democratisation. After a five-year total ban on political activity was abolished in 1989, more than forty political organisations emerged, with thirteen of them requesting registration with the National Electoral Commission. However, the Commission only

suggested six that, in accordance with the regulations, may complete part of the necessary conditions for registration. Surprisingly, the government disbanded these six registered political organisations after accusing them of engaging in actions that may foster nationalism (Musa, 2013).

Two political parties that were more of a burden on Nigerians were founded, registered, and even supported by the government. This obviously runs completely counter to a real transition programme. These political organisations, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC), lacked a strong ideological base. This was a significant obstacle to democratisation and the political transition. Even the party manifestos, which were created by the government, were quite identical.

The annulment of the June 12, 1993, Presidential Election, which was contested by MKO Abiola of the SDP and Bashir Tofa of the NRC, showed the blatant failure of political transition in Nigeria politics, and this has been a growing obstacle to democratic governance and a real source of political instability in the nation.

Babangida was forced to reluctantly step aside and hastily establish an Interim National Government (ING) with Chief Ernest Shonekan, a Yoruba, as the Head of Government in order to placate the Yorubas. This was done in order to quell the uproar, chaos, and insecurity brought on by the annulment of the 1993 Presidential elections, also known as the June 12 crisis and the apparent tension in the country. The interim administration only lasted a brief time before being replaced by Abacha's second military rule. The new administration quickly convened a Constitutional Conference with delegates to discuss the country's political future after terminating all earlier transition programmes.

Later in 1996, in response to the Conference's discussion of a multi-party system for Nigeria, the Abacha junta held local government elections on a "Zero" party basis. There were five recognised political parties, and they were a crucial element of Abacha's ruling Provisional Ruling Council. Furthermore, the parties were used as pawns in a cruel and intricate military chess game to enable Abacha to succeed himself without necessarily going through the difficulties of an election.

This earned the name "Tazarce" in popular culture. When Abacha unexpectedly passed away on June 8, 1998, the scandalous process came to an end, and the Provisional Ruling Council chose Abdussalami Abubakar to take his place, triggering another political revolution (Musa, 2013).

Abubakar established an Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), which established rules for the registration of political parties, conducted local government elections in December 1998 and general elections in 1999 in a little under nine months, resulting in the establishment of the Fourth Republic under retired military general Obasanjo of the Peoples' Democratic Party. This political transition appeared to be the quickest in Nigerian history.

The results of this hasty political transition under Abubakar's military dictatorship are as follows: First, political parties were formed without a defined ideology or popular mandate. Second, the emergency circumstances prevented true Nigerians from becoming members of the parties; after all, many people had doubts about the military's dedication to the transition plan.

Thirdly, opportunists and inexperienced Democrats assumed control of the party caucuses, and fourthly, it caused a significant spike in corruption in the Fourth Republic's leadership. Additionally, it became clear that these ideologically devoid political organisations lacked internal democracy because candidates for delicate elected posts were pushed on the populace rather than chosen democratically. Election fraud, election-related violence, and a general disrespect for the constitution and constitutionalism all became hallmarks of the administration.

Therefore, it would appear that Nigeria's democratic development in the twenty-first century is failing, if not stopping, in large part due to departure from the fundamental concepts and values of representative, liberal democracy. This deviation can be seen in the way political parties operate, particularly in the ways and means by which they identify and select candidates for elective positions as well as the ways and means by which they and their chosen candidates participate in the electoral process and exercise governance once they are "elected." (Jega, 2021).

## **Theoretical Framework**

Given that the organic connection between democracy and constitutionalism is essential in the paradigm of politics and democratic practise, the research uses the liberal democratic theory. In other words, the democratic political system of Western liberalism contains the current conception of the constitution.

Liberal democracy is a system of governance that adheres to the ideals of classical liberalism and is based on the liberal political ideology. Elections between several different political parties, the division of powers among the three parts of government, the

application of the rule of law in all aspects of public life, the existence of a market economy with private property, and the equal protection of all individuals' civil and political rights as well as their human and civil liberties are its distinguishing features. Liberal democracies frequently use a constitution to outline the powers of the government and establish the social compact in order to define the system in practise. Liberal democracy evolved over the 20th century into the preeminent political structure in the world (Filodiritto, 2020).

In a liberal democracy, the fourth estate is the media, which stresses the separation of powers, an independent judiciary, and a system of checks and balances between the arms of government. Liberal democracies are more likely to stress the significance of upholding the rule of law. Only laws that have been approved and implemented in line with established protocol and are in writing and publicly available are properly used by the government. Federalism, also known as vertical separation of powers, is a common method used by democracies to limit abuse and enhance public participation by splitting authority between local, provincial, and federal administrations.

Liberal democracy is typically thought of as a form of governance in which citizens freely elect their leaders and those leaders are obligated by law to uphold citizens' rights. However, there are a broad variety of opinions on the definitions of consent and individual rights, the appropriate forms of government for upholding popular rule and protecting rights, as well as the kinds and efficacy of constitutional restraints within those forms of government. However, liberal democracy prevails in the majority of the industrialised world. According to Cengage (2022); liberal democracy is distinguished by the least of the following:

- Engagement in politics among adult citizens, especially those who belong to minority racial, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and economic groupings.
- Elections that are held often and in secret.
- Individuals have broad freedom to create and support political parties, and each party is allowed to express its opinions and establish a government.
- Governments that have the power to amend, interpret, and apply the law (within certain bounds) to the preferences of the majority.
- Effective protections for personal and minority rights, particularly in areas like equality before the law and freedom of the press, expression, conscience, and religion
- Constitutional protections, such as the separation of powers, provide restraints on the limited scope of governmental authority (so that all executive, legislative, and judicial powers are not, in effect, exercised by the same person or institution).

In a similar vein, liberalism is seen as a philosophy of intellectual openness that rejects self-interest and other indications of injustice when formulating economic, political, and social policies. As a result, it accords special consideration to the constitution and constitutionalism in society while also excluding such considerations (Nnoli, 2003).

The liberal democratic theory of representation, which is thought to be the foundation of contemporary constitutional democracy, has its philosophical roots in the idea that since man is a creature of reason, he can recognise his own interests and opinions while also being aware of the broader claims of the community, some of which may pose a threat to democratic governance and the advancement of the country. In general and based on the aforementioned, man will exercise his right to vote responsibly and is therefore allowed to participate in the selection of representatives (Hoult, 1969).

Even if the term of constitutionalism is broad, it may help us better comprehend how crucial it is to democratic administration. A set of political beliefs, legal precepts, and institutional tools known as constitutionalism were developed with the intention of limiting man's propensity to abuse political authority or his propensity to become corrupted by it. However, when one examines the idea, constitutionalism serves to limit authority because of its liberal premise and modern application (Henkey, 1998).

Constitutionalism is a notion that encompasses much more than simply adopting unfinished constitutional papers in constitutional democracies. Constitutionalism as a philosophy demands that the elected government be receptive to the needs of the people, as well as to their rights, well-being, and security. Constitutionalism actually develops in a democratic setting as a way of life, not only as a procedure.

## **Discussions**

The journey of political transition has been met with the challenges of disregard for constitutional provisions, insecurity, massive corruption, as well as poverty and poor living conditions.

### ***Disregard for Constitutional Requirements***

The Federal Republic of Nigeria's Constitution is regarded as the highest legislation and the cornerstone of its system of governance. To this purpose, all authorities and individuals inside the Federal Republic of Nigeria are deemed to be bound by and respect its provisions as holy. The idea of separation of powers, which holds that each branch of government—the legislative, judicial, and executive—plays an equal role in administering a successful government, is another fundamental value stated in the constitution.

The expectation was that a democracy would automatically foster the rule of law more so than former military regimes. The hopes were undoubtedly dashed, as a number of odious developments that occurred during the brief periods of civil rule and are still evident in the current regime have demonstrated that democratic governments occasionally have constitutions but lack constitutionalism and the rule of law. This shows that disregard for the rule of law is not an exclusive trait of the military government (Akanbi & Shehu, 2012).

Members of the Justice Reform Project (JRP) are among those who have spoken out passionately against the ongoing contempt for the law because they think that Nigeria's public officials' continued misuse of their positions of authority is an aberration that has become well-known as a component of our society. They contend that the only real defence against the threat of oppression and improper influence that people in positions of authority would otherwise hold over the heads of common Nigerians is equality before the law (BusinessDay, 2020).

Gbadamo (2019) claims that since President Muhammadu Buhari's government began there have been several instances of blatant contempt for the law and disobedience of court rulings. The All Progressives Congress (APC)-led administration under Muhammadu Buhari, however, seems to have faced greater opposition than any of its forerunners due to violations of human rights and contempt for the rule of law. The government is currently dealing with criticisms over how it has handled cases against its opponents and critics, particularly that of Omoyele Sowore, the convener of #RevolutionNow and publisher of the online news outlet Saharareporters. This comes after a flurry of complaints against the government at the beginning of its first term about five years ago. The administration had a different opinion from the competent courts, which had determined on more than two times that Sowore should be freed on bond. The same holds true for Sheik Ibrahim El-Zakyzaky, the leader of the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN), popularly known as Shi'ite Muslims, and Colonel Sambo Dasuki, a former national security adviser (NSA). An effort to re-arrest Sowore in a courtroom during a legal proceeding at one time brought criticism for the Presidency and caused a lot of controversy both nationally and internationally. The government's disregard for court rulings is the worst stain on its reputation for protecting human rights. According to many, the government decides which court rulings it prefers to follow and which it doesn't.

Some legal experts assert that the administration has always been clear about its intentions regarding its relationship with the court. According to reports, President Buhari dislikes how people use the legal system to get out of "his venom" despite it being done in the name of the rule of law. Early in the administration, personnel from the State Security Service (SSS), also known as Department of State Service (DSS), went for several judges in a night-time raid on suspicion of illicit enrichment coming from the executive. This was a sign of things to come (Gbadamo, 2019).

### ***Insecurity in Nigeria***

All well-intentioned Nigerians are very concerned about the issue of insecurity, and the majority of them still wonder how the nation came to be in such a perilous scenario where no one is secure. What's more, the issue is becoming worse rather than better; it is now completely out of control. Nigeria's people's safety is threatened by a persistent phenomenon called insecurity.

Nation-building and national economic development are predicated on national security. This is due to the fact that calm countries draw in global investors, while domestic investors may freely operate the economy with few or no conflicts or worries. Every genuine progress can be accomplished and sustained only on the basis of security. In the last 15 years, Nigeria has had an unparalleled number of protests that have taken the form of kidnapping and abductions, armed robberies, bombings, and carnages of various sizes (Moronfolu, 2022).

Cybercrime, armed robbery, abduction, domestic violence, extrajudicial executions, herder-farmer disputes, ritual killings, and banditry are on the rise in the south-west of Nigeria. Ritual killings, commercial crime, separatist agitation, abduction, conflicts between herders and farmers, gunman assaults, and banditry are all common in the south-east. Threats from insurgency, abduction, and environmental unrest still exist in the south-south. The Boko Haram insurgency and the Islamic State in West Africa Province are to blame for the more than ten-year-old humanitarian disaster that has affected the north-east. Throughout the meanwhile, banditry, ethnoreligious murders, and illicit mining are pervasive in the northwest. Therefore, Nigeria's political attitude has become more tolerant of insecurity, which has resulted in thousands of fatalities, significant property damage, and loss of life (Agbelusi, 2022).



Nigeria's insecurity situation seems to have taken on greater and more complicated dimensions with the arrival of Boko Haram in 2002. Aside from the frequency and severity of violent assaults and massacres, Nigeria's insecurity condition is so widespread that there are few places to seek refuge. Both urban and rural residents face threats to their lives and property. Nearly every day, people live in fear. Some have suggested that the nation's shocking poverty is to blame for the current spike in insecurity. The country is now experiencing one of the worst economic downturns in the past 27 years with a youth unemployment rate of 32.5% (Moronfolu, 2022). The UN estimated that by the end of 2021, fighting with the insurgent groups had killed up to 450,000 people and evicted millions from their homes.

### *Massive Corruption in Nigeria*

The political elite did not place much emphasis on democracy as a goal since they just considered it as an instrument with no inherent worth to strive for. Therefore, politics was always the deadliest adversary of democracy. The political elite, who the people have a severe lack of confidence in, have over the years participated in large and unprecedented corruption, which had a domino effect on poverty and increased insecurity throughout the nation. Poverty, crime, insecurity, and overall instability in the nation are the inevitable results of taking money from the public treasury intended for employment and development programmes.

Despite the fact that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has investigated and prosecuted 11 of the 31 state governors it has found guilty of corruption, the organisation has only recorded two convictions, both of which were commuted without serving out the full terms of their sentences.

**Table 1: 11 Cases of Alleged Corruption by Former Nigerian Governors**

NO	STATES	CASES
1.	<b>Anambra State</b>	Willie Obiano, the former governor of Anambra State, was detained by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission on March 16, 2022, only hours after ceding control to his successor, Charles Soludo (EFCC). When Mr. Obiano was arrested by EFCC agents at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport in Lagos, he was en route to Houston, Texas in the United States and had been on the anti-graft agency's radar. The former governor was flown to the EFCC's Abuja headquarters shortly after his detention, but he was freed a few days later. The committee reportedly asked Mr. Obiano to explain his alleged participation in a suspected N42 billion fraud case and abuse of public funds, albeit the cause for his incarceration was never made public.
2.	<b>Zamfara State</b>	According to a story by PREMIUM TIMES dated February 2021, Mr. Yari had a protracted interview with investigators at the EFCC's Lagos office on an alleged effort to shift N300 billion unlawfully from a corporate account in a new generation bank. The details of the deal were murky, but sources informed this newspaper that Mr. Yari delivered a detailed testimony to the commission's agents before he was freed late on February 3rd. Additionally, PREMIUM TIMES first revealed how the commission once more invited Mr. Yari to show up for questioning at its Sokoto office on April 8. In a same vein, this publication detailed how Mr. Yari reportedly planned a N84 billion scam with Ahmed Idris, the beleaguered Accountant General of the Federation.
3.	<b>Abia State</b>	Theodore Orji, a senator in office and a former governor of Abia State who had been on the anti-corruption agency's radar, was detained alongside his son in August 2021 at the Nnamdi International Airport in Abuja. After spending hours being questioned at the EFCC headquarters in Abuja, he was given an administrative bail. He was however freed and told to come back to the EFCC office for more questioning. The EFCC is looking into Mr. Orji and his sons, Chinedu and Ogbonna, for suspected money laundering and abuse of public monies. When the ex-governor served as governor of Abia from 2007 to 2015, it was claimed that he got N500 million per month in security payments. According to the petition, the N500 million the former governor allegedly withdrew monthly was "not part of the security funds expended on the Nigerian Police, the Nigerian Army, DSS, Navy anti-Kidnapping Squad, anti-robbery Squad, purchase of security equipment and vehicles for the security agencies." The petitioners also accused Mr Orji's son, Chinedu, of owning about 100 accounts in different banks.
4.	<b>Nasarawa State</b>	The former governor of Nasarawa State, a sitting senator, and his wife were detained by the EFCC in July. Agents from the anti-graft organisation questioned the couple at their Abuja headquarters. Before being elected to the Senate for the Nasarawa South seat, Mr. Al-Makura

		served as governor from 2011 to 2019. He and his wife were detained by the EFCC on suspicion of taking part in the movement of illicit funds. When Mr. Al-Makura served as governor, it was discovered by PREMIUM TIMES that roughly 55 accounts managed by the couple and their businesses were engaged in the questionable transactions totaling billions of naira. In the two years before he took office, sources claim that not less than \$250 was deposited in one of the accounts. However, as soon as he was elected governor, significant deposits began to come in what appeared to be a planned manner. Businesses that are said to have completed contracts for the state government are said to have made several deposits into this domiciliary account as well as others.
5.	<b>Akwa-Ibom State</b>	Godswill Akpabio, the former governor of Akwa Ibom State, was initially implicated in corruption charges in 2015. Mr. Akpabio was accused of misusing his power after serving as governor from May 29, 2007, to May 29, 2015, and he afterwards appeared on the anti-corruption authority's list of corrupt people. The EFCC detained the former governor in October 2015, less than six months after he finished his second tenure, in response to a petition from Leo Ekpenyong, a lawyer and activist based in Abuja, who accused Mr. Akpabio of stealing from the Akwa Ibom state government. Mr. Akpabio, who held the position of governor at a period of strong oil income for the country, was accused of stealing about N100 billion from the oil-rich state; he has refuted this accusation.
6.	<b>Kwara State</b>	Abdulfatah Ahmed, the most recent governor of Kwara State, was detained by the EFCC for allegedly diverting N9 billion from the Kwara State government's funds between 2011 and 2019. He was interrogated by EFCC agents at their Abuja headquarters in May, but after spending two nights in their detention, he was freed on administrative bail. However, the EFCC has not filed charges in this instance.
7.	<b>Sokoto State</b>	Attahiru Bafarawa and Aliyu Wamakko, two political allies and former governors of Sokoto State, engaged in years of back-and-forth accusations involving a N15 billion fund. The former dragged the latter, who served as his deputy for eight years, to the anti-corruption agency for alleged mismanagement and abuse of office. In a petition from 2019, Mr. Bafarawa accused Mr. Wamakko, the present senator for Sokoto-North, of theft while they were both in office. Mr. Bafarawa urged the EFCC to look into Mr. Wamakko over the N15 billion Mr. Bafarawa allegedly left behind in the government's coffers in a plea to the agency's zonal head at the time, Ahmed Lateef, at the agency's Zonal Office in Sokoto.
8.	<b>Borno State</b>	2015 saw PREMIUM TIMES exclusively report on the EFCC's invitation of Ali Modu Sheriff, the former governor of Borno State. Later, he received an administrative bail. It was alleged that he misused N300 billion that his administration got from the Federation Account between 2003 and 2011; the anti-graft agency did not specify why he was detained, but sources told this outlet that was the reason. According to the Vanguard newspaper, the former governor was brought back to the EFCC's main office in Abuja in 2018 to respond to allegations of abusing his position to the tune of \$200 million while pretending to enforce a fake Boko Haram truce in a neighbouring nation in 2014.
9.	<b>Kano State</b>	The former governor of Kano State, Rabiu Kwankwaso, showed up at the EFCC headquarters in October to address accusations of fraud against him despite turning down several invitations. According to Vanguard, Mr. Kwankwaso's invitation was related to a complaint filed with the EFCC by a few retired officials from the Kano State Government alleging that the former governor mismanaged pension remittances totaling N10 billion between 2011 and 2015, which he diverted to pay for a housing project for his friends. Additionally, sources from the EFCC informed PREMIUM TIMES that the investigation is ongoing and it is still possible to file a lawsuit in 2022. Former Minister of Defense Mr. Kwankwaso is now a candidate for president with the New Nigeria People's Party.
10.	<b>Kwara State</b>	Bukola Saraki, a former Senate President, is the subject of an investigation by the EFCC for suspected financial offences, according to Ibrahim Magu, a former acting chairman of the organisation. The former governor of Kwara State, who served two terms as governor, questioned the former EFCC chairman's motivation for starting an inquiry into his time in office and said it was a "witch-hunt" against him. The EFCC investigated Mr. Saraki for an alleged conspiracy, misuse of power, misappropriation of public funds, theft, and money-laundering, much like it did with his successor, Mr. Ahmed. Additionally, the EFCC

		identified certain reportedly Mr. Saraki-owned homes at 15a, 15b, and 17 MacDonald Road, Ikoyi, Lagos.
11.	<b>Lagos State</b>	In an interview with This Day published in June of 2021, the EFCC Chairman, Abdulrasheed Bawa, claimed that Bola Tinubu, the APC's presidential candidate, was the subject of an asset disclosure probe. Many Nigerians have called for Mr. Tinubu's probe due to concerns surrounding his money source. A copy of a letter from the EFCC to the Code of Conduct Bureau requesting copies of Mr. Tinubu's asset disclosure form had been circulating on social media, despite the fact that the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami, denied any intention to investigate Mr. Tinubu. The letter, dated 6 November 2020, was signed by Mr. Bawa, the current Chairman of the EFCC, who was the zonal head of Lagos at the time, according to The Peoples Gazette, an online news source that first reported the story. Mr. Tinubu is alleged to have a stake in Alpha Beta Consulting and to have utilised the business to steal money from Lagos State. Dapo Aparu, a former managing director of the business, charged Mr. Tinubu and Akin Doherty, a former commissioner in Lagos, with money laundering, fraud, tax evasion, and a number of other corrupt activities in a 40-page document that was brought to a Lagos high court in 2020. A plea to the EFCC to investigate Mr. Tinubu over the source of money transported in bullion vans to his Ikoyi home on the night of the 2019 presidential election was also filed by Deji Adeyanju, the convener of Concerned Nigerians, on October 25, 2019. Over the years, the EFCC had rejected media inquiries about Mr. Adeyanju's petition against Mr. Tinubu's

Source: (Sanni, 2022)

Interestingly, a very good number of the corruption allegations are currently in litigation, in Nigeria today an approximate of three thousand, four hundred and eighty-seven cases in court and the top cases bother on issues of cybercrime, fraud, illegal oil dealings, and money laundering.

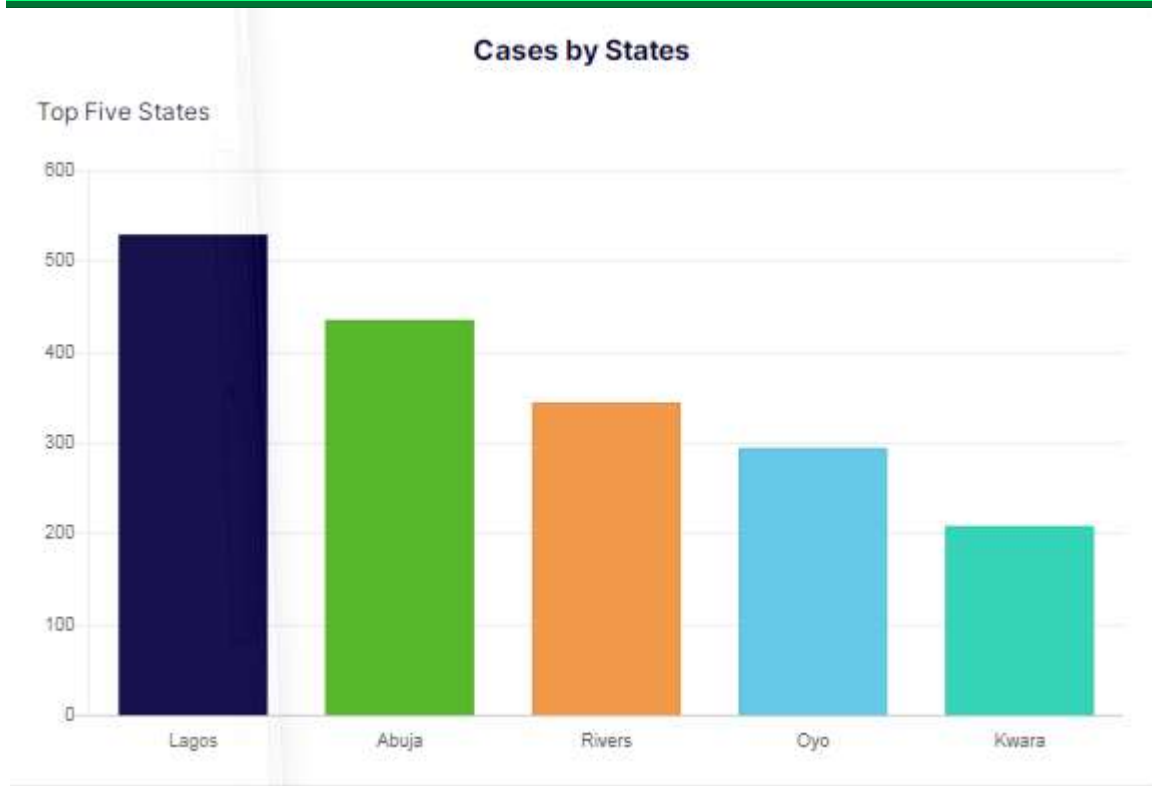
Fig. 2 Total Corruption/Crime Court Cases in Nigeria



Source: (Transparency International Corruption Cases Database, 2022)

Fig 3. Top 5 States with Highest Corruption/Crime Court Cases in Nigeria





*Source: (Transparency International Corruption Cases Database, 2022)*

From the data above, we can see that the top 5 states with cases have a total of 1815 cases of corruption and fraud in courts currently; this represents 52.2% of the total cases in court. Lagos state has a total of 530 cases representing 15.2% of the total cases in the country and 29.2% of the top five states. Abuja follows with a total of 436 case representing 12.5% of the total cases in the country and 24% of the top five states. Rivers State has a total of 345 cases representing 9.9% of the total cases and 19% of the top five states. Oyo state has 295 cases representing 8.6% of the total cases in court and 16.2% of the top five states. Finally, Kwara State has 209 cases representing 6% of the total cases in Nigeria and 11.5% of the top five states.

### **Poor Living Conditions**

According to a recent World Bank analysis titled "A Better Future for All Nigerians: Nigeria Poverty Assessment 2022," sluggish development, inadequate human capital, labour market flaws, and exposure to shocks are hindering Nigeria's efforts to reduce poverty. The study is the result of the World Bank's involvement with data and analytics related to poverty and inequality in Nigeria over the last two years. The Nigerian COVID-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey and the 2018–19 Nigerian Living Standards Survey (NLSS), which supplied the country with its first official estimates of poverty in almost a decade, are the primary sources used (NLPS). The World Bank worked with Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) to carry out these surveys. As many as 4 out of 10 Nigerians are estimated to live below the poverty line in the research, which compiles the most recent data on the characteristics and causes of poverty in Nigeria. Many Nigerians also lack access to basic amenities like electricity, clean water, and adequate sanitation, particularly in the north of the country. According to the survey, only 17% of Nigerian employees have the kind of wage occupations that can most effectively help people escape poverty, despite the fact that most of them are employed in small-scale domestic farms and non-farm businesses (Nasir, 2022).

According to the Nasir (2022), COVID-19 has exacerbated the consequences of climate and conflict shocks, which disproportionately affect Nigeria's poor. Despite this, the government offers little assistance to households. Families have started using risky coping mechanisms, such cutting back on their education and food intake, which could harm their human capital in the long run. These challenges affect some sections of Nigeria more than others; the report reflects this spatial inequity by giving information at the state level, which is critical given Nigeria's federal structure.

Over 80 million Nigerians live in poverty despite the country's stunning 205 million inhabitants. This is in accordance with the National Bureau of Statistics' report on the Nigerian Living Standards Survey. According to the available data, 40.09 percent of

Nigerians live in poverty. While just 18.04 percent of people live in poverty in metropolitan areas, up to 52.1% of people who live in rural regions are impoverished. The research also showed that the poverty headcount rate was highest in northern Nigeria. North-Eastern Nigeria had the highest average level of poverty across all geopolitical zones, while South Western Nigeria had the lowest. According to geopolitical zones, the average poverty headcount rate is as follows: North Central (42.7%), North East (71.86%), North West (64.84%), South East (42.44%), South South (21.28%), and South West (12.12 percent) (Adeyeye, 2020).

**Table 2: Average Poverty Headcount Rate by Geopolitical Zone**

GEOPOLITICAL ZONE	POVERTY HEADCOUNT RATE (%)
North-Central	42.70
North-East	71.86
North-West	64.84
South-East	42.44
South-South	21.28
South-West	12.12

*Source: (Adeyeye, 2020)*

Additionally, according to the above research, the states with the highest rates of poverty are Sokoto (87.73%), Taraba (87.72%), Jigawa (87.02%), Ebonyi (79.76%), Adamawa (75.41%), Zamfara (73.98%), Yobe (72.34%), Niger (66.11%), Gombe (62.31%), and Bauchi (61.53%).

On the other side, the lowest rates of poverty were found in Lagos (4.5%), Delta (6.02%), Osun (8.52%), Ogun (9.32%), Oyo (9.83%), Edo (11.99%), Ondo (12.52%), Anambra (14.78%), Kwara (20.35%), and Bayelsa (22.61%). In Nigeria, the poverty rate exceeds 50% in about 44% of the states. Inferentially, 16 of the 35 states and the FCT have a poverty rate of over 50%. Borno State was not included in the survey because some areas there were unsafe to visit.

## Conclusion

Evidently, there is a connection between the lack of integrity, accountability, and transparency in government, huge corruption, and the ensuing effects of the extreme poverty and insecurity that have plagued Nigeria for the past 23 years since the country's democratic transition. If Nigeria is to experience democratic stability in the future, these issues must be resolved.

Nigeria is currently experiencing severe democratic disarray as a result of the military rule of Abdussalami Abubakar's rushed and haphazard creation of political parties devoid of people-oriented philosophy and the nomination of undemocratic party candidates with personal agendas who view politics as a lucrative business opportunity.

Abuse of the constitution typically has negative effects, particularly on political stability, security, and economic growth. Although the difficulties with democratic administration throughout Nigeria's history of attempts to democratise could not be solely attributed to constitutional violations, the disregard for due process of law only made the issue worse.

Most individuals lower on the social scale would follow suit when the President and other powerful officials disobeyed the law and engaged in huge corruption. This has led to a violent increase in various fraudulent activities that nearly caused the banking industry to collapse, brought about insecurity of life and property, and general economic mania from both the public and politicians, which has led to general insecurity in the horrific forms of Boko-Haram, banditry, kidnappings, and abductions across the nation.

## Recommendations

After a careful consideration of the issues bothering on the political transition from military to democratic rule in Nigeria, this research therefore proposes the following recommendations:

1. To ingrain and protect stability in Nigerian governance, the Legislative and Executive branches of government urgently need to uphold the Rule of Law and adhere to constitutional requirements.
2. To ensure integrity and true representation, Nigerians must ensure democracy in the selection of candidates for elections and disqualify any unfit candidates in their local constituencies.
3. Regardless of position, class, or tribe, there must be a strong campaign against corruption, and those who are caught must be punished and brought to justice.
4. The populace must get appropriate and high-quality education from the government.
5. Effective measures for reducing poverty must be implemented by the government.

6. The Military and other security agencies must receive funds designated for security for the purchase of cutting-edge equipment, training, and welfare. The Government must also have the political will to employ contemporary security strategies in order to combat the threat of insecurity in the nation.

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