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JUDICIAL PRONOUNCEMENTS AND THE SUSTAINABILITY OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

Nwakodo, Udochukwu Precious [1]; Okpomechile, Chukwemeka Anthony [2]; Alum, Charity Nnenna PhD [3]
[1,3] Department of Public Administration, Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic, Aba
[2] Department of Public Administration, Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic Unwana
[1] preshy1973@gmail.com; [2] okpomechileanthony@yahoo.com

Abstract
The interpretation of Section 34(A)(i) and (ii) of the Electoral Decree No. 73 of 1977 by the Supreme Court on 26th September 1979 marked the beginning of active judicial involvement in Nigeria's political calculations in contemporary times. Such involvement has continued to increase and expand since the return to democratic governance in 1999. The contributions, influence and impact of the judiciary to politics and governance in the country are quite remarkable. Through its verdicts and pronouncements, the judiciary has created new laws, given new meanings to existing laws, clarified functions of government tiers and agencies, and curtailed abuses of powers as well as correcting electoral anomalies. Despite these, some of its recent decisions have elicited doubt and fears about its role in the sustainability of democratic governance in Nigeria. The study adopted a case – study analysis of some selects cases in which the Supreme Court made some unique interpretations and pronouncement recently. It was noted that the judiciary have continued to play significant (role in the consolidation of democratic governance in the country but that some it is recent positions appear as threat to the sustainability of democracy and good governance. Moreso as such decisions seem to be based on the need to satisfy political patronage and expediency and not on the basis of law, which has led to substantial loss of confidence in the judiciary. As a way out, the judiciary must as a matter of urgency and survival, take immediate and concrete steps to restore its integrity and dignity. The Courts, particularly the Supreme Court must rise above the fray of political machinations and pecuniary inducements to reassert its role as the defender of democracy. This is so necessary as the path to consolidating and sustaining democratic governance demands an unwavering commitment to legal principles over transient political calculations.
Keywords: Judicial Pronouncements, Democratic Governance, Sustainability of Democracy.

INTRODUCTION

Since the introduction of the Presidential System of Government in 1979 in Nigeria, the Judiciary has continued to play prominent role in the political governance of the country. The Supreme Court Ruling on 26th September, 1979 on the matter of Two- Thirds of all the States in the suit filed by Chief Obafemi Awolowo against Alhaji Shehu Shageri and the Federal Electoral Commission marked a watershed in the political history of the country. Since then, the Judiciary has continued to make pronouncements on a wide range of issues of politics and governance. The impact of such pronouncements on the sustainability of democratic governance in the country remains a matter of debate. While some believe that the courts have helped to develop and consolidate democracy in the country, others think otherwise.

Not a few Nigerians believe that the practice and sustenance of democratic governance is being threatened. They contend that the recent Supreme Court verdicts on the 2023 Presidential Election, the Local Government Autonomy, the Rivers State House of Assembly Crisis, PDP National Secretaryship tussle and the Labour Party National Chairman dispute among many others have thrown more confusions and problems not only for the parties concerned but for the country at large. The current state of the Local Governments across the states

of the federation, the unabating crises in PDP and LP and the recent upsurge of defection of elected political office holders' lays credence to this fear.

These and more have begun to raise doubts on the minds of Nigerians if our democratic experiment will be consolidated and sustained. This paper examined the concept of judicial pronouncements, analysed three recent decisions of the Supreme Court and explored the chances of sustainability of democratic governance in Nigeria.

The outcome is expected to serve as a wakeup call to all Nigerians particularly the political class, and judiciary on the need to be mindful of their actions and inactions for the sustenance of democracy in the country.

STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT

Government has been described as the machinery through which the will of the state is formulated, expressed and realized. As an institution, it is consciously established to organize the state, manage its affairs and administer its function as well as the duties of the state. Even before the emergence of the modern state principle, government and governance have been part of human society. In contemporary times, the Government as an institution of the State includes the Legislature, the Judiciary and the Executive. These, collectively and individually ensure the continuity, stability and security of the state.

The Legislature: The legislature which is also known as the Parliament is the organ of government that is responsible for the making of laws of the state. It's distinctive hallmark is that it is made up of elected representatives of the people. Apart from law making, it performs other important functions. These include:

- Control of government revenue through legislative appropriations
- Amendment of the constitution
- Ratification of Executive appointments such as Ministers, Ambassadors, Heads of Government. Parastatals and Agencies
- Control of the Executive through the instrument of legislative oversight
- Ratification of treaties and international agreements entered into by the Executive on behalf of the State.
- Approval of declaration of war or state of emergency by the Executive

The nature, structure, composition and form of legislative leadership differ from State to State. Generally, the legislature is seen as the main symbol of democratic governance.

The Executive: The Executive is the organ of government empowered by the constitution of the State to implement, enforce and execute government decisions and laws duly passed by the Legislature. The nature and structure of the Executive differs from State to State. Nigeria has over the years experienced Parliamentary Executive, Military Executive and now Presidential Executive. Generally the functions of the Executive include:

- Initiation of bills and policies for the good governance of the state.
- Implementation of laws duly passed by the Legislature
- Maintenance of law and order through the Police and other security agencies of the state
- The Executive conduct the foreign affairs of a country on behalf of the citizens of the state.

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- Through the instrumentality of the military apparati, the Executive defends the state against internal insurrection and external aggression.
- The Executive also performs delegated legislative functions in form of statutory orders and judicial functions like granting of pardon to convicted persons.

The Judiciary: It is the organ of government that is responsible for the interpretation of the laws of the state. In addition,

- The Judiciary plays vital role in ensuring peace and order in the society through the process of adjudication.
- It swears in via oath office members of both the Executive and Legislature
- It is empowered to review the acts and decisions of the Legislature as well as that of the Executive to ensure that they did not exceed their powers.
- The Judiciary promotes and protects the rights and liberties of the individuals by serving as a check on the arbitrary use of power by those in authority.
- The Judiciary through its verdicts also advises the government especially on constitutional matters.

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Democracy is that form of government in which the supreme power of the state is vested in the people and exercised by their elected representatives. In a democracy, the citizens elect representative who will govern on their behalf and according to the wishes of the majority. In a democratic setting, citizens through the electorate participate in decision making usually through elected representatives (Nwakodo, 2008).

Democracy is anchored on the principle of equality, freedom, justice and participation.
Democracy is characterized by:

- Free and fair regular elections which offers citizens the right to choose their leaders.
- Rule of law wherein all citizens including the rulers are subject to the law
- Separation of powers: The powers and duties of government is divided into the Legislature, Executive and Judiciary arms to forestall abuse of powers and offices.
- Promotion and protection of Fundamental Human Rights: The rights of individuals like freedom of speech, right to private life, freedom from discrimination etc are best guaranteed in a democracy.
- Majority rule with minority rights. The view of the majority rules while the rights of minorities to have their say is respected and protected.
- Active participation. Democracy allows the citizens to freely participate in the socio – economic and political life of the state.

According to GIA (2025), Governance generally refers to the manner in which a society or any organization's rules, norms and activities are structured, managed, regulated, sustained and held accountable. Simply put, it involves decision – making, policy implementation and management of organization's or society's affairs. Governance can be political, economic, corporate or even local.
In the sphere of political governance, there is democratic governance which can be described as a way government operates in a democracy. It is usually characterized with:

- Active citizens participation in decision making directly or through representatives freely chosen or elected by them
- Application of the rule of law to all individuals irrespective of status.

- Accountability of Government (Public Officials) to the citizens for their actions and decisions.
- Transparency in the conduct of government business and access to information by the citizens.
- Promotion and protection of the fundamental rights and freedom of all individual in the state.
- Regular free and fair elections in which citizens choose their leaders and representatives.
- All inclusive form of governance in which powers of the State are well decentralized and devoluted for good governance and proper representation.

  The goal of democratic governance is to ensure that there is good governance which is made manifest by citizens participation, justice and equality as well as continuous improvement in the economic wellbeing of all (International IDEA:2021).

SUSTAINABILITY OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

To sustain democratic governance, the practice of democracy must reflect its characteristics and strengthened for future generations while meeting the needs and challenges of today. (Amedu & Busari 2020:8) Therefore, the sustainability of democratic governance refers to the ability of a democratic system to endure and function effectively overtime while adapting to challenges and meeting the needs of both current and future generations. The sustainability of democratic governance in any society requires:

- The existence of strong, independent and effective institutions. The Judiciary, the Legislature, the Police, the election management bodies etc must enjoy complete independence in terms of funding, authority and staffing.
- Robust participation of the citizens in the governance through voting, dialogue, expression of opinion, and getting involve in civil society engagements.
- Equal and fair application of the rule of law in order to ensure justice and accountability in the society.
- Stable and transparent electoral process that ensures peaceful and regular transitions of power. The respect for democratic norms help to maintain tryst and confidence in the system thereby ensuring political stability (Buril, 2011).
- Open, transparent and accountable process of governance in which the citizens are aware of government decisions and can hold the leaders accountable. This builds public confidence in the system.
- Respect for human rights such as freedom of speech which promotes free press, freedom of lawful assembly which ensures viable opposition and right to fair hearing which promotes justice, all these sustain democratic values.
- Adaptable and dynamic democratic system which embraces and responds to social, economic and technological changes to remain relevant and effective.

The sustainability of democratic governance is a basic necessity for any democratic State like Nigeria. To attain it, there must be a never-ending and resolute commitment to democratic principles, citizen participation and responsible and responsive leadership that can address both current realities and future challenges.

JUDICIAL PRONOUNCEMENTS

Judicial pronouncements refer to the formal statements or decisions made by courts and judges, typically regarding legal matters. These pronouncements can take various forms, including judgements, orders, rulings, and they establish how laws are applied and interpreted in specific cases. They serve as precedents for future cases and contribute to the legal principle. They can also be seen as official decisions, interpretations, or rulings made by a court, tribunal or judicial panel. Specifically, judicial pronouncement involves:

- Interpretation of laws (the constitution) and clarification on how they should be applied.

- Binding decisions by higher courts which serve as precedents for lower courts to follow.
- Judicial review of laws or actions of government in order to ensure their conformity with the constitution.
- Upholding of fundamental human rights and ensuring justice is served.
- Filling of gaps in existing (laws and by so doing shaping the legal landscape
- Resolution of legal disputes

According to Jenkings (2017) judicial pronouncements come in form of:

- Judgments - final decisions resolving a case, often including a summary of the facts, legal arguments, and the Courts reasoning.
- Orders – Directions or instructions issued by a court in connection with a case.
- Rulings – Intermediate decisions made during a trial or hearing.

Judicial pronouncements are powerful tools through which courts uphold democracy, ensure justice, and the interpretation and application of the law. The role of the judiciary (courts) both as a arbiter and interpreter of laws in a democracy is so crucial that it to a great extent determines the progress and survival of the government and the state (Nwakodo & Ubanu: 2023).

CASE STUDY OF SOME JUDICIAL PRONOUNCEMENTS

We shall undertake a review of the verdicts of the Supreme Court of Nigeria on the People's Democratic Party (PDP) National Secretary tussle and the Labour Party National Chairman crisis as well as its recent ruling on the alleged defection of 27 members of Rivers State House of Assembly.

PDP Secretaryship Dispute

The Supreme Court had on 25th March, 2025 while delivering judgement on the case ruled that matters concerning the leadership or membership of a political party are internal affairs and should not be subject to judicial intervention. According to the court "the exceptional circumstances that would have given jurisdiction for the court to decide on the internal affairs of a political party were missing" It added that such exceptional circumstances include, "if the Nigerian constitution grants the judiciary jurisdiction over the matter, if a crime has been committed or if there is a violation of contractual rights". This verdict set aside the decisions of an Enugu High Court and Court of Appeal, Enugu Division which had earlier on ruled that the removal of Senator Samuel Anyanwu as National Secretary of PDP by the Party's National Working Committee was in order.

The High Court had averred that" by the spirit and letters of the PDP constitution and electoral guidelines for primary elections given by the National Executive Committee of the party in March 2022, the party does not contemplate a situation where the same person will emerge as a gubernatorial candidate of the party in any state and still occupy the position of national secretary" (Daily Trust, 2025)

Looking at the grounds of the judgment of the High Court (Appeal Court) with that of the Supreme Court, one is confronted with lots of questions and confusion, some of which are:

- In the light of the Supreme Court verdict, was the National Working Committee of the PDP wrong in removing and replacing Senator Samuel Anyanwu as its national secretary since its own constitution was adhered to.
- Where does an aggrieved party member run to for justice.
- What happens when a party goes against the clear provision of its own constitution.

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Labour Party Chairmanship Tussle

On 4th April, 2025, a five member panel of the Supreme Court set aside the decisions of an Abuja High (8/10/24) and Court of Appeal, Abuja Division (17/1/25) which had recognized Barrister Julius Abure as the National Chairman of the Labour Party. The Supreme Court had anchored its verdict on the grounds that both the Federal High Court and the Court of Appeal lacked the jurisdiction to declare Julius Abure as Labour Party's National Chairman as the matter is deemed an internal affair of the party. Interestingly, the Court of Appeal had also on (13/11/24) voided the judgment of the Federal High Court delivered on 8/10/24 on the grounds that the lower court lacked jurisdiction to hear the suit. The Supreme Court further admonished thus "Before I am done, may I admonish political parties and their members to endeavour to always allow their constitutions, regulations and guidelines to guide them in choosing their officers as well as candidates. That way incessant internal rifts which always find their way to court would be reduced".

Many observers have expressed their disagreement with the Supreme Court rulings, which they believe have compounded the leadership crisis in the two parties. Others have also expressed concern that stopping the courts from entertaining cases from political parties would cause the leadership of the political parties to become dictatorial and despotic, since there would be no institution to curtail their excesses (Kalu & Olabiyi, 2024).

Professor Itse Sagay (SAN) had these to say about the judgements: "I don't agree with the Supreme Court. Their views were expressed without any provision, any control. So, the parties officers cannot be acting in a wild and uncontrolled manner. There is a limit to which they can do that. I think the Supreme Court is limited to matters that are based, for example, on who represents a party, the choice of the candidates who represent a party is internal affairs. But, if the basic principles of human rights, actually fair hearing are broken in the process of selecting them, a complaint can be sustained" (Saturday Sun, 26 April,2025).

In a similar reaction, another legal luminary, Professor, Mike Ozekhome (SAN) expressed fear that the apex court ruling could be creating more injustice than bringing about justice. According to him "the Supreme Court has maintained that party disputes are internal affairs reserved only for the political parties to solve …. But to have this blanket judicial precedent of party matters being internal and not subject to review through judicial methodology, I think it's not moving us forward at all. And its creating more injustice than it is bringing about justice" (Saturday Sun, April 26)

On his part, a rights activist, Chijioke Ifenkwe noted that the role of the judiciary is to interpret the laws and the Supreme Court, as the final arbiter, is expected to give clear and conclusive verdicts. When the court shies away from delivering judgements in matters that require clarity, it reflects the worrying state of institutions in our country". He went on to accuse the Supreme Court of inconsistency and reluctance to make definitive pronouncements in politically sensitive cases (Saturday Sun, April 26, 2025).

Another Lawyer, Gideon Okebu sees nothing wrong in the Supreme Court decision on the grounds that the issues are internal affairs of the political parties and as such are not justiciable. In his words the Supreme Court's reasoning in deciding that courts should not dabble into the affairs of political parties is shrewd, given the dynamics, fluidity and inconsistencies which characteristics politics or non-compliance with the internal standards, principles and procedures of a political party are not rights which courts should entertain, if they do not contravene laws passed by an established government/ body" (Saturday Sun, April 26, 2025).

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On The Defection of 27 Members of Rivers State House of Assembly

On 28th February, 2025, the Supreme Court made some pronouncements on sundry issues on the crisis in Rivers – State. Of particular interest here is the issue of defection of the 27 members of the state House of Assembly from the people's Democratic Party (PDP) to the All-Progressive Congress (APC). The apex court ruled that there was no iota or shred of evidence to support the claim of defection against the 27 lawmakers. The Court had accused the Governor of Rivers State, Siminalayi Fubara of collapsing the House of Assembly earlier and that the issues of defection could not arise since there was no House of Assembly in existence. It went further to direct the Governor to represent the 2024 Budget to the Speaker Martin Amawhule' led House of Assembly. Furthermore, the court reiterated that it is the duty of the Speaker to declare any seat vacant and not the courts. Curiously, it stated that the only proof of defection is a party's membership card and register showing the name of the defected members.

The pronouncements elicited wide reactions from Nigerians. According to Peterside (2025)". This is one judgment that in all respect has led to the displacement of the confidence of the people in the Judiciary by the perceived manipulation of judicial process and proceedings in the far-reaching decisions of the Supreme Court on issues of defection of the 27 former lawmakers that were not pleaded by the parties before it or tried by the Federal High Court. Equally, the Justice Maojeed Owoade (rtd) led 11 – man Independent Judicial Accountability Panel (IJAP)noted that the judgement of the Supreme Court in the consolidated appeals leaves a gap as to whether the issue of the alleged defection of 27 members of the Rivers – State House of Assembly is still alive or has been settled. This is because the court commented on the defection issue without actually addressing it. This failure is very significant because in 2012 in similar matter, the Supreme Court upheld the removal of lawmakers who defected without following due process.

Lending its voice on the verdict, the Association of Legislative Drafting and Advocacy Practititoners (ALDRAP) speaking through its Executive Secretary, Dr. Tonye Clinton Jaja observed that "there are so many absurdities that Hon. Justice Agim's interpretation has created, such as the absurdity in his statement that only the offending legislature can declare that a defection has occurred. Additionally, Hon. Justice Agim's interpretation has defeated the very purpose of section 109(1)(g) of the Nigerian Constitution, considering that, going by his interpretation, it is next to impossible for any lawmaker who is in violation of the said section to be declared as having vacated his seat if such a declaration is to be made by the speaker of such a legislature when the speaker himself is also one of the lawmakers that has defected, as was the case with the 27 lawmakers of the Rivers State House of Assembly".

Though, the Supreme Court in its wisdom has made some binding pronouncements, this paper disagreed with its position that there was no iota or shred of evidence that the 27 lawmakers had defected.
First, the matter was not before the court. Already, a Federal High Court sitting in Portharcourt is already considering the matter. Ironically, the defection of the 27 lawmakers took place on the floor of the Assembly. On the 11th day of December, 2023, with Rt. Hon. Martin Amaewhule presiding, the Deputy Speaker of the Assembly read a letter of defection jointly signed by all the 27 members including the speaker. The matter was approved as a resolution having been passed via a voice vote. The Hansard of the Assembly has the record. Furthermore, the 27 lawmakers addressed a joint press conference after which they took photographs each waving the flag of the All Progressive Congress (APC). The national leadership of the Party through its Legal Adviser, Professor Abdulkarim Abubakar Kana received the decampees in an elaborate rally organized by the party in Port – Harcourt. Their defection was also confirmed by the Caretaker Chairman of APC in River State, Tony Okocha in a press conference. He said 'today, we received 27 former members of the PDP into the APC,

River States. We commend the defection's Vanguard (12 Dec. 2023). There is no argument about the defection of the 27 lawmakers even though the Supreme Court has settled the matter.

PRESENT REALITIES, IMPLICATIONS AND IMMINENT FEARS

Justice is the bedrock of any democratic society, providing stability, fairness, and order. However, when a Supreme Court ruling also fuels political strife, it calls into question the judiciary's integrity and role in governance (Peterside, 2025). There is no doubt that some of the rulings of the Supreme Court on very critical constitutional issues has raised serious concerns about their implications for governance, democracy and the rule of law.

The average Nigerian today no longer agree with the maxim that the Judiciary is the last hope of the common man. Neither do they believe that what we operate as a form of government today is democracy. The reasons are not far feteched.

One of the realities today is that people have lost confidence in the judiciary. A public analyst, Mr. Olufemi Aduwo (2025) decried the recent ruling of the Supreme Court on the issue of defection as an alarming departure from established jurisprudence. "It undermines legal certainty as judicial pronouncements ought to be consistent and predictable. A judiciary that oscillates between conflicting interpretations of the same constitutional provision erodes public confidence in the justice system" …. Such judicial inconsistency casts a pall over the integrity of the judiciary, reinforcing perceptions that adjudication is susceptible to political influence rather than being guided by constitutional fidelity.

There is no gainsaying that some decisions of courts, especially the Supreme Court have continued to lower the image of the judiciary as well as erode public confidence in the judiciary (Enuma: 2025). In a recent past, Olisa – Agbakoba (SAN), a former President of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) lamented in a television programme over the state of the judiciary. He said "I have lost a bit of confidence in what the courts have been doing lately. There was a time you could say oh, on the facts and the law, this is the likely outcome, today you cannot because there have been all kinds of silly decisions, the silliest was that concerning the President of the Senate". Judiciary has become a tool in the hands of desperate litigants especially politicians to obstruct or delay justice. Interestingly the same politicians now turn around to ridicule the judiciary. Recently, the senate President, Senator Godswill Akpabio described a female Senator, Natasha Akpoti Uduaghan as a "Court – declared Senator". "I think part of the problem is when people come from court, they missed the orientation".

Some of the decisions of the court like the ones on PDP secretary tussle and Labour Party's Chairmanship contest have led to different interpretations and confusion by the parties. In Labour Party the two factions are still claming that the Supreme Court ruling affirmed their leadership while the independent Electoral Commission (INEC), claims it is still studying the judgment after two months of the ruling (the Nation, May, 2020).

Infact, Ifeukwe (2025) linked the ongoing leadership crises within the Labour Party and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) to political interference, emphasizing that the hope many had placed in the judiciary as a refuge from political manipulation appears to be dwindling.

It is the law that elected public office holders like the President, Governors, Chairmen of Local Government Areas and Legislators lose their seat if and when they defect from the Party that sponsored their election into office, when there is no division in that Party at the centre. Unfortunately, rather than solving a problem, the

Supreme Court ruling on the defection of the 27 lawmakers have now opened the floodgate of defections. In the past couple of days, the country has witnessed several defections from other parties to the ruling APC without consequences, and this trend is impacting adversely on the country's rule of law and democratic governance.

In a recent editorial, the Premium Times Newspaper reminded the Supreme Court that it once described defection as "painful, unconscionable and immoral". The words of Governor Sheriff Oborevwori of Delta state on the eve of his defection from PDP to APC aptly captures how phony and ridiculous the situation has become. "We agreed will all move together. All our members in the National Assembly, in the next resumption (sitting), they have all agreed to defect on the floor of the house. The Speaker (State Assembly) is here, **heaven will not fall**. All of them will also defect **because it is normal**. **There is nothing wrong"**. (Emphasis mine). This ugly trend of defection which the Supreme Court has unwittingly encouraged with its latest ruling poses a serious existential threat to Nigeria's democracy. If lawmakers can defect at will, with judicial approval, without suffering the legal ramifications explicitly enshrined in the constitution, then the foundational principles of representative democracy are imperilled. Legislative seats are not personal chattels but sacred mandates entrusted by the electorate. To allow defectors to retain their seats under spurious justifications is to desecrate the sanctity of democratic representation" (Aduwo, 2025). Reckless defections of legislators' trample on the sensibilities of voters that elected them. Without check, they make mockery of this democracy.

The unabating leadership crises in PDP and LP are not only detrimental to the individual parties but also a threat to democracy in Nigeria. Apart from weakening the internal cohesion, focus and strength of the parties, it will also whittle their ability to play their role as opposition to the ruling party. Without a strong opposition, the party in power will continue to behave as it likes.

Apart from checkmating the government, opposition parties offer alternative candidates and policies to the electorate. A one-party system is a big threat to democracy and Nigeria with its pluralistic nature might not experiment the idea without dire consequences to the unity, stability and continuity of the State.

The continuous abuse of court processes, disrespect for the constitution and non-obedience to court decisions will eventually result to lack of trust and dependence on state institutions for justice. The resort to self-help would be very disastrous for Nigeria who is already facing a myriad of economic and security challenges.

As it is now, democratic governance is facing existential threats in the country already even though the ruling class thinks otherwise. With the state of the judiciary and other state institutions coupled with the state of the economy, one wonders what will become of democratic governance after the 2027 general elections

Conclusion

Judicial pronouncements play a crucial role in shaping, safeguarding and sustaining democratic governance. In the Nigerian context, judicial pronouncements have significantly influenced the trajectory of democratic governance. From landmark rulings on electoral disputes to constitutional interpretations that clarify the powers, functions and limits of government institutions, the judiciary has acted as a guardian of democratic norms. As a matter of fact, some interventions of Nigerian Courts have helped to correct Executive overreach, ensured compliance with the law and due process as well as upheld the supremacy of the 1999 Constitution.

However, the sustainability of democratic governance in Nigeria hinges on more than judicial pronouncements. It requires a judiciary that is truly independent, insulated from political interference,

untainted with corruption and bias, and equipped with the institutional capacity to play its role in a democracy effectively. Cases of delayed justice, perceived judicial compromise, and inconsistent pronouncements have weakened citizens confidence in the judiciary. For judicial pronouncements to continue supporting democratic governance, reforms become inevitable. The path to democratic consolidation and sustainability demand an unwavering commitment to legal principles over transient political calculations. For democracy to thrive, the supremacy of the constitution must be upheld in both letter and spirit. The judiciary as the ultimate custodian of constitutional interpretation has an inescapable obligation to ensure that its pronouncements are anchored on the law, legal consistency and doctrinal coherence. Anything less would be tantamount to judicial abdication and a betrayal of democratic ideals.

Ultimately, a vibrant democratic governance in Nigeria depends on a judiciary that is both empowered and respected. When judicial pronouncements are rooted in fairness, consistency and courage, they reinforce the rule of law, protect human rights and contribute meaningfully to the sustainability of democratic governance in Nigeria.

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