NOVEMBER 4, 2026

PRESS RELEASE

NJC recommends 28 candidates for judicial appointments

- *Suspends three (3) judges for a year without pay,*
- *Council directs Imo Judicial Service Commission to include Acting Chief Judge in list of candidates for interview,*
- *Issues warning letters to three (3) judicial officers, cautions eight (8) others*

The National Judicial Council (NJC), at its 112th meeting held on November 3, 2026, under the Chairmanship of the Honourable, the Chief Justice of Nigeria, Hon. Justice Kudirat Motonmori Olatokunbo Kekere-Ekun, GCON, has recommended the appointment of a Grand Kadi for Plateau State and 27 other candidates as Judicial Officers.

Of the 28 candidates recommended, 24 were for appointment as Judges of the High Courts of Kano, Ebonyi, Edo, Adamawa and Ogun States. One candidate was recommended for appointment as Grand Kadi of the Plateau State Sharia Court of Appeal, while another was recommended as Kadi of the Adamawa State Sharia Court of Appeal. Two others were recommended for appointment as judges of the Adamawa State Customary Court of Appeal.

The breakdown is as follows:

GRAND KADI, PLATEAU STATE SHARIA COURT OF APPEAL:

i) Hon Kadi Zololo, Tijjani Jibrin

KANO STATE HIGH COURT:

i) Hassan, Nafisah Yusuf
ii) Ahmad, Halima Yahuza
iii) Bature, Abdullahi Abdulsalam
iv) Umar, Musa Ibrahim

EBONYI STATE HIGH COURT:

i) Amaga Dickson Edmund

EDO STATE HIGH COURT:

i) Osawaru, Benson Osagie
ii) Omoruyi, Taiye Osayanmon
iii) Adamaigbo, Dorothy Ibhade
iv) Usiobaifo, Festus Osagie
v) Oiwoh, Pius Idemudia
vi) Amune, Majebi Samuel
vii) Imuekemhe, Emike Jessica

ADAMAWA STATE HIGH COURT:

i) Sa'ad, Aminu
ii) Musa, Ibrahim Ulenda
iii) Giwa, Sadiq
iv) Mijinyawa, Musa Bala
v) Ibrahim, Japhet
vi) Bakari, Aliyu
vii) Ahmadu, Yakubu

OGUN STATE HIGH COURT:

i) Oke, Olakulehin Luqman Abiola
ii) Obienu, Adebimpe Folusho
iii) Daudu, Fatimat Adeola

iv) Kadiri, Rafiat Bolanle
v) Osho, Oludotun Olaniyi

ADAMAWA STATE SHARIA COURT OF APPEAL:

i) Ishaku, Abubakar

ADAMAWA STATE CUSTOMARY COURT OF APPEAL:

i) Dimas, Elshama Gwama

ii) Pembi, David Benjamin

All recommended candidates are expected to be sworn-in by their respective State Governors without delay.

Council also directed the Imo State Judicial Service Commission to include the name of the most senior Judge of the State High Court, the Acting Chief Judge, Hon. Justice Ijeoma Agugua, in the list of candidates for appointment as substantive Chief Judge of the State.

The decision followed the consideration of a petition dated June 11, 2026, by Mr. Bob Kay Njemanze, who challenged the exclusion of Justice Agugua from the shortlist submitted by the Imo State Judicial Service Commission.

In considering the petition, Council noted that although the State Judicial Service Commission has the constitutional responsibility to advise the NJC on suitable candidates for appointment as Chief Judge, the Council retains the authority to determine the suitability of persons presented to it.

It consequently directed its Secretariat to formally request the Imo State JSC to include the name of Hon. Justice I. O. Agugua in the shortlist.

On disciplinary matters, Council considered nine (9) investigation reports concerning petitions against Judicial Officers over their handling of cases. It approved the recommendation of one-year suspension without pay for three (3) Judicial Officers and imposed additional restrictions on the elevation of two of those suspended.

The suspended Judicial officers are:

1. **Hon. Justice Hannatu Mohammed Kabir – Nasarawa State High Court**

Council approved her suspension for one year without pay and barred her from nomination for elevation for three years over the unlawful detention of a litigant for 58 days without proper contempt proceedings.

The Investigation Committee found that she ordered the litigant's arrest and detention for alleged disobedience of court orders without the issuance and service of the mandatory Forms 48 and 49 or the institution of proper contempt proceedings.

It held that the alleged contempt occurred outside the court's presence and could not lawfully be summarily tried and punished. The Committee also found that the action violated the litigant's right to fair hearing.

2. **Hon. Grand Kadi Mohammed Sani Salihu – Jigawa State Sharia Court of Appeal**

Council approved his suspension for one year without pay over his involvement in reopening a judgment delivered by the FCT Upper Area Court.

The Committee found that the Grand Kadi exceeded his authority by constituting a committee to review the judgment and subsequently

assigning the matter to a Higher Sharia Court Judge, who received fresh evidence and delivered another judgment.

The Committee held that the process amounted to an appeal against a valid judgment of a court of competent jurisdiction, which was subsequently set aside by the Jigawa State High Court. It also found the act to constitute a violation of Rule 3.3.1 of the Revised Code of Conduct for Judicial Officers, 2016.

Meanwhile Council directed that the most senior Kadi of the Jigawa State Sharia Court of Appeal should perform the functions of the office of the Grand Kadi for the period of the suspension.

3. **Hon. Justice Sobere Biambo – Rivers State High Court**

Council approved his suspension for one year without pay and a three-year restriction on elevation over the issuance of bench warrants and imposition of fines on litigants in a civil dispute without due process.

The Committee found that he ordered the arrest of the petitioners for alleged disobedience of an interim injunction and subsequently imposed fines of ₦300,000 on each without the institution of contempt proceedings or service of Forms 48 and 49.

It held that the alleged contempt occurred outside the court's presence and ought not to have been summarily tried and punished.

Hon. Justice Kayode Agunloye of the FCT High Court was cautioned in one of the petitions over his handling of post-judgment garnishee proceedings in a suit involving First Bank of Nigeria Plc.

The Committee found that he improperly entertained and granted a fresh *ex parte* application for a Garnishee Order *Nisi* on October 22, 2025, after an earlier similar application had been withdrawn and struck out.

This was while other pending applications, including the bank's application for stay of execution, had been adjourned to November 4, 2025. The Committee held that his action created room for justifiable suspicion.

Two (2) petitions against Hon. Justice B. M. Balarabe of the Kaduna State High Court and Hon. Justice Evelyn N. Anyadike were dismissed having been withdrawn.

One Petition against Hon. Justice Peter O. Ikujuni of the Ondo State High Court was struck out for being leaked/published in social media in violation of Paragraphs 2.2.4 and 2.2.8 of the National Judicial Policy, 2016.

The Petition against Hon. Justice Abdullahi Mika'ilu of the Niger State High Court was dismissed for want of diligent prosecution.

Council also resolved that investigation should continue in a petition against Hon. Justice G. N. Ugbala of the Ebonyi State High Court despite notice of withdrawal by the petitioner.

Council also considered reports on 35 petitions submitted by its Preliminary Complaints Assessment Committees.

It dismissed 24 petitions for lack of merit, recommended four (4) for further investigation and put one petition in abeyance for being *sub judice.*

Council also approved the issuance of caution/warning to six (6) Judicial Officers including placement on its Watch List for six (6) months.

The affected Judicial Officers include:

1. **Hon. Justice Bello Kawu – FCT High Court**

Council found merit in a petition against Justice Kawu over his grant of an interim bail to former Attorney-General of the Federation, Mr. Abubakar Malami, SAN, despite a subsisting remand order issued by another Judge of the same court.

The Investigation Committee found that Justice Kawu knew of the earlier order, which was due to expire at midnight on December 24, 2025, but granted an interim bail on December 23, 2025, in conflict with it.

Council consequently directed that he should be issued a warning letter and placed on its Watch List.

2. **(i) Hon. Justices Danjuma A. Oyigbenu and (ii) Isa Ebini Kana – Nasarawa State High Court**

The Committee found merit in a petition against the two Judges over their failure to deliver judgment in an appeal within the constitutionally prescribed 90 days.

It rejected their arguments that the constitutional provision did not apply to appellate courts, noting their admission that judgment was delivered outside the stipulated period without a satisfactory explanation for the delay.

Council adopted the report and directed that warning letters be issued to them for the breach of Section 294 of the 1999 Constitution, as amended. They are advised to be more diligent in their case management.

3. **Hon. Justice Mohammed Zubairu – FCT High Court**

Council adopted the Committee's finding that Justice Zubairu acted improperly by entertaining an application and making orders after

being informed that an appeal had already been entered at the Court of Appeal.

The Committee held that his action amounted to disregard for the appellate court and bordered on insubordination. It also found his defence untenable.

Council consequently directed that he should be cautioned and placed on its Watch List.

4. **Hon. Justice C. A. Ogbuagor, Enugu State High Court**

The Committee found that Justice Ogbuagor exhibited judicial impertinence, denied fair hearing and disregarded due process and court hierarchy by continuing proceedings despite a pending appeal and an application for stay of proceedings.

Consequently, it cautioned and advised him to familiarise himself with the law and procedures governing appeals.

5. **Hon. Justice Chibuike L. Azuama, High Court, Imo State**

Council directed that Justice Azuama should be cautioned, placed on its Watch List and advised to take his judicial responsibilities seriously after finding that he granted an *ex parte* Garnishee Order freezing the bank accounts of Puma Energy, a non-party to the substantive suit, thereby causing the company substantial losses.

On retirements

Council also approved the retirement notifications of six judicial officers:

1. Hon. Justice Ibrahim Mohammed Musa Saulawa, Supreme Court of Nigeria, who retired on September 29, 2026.

2. Hon. Justice Uwani Musa Abba Aji, Supreme Court of Nigeria, due to retire on November 7, 2026.
3. Hon. Justice O. F. Omoleye, Court of Appeal, who retired on October 6, 2026.
4. Hon. Justice Ogechi Okehielem, Abia State High Court, who voluntarily retired on September 15, 2026.
5. Hon. Justice Theresa Isidore Obot, Akwa Ibom State High Court, due to retire voluntarily on December 30, 2026.
6. Hon. Justice Munir Muhammad Ladan, Kaduna State High Court, due to retire voluntarily on December 31, 2026.

Council expressed profound appreciation to the Judicial Officers for their dedicated and meritorious service to the Judiciary and the Nation.

Council expressed sadness over the deaths of nine (9) Judicial Officers between May 01 and September 26, 2026.

The deceased officers named in the report are:

1. Hon. Justice Mohammed Nasir Yunusa, Federal High Court, Kano Division.
2. Hon. Justice Sambo Sammy Daka, Kaduna State High Court.
3. Hon. Justice Josephine Efunkumbi Oyefeso, Lagos State High Court.
4. Hon. Justice Musa Mohammed Dallah, Nasarawa State High Court.
5. Hon. Justice Bello Muhammed Shinkafi, Zamfara State High Court.
6. Hon. Justice Edem Nyong Okokon, Cross River State High Court.

7. Hon. Kadi Aliyu Mani Yauri, Kebbi State Sharia Court of Appeal.
8. Hon. Justice Dorothy Sim Inwulale, Kaduna State Customary Court of Appeal.
9. Hon. Justice Legor Torbira Senewo, Rivers State Customary Court of Appeal.

The Council extended its heartfelt condolences to their families, the Judiciary and the Nigerian legal community, and prayed for the peaceful repose of their souls.

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