PRESS STATEMENT

January 14, 2026

NJC recommends Hon. Justice Joseph Olubunmi Kayode Oyewole, JCA, for Supreme Court, 35 others for Judicial Appointments

- **Recommends 27 candidates for State High Courts across seven States**
- **Okays six Kadis and two Customary Court of Appeal Judges**
- **Extends appointment of Imo State Acting Chief Judge**
- **Clears Osun State Chief Judge of alleged misconduct**
- **Dismisses petition against Delta State High Court Judge over chieftaincy dispute**
- **Reverses Suspension of Court of Appeal Justice**
- **Dismisses 26 petitions against judicial officers, orders further investigation of seven others**
- **Sets up committee to examine the request for review by nine (9) dismissed Imo State Judges**
- **Approves retirement of two senior Judicial Officers**

The National Judicial Council (NJC), at its 110th Meeting held on 13 January 2026, and presided over by, the Chief Justice of Nigeria, Hon. Justice Kudirat Motonmori. Olatokunbo Kekere-Ekun, GCON, has recommended Hon. Justice Joseph Olubunmi Kayode Oyewole for appointment as a Justice of the Supreme Court of Nigeria, alongside 35 other candidates for various judicial offices across the country.

Hon. Justice Oyewole is currently the presiding Justice of the Court of Appeal, Enugu Division.

Federal and State Judicial Appointments

Specifically, the Council approved 27 candidates for appointment as Judges of various High Courts. They are as follows: Borno (6), Niger (4), Benue (1), Taraba (1), Plateau (6), Delta (4), and Ekiti (5) States.

Furthermore, the Council recommended:

- Six (6) Kadis for appointment to the Sharia Courts of Appeal in Niger (3), Taraba (2), and Katsina (1) States; and
- Two (2) Judges for appointment to the Customary Court of Appeal, Delta State.

These recommendations followed a rigorous screening process, including the consideration of public complaints and interviews conducted by a seven-member Interview Committee, in line with the 2023 Revised NJC Guidelines and Procedural Rules for the Appointment of Judicial Officers.

List of Recommended Candidates

SUPREME COURT

1. Hon. Justice Joseph Olubunmi Kayode Oyewole

SIX HIGH COURT JUDGES FOR BORNO STATE

1. Mustapha, Mallam Babagana
2. Mustapha, Hadiza Grema
3. James, Peter Bwala
4. Zannah, Tijjani Babakura
5. Alkali, Alhaji Umar
6. Dunoma, Yahaya Alhaji

SIX HIGH COURT JUDGES FOR PLATEAU STATE

1. Maikai, Andrawus
2. Kparbong, Tongret Nanman
3. Nkwap, Diane Ngummai
4. Mantu, John Ishaku
5. Bature, Gavou Musa
6. Mallan, Kingsley Mangai

FIVE HIGH COURT JUDGES FOR EKITI STATE

1. Adegoke, Olanike Caroline
2. Bamise, Julius Sunday Bamidele
3. Ajibare, Julius

4. Akinyede, Stephen Rotimi
5. Anoma, Adefunke Helen

FOUR HIGH COURT JUDGES FOR NIGER STATE

1. Abubakar, Adamu
2. Ahmed, Bala Ndajiwo
3. Gambo, Sa'adatu Abubakar
4. Wushishi, Sulaiman Buhari

FOUR HIGH COURT JUDGES FOR DELTA STATE

1. Otite, Jonah Akporuaro
2. Sam-Oligida, Jereoma
3. Ukuli, Boeye Irene
4. Adamidenyo, Otome Benjamin

ONE HIGH COURT JUDGE FOR TARABA STATE

1. Babagari, Mansura Mohammed

ONE HIGH COURT JUDGE FOR BENUE STATE

1. Yuwa, Franca Ngiher

THREE KADIS FOR SHARIA COURT OF APPEAL, NIGER STATE

1. Aboki, Usman Abdulrahman
2. Mohammed, Ya'aba
3. Muhammad, Nasir Ibrahim

TWO KADIS FOR SHARIA COURT OF APPEAL, TARABA STATE

1. Yakubu, Muhammad
2. Aliyu, Yahaya Abubakar

ONE KADI FOR SHARIA COURT OF APPEAL, KATSINA STATE

1. Mutawakkil, Mustapha Salis

TWO JUDGES FOR CUSTOMARY COURT OF APPEAL, DELTA STATE

1. Ojeikere, Bridget Onome
2. Okah, Stella Ovuorieroro

The Council recommended extension of the appointment of the Acting Chief Judge of Imo State, Hon. Justice I. O. Agugua by three (3) months just as it called on the Governor of Imo State to immediately commence the process of constituting the State Judicial Service Commission, to enable the appointment of a substantive Chief Judge of Imo State.

The NJC stressed the imperative of prompt appointment of the substantive Chief Judge to ensure stability, safeguard judicial independence, and promote the effective administration of justice in the State.

Meanwhile, the Council has cleared the Chief Judge of Osun State, Hon. Justice Oyebola Adepele Ojo, of all allegations bordering on financial recklessness, diversion of funds, and judicial misconduct.

The Council took the decision after considering and upholding the report of a three-member Investigation Committee constituted to probe several petitions filed against the Chief Judge.

The petitions were initiated by a staff member of the Osun State Customary Court of Appeal and Chairman of the Osun State chapter of the Judiciary Staff Union of Nigeria (JUSUN), Mr. Eludire G. Kunle, alongside three others.

Similar petitions were also filed by the Speaker of the Osun State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Adewale Egbediran; Mrs. Temitope Opeoluwa Fasina; and a joint petition by the Osun State Attorney-General, Hon. Oluwole Jimi Bada, together with four purported members of the State Judicial Service Commission.

The petitioners alleged, among others, unilateral suspension of judiciary staff, selective promotion of staff, stoppage of training programmes, disobedience of court orders, and misappropriation of funds, including an alleged diversion of ₦7.4 million meant for judges' and magistrates' retreat, ₦5 million robe allowance, and proceeds from e-affidavits.

The Committee sat on several occasions. All parties were represented by counsel and called witnesses in support of their respective cases.

The Committee ruled that the petition filed by the Attorney-General and others on behalf of the State Judicial Service Commission was

incompetent, as issues relating to their membership were already pending before a court of law.

However, it held that the remaining petitioners had the requisite locus standi to institute their petitions.

It found that the suspension of judiciary staff followed due process, having been recommended by the appropriate disciplinary committee, and did not constitute misconduct.

The Committee further held that matters relating to staff training and promotion fall within the statutory responsibilities of the State Judicial Service Commission.

It also found no evidence that Hon. Justice Ojo diverted robe allowances, misappropriated funds meant for a foreign retreat, withheld proceeds from e-affidavits, or personally benefited from any of the financial transactions complained of.

The Committee concluded that none of the allegations amounted to judicial misconduct or a breach of the Revised Code of Conduct for Judicial Officers.

Accordingly, it recommended that all the petitions be dismissed—a recommendation the Council accepted in full.

In a related development, the National Judicial Council has dismissed a petition filed against a Judge of the Delta State High Court, Hon. Justice Gentu E. Timi, over allegations of professional misconduct arising from a chieftaincy dispute.

The petition, filed by Prince Mbanefo Nwoko (KSC), accused the Judge of misapplication of the law and abuse of court process in a dispute concerning the ancient stool of Idumuje-Ugboko.

However, before the three-member Investigation Committee of the Council could commence sitting, the petitioner formally withdrew the petition on February 17, 2025, citing the resolution of the dispute following the presentation of the staff of office by the Delta State Governor, Sheriff Oborevwori, to his client.

At its sitting, the Investigation Committee considered the withdrawal and resolved that there were no issues warranting further consideration by the Council, and accordingly recommended the discontinuation of the matter.

Meanwhile, the Council has reversed the one-year suspension without pay earlier imposed on Hon. Justice Jane E. Inyang of the Court of Appeal, Uyo Division.

Hon. Justice Inyang had been suspended after being found in breach of Rule 3(5) of the Revised Code of Conduct for Judicial Officers, following findings that he abused his office by granting inappropriate ex parte orders for the sale of a petrol station and other businesses belonging to Udeme Assets Limited at the interlocutory stage of proceedings.

The acts complained of occurred while His Lordship presided over Suit No. FHC/UY/CS/46/2023 at the Federal High Court, Uyo Judicial Division, prior to his elevation to the Court of Appeal.

However, upon a review of the matter, the Council found that the decision forming the basis of the petition was already the subject of an appeal at the time the petition was filed.

The Council further noted that the petition was instituted outside the six-month period stipulated by its policy for the filing of complaints.

In view of these findings, the Council resolved to set aside the suspension.

The Council also considered and upheld the reports of its two Preliminary Complaints Assessment Committees.

Out of a total of 39 petitions reviewed, the Committees dismissed 26 for lacking in merit, recommended seven for further investigation, issued cautions to two judicial officers.

One of the judicial officers was cautioned for delivering judgment in a case outside the constitutionally prescribed 90 days contrary to the provisions of Section 294(1) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) and for the uncouth language he used in his response to the petition against him.

In another development, the Council reiterated its earlier warning to Judges against indiscriminate grant of exparte orders.

Council also advised Heads of Court to be circumspect in assigning complex matters to newly appointed Judges.

Furthermore, the Council has constituted a Committee to consider the request for review submitted by the nine (9) dismissed Judges of Imo State Judiciary.

The Council, however, declined to entertain a fresh petition against the Acting Chief Judge of the Imo State High Court, Hon. Justice I. O. Agugua, having previously considered and disposed of the same issues more than once.

Retirement of Judicial Officers

The Council approved the voluntary retirement of the following Judicial Officers:

1. Umar Ibrahim Abdullahi, Acting Grand Kadi, Sharia Court of Appeal, Plateau State
2. Hon. Justice Obientobara Owupele Daniel-Kalio, Presiding Justice, Court of Appeal, Asaba Division

However, the Council noted with regret that Alhaji Umar Ibrahim Abdullahi passed away shortly after submitting his notice of voluntary retirement.

Death

The National Judicial Council (NJC) regrets to announce the death of two Judicial Officers between November and December 2025.

The deceased Judicial Officers are:
1. Hon. Justice Oluwayemisi Ikeolupo Adelaja, a Judge of the High Court of the Federal Capital Territory, Kubwa, Abuja; and

2. Hon. Justice U. I. Abdullahi, the Acting Grand Kadi of the Sharia Court of Appeal, Plateau State.

The Council extends its condolences to the families of the deceased, the Judiciary, and the Nigerian legal community, and prays for the peaceful repose of their souls.

Kemi Babalola-Ogedengbe, Esq.
D.D., Information