

Bayo Akinlade & Co.

Barristers, Solicitors, Notary Public, Property Consultants, Human Rights Advocates

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MEMORANDUM FOR REVIEW OF MAGISTRATES' COURTS LAW*

2nd September 2026

The Right Honourable Speaker,
Lagos State House of Assembly
Assembly Complex, Alausa
Ikeja, Lagos State

Respectfully my Rt. Hon Speaker;

MEMORANDUM FOR THE REVIEW AND AMENDMENT OF THE MAGISTRATES' COURTS LAW, CAP M1, LAWS OF LAGOS STATE 2015

INTRODUCTION

I, the undersigned; member of the Nigerian Bar Association, a Former Chairman of the NBA Ikorodu Branch (2018 – 2020), the convener of Fight Against Corruption in the Judiciary, convener of Citizens Support for Lower Courts in Nigeria, an indigene of Lagos State from Lagos Island Local Government Area, family secretary of the Bankefun Ruling House of the Bashua Royal and Chieftaincy Family of Somolu and Lagos and a devoted card carrying member of the APC, humbly submit this memorandum to request the Honourable House to review the Magistrates' Courts Law, Cap M1, Laws of Lagos State 2015.

BACKGROUND

The Magistrates' Courts Law is the principal law regulating the jurisdiction, powers and procedure of Magistrate Courts in Lagos State. However, since its last major amendment, certain provisions have become inadequate due to inflation, population growth, and delays in the justice system in Lagos State.

Aside the above, other States have since reviewed their Laws to reflect the realities of the political, economic and social landscape of the Country and have updated some provisions of their laws to bring the Judiciary up to per with these developments.

ISSUES IDENTIFIED & PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

Issue 1:

I start with a humble plea for the implementation of the Provision of **Section 4 (3)** of the Magistrate Court Law 2009: RECOGNITION OF LAGOS MAGISTRATES AS STATE JUDICIAL OFFICERS AND URGENT IMPROVEMENT OF WELFARE AND THEIR WORKING CONDITIONS.

This request is to respectfully address critical matters affecting the welfare, legal status, and working conditions of Magistrates at the grassroots of justice. Despite the fact that individual Magistrates adjudicate over 300 cases each, ranging from civil matters up to N10m to criminal cases with 14-year imprisonment terms, Magistrates remain classified as Civil Servants rather than Judicial Officers. This lack of recognition, coupled with the remuneration (last considered in 2009 – over 16 years and counting), has led to a significant loss of morale and the departure of brilliant legal minds from the State's service.

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National Convener:

*Fight Against Corruption in the Judiciary

*Duty Solicitors' Network

*Citizens' Support for Lower Courts

Justice & Integrity

*Chairman NBA Ikorodu Branch 2018 – 2020

*Member Governing Board, NBA-HRI 2024 – 2026

*Chairman, NBA Ikorodu Branch Bar/Bench Relations Committee 2024 –2026

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Legal Justification for Reform

Section 4(3) of the Magistrates Court Law (MCL) 2009: Explicitly states that Magistrates shall serve as Judicial Officers to the exclusion of any other function.

Section 93 of the MCL 2009: Mandates a single cadre of Magistrates, which we propose should be fully implemented by eradicating current caderization.

Judicial Precedent: In *LAJSC v. Muziq Abodunrin Etti* (CA/LAG/CV/17/23), the Court of Appeal held that the MCL, not Public Service Rules, should govern the affairs and retirement of Magistrates.

Key Prayers for Consideration:

S/N	Proposed Reform / Prayer	Details & Rationale
1	Change of Nomenclature	Rename Magistrates to "District Judges" to align with the constitutional recognition of Judicial Officers. (As implemented in the FCT)
2	Salary Review	An upward review of monthly salary to N3,500,000.00, in parity with the recent 300% increment approved by the Federal Government for Judges.
3	Court Running Grants	Increase the running allowance of Courts to N350,000.00 per month to meet operational costs.
4	Housing & Security	Secured housing allocation upon employment to prevent the embarrassment of eviction from private rentals. (Appreciation to the Government of Lagos State for the on-going housing allocation for Magistrates)
5	Official Vehicles	Allocation of official cars upon appointment, with a renewal policy every four years and boarding options. (Applicable to High Court Judges)
6	Health Policy	Specialized health insurance addressing occupational hazards such as spinal issues resulting from long hours of sitting.
7	Retirement Benefits	Retired Magistrates should be entitled to their last basic salary for life, ensuring a dignified retirement.

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Issue 2:

Low Civil Jurisdiction Limit:

Section 8(1) limits civil jurisdiction to N10,000,000.

This amount is no longer realistic in 2026. Most rents, debts and contract cases exceed this, causing unnecessary delays at the High Court.

Proposed Amendment: That **Section 8(1)** be amended to increase the Civil Jurisdiction limit to N50,000,000 which is even consistent with civil jurisdiction limits in lower courts in Delta State for instance

PRAYER

In view of the foregoing, I, on behalf of members of my movement, my supporters and followership humbly pray the Honourable House to:

1. **To review the Magistrates' Courts Law, Cap M1, Laws of Lagos State 2015; and**
2. **Enact an Amendment Bill to address the issues raised above in the interest of justice and efficient judicial administration in Lagos State.**

CONCLUSION

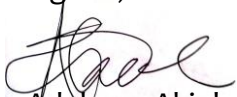
We believe these amendments will decongest the High Court, ensure speedy justice, and bring the law in line with current realities in Lagos State.

We remain available to appear before the relevant Committee to make further oral submissions.

Thank you, Rt Hon Speaker.

Yours faithfully,

Signed,



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Solicitor

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