FEDERAL DOMINANCE OR NECESSARY INTERVENTION? A CRITICAL EXPLORATION OF THE NIGERIAN PRESIDENT'S POWER TO SUSPEND A STATE GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE*

Abstract
Governance in Nigeria operates within a federal framework, theoretically structured to ensure a balance of power between the central and subnational governments. However, the extent of federal authority particularly the power of the Nigerian President to suspend a state governor and legislature remains a contentious constitutional and political issue. This research critically interrogates whether such presidential intervention constitutes an act of federal dominance that undermines state autonomy or a necessary measure to maintain constitutional order and national stability. Adopting a doctrinal methodology with an analytical approach, this research relied on primary legal sources, including constitutional provisions, statutory frameworks, and judicial decisions, as well as secondary sources such as scholarly articles, and law journals. Findings revealed that while federal intervention mechanisms exist within Nigeria's legal framework, the discretionary nature of their application, enforcement inconsistencies, and political undercurrents raise concerns about their impact on democratic governance. This work recommended constitutional clarity, judicial oversight, institutional safeguards, and policy reforms to ensure that any exercise of presidential authority over state governance is strictly confined within legal and democratic parameters, preserving both national stability and the autonomy of subnational entities.

Keywords: Federalism, Executive Power, State Autonomy, Constitutional Law, Democratic Governance, Nigeria.

1. Introduction

The structure of Nigeria's federalism, as enshrined in its governing framework, is designed to ensure a balance of power between the central and state governments.[1] However, the power of the Nigerian President to suspend a state governor and legislature has been a contentious issue, raising concerns about the extent of federal control over subnational entities.[2] While proponents argue that such powers are necessary to preserve national unity and stability, critics view them as an encroachment on the autonomy of state governments, potentially undermining the principles of federalism. This issue becomes even more critical in politically sensitive contexts where federal intervention is perceived as a tool for suppressing opposition or consolidating power. One of the major justifications for the President's power to suspend a state governor and legislature is the need to prevent breakdowns of law and order.[3] In situations where a state government is unable to function effectively due to political crises, security threats, or gross misconduct, federal intervention is often seen as the only viable solution.[4] This power is particularly invoked in cases where state executives act in ways that threaten national cohesion or public safety. Advocates argue that without such provisions, a dysfunctional state government could paralyze governance and compromise national security, necessitating decisive federal action. On the other hand, the exercise of this power has been criticized for being susceptible to political abuse. The suspension of state officials has, in some cases, been perceived as a strategy to weaken political opponents or assert federal dominance over opposition-controlled states.[5] This raises concerns about the over-centralization of authority and the potential erosion of democratic principles. In a true federal system, states are expected to have a degree of autonomy, and the power to remove or discipline elected officials should rest primarily with the electorate or state institutions, rather than the central government. The excessive use of federal intervention could therefore undermine the democratic process by circumventing the will of the people.[6] While it can serve as a safeguard against state-level instability and governance failures, it also poses significant risks to democratic governance if misused. The challenge lies in ensuring that such powers are exercised transparently, lawfully, and in exceptional circumstances rather than as a tool for political advantage.

2. The Legal Basis for Presidential Suspension of State Governors and Legislatures in Nigeria

A careful examination of the Nigerian Constitution[7] does not expressly grant the President the power to suspend a state governor or dissolve a state legislature. The Constitution provides a clear separation of powers between the legislative,[8] executive,[9] and judicial[10] arms of government at both the federal and state levels. The Constitution establishes that the governor is the chief executive of a state,[11] and also outlined the process for the removal of a governor,[12] which is strictly within the purview of the state legislature. Similarly, Section 96 stipulates that a state legislature can only be dissolved or suspended through a

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[1] E Amah, 'Federalism, Nigerian Federal Constitution and the Practice of Federalism: An Appraisal' (2017) 8(1), 287-310.

[2] D Adamgbo, 'The Contentious Question: Can a Nigerian President Suspend a State Governor? A Constitutional Deep Dive' < https://medium.com/@the_solicitorng/the-contentious-question-can-a-nigerian-president-suspend-a-state-governor-b85546fdb243> Accessed 17th March 2025.

[3] T Oyedokun, 'State of emergency: Can the president suspend a governor? Here's what the constitution says' < https://businessday.ng/news/article/state-of-emergency-can-the-president-suspend-a-governor-heres-what-the-constitution-says/> Accessed 17th March 2025.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] O Victor, 'The Illegality of Suspending Elected Officials' < https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2025/03/20/the-illegality-of-suspending-elected-officials/> Accessed 17th March 2025.

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (As Amended)

[8] *Ibid,* s4.

[9] *Ibid,* s5.

[10] *Ibid,* s6.

[11] *Ibid,* s176.

[12] *Ibid,* s188.

constitutional process, usually upon the expiration of its tenure[13] or by a legal declaration of emergency.[14] The only scenario in which the federal government can interfere in state governance is under Section 305 of the Constitution, which provides for a state of emergency.[15] Under this section, the President may declare a state of emergency in a state through an official proclamation but only under specific conditions.[16] These conditions include war, breakdown of public order, natural disasters, and any other situation threatening the state's existence.[17] However, such a declaration must be approved by a two-thirds majority of the National Assembly within two days (if the legislature is in session) or ten days (if not in session).[18] This provision indicates that even in extreme circumstances, the President cannot unilaterally dissolve or suspend a state government without legislative approval.

One of the most controversial instances of federal intervention in state governance occurred in 2006 during the declaration of emergency rule in Ekiti State.[19] President Olusegun Obasanjo declared a state of emergency in the state, suspending Governor Ayodele Fayose and appointing a military administrator.[20] This action was widely criticized as unconstitutional because, while the Constitution allows for emergency rule,[21] it does not expressly permit the removal or suspension of a governor outside constitutional procedures. The matter generated extensive legal debates, with many arguing that the proper course of action should have been impeachment by the State House of Assembly rather than a federal suspension. Similarly, the 2004 declaration of emergency rule in Plateau State by President Obasanjo, which resulted in the suspension of Governor Joshua Dariye and the state legislature, was legally controversial.[22] While the federal government justified its action by citing escalating violence in the state, critics contended that the suspension of a democratically elected governor and legislature was an overreach of executive power.[23] The decision was challenged in court, but the lack of explicit constitutional provisions on the issue left the judiciary in a difficult position.[24]

A landmark judicial pronouncement on the limits of federal intervention in state affairs came in *Attorney-General of the Federation v Attorney-General of Lagos State*[25] the Supreme Court reaffirmed the autonomy of state governments, emphasizing that the federal government must act strictly within constitutional limits. While the case did not directly address the suspension of governors, it underscored the principle that state governments operate independently within Nigeria's federal system, and the President cannot exercise powers not expressly conferred by the Constitution. Another critical case is *Senator Rashidi Adewolu Ladoja v Independent National Electoral Commission and Ors,*[26] where the Supreme Court held that the removal of Governor Rashidi Ladoja of Oyo State by the state legislature without following constitutional due process was illegal and void. This case reinforces the principle that even at the state level, the removal or suspension of a governor must strictly comply with constitutional provisions. By extension, if a state legislature cannot unilaterally remove a governor without due process, then the President, who has no direct constitutional authority over state executives, lacks the power to suspend a governor or legislature without clear constitutional backing.

In March 2025, Nigerian President Bola Tinubu declared a state of emergency in Rivers State, citing escalating political tensions and recent incidents of pipeline vandalism that threatened public safety and the nation's oil production.[27] This unprecedented action led to the suspension of Governor Siminalayi Fubara, his deputy, and all members of the Rivers State House of Assembly for an initial period of six months.[28] President Tinubu appointed retired Vice Admiral Ibok-Ete Ibas as the sole administrator to oversee the state's affairs during this period.[29] The declaration marked the first imposition of emergency rule in Nigeria in over a decade. The President's decision was met with significant criticism from various legal experts and organizations. The Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) condemned the suspension of the elected officials as unconstitutional, asserting that while Section 305 of the 1999 Constitution empowers the President to declare a state of emergency, it does not grant the authority to

[13] *Ibid,* s105.
[14] *Ibid,* s305.
[15] *Ibid.*
[16] Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (As Amended).
[17] *Ibid,* s305(3).
[18] *Ibid,* s305(6).
[19] OCHA, 'Nigeria: Emergency rule as impeachments turn ugly' < https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/nigeria-emergency-rule-impeachments-turn-ugly> Accessed 17th March 2025.
[20] F Omoboye, 'Nigerian states that have had a 'state of emergency' < https://businessday.ng/politics/article/nigerian-states-that-have-had-a-state-of-emergency/> Accessed 17th March 2025.
[21] Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (As Amended), s305.
[22]The New Humanitarian, 'Obasanjo declares state of emergency in Plateau State' < https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2004/05/18/obasanjo-declares-state-emergency-plateau-state> Accessed 18th March 2025.
[23] Guest Writer, 'State of emergency powers: Illegality of suspending elected officials' < https://www.thecable.ng/state-of-emergency-powers-illegality-of-suspending-elected-officials/> Accessed 18th March 2025.
[24] *Plateau State of Nigeria and Another v Attorney General of the Federation and Anor* SC 113/2004.
[25] (2013) LPELR-20974(SC)
[26] SC 120/2007.
[27] C Eboh, 'Nigeria declares state of emergency in Rivers State over pipeline vandalism' < https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/nigerian-president-declares-state-emergency-oil-producing-rivers-state-2025-03-18/> Accessed 18th March 2025.
[28] *Ibid.*
[29] B Onanuga, 'President Tinubu Swears-In Rivers State Sole Administrator, Ibok-Eke Ibas' < https://statehouse.gov.ng/news/president-tinubu-swears-in-rivers-state-sole-administrator-ibok-eke-ibas/> Accessed 19th March 2025.

unilaterally remove elected state officials.[30] The NBA emphasized that the Constitution provides specific procedures for the removal of a governor or deputy governor, such as impeachment by the state assembly, and that these procedures were not followed in this instance.[31] Furthermore, labour unions, including the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC), labeled the federal government's action as a direct assault on democracy.[32] They argued that the move violated constitutional provisions and undermined Nigeria's democratic principles by setting a dangerous precedent for the arbitrary removal of elected officials.[33] The unions called for the immediate reversal of the state of emergency, warning that such actions could erode constitutional governance and threaten the autonomy of subnational governments

From the foregoing analysis, it is evident that the President of Nigeria lacks the express constitutional authority to unilaterally suspend a state governor or legislature. Any such action would be inconsistent with the principles of constitutional democracy and federalism. While the Constitution allows for emergency declarations,[34] it does not confer powers to remove elected state officials. Therefore, any attempt to do so outside established legal frameworks would amount to executive overreach and could be successfully challenged in court.

3. Comparative Analysis of Judicial Activism in Some Other Jurisdictions

United States of America

The United States operates under a strict federal system that prioritizes state autonomy, ensuring that state governments function independently of federal interference.[35] Unlike Nigeria, where executive overreach in state governance has been a subject of debate, the U.S. Constitution does not grant the President the power to unilaterally remove or suspend a state governor or dissolve a state legislature. Instead, governance at the state level is primarily regulated by state constitutions, with removal mechanisms such as impeachment and recall elections explicitly placed in the hands of the state legislature and the people.[36] the U.S. Constitution guarantees a 'Republican Form of Government' to each state, ensuring that federal interventions in state governance are constitutionally constrained.[37] The landmark case of *Luther v. Borden*,[38] affirmed that it is the responsibility of state institutions, not the federal government, to determine legitimate governance within a state. The primary federal intervention mechanism in state affairs in the U.S. is through the Insurrection Act of 1807, which allows the President to deploy federal troops to states during extreme cases of rebellion, insurrection, or lawlessness.[39] However, even in such instances, the President does not have the authority to suspend state officials. The Tenth Amendment further reinforces state sovereignty by explicitly stating that powers not delegated to the federal government are reserved for the states.[40] Even during national crises, such as the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln, despite suspending habeas corpus, did not attempt to remove elected state officials but instead sought congressional authorization for emergency measures.[41] The Supreme Court case of *Texas v White,*[42] reaffirmed that states remain indestructible units within the union, limiting federal encroachment on state governance. Comparatively, in cases where states have engaged in unconstitutional or discriminatory governance such as during the Civil Rights Era, the federal government has intervened, but through judicial and legislative actions rather than executive suspensions. In *Cooper v Aaron*,[43] the Supreme Court ruled that state governments must comply with federal constitutional mandates, particularly concerning civil rights, but enforcement was carried out through the courts and federal agencies, not through executive removals. Similarly, during President Dwight Eisenhower's intervention in Arkansas (1957) to enforce desegregation, the President deployed federal troops to maintain order but did not remove the state governor or dissolve the legislature, demonstrating the constitutional limits of executive intervention.[44] Overall, the United States provides a stark contrast to Nigeria in terms of federal intervention in state governance. While Nigeria's history reflects instances of de facto executive

[30] NBA Blog, 'State of Emergency In Rivers: "Suspension" Or Otherwise Summary Removal of A Democratically Elected Governor and Other Elected Officials is Unconstitutional – NBA' < https://blog.nigerianbar.org.ng/2025/03/18/state-of-emergency-in-rivers-suspension-or-otherwise-summary-removal-of-a-democratically-elected-governor-and-other-elected-officials-is-unconstitutional/> Accessed 18th March 2025.

[31] NBA Blog, 'State of Emergency In Rivers: "Suspension" Or Otherwise Summary Removal of A Democratically Elected Governor and Other Elected Officials is Unconstitutional – NBA' < https://blog.nigerianbar.org.ng/2025/03/18/state-of-emergency-in-rivers-suspension-or-otherwise-summary-removal-of-a-democratically-elected-governor-and-other-elected-officials-is-unconstitutional/> Accessed 18th March 2025.

[32]R Ozigbo, 'NLC, TUC condemn suspension of Rivers State Governor, describe it as direct assault on democracy' < https://nairametrics.com/2025/03/19/nlc-tuc-condemn-suspension-of-rivers-state-governor-describe-it-as-direct-assault-on-democracy/> Accessed 18th March 2025.

[33] *Ibid.*

[34] [34] Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (As Amended), s305.

[35] Legal Information Institute, 'Federalism' < https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/federalism> Accessed 18th March 2025.

[36] Oregon State University, 'State Constitutions'<https://open.oregonstate.education/government/chapter/chapter-5/ > Accessed 18th March 2025.

[37] Constitution of the United States 1789, Section 4, Article IV.

[38] 48 U.S. (7 How.) 1 (1849).

[39] Insurrection Act 1807 s253.

[40] Constitution of the United States 1789, Tenth Amendment

[41] JA Dueholm, 'Lincoln's Suspension of the Writ of Habeas Corpus: An Historical and Constitutional Analysis' *Summer* (2008) 29(2), 47-66.

[42] 74 U.S. 700 (1869).

[43] 358 U.S. 1 (1958).

[44] National Archives, 'Executive Order 10730: Desegregation of Central High School (1957)' < https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/executive-order-10730> Accessed 21th March 2025.

interference, the U.S. constitutional structure strictly limits the President's ability to intervene in state governance without judicial or congressional authorization. The balance of power in the U.S. federal system ensures that state autonomy is legally protected, reinforcing a governance model where federal dominance is highly constrained and necessary interventions must follow constitutionally sanctioned procedures

South Africa

South Africa operates under a unitary-federal hybrid system where provincial governments enjoy constitutionally guaranteed autonomy but remain subject to national oversight.[45] Unlike Nigeria's federal structure, where the Constitution does not explicitly empower the President to suspend a governor or legislature, South Africa 1996 Constitution provides a structured mechanism for national intervention in provincial affairs.[46] This allows the national executive to intervene when a province fails to fulfill its constitutional or statutory obligations. However, this intervention is regulated, time-bound, and subject to legislative oversight, ensuring that provincial autonomy is not arbitrarily overridden.[47] The landmark case of Premier, *Western Cape v President of South Africa,*[48] reinforced the principle that national intervention must be justified and proportional, emphasizing that any such action should be exceptional rather than routine. A key distinction between South Africa and Nigeria lies in the scope and limitations of federal intervention. While Nigeria has witnessed historical instances of presidential overreach, such as in Plateau State [49] and Ekiti State (2006),[50] South Africa's system requires parliamentary approval and judicial oversight to prevent abuse. Section 139 of The South African Constitution further extends this principle to municipalities, allowing provincial governments to intervene in local government affairs under strict conditions.[51] This structured approach ensures that interventions are not a tool for political control but rather a corrective measure to uphold constitutional governance. In *Minister of Local Government, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning, Western Cape v The Habitat Council and Ors,*[52] the Constitutional Court ruled that intervention must be necessary, transparent, and proportional, setting a strong legal precedent that limits executive dominance over subnational governments. Moreover, South Africa's constitutional framework prioritizes cooperative governance, ensuring that conflicts between national and provincial governments are resolved through dialogue rather than unilateral action. The Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act 2005 establishes formal structures for dispute resolution, preventing undue federal encroachment.[53] This contrasts with Nigeria, where the Constitution[54] allows for emergency declarations but lacks explicit safeguards against arbitrary presidential actions. The South African approach underscores the importance of institutional checks and balances, as seen in Ex parte Chairperson of the Constitutional Assembly: In *re Certification of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa,*[55] where the Constitutional Court emphasized the need for a balanced division of powers between national and provincial governments. Ultimately, South Africa provides a model where intervention is framed as a constitutional safeguard rather than an instrument of federal dominance. By embedding clear procedural guidelines and judicial scrutiny, the South African system minimizes executive overreach while maintaining the integrity of its federal structure. In contrast, Nigeria's legal framework remains ambiguous, allowing past governments to exploit emergency powers beyond their intended purpose. Strengthening Nigeria's constitutional provisions by incorporating structured intervention mechanisms akin to Section 100 and 139 of the South African Constitution could enhance democratic governance and prevent excessive federal interference in state affairs.

India

India operates under a federal system with a strong central government,[56] and its Constitution explicitly provides for federal intervention in state affairs. Article 356 of the Indian Constitution, also known as the 'President's Rule,' empowers the President to assume control over a state government if it fails to function according to constitutional provisions.[57] This provision allows the President, upon the advice of the Union Cabinet, to dissolve a state legislature and take over executive powers. However, such an intervention must be approved by both houses of Parliament within two months, ensuring a level of legislative oversight.[58] Unlike Nigeria, where presidential intervention in state governance lacks explicit constitutional clarity, India has a well-defined legal framework governing such actions. The Supreme Court of India has also played a crucial role in interpreting and limiting the misuse of Article 356, ensuring that it is invoked only under genuine constitutional breakdowns. A landmark case, *S. R. Bommai v Union of India,*[59] significantly curtailed the arbitrary use of Article 356 by establishing that judicial review applies to the President's decision

[45]N Steytler, 'The Symbiotic Relationship between Decentralisation and Constitutionalism in Africa' < https://oxcon.ouplaw.com/display/10.1093/law/9780198846154.001.0001/law-9780198846154-chapter-22?p=emailAaxZuXawZZlKo&d=/10.1093/law/9780198846154.001.0001/law-9780198846154-chapter-22> Accessed 22nd March 2025.

[46] South Africa Constitution 1996, s100.

[47] *Ibid.*

[48] (1999) (3) SA 657.

[49]The New Humanitarian, 'Obasanjo declares state of emergency in Plateau State' < https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2004/05/18/obasanjo-declares-state-emergency-plateau-state> Accessed 22nd March 2025.

[50] OCHA, 'Nigeria: Emergency rule as impeachments turn ugly' < https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/nigeria-emergency-rule-impeachments-turn-ugly> Accessed 22nd March 2025.

[51] South Africa 1996, s139.

[52] 2014 (4) SA 437 (CC).

[53] Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act 2005, s42.

[54] Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (As Amended), s305.

[55] [1996] ZACC 26.

[56] National Institute of Open Schooling, 'Indian Federal System ' < https://nios.ac.in/media/documents/srsec317newE/317EL8.pdf> Accessed 23rd March 2025.

[57] Constitution of India 1949, Article 356.

[58] *Ibid.*

[59] (1994) 3 SCC 1

to dismiss a state government. The Supreme Court ruled that the central government must provide valid reasons for imposing President's Rule, emphasizing that state autonomy cannot be undermined at the whims of the federal executive.[60] This decision reinforced democratic principles by ensuring that the dissolution of a state government is not solely at the discretion of the central government but is subject to judicial scrutiny. Comparatively, Nigeria lacks a similar judicial safeguard, as past federal interventions in state governance such as in Plateau State, Ekiti State and Rivers State, occurred without express constitutional backing and minimal judicial checks.

While India's framework provides a structured mechanism for federal intervention, it has faced criticisms regarding political misuse. Successive central governments have been accused of invoking Article 356 for partisan reasons, particularly against opposition-led states. For instance, in *State of Karnataka v Union of India*,[61] the Supreme Court upheld the necessity of objective criteria for imposing President's Rule, reinforcing that political motivations cannot justify federal interventions. These rulings demonstrate India's commitment to maintaining state autonomy while allowing federal intervention as a last resort. In contrast, Nigeria's constitutional ambiguity regarding emergency rule under Section 305 of the Nigerian Constitution has led to instances of presidential overreach without robust legal consequences, highlighting the need for clearer judicial interpretation and legal refinement.

Overall, India's approach to federal intervention provides a more structured and constitutionally defined process than Nigeria's, with Article 356 outlining clear legal and procedural safeguards. While both countries recognize the necessity of central intervention in extreme cases, India has instituted stronger judicial oversight to prevent arbitrary dismissals of state governments.[62] Nigeria, on the other hand, lacks such explicit constitutional mechanisms and judicial precedents, making federal dominance a more contentious issue. To align with global best practices, Nigeria could adopt a similar structured approach, ensuring that any federal intervention in state governance is not only constitutionally grounded but also subject to judicial and legislative scrutiny.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

In examining the power of the Nigerian President to suspend a state governor and legislature, it is evident that where such authority lacks express constitutional backing it poses a significant threat to the principles of federalism and democratic governance. While proponents argue that federal intervention is necessary to prevent governance breakdowns and maintain national stability, historical precedents and legal interpretations demonstrate that such actions often overreach constitutional limits and undermine the autonomy of state governments. Comparative analysis with jurisdictions like the United States, South Africa and India further highlights the importance of judicial and legislative processes in addressing state-level crises rather than executive overreach. The Nigerian Constitution provides clear mechanisms for the removal of state executives, primarily through legislative impeachment and judicial review, reinforcing the doctrine of separation of powers. Any deviation from these established legal frameworks risks setting a dangerous precedent for authoritarian rule, eroding democratic norms, and diminishing public trust in governance. The following measures will be helpful:

Strict Adherence to Constitutional Provisions: The federal government must operate strictly within the boundaries of the Constitution. Any action affecting state executives or legislatures should be legally justified, ensuring that no governor or state legislature is suspended without due process.
Strengthening Judicial Oversight: The judiciary must be empowered to act as a check on executive overreach. Judicial review mechanisms should be enhanced to swiftly nullify unconstitutional actions and reinforce the principle of separation of powers.
Legislative Reforms and Clarifications: The National Assembly should enact laws that clearly define the limits of federal executive powers concerning state governance. Any ambiguities in the Constitution regarding emergency rule and federal interventions should be addressed through constitutional amendments.
Upholding the Principle of Federalism: Nigeria must practice true federalism, where state governments exercise autonomy without undue interference from the federal executive. Federal interventions should only occur in extreme situations and must follow constitutional procedures.
Institutional Checks and Balances: Independent institutions, including the judiciary, legislature, and civil society organizations, must play active roles in holding the executive accountable. Transparent governance and public access to legal recourse should be prioritized.
Judicial Independence and Non-Interference: The executive should respect judicial decisions and refrain from undermining the courts' authority. Judges must be free from political pressure to make impartial rulings on cases concerning federal and state relations.
Public Awareness and Civic Engagement: Citizens should be educated on their constitutional rights and the dangers of executive overreach. Civil society organizations, legal practitioners, and the media must advocate for democratic governance and challenge unconstitutional actions.
Strengthening State Institutions: Governors and state legislatures should be constitutionally protected from arbitrary removal or dissolution. State governments should be strengthened through legal and financial autonomy to effectively govern without federal coercion.
Comparative Legal Reforms: Nigeria should adopt best practices from established federal democracies, such as the United States, South Africa and India, where state autonomy is constitutionally protected. Legal frameworks should be refined to prevent executive misuse of emergency powers.
Promotion of Political Accountability: Political leaders must be held accountable for unconstitutional actions. The use of impeachment, legal sanctions, and political reforms should be encouraged to deter federal executives from overstepping their constitutional boundaries.

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[60] *Ibid.*
[61] 1978 AIR 68.
[62] JUS, 'Separation of Powers in the Indian Constitution - Relationship between Executive, Legislature and Judiciary' < https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/separation-power-indian-constitution/> Accessed 24th March 2025.