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The Institute of Bill of Rights Law Hosts Nigerian Justices

Institute of Bill of Rights Law at The College of William & Mary School of Law

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THE INSTITUTE OF BILL OF RIGHTS LAW
HOSTS NIGERIAN JUSTICES

Monday, January 28, 1991

COMPARING CONSTITUTIONAL TRADITIONS
IN NIGERIA AND THE UNITED STATES

Marshall-Wythe 124
2:30–3:30 p.m. Public Panel Discussion:
Justice Mush Dattijo Muhammad, Judge,
High Court of Justice of Niger State
Justice Bemare Seunmwukseni Bansi, Judge,
High Court of Justice of Gongola State
Justice Olaiya Oluwadare Aguda, Judge, High
Court of Ondo State
Justice Ibrahim Umar, Chief Judge, High
Court of Sokoto
Justice Olukayode Olumuyiwa Somolu, High
Court of Ogun State

Student Lounge
3:30 Reception

The Institute of Bill of Rights Law will host this visiting contingent of Justices from Nigeria. Members of the Faculty of the College of William and Mary, Marshall-Wythe School of Law will serve as hosts.
The Federal Republic of Nigeria, located in West Africa with an area of 356,667 square miles and 21 states, is bordered by Niger on the north, Cameroon on the east, Benin on the west, and the Gulf of Guinea on the south. It is more than twice the size of California, with coastal swamps and tropical forests in the south; woodlands, grasslands and semiarid deserts in the north. Lagos, located on the southern coast, is the federal capital. The Nigerian government is also currently building a new federal capital in Abuja.

Nigeria's economy is based primarily on oil, the nation’s richest and most abundant resource. The country is sub-Saharan Africa's largest producer of oil, which accounts for more than 43% of GDP and 85% of export revenue. Other natural resources include tin, coal, columbite, iron ore, zinc, and uranium. Agriculture remains a significant part of the economy, engaging 70% of the labor force and contributing 21% to GDP. Cocoa, rubber, palm products, yams, cassava, and groundnuts are among the main crops produced. A small industrial sector is involved in the production of cotton, rubber, textiles, cement, and other goods. Efforts are underway to strengthen the agricultural sector and diversify the economy.

Nigeria is Africa’s most populous nation; its people numbering nearly 124 million, with an estimated 5 million concentrated in Lagos. It is also one of the continent’s most ethnically diverse countries with nearly 250 ethnic groups. The dominant groups are the Yoruba in the west, the Ibo in the east, and the Hausa and Fulani in the north. Other large groups are the Edo, Ibibio, Ijaw, Kanuri, Nupe, and Tiv. English is the official language; Ibo, Hausa and Yoruba are also widely spoken. The north is predominantly Muslim, and although traditional faiths are practiced in the south, the latter is predominantly Christian.

Independent from Great Britain since 1960, Nigeria is ruled today by a 28-member Armed Forces Ruling Council headed by General Ibrahim Babangida, the military leader and former Army Chief of Staff on the Supreme Military Council headed by deposed General Buhari. President Babangida, a Moslem from the Niger state of Nigeria, assumed power on August 27, 1985. He has since embarked upon an austerity and agricultural development program in an effort to resuscitate Nigeria’s economy, which is suffering from a decline in world oil prices. Handing over of power to a civilian government is planned for 1992.