

RULE OF LAW

Rule of Law is the supremacy of the law over every custom or tradition, person, group or institution. It means that decisions by leaders must abide with the law of the land. Rule of Law does not give any preference to anybody on account of position, wealth or any power whatsoever.

Benefits of the Rule of Law

1. It protects the equality of everybody before the law.
2. Rule of Law guarantees the freedom of the less privileged in the society. It frees them from oppression, cruelty and arbitrary arrest, or punishment.
3. Rule of Law gives hope to every citizen who is hurt to go to court and seek redress and believe that the case would be determined strictly according to the law.

Offences Punishable by Law

Virtually all offences are punishable under our law. The gravity of the offence determines the level of the punishment. This further depends on whether the offence is civil or criminal.

Civil Offences are offences that do not carry severe punishment. They include offences like slander, prostitution, illegal assembly and sanitation offences. They are generally offences that do not involve violence. They attract penalties like fines and short jail terms.

Criminal Offences are offences that involve violence or those the effect of which is regarded as great to individuals, groups, or to the entire nation. They include: burglary, armed robbery, rape, kidnapping, murder, forgery, drug trafficking, examination malpractices, child trafficking, cult activities and money laundering. They attract jail terms which may be life jail or even death sentences.

Human Rights

Human Rights are basic rights every human being should be entitled to. They include: the rights to life, to liberty, to association and freedom from slavery as well as freedom from torture. These rights are contained in the Nigerian Constitution and are therefore part of our laws.

Ways of Protect Human Rights and the Rule of Law

Apart from the State, whose role we earlier discussed, individuals and groups could do the following to protect Human Rights:

1. Representing the affected person in court as a lawyer or as a witness.
2. Supporting actions directed at protecting Human Rights or at reversing violations of such

Rights.

3. Involving in protest marches or media campaigns against Human Rights violations.