



# **EBONYI STATE OF NIGERIA**

**LAW NO. 013 OF 2019**

## **EBONYI STATE**

**ADMINISTRATION OF CRIMINAL  
JUSTICE LAW 2019**

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**EBONYI STATE OF NIGERIA**  
**LAW NO. 013 OF 2019**

A LAW TO MAKE PROVISIONS FOR  
PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IN  
CRIMINAL CASES IN HIGH COURT AND  
MAGISTRATES' COURTS IN EBONYI STATE  
AND FOR OTHER MATTERS RELATED  
THERE TO.

*Title*

**BE IT ENACTED** by the House of Assembly  
of Ebonyi State of Nigeria as follows:

*Enactment*

**PART I: PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS**

This Law may be cited as Ebonyi State Administration of Criminal Justice  
Law,  
No. 013 of 2019.

*Citation*

**SECTION 1**

This Law shall be deemed to have come into  
Force on Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> day of August,  
2019.

*Commencement*

1. The Criminal Procedure Law Cap.31 is hereby repealed and shall  
cease to have effect from the commencement of this Law.
2. The provisions of this Law shall apply to all cases filed  
or arising after the commencement of this Law.

*Transitional  
Provisions*

## SECTION 2

In this Law, unless the context otherwise requires:

### *Interpretation*

**“Act”** means an enactment of the National Assembly, or any other enactment which has effect as such;

**“Adult”** means a person who has attained the age of eighteen years or above;

**“Charge”** means the statement of offences with which a defendant is charged in a summary trial before a court;

**“Chief Judge”** means the Chief Judge of Ebonyi State;

**“Child”** means any person who has not attained the age of eighteen years;

**“Complainant”** includes any informant or prosecutor in any case relating to a summary conviction offence;

**“Complaint”** means the allegation that any named person has committed an offence made before a magistrate for the purpose of moving him to issue process under this Law;

**“Court”** includes the High Court and Magistrates' Court;

**“Constitution”** means the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria;

**“Defendant”** means any person against whom an indictment or a complaint is made;

**“District”** means a magisterial district created under the provisions of the Magistrates' Courts Law;

**“Division”** means a judicial division created under the provisions of the High Court Law;

**“Federal Law”** means any Act of National Assembly or any other enactment which has effect as such;

**“Felony”** means an offence on conviction for which a person can, without proof of his having been previously convicted of an offence, be sentenced to death or to imprisonment for three years or more or which is declared by Law to be a felony;

**“Fine”** includes any pecuniary penalty or pecuniary forfeiture or pecuniary compensation payable under a conviction;

**“Future Law”** means any Law passed after the commencement of this Law.

**“High Court”** means High Court established for the State under the Constitution;

**“Indictable Offence”** means any offence -

- a. which on conviction may be punished by a term of imprisonment exceeding two years, or
- b. which on conviction may be punished by imposition of a fine exceeding Ten Thousand Naira; or



- c. which is not declared by the written Law creating the offence to be punishable on summary conviction;

**“Indicted”** means filing of an information against a person after the preparation of proofs of evidence;

**“Infant”** means a person who has not attained the age of Seven years;

**“Judge”** means a Judge of the High Court;

**“Justice of the Peace”** means any person appointed under any written Law to be a justice of the Peace of Ebonyi State;

**“Juvenile Offender”** means an offender who has not attained the age of eighteen years;

**“Law”** means an Enactment of the Legislature of the State or any other Enactment which has effect as such an enactment;

**“Law Officer”** means Attorney-General of the State and includes such other qualified officers by whatever names designated to whom any of the powers of a Law officer is delegated to by Law or necessary intendment.

**“Legal Guardian”** in relation to an infant, child, young person or juvenile offender, means a person appointed according to Law to be his guardian by deed or will, or by order of a Court of Competent Jurisdiction.

**“Magistrate”** means a Chief Magistrate or a magistrate appointed under the Magistrates' Courts Law;

**“Minor”** means the same thing as a child or young person;

**“Offence”** means an offence against any Law or Act including any regulation, order, rule or proclamation made under any Law or Act;

**“Officer in charge of a police station”** includes the officer in charge of a police station or any police officer who acts in the absence of the officer-in-charge;

**“Open court”** means any room or place in which any court shall be sitting to hear and determine any matters within its jurisdiction and to which the public may have access;

**“Order”** includes any conviction in respect of a summary conviction offence;

**“Penalty”** includes any pecuniary fine, forfeiture, costs, or compensation recoverable or payable under an order;

**“Police Officer”** includes any member of the Police Force established by the Police Act;

**“Prescribed”** means prescribed by rules made under the authority of this Law;

**“Registrar”** includes Chief Registrar and a registrar of the High Court and of a Magistrate's Court;

**“Rules”** or **“Rules of Court”** means any Rules of Court relating to the practice and procedure of the High Court or of the Magistrates' Courts in the exercise of their

criminal jurisdiction;

**“Sentenced to Imprisonment”** shall include a case where imprisonment is imposed by a court on any person either with or without the option of a fine or in respect of the non-payment of any sum of money or for failing to do or abstaining from doing any act or thing required to be done or left undone and the expression

**“Sentence of Imprisonment”** shall be construed accordingly;

**“Sheriff”** means a sheriff within the meaning of the Sheriffs and Civil Process Law and includes a deputy sheriff and any person authorised by the sheriff or a deputy sheriff to execute process of court;

**“Summary conviction offence”** means any offence punishable by a High Court or Magistrates' Court on summary conviction and includes any matter in respect of which a High Court or Magistrates' Court can make an order in the exercise of its summary jurisdiction;

**“Summary Court”** means unless the same is expressly or by necessary implication qualified:

- a. a Judge of the High Court when sitting in court and presiding over a summary trial, and
- b. any magistrate when sitting in open court to hear and determine any matters within his jurisdiction either under the provisions of this Law or any other written Law;

**“Summary Trial”** means any trial by a magistrate and a trial by a judge not on information;

**“Sup Juserior Police Officer”** has the same meaning as in the Police Act;

**“The State”** means Ebonyi State, and **“a state”** means any other State of the Federation or the Federal Capital Territory;

**“Young Person”** means a person who has not attained the age of eighteen years.

### SECTION 3

The general provisions of this Law shall apply to criminal trials and other criminal proceedings in the High Court and Magistrates' Courts except when express provision is made in this Law or in any Law in respect of any particular court or form of trial. *Application*

### SECTION 4

Nothing in this Law shall affect the use or validity of any special forms in respect of any procedure or offence specified under the provisions of any other written Law or the validity of any other procedure provided by any other written Law. *Saving of other forms and procedure*

### SECTION 5

The provisions of **Chapters 28, 29, 30, 31 and 36** shall apply subject to the provisions of any written Law relating to any specific offence or class of *Construction of Provisions Relating to Punishments*

offences and to the jurisdiction conferred on any court or any person presiding over such court.

## SECTION 6

Nothing in this Law shall be construed to authorize - *Inter-State Service of Process*

1. The service outside the State of a summons to enforce the appearance before a court of a defendant, surety or parent of a defendant.
2. The service outside the State of a subpoena, summons or notice of hearing to compel the attendance of a witness before a court.
3. The execution outside the State of a warrant for the arrest of any person or of a search warrant.
4. The issue of an order to compel the production of any person confined in a Correctional Service outside the State.
5. The execution outside the State of a warrant of distress; or
6. The execution outside the State of a warrant of committal issued in accordance with **Section 428** of this Law.

## CHAPTER 2: ARREST

### SECTION 7

- a. In making an arrest, the police officer or other person making the arrest shall touch or confine the body of the person to be arrested, unless there is a submission to the custody by word or action. *Arrest, How Made*
- b. An offender under the Criminal Code or under any other enactment creating an offence shall be arrested, investigated, inquired into, tried and otherwise dealt with according to the provisions of this Law, except where there are specific provisions in the enactment in relation to the manner or place of arrest, inquiry or trial.

### SECTION 8

No person shall be arrested in the stead of another.

### SECTION 9 *Arrest in Lieu Prohibited*

A person arrested shall not be handcuffed, otherwise bound or be subjected to unnecessary restraint except:

- a. by order of the court, a magistrate or justice of peace; *No Unnecessary Restraint*

- b. there is reasonable apprehension of violence or of an attempt to escape; or
- c. the restraint is considered necessary for the safety of the person arrested.

## SECTION 10

1. Except when the person arrested is in the actual course of the commission of a crime or is pursued immediately after the commission of a crime or escape from lawful custody, the police officer or other person making the arrest shall inform the person arrested of the cause of the arrest. *Notification of Cause of Arrest and Rights of the Arrested Person*
2. Any person arrested shall be accorded humane treatment, having regard to his right to the dignity of his person.
3. No person shall be arbitrarily arrested, or arrested on allegation that borders on civil breach of contract, but the arrest shall be based on reasonable suspicion that the person arrested committed or is about to commit a criminal activity punishable as an offence under any Law.
4. Nothing in this Section and in this Law shall be construed as permitting a police officer, private person or officer of an agency to arrest a person by reason only of consanguinity or

affinity or association with the person alleged to have committed an offence.

5. Any agency, police or persons authorized by any Law to make arrest for any offence(s) shall comply with the provisions of this Law in effecting the said arrest.
6. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in any written Law, where a person(s) or officer(s) of any agency violates the provisions of this Law in the course of an arrest, he shall be liable to pay compensation to the person or any injured person(s) as may be determined by the court.
7. Where any person is arrested contrary to the provisions of this Law or in contravention of his rights under the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria or any other written Law, he shall have a right of action in damages against such arresting officer or agency or both.

## SECTION 11

1. Whenever a person is arrested by a police officer or a private person, the police officer making the arrest or to whom the private person hands over the person arrested may search the person, using such force as may be *Search of Arrested Person*



reasonably necessary for such purpose, and place in safe custody all articles other than necessary wearing apparel found upon him; Provided that whenever it is necessary to search a person, the search shall be made by a person of the same sex with a sense of decency.

2. Notwithstanding the other provisions of this Section, any police officer or other person making an arrest may in any case take from the person arrested any offensive weapons which he has on his person.
3. Where any property has been taken under this Section from a person charged before a court of competent jurisdiction with any offence, a report shall be made by the police to such court of the fact of such property having been taken from the person charged and of the particulars of such property, and the court shall, if of the opinion that the property or any portion thereof can be returned consistently with the interests of justice and with the safe custody of the person charged, direct such property or any portion thereof to be returned to the person charged or to such other person as he may direct.
4. Where any property has been taken from a person under this Section and the person is not charged before a court but is released on

the ground that there is no sufficient reason to believe that he has committed any offence, any property so taken from him shall be restored to him.

5. Notwithstanding the other provisions of this section, a police officer or any other person making an arrest may in any case take from the person arrested any instruments of violence or poisonous substance which he has on his person.

## SECTION 12

1. Upon arrest, a police officer making the arrest or to whom the private person hands over the person arrested, shall immediately record information about the arrested person and an inventory of the particulars of all items or properties recovered from the person arrested. *Inventory of Property of Arrested Person*
2. An inventory recorded under subsection (1) of this section shall be duly signed by the police officer and the arrested person.
3. The person arrested, his legal representative or such other person as the person arrested may direct, shall be given a copy of the inventory.

4. Where any property has been taken under this section from a person charged of an offence before a court of competent jurisdiction, the officer shall upon request by the prosecution make a report to the court of the fact of the property having been taken from the person charged and of the particulars of the property.
5. The court to which a report is made under subsection (4) of this section shall, if of the opinion that the property or any portion of it can be returned in the interest of justice and with the safe custody of the person charged, direct the property or any portion of it to be returned to the person charged or to such other person as he may direct; Provided that where the police fail to make such a report to the court, the owner or any person having such interest in the property may apply to the court for its release
6. Where any property has been taken from a person under this section, and the person is not charged before a court but is released on the ground that there is no sufficient reason to believe that he has committed an offence, any property so taken from him shall be returned to him, provided the property is neither connected to nor a proceed of crime.

## SECTION 13

When a person is in lawful custody on a charge of committing an offence of such a nature and alleged to have been committed in such circumstances that there are reasonable grounds for believing that an examination of his person will afford evidence as to the commission of the offence, a qualified medical practitioner or any certified professional with relevant skills, acting at the request of a police officer may make such an examination of the person in custody as is reasonably necessary in order to ascertain the facts which may afford the evidence, and to use such force as is reasonably necessary for that purpose.

### *Examination of Arrested Person*

## SECTION 14

1. If a person or police officer acting under a warrant of arrest or otherwise having authority to arrest, has reason to believe that the person to be arrested has entered into or is within any place, the person residing in or being in charge of the place shall, on demand by the police officer or person acting for the police officer, allow him free access to the place and afford all reasonable facilities to search the place for the person sought to be arrested.

### *Search of Place Entered by Person Sought to be Arrested*

2. If access to a place cannot be obtained under subsection (1) of this section, the person or police officer may enter the place and search it for the person to be arrested, and in order to effect an entrance into the place, may break open any outer or inner door or window of any house or place, whether that of the person to be arrested or of any other person or otherwise effect entry into such house or place, if after notification of his authority and purpose, and demand of admittance duly made, he cannot otherwise obtain admittance.

## SECTION 15

Any police officer or other person authorized to make an arrest may break out of any house or place in order to liberate himself or any other person who, having lawfully entered for the purpose of making an arrest, is detained therein.

*Power to Break  
out of any House  
for Purpose of  
Liberation*

## SECTION 16

1. When a person is arrested, whether with or without a warrant and taken to a police station or any other agency effecting the arrest, the police officer making the arrest or the officer in charge of the police station or agency shall cause to be taken immediately, in the prescribed

*Recording of Arrest*

form, the following record of the person arrested-

- a. the alleged offence;
  - b. the date and circumstances of his arrest;
  - c. his physical address; and
  - d. for the purpose of identification-
    - i. his physical measurement,
    - ii. his photograph,
    - iii. his full fingerprint impressions, and
    - iv. such other means of his identification, including but not limited to DNA samples.
2. The process of recording in subsection (1) of this section shall be concluded within a reasonable time of the arrest of the person, but not exceeding forty-eight hours.
  3. Any further action in respect of the person arrested pursuant to subsection (1) of this section shall be entered in the record.
  4. Where a suspect who is arrested with or without warrant volunteers to make a confessional statement, the police officer shall ensure that the making and taking of the statement shall be in writing and may be recorded electronically on a retrievable video compact disc or such other audio visual means.

## SECTION 17

1. Any person who is arrested, whether with or without a warrant, shall be taken with all reasonable dispatch to a police station or other place for the reception of arrested persons and shall without delay be informed of the charge against him. Any such person while in custody shall be given reasonable facilities for obtaining legal advice, taking steps to furnish bail, and otherwise making arrangements for his defence or release. *Arrested Person to be taken at once to Police Station*
2. Where any person who is arrested with or without a warrant volunteers to make a confessional statement, the police shall ensure that the making and taking of such statement is recorded on video or other retrievable electronic device and the said recording and copies thereof may be produced at the trial; provided that in the absence of video facility, the said statement shall be in writing in the presence of a private legal practitioner or any other person of his choice.
3. The legal practitioner or any other person referred to in subsection (2) shall also endorse with his full particulars and indication of having witnessed the recording thereof.

4. The statement or its endorsement as in subsection (2) shall be made in the presence of the officer in charge of the Human Rights Desk where available or a superior police officer in the absence of a Human Rights Desks officer.
5. Where a suspect does not understand or speak or write in the English language, an interpreter of his own choice shall record and read over the statement to the suspect to his understanding and the suspect shall then endorse the statement as having been made by him, and the interpreter shall attest to the making of the statement.
6. The interpreter shall endorse his name, address, occupation, designation or other particulars on the statement.

## SECTION 18

1. There shall be established at the headquarters of the State Police Command, a Central Criminal Record Registry. *Central Criminal Record Registry*
2. It shall be the duty of the Chief Registrar of the Courts in the State to transmit the decision of the courts in all criminal trials in the form shown in the schedule to this section to the Central Criminal Record Registry within thirty days of delivery of final judgment.



3. Where there is default by the Chief Registrar to transmit the records referred to in this section within thirty days after judgment, he shall be liable to appropriate disciplinary measures by the Judicial Service Commission.
4. A police officer in charge of a police station or officers in charge of an agency authorized by Law to make arrest and take records as provided in **Section 16 (1)** of this Law shall forward to the Central Criminal Record Registry on the first week of every month all record as described in that section taken at that station or agency in the manner provided for entry into the Registry.
5. The person arrested or his legal representative shall have access to all the information in the Registry with regard to his arrest or information relevant for his defence.
6. Without prejudice to the provisions of **Section 10(8)** of this Law, where there is default by an officer in charge of a police station or officer in-charge of an agency authorized to make arrest to comply with the provision of this section, the default shall be treated as a misconduct and shall be dealt with in accordance with the relevant Police Regulation under the Police Act, or pursuant to any other disciplinary procedure

prescribed by any provision regulating the conduct of the officer or officer of the agency.

7. There shall be established at the State Police Headquarters or any appropriate location, a forensic laboratory.

## SECTION 19

1. A Police Officer may, without an order from a Magistrate and without a warrant, arrest a person:
  - a. whom he suspects on reasonable grounds of having committed an offence against a Law in Nigeria or against the Law of any other State, unless the written Law creating the offence provides that the offender cannot be arrested without a warrant;
  - b. who commits any offence in his presence;
  - c. who obstructs a police officer while in the execution of his duty, or who has escaped or attempts to escape from Lawful custody;
  - d. in whose possession anything is found which may reasonably be suspected to be stolen property or who may reasonably be suspected of having committed an offence with reference to the thing;

***Arrest by Police  
Officer Without  
Warrant***

- e. who he suspects on reasonable grounds of being a deserter from any of the armed forces of Nigeria;
- f. who he suspects on reasonable grounds of having been involved in an act committed at a place outside of Nigeria which, if committed in Nigeria, would have been punished as an offence, and for which he is, under an enactment in force in Nigeria, liable to be apprehended and detained in Nigeria;
- g. having in his possession without lawful excuse, the burden of proving which excuse shall lie on such person, any implement of housebreaking, car theft, firearm or any offensive or dangerous weapon;
- h. whom he has reasonable cause to believe a warrant of arrest has been issued by a court of competent jurisdiction in Nigeria;
- i. found in the State taking precautions to conceal his presence in circumstances, which afford reason to believe that he is taking such precautions with a view to committing an offence;
- j. whose arrest a warrant has been issued or whom he is directed to arrest by a Judge, Magistrate, Justice of the Peace or

- superior police officer;
- k. whom he reasonably suspects to be designing to commit an offence for which the police may arrest without a warrant, if it appears to him that the commission of the offence cannot be otherwise prevented; or
  - l. required to appear by a public summons issued under this Law or any other Law.
2. The authority given to a police officer to arrest a person who commits an offence in his presence shall be exercisable in respect of offences committed in the officer's presence notwithstanding that the written law creating the offence provides that the offender cannot be arrested without a warrant.
  3. Any person, who is unlawfully arrested, shall be entitled to compensation by the particular police officer or officers) effecting the arrest
  4. Any compensation awarded under subsection (3) of this section shall be paid by direct deduction from the salary of the particular police officer(s).

## SECTION 20

1. When any person who in the presence of a police officer has committed or has been accused of committing an offence triable *Refusal to Give Name and Residence*

- summarily refuses on demand of such officer to give his name and residence, or gives a name or residence which such officer has reason to believe to be false, he may be arrested by such officer in order that his name or residence may be ascertained.
2. When the true name and residence of such person have been ascertained he shall be released on his executing a recognizance, with or without sureties, to appear before a magistrate if so required: Provided that if such person is not resident in Nigeria the recognizance shall be secured by a surety or sureties resident in Nigeria.
  3. Should the true name and residence of such person not be ascertained within 24 hours from the time of arrest, or should he fail to execute the recognizance or, if so required to furnish sufficient sureties, he shall forthwith be forwarded to the nearest magistrate having jurisdiction
  4. Where such person on being brought before the Court still refuses, the Court may deal with him as it will deal with an uncooperative witness.

## SECTION 21

A private person may arrest a person in the State who in his presence commits an offence or whom he reasonably suspects of having committed an offence for which the police is entitled to arrest without a warrant.

*Arrest by  
Private  
Persons*

## SECTION 22

A person found committing an offence involving injury to property may be arrested without a warrant by the owner of the property or his servants, agent or persons authorised by him.

*Arrest by Owners of  
Property*

## SECTION 23

A private person may arrest any person found damaging public property.

*Arrest of Person  
doing Damage to  
Public Property*

## SECTION 24

1. A private person who arrests any other person without a warrant shall immediately hand over the person so arrested to a police officer, or in the absence of a police officer, shall take the person to the nearest police station and the police officer shall make a note of the name, residence and other particulars of the private

*Handing over of a  
Person Arrested  
by Private Person*

- person making the arrest.
2. Where there is reason to believe that the person arrested comes under the provisions of **Section 19** of this Law, a police officer shall re-arrest him.
  3. Where there is reason to believe that he has committed an offence, and he refuses on the demand of a police officer to give his name and residence, or gives a name or residence which the officer has reason to believe to be false, he shall be dealt with under the provisions of **Section 20** of this Law.
  4. Where a person so arrested by a private person is handed over to a police officer or to an official of an agency authorised by Law to make arrests, the police officer or official shall take note of the name, residence and other particulars of the private person making the arrest, and the date, time and other circumstances of the arrest, and where the person arrested is taken to the police station or to the agency, the charge room officer shall make the entries in the crime diary.
  5. The police officer or official to whom the arrested person is handed over by the private person shall obtain from the private person who made the arrest a formal witness statement setting out the facts and circumstances of the arrest.

6. Where there is sufficient reason to believe that the person handed over has committed an offence he shall immediately be re-arrested but if there is no sufficient reason to believe that he has committed an offence, he shall be released immediately.
7. The provisions of **Section 16** of this Law do not apply to this section unless the person arrested and handed over has been re-arrested in accordance with sub section 2 of this section.

## SECTION 25

When an offence is committed in the presence of a Judge or Magistrate within the State, the Judge or Magistrate may himself arrest or order a person to arrest the offender and may thereupon, subject to the provisions contained in this Law as to bail, commit the offender to custody.

### *Offence Committed in Presence of a Judge or Magistrate*

## SECTION 26

1. A judge or magistrate may arrest or direct the arrest of any person whose arrest upon a warrant he could have lawfully ordered if the facts known to him at the time of making or directing the arrest had been stated before him on oath by some other person.

### *Arrest by a Judge or Magistrate*



2. Where a person is arrested in accordance with the provisions of either Sections **19, 20, 21, 22 or 23** of this Law, the judge or magistrate making or directing the making of such arrest may deal with the person so arrested in the same manner as if such last named person had been brought before him by or under the directions of any other person.

## SECTION 27

A Judge, Magistrate or Justice of the Peace may arrest or direct the arrest of a person committing an offence in his presence and shall thereupon hand him over to a police officer or take security for his attendance before a court at a specified time.

*Arrest for Offence  
Committed in  
Presence of Judge,  
Magistrate or Justice  
of the Peace*

## SECTION 28

A person is bound to assist a Judge, Magistrate, Justice of the Peace, police officer or other person reasonably demanding his aid in arresting or preventing the escape of a person whom the Judge, Magistrate, Justice of the Peace, police officer or other person is authorised to arrest.

*Public Bound to  
Assist in Arrest*

## SECTION 29

A person authorised to effect the arrest of any other person may for the purpose of effecting the arrest pursue him into any part of the State and where the pursuit goes beyond the State, the provisions of the relevant federal legislation shall apply.

*Pursuit of offender into  
other Jurisdictions*

## SECTION 30

1. The Commissioner of Police in the State and head of every agency authorised by Law to make arrest within the State shall remit quarterly to the Attorney-General of the State a record of all arrests made within the State with or without warrant.
2. The report shall contain the full particulars of the persons arrested as prescribed by **Section 16** of this Law.
3. A register of arrests containing the particulars prescribed in **Section 16** of this Law shall be kept in the prescribed form at every police station or agency authorised by Law to make arrests, and every arrest, whether made with or without warrant, within the local limits of the police station or agency, or within the State, shall be entered accordingly by the officer in charge of the police station or officer in charge of the agency as soon as the

*Quarterly report of  
arrests to the  
Attorney-General  
by Commissioner  
of Police*

arrested person is brought to the station or agency.

4. The Attorney-General shall establish an electronic and manual database of all records of arrested persons in the State.

## SECTION 31

1. When a person has been taken into police custody without a warrant for an offence, other than an offence punishable with death, an officer in charge of the police station shall inquire into the case and release the person arrested on bail subject to subsection (2) of this section if it will not be practicable to bring the person before a court having jurisdiction with respect to the offence alleged, within twenty-four hours after the arrest. ***Release on Bail of a Person Arrested Without Warrant***
2. The officer in charge of a police station shall release the person arrested on bail on his entering into a recognizance with or without sureties for a reasonable amount of money to appear before the court or at the police station at the time and place named in the recognizance.
3. Where a person is taken into custody and it appears to the police officer in charge of the station that the offence is of a capital nature, the person arrested shall be detained in

custody, and the police officer shall within forty eight (48) hours of such arrest refer the matter to the office of the Attorney-General for legal advice and where the advice is to prosecute, cause the person arrested to be taken before a court having jurisdiction with respect to the offence within a reasonable time.

## SECTION 32

1. Where a person is taken into custody and it appears to the officer that the inquiry into the case cannot be completed forthwith, he may discharge the person on his entering into a recognizance, with or without sureties for a reasonable amount, to appear at the police station and at such times as are named in the recognizance, unless he previously receives notice in writing from the police officer in charge of that police station that his attendance is not required. *Power to Release on Bail before Charge is Accepted*
2. A recognizance under subsection (1) of this section may be enforced as if it were a recognizance conditional for the appearance of the said person before a Magistrate's court or the place in which the police station named in the recognizance is situate.

## SECTION 33

1. Where a person taken into custody in respect of a non-capital offence is not released on bail after twenty four hours, a court having jurisdiction with respect to the offence may be notified by application on behalf of the arrested person. *Remedy of Person Detained in Custody*
2. The court shall order the production of the person detained and inquire into the circumstances constituting the grounds of the detention and where he deems fit, admit the person detained to bail.
3. An application for bail may be made orally or in writing.

## SECTION 34

1. An officer in charge of a police station or an official in charge of an agency authorized to make arrest shall on the last working day of every month report to the nearest Magistrate the cases of all persons arrested without warrant within the limits of their respective stations or agency whether the persons have been admitted to bail or not. *Police to Report to Supervising Magistrates*
2. The report shall contain the particulars of the persons arrested as prescribed in **Section 16** of this Law.
3. The Magistrate shall on receipt of the reports, forward them to the Ebonyi State Justice

Reform Team established under **Section 538** of this Law, which shall analyze the reports and advice the Attorney-General as to the trends of arrests, bail and related matters.

4. The Attorney-General upon request by the National Human Rights Commission, the Legal Aid Council, Citizens Rights and Mediation Center or registered Non Governmental Organizations may make the report available to them.
5. Where no report is made in accordance with sub-section (1) of this section the Magistrate shall forward a report to the Chief Judge and the Attorney-General for appropriate remedial action.

## SECTION 35

1. The Chief Magistrate or where there is no Chief Magistrate within the police division, any Magistrate of any grade designated by the Chief Judge for that purpose, shall, at least every month, conduct an inspection of police stations or other places of detention within his territorial jurisdiction other than the Correctional Service. *Chief Magistrate to visit Police Stations Every month*
2. During a visit, the Chief Magistrate or Magistrate of any grade appointed by the Chief Judge may:
  - a. call for and inspect the Register of arrests;

- b. direct the arraignment of any suspect; or
  - c. where bail has been refused, grant bail to any suspect where appropriate if the offence for which the suspect is held is within the jurisdiction of the Chief Magistrate or Magistrate of any grade appointed by Chief Judge.
- 3. An officer in charge of a police station or officer in charge of an agency authorized to make arrest shall make available to the visiting Chief Magistrate or designated Magistrate exercising his powers under subsection (1) of this section-
  - a. the full record of arrest and record of bail;
  - b. applications and decisions on bail made within the period; and
  - c. any other facilities the Magistrate requires to exercise his powers under that subsection.
- 4. Where there is default by an officer in charge of a police station or official in-charge of an agency authorized to make arrest to comply with the provisions of subsection (3) of this section, the default shall be treated as a misconduct and shall be dealt with in accordance with the relevant Police Regulation under the Police Act, or pursuant to any other disciplinary procedure prescribed by any provision regulating the conduct of the officer or official of the agency.

## CHAPTER 3 - WARRANTS

### PART A: WARRANT OF ARREST

#### SECTION 36

Where under any written Law, whether passed before or after the commencement of this Law, there is power to arrest a person without warrant, a warrant for his arrest may be issued.

#### *General Authority to Issue Warrant*

#### SECTION 37

1. Every warrant of arrest issued under this Law or, unless the contrary is expressly provided, under any other written Law shall-
  - a. bear the date of the day of issue;
  - b. contain all necessary particulars; and
  - c. be signed by the judge or magistrate by whom it is issued.
2. Every such warrant shall state concisely the offence or matter for which it is issued and shall name or otherwise describe the person to be arrested, and it shall order the police officer or officers to whom it is directed to apprehend such person and bring him before the court to answer the complaint or statement, or to testify or otherwise according to the circumstances of the case, and to be further dealt with according to Law.

#### *Form and Content of Warrant of Arrest*



## SECTION 38

No warrant of arrest shall be issued in the first instance in respect of any complaint or statement unless such complaint or statement is on oath either by the complainant himself or by a material witness.

***Warrant Issued  
on Complaint to  
be in Writing on  
Oath***

## SECTION 39

A warrant of arrest may be issued on any day including a Sunday or public holiday.

***Warrant may  
be Issued on  
any Day***

## SECTION 40

1. A warrant of arrest may be directed to a police officer by name or to all police officers and any other law enforcement agent or agency.
2. It shall not be necessary to make any such warrant returnable at any particular time and a warrant shall remain in force until it is executed or until it is cancelled by a Judge or Magistrate, as the case may be.
3. Where a warrant has been executed and the person arrested has been released the warrant shall no more be valid for re-arresting the person.

***Warrant to Whom  
Directed and  
Duration***

## SECTION 41

1. Any court issuing a warrant of arrest may, if its immediate execution is necessary and no police officer is immediately available, direct it to some other person or persons and such person or persons shall execute the same.
2. Any such person, when executing a warrant of arrest directed to him, shall have all the powers, rights, privileges and protection given to or afforded by Law to a police officer executing a warrant of arrest and shall conform with the requirement placed by Law on such a police officer.

***Warrant of Arrest May in  
Exceptional Cases be  
Directed to other Persons***

## SECTION 42

1. Every warrant of arrest may be executed on any day including a Sunday or public holiday.
2. Every such warrant may be executed by any police officer at any time and in any place in the State other than within the actual court premises in which a court is sitting.
3. The person executing any such warrant shall, before making the arrest, inform the person to be arrested that there is a warrant for his arrest unless there is reasonable cause for abstaining from giving such information on the ground that it is likely to occasion escape, resistance or rescue.

***Procedure for Execution  
of Warrants***

4. Every person arrested on any such warrant shall, subject to the provisions of Sections 44 and 45 be brought before the court which issued the warrant within 24 hours after he is so arrested.

## SECTION 43

A warrant of arrest may be executed notwithstanding that it is not in the possession at the time of the person executing the warrant but the warrant shall, on the demand of the person arrested, be shown to him within 24 hours after his arrest.

*Power to Arrest on  
Warrant but  
Without the Warrant*

## SECTION 44

1. Any court, on issuing a warrant for the arrest of any person in respect of any matter other than an offence punishable with death, may, if it thinks fit, by endorsement on the warrant, direct that the person named in the warrant be released on arrest on his entering into such a recognizance for his appearance as may be required in the endorsement.
2. The endorsement shall specify -
  - a. the number of sureties, if any;
  - b. the amount in which they and the person named in the warrant are respectively to be bound;

*Court may Direct  
Particulars of  
Security to be  
Taken on  
Execution of  
Warrant*

- c. the court before which the person arrested is to attend; and
  - d. the time at which he is to attend, including an undertaking to appear at a subsequent time as may be directed by any court before which he may appear.
- 3. Where such an endorsement is made, the officer in charge of any police station or any other agency to which on arrest the person named in the warrant is brought, shall discharge him upon his entering into a recognizance, with or without sureties approved by that officer, in accordance with the endorsement, conditioned for his appearance before the court and at the time and place named in the recognizance.
- 4. Where security is taken under this Section the officer who takes the recognizance shall cause it to be forwarded to the court before which the person named in the recognizance is bound to appear.
- 5. The provisions of subsections (3) and (4) of this Section shall not have effect with respect to a warrant executed outside the State.

## SECTION 45

1. Where a warrant of arrest is executed outside the division or district of the court by which it was issued, the person arrested shall, unless security is endorsed as provided under Section 44 and such security as to bail of the person is taken, be taken before the court within the division or district in which the arrest was made.
2. The court shall if the person arrested, on such inquiry as the court considers necessary, appears to be the person intended to be arrested by the court which issued the warrant, direct his removal in custody to that court, but if the person has been arrested in respect of any matter other than an offence punishable with death and:
  - a. is ready and willing to give bail to the satisfaction of the court within the division or district of which he was arrested; or
  - b. if a direction had been endorsed under Section 44 of this Law on the warrant and the person is ready and willing to give the security required by the direction, the court shall take bail or security, as the case may be, and shall forward the recognizance, if such be

*Procedure on arrest  
of persons outside  
Division or District  
of Court Issuing  
Warrant*

entered into, to the court, which issued the warrant.

3. Nothing in this section is deemed to prevent a police officer or officers of any other agency from taking security under section 31 of this Law.

## SECTION 46

If a person in lawful custody escapes or is rescued, the person from whose custody he escapes or is rescued or any other person may pursue and arrest him.

*Re-arrest of  
Person Escaping.*

## SECTION 47

The provisions of Sections 14 and 15 of this law shall apply to arrest under the last proceeding section, although the person making any such arrest is not acting under a warrant and is not a police officer having authority to arrest.

*Provisions of  
Sections 14 and 15  
to Apply to Arrest  
under Section 46*

## SECTION 48

Every person is bound to assist a judge, magistrate, police officer or any other person reasonably demanding his assistance in the:

*Assistance to Judge,  
Magistrate or Police  
Officer*

- a. arrest or prevention of escape of any other person whom the judge, magistrate, police officer or such other person is authorized to arrest; and

- b. prevention or suppression of a breach of the peace, or in the prevention of any injury attempted to be committed on any person or any property.

## SECTION 49

Where any person who is bound by any recognizance entered into under this Law to appear before the court does not so appear, the officer presiding in such court may issue a warrant directing that such person be arrested and brought before him.

### *Arrest on Breach of Recognizance for Appearance*

## SECTION 50

If a court has reason to believe, whether after evidence or not, that a person, against whom a warrant of arrest has been issued by itself or by any court or Justice of the Peace, has absconded or is concealing himself so that the warrant cannot be executed, the court may publish a public summons in writing requiring that person to appear at a specific place and a specific time not more than thirty days from the date of publishing the public summons.

### *Public Summons for Person Absconding*

## SECTION 51

1. A public summons shall be published as follows: *Application of Public Summons*
  - a. In a newspaper that enjoys wide circulation in the State or circulated in any other medium as may be appropriate;
  - b. By affixing it to some conspicuous part of the house or premises or to some conspicuous place in the town or village, in which the person ordinarily resides;
  - c. By affixing a copy to some conspicuous part of the High Court or Magistrate's court building; and
  - d. By affixing a copy of same to some conspicuous part of a place of worship.
2. A Statement in writing from the Judge of the High Court or a Magistrate to the effect that the public summons was duly published on a specified day shall be conclusive evidence that requirements of this section have been complied with and that the public summons was published on such day.



## PART- SEARCH WARRANTS - ISSUE AND EXECUTION

### SECTION 52

1. Where a Court or Justice of the Peace is satisfied by information upon oath and in writing that there is reasonable ground for believing that there is in the State in any building, carriage, receptacle, motor vehicle, aircraft or place:

- a. anything upon or in respect of which any offence has been or is suspected to have been committed; or
- b. anything which there is reasonable ground for believing will afford evidence as to the commission of any offence; or
- c. anything which there is reasonable ground for believing is intended to be used for the purpose of committing any offence, the court or justice of the peace may at any time issue a warrant, called a search warrant, authorizing an officer of the court, member of the police force or other person therein named :
  - i. to search such building, ship, carriage, receptacle, motor vehicle, aircraft or place for any such thing, and to seize and carry such thing before the court or justice of the

*Cases in which Search  
Warrants may be Issued  
and Application for  
Search Warrant*

peace issuing the search warrant or some other court to be dealt according to Law, and

- ii. to arrest the occupier of the house or place where the thing was found if the magistrate thinks fit so to direct on the warrant.

- 2. In this Section and Section 53, “offence” includes an offence against a law of any other State of Nigeria which would be punishable in the State if it had been therein committed.

## SECTION 53

- 1. If the occupier of any building or the person in whose possession anything named in a search warrant is found, is brought before a court and complaint is not made that he has committed an offence, he shall forthwith be discharged by such court. *Discharge of Suspected Persons*
- 2. Every search warrant shall be under the hand of the Court or Justice of the Peace issuing the same.

## SECTION 54

Every search warrant shall remain in force until it is executed or until it is cancelled by the Court or Justice of the Peace that issued it.

*Search Warrant to be signed by the Court or Justice of the Peace*

## SECTION 55

A search warrant may be directed to one or more persons and when directed to more than one it may be executed by all or by any one or more of them.

*Search Warrant to Whom Directed*

## SECTION 56

1. A search warrant may be issued and executed on any day including a Sunday or public holiday. It shall be executed between the hours of five o'clock in the forenoon and eight o'clock at night but the Court or Justice of the Peace may, in its/his discretion, authorize by the warrant the execution of the warrant at any hour.
2. Where a court or Justice of the Peace authorizes the execution of a search warrant at any hour other than between the hours of five o'clock in the forenoon and eight o'clock at night such authorization may be contained in the warrant at the time of issue or may be endorsed thereon by any Court or Justice of the Peace at any time thereafter prior to its execution.

*Time When Search Warrant may be Issued and Executed*

## SECTION 57

1. Whenever any building or other thing or place liable to search is closed, a person residing in or being in charge of the building, thing or

*Person in Charge of Closed place to Allow Access*

place shall, on demand of the police officer or other person executing the search warrant, allow him free and unhindered access to it and afford all reasonable facilities for its search.

2. If access into such building, thing or place cannot be so obtained the police officer or other person executing the search warrant may proceed in the manner prescribed by Sections 14 and 15 of this Law.
3. Where a suspect in or about a building is reasonably suspected of concealing on his person any article, the suspect may be searched by an officer of the same sex and may be taken to a police station for that purpose.
4. A search under this part shall, unless the Court or Justice of the Peace owing to the nature of the case otherwise directs, be made in the presence of two witnesses and the person to whom the search warrant is addressed may also provide a witness within the neighbourhood.
5. A list of all things found on his person and seize shall be drawn up by the person carrying out the search and shall be signed or sealed by the person to whom the search warrant is addressed, the person executing the search warrant and the witnesses, and a witnessed copy of the list shall be delivered to the person searched.

## SECTION 58

1. A person executing a search warrant beyond the jurisdiction of the Court or Justice of the Peace issuing it shall, before doing so, apply to the court within whose jurisdiction search is to be made and shall act under its directions. *Execution of Search Warrant Outside Jurisdiction*
2. A Magistrate or Justice of the Peace may direct a search to be made in his presence of any place for the search of which he is competent to issue a search warrant. *Magistrate may Direct Search in his Presence*

## SECTION 59

1. Subject to Section 52 of this Law, when upon the execution of a search warrant anything is recovered, it shall be brought before a court having jurisdiction and the court may detain or cause it to be detained, taking reasonable care that it is preserved until the conclusion of the trial and if an information is preferred against any person after the preparation of the proofs of evidence or if any appeal is made, the court may order it to be further detained in such manner and place and by such person as the court may direct for the purpose of the trial or pending the hearing of the appeal. *Detention of Articles Recovered*
2. If no information is preferred against any person after preparation of proofs of evidence or no appeal is made, the court shall, except in

the cases hereinafter mentioned, unless it is authorized or required by Law to dispose of it, otherwise direct that:

- a. the property or a part thereof be restored to the person who appears to the court to be entitled thereto, and if he be the person charged, that it be restored either to him or to such other person as the person charged may direct; or
- b. the property or a part thereof be applied to the payment of any costs or compensation directed to be paid by the person charged.

## SECTION 60

Where anything recovered under a search warrant and brought before a court is of a perishable or noxious nature, such thing may be disposed of forthwith in such manner as the court may direct.

*Perishable Articles  
may be Disposed of  
by Court*

## SECTION 61

If the thing to be searched for under a search warrant is gunpowder, arms, ammunition, explosives or dangerous or noxious substance or thing, the person making the search shall have the powers and protection as are given by any written Law for the time being in force to any person lawfully authorized to search for any such thing, and the thing itself shall be disposed of in the same manner as directed by any such written Law or in default of such direction, as the Commissioner of Police or court may either generally or in any particular instance order.

*Search for and disposal  
of gunpowder, etc*

## SECTION 62

If, in consequence of the execution of a search warrant, there is brought before any court any forged banknote, banknote paper, counterfeit coin, instrument or other thing, used for forgery or counterfeiting, the possession of which, in the absence of lawful excuse, is an indictable offence according to any enactment for the time being in force, the court or the judge may cause such thing to be defaced or destroyed.

*Destruction and  
disposal of forged  
banknote and coin*

## SECTION 63

Where a search warrant is issued in respect of an offence against the Law of any other State of Nigeria and a summons has been issued for that offence, or any person has been charged with that offence before a court of that State, the court issuing the search warrant may unless it has disposed of the thing in accordance with Section 61, transmit anything recovered and brought before it to that court and in relation to anything so transmitted the functions conferred upon a court by Sections 60, 61 and 63 of this Law shall be exercised and performed by that court instead of the court that issued the search warrant.

*Transmission to  
Court of another  
State*

## CHAPTER 4: PREVENTION OF OFFENCES

### SECTION 64

1. Every police officer may intervene for the purpose of preventing, and shall to the best of his ability prevent, the commission of any offence. *Police to Prevent Offences and Prevent Damage to Public Property*
2. A police officer may of his own authority intervene to prevent any damage attempted to be committed in his view to any public property, movable or immovable, or the removal of or any damage to any public landmark or buoy or other mark used for navigation.

### SECTION 65

Every police officer receiving information of a plan to commit any offence shall communicate such information to the police officer to whom he is subordinate and to any other officer whose duty it is to prevent or take cognizance of the commission of any such offence. *Information of a Plan to Commit an Offence*

### SECTION 66

Notwithstanding the provisions of this or any other written Law relating to arrest, a police officer on *Arrest to Prevent Commission of an Offence*



reasonable suspicion of a plan to commit any offence may arrest, without orders from a judge or magistrate and without a warrant, the person so planning, if it appears to such officer that the commission of the offence cannot otherwise be prevented.

## SECTION 67

The Commissioner of Police or Controller of Correctional Services may make regulations for all or any of the following purposes:

### *Power to make Regulations*

- a. providing for the registration and photographing of suspects and persons detained by the police or in custody awaiting trial, and the manner, form, and places in which registers of suspects and such other persons shall be kept;
- b. prescribing the duties of officers of police or officers in charge of Correctional Services in connection with the registration and photographing of convicts, suspects and persons detained or in custody awaiting trial;
- c. providing for the taking by any authorized person of the fingerprints of convicts, suspects and persons charged with or being suspected of having committed any felony, misdemeanour or other offence punishable by imprisonment for one month or more and for the taking of the fingerprints for comparison,

of any person reasonably suspected of having made a finger impression on any document or object likely to become an exhibit in a criminal case;

- d. generally for the purpose of giving effect to the objects and purposes of this Law.

## SECTION 68

Whenever a magistrate is informed on oath that any person is likely to commit a breach of peace or disturb the public tranquility, or to do any wrongful act that may probably occasion a breach of the peace or disturb the public tranquility, the magistrate may in the manner hereinafter provided, require such person to show cause why he should not be ordered to enter into a recognizance, with or without sureties, for keeping the peace for such period not exceeding one year, as the magistrate deems fit.

***Power of Magistrate to  
Require Execution of  
Recognizance for Keeping  
the Peace***

Proceedings shall not be taken under this Section unless:

- a. the person informed against is in the State; and
- b. such person is within the district to which the magistrate is assigned or the place where the breach of the peace or disturbance is apprehended is within the district to which the magistrate is assigned.

## SECTION 69

Whenever a magistrate is informed on oath that any person is taking precautions to conceal his presence within the local limits of such magistrate's jurisdiction, and that there is reason to believe that such person is taking such precautions with a view to committing any offence, such magistrate may in the manner hereinafter provided, require such person to show cause why he should not be ordered to enter into a recognizance with sureties, for his good behaviour for such period not exceeding one year, as the magistrate deems fit.

*Security for good  
Behaviour for  
Suspected Persons*

## SECTION 70

Whenever a magistrate is informed on oath that any person within the local limits of his jurisdiction:

- a. is by habit a robber, housebreaker, or thief; or
- b. is by habit a receiver of stolen property, knowing the same to have been stolen; or
- c. habitually protects or harbours thieves, or aids in the concealment or disposal of stolen property; or
- d. habitually commits or attempts to commit, or aids or abets in the commission of any offence punishable under Chapter 33, 34, 35 or 40 of the Criminal Code; or
- e. habitually commits or attempts to commit or aids or abets in the commission of offences

*Security for Good  
Behaviour for  
Habitual Offenders*

- involving a breach of the peace; or
- f. is so desperate or dangerous as to render his being at large without security hazardous to the community; such magistrate may, in the manner hereinafter provided, require such person to show cause why he should not be ordered to enter into a recognizance, with sureties, for his good behaviour for such period, not exceeding three years as the magistrate deems fit.

## SECTION 71

When a magistrate acting under Sections 68, 69 or 70 deems it necessary to require any person to show cause under such section, he shall make an order in writing setting forth:

*Order to be Made*

- a. the substance of the information received;
- b. the amount of recognizance to be executed;
- c. the term for which it is to be enforced; and
- d. the number, character and class of sureties required, if any.

## SECTION 72

If the person in respect of whom such order is made is present in court, it shall be read over to him, or if he so desires, the substance thereof shall be explained to him.

*Procedure in Respect of Person Present in Court*

## SECTION 73

If such person is not present in court, the magistrate shall issue a summons requiring him to appear or when such person is in custody, a warrant directing the officer in whose custody he is to bring him before the court: Provided that whenever it appears to such magistrate, upon the report of a police officer or upon other information, the substance of which report or information shall be recorded by the magistrate, that there is reason to fear the commission of a breach of the peace and that such, breach of the peace cannot be prevented otherwise than by the immediate arrest of such person, the magistrate may at any time issue a warrant for his arrest.

***Summons or Warrant in  
case of Person not so  
Present***

## SECTION 74

Every summons or warrant issued under the last preceding section shall be accompanied by a copy of the order under Section 71, and such copy shall be delivered by the officer serving or executing such summons or warrant to the person served with or arrested under the same.

***Copy of order under  
Section 71 to  
Accompany Summons  
or Warrant***

## SECTION 75

The magistrate may, if he sees sufficient cause, dispense with the personal attendance of any person called upon to show cause why he should not be

***Power to Dispense  
with Personal  
Attendance***

ordered to enter into recognizance for keeping the peace and may permit him to appear by a legal practitioner.

## SECTION 76

1. When an order under Section 71 has been read or explained under Section 72 to a person in court or when any person appears or is brought before a magistrate in compliance with or in execution of a summons or warrant issued under Section 73, the magistrate shall proceed to inquire into the truth of the information upon which the action has been taken, and to take such further evidence as may appear necessary. *Inquiry as to Truth of Information*
2. Such inquiry shall be made, as nearly as may be practicable, in the manner hereinafter prescribed for conducting trials and recording evidence in trials before Magistrates' Courts.
3. Pending the completion of the inquiry under subsection (1), the magistrate, if he considers that immediate measures are necessary for the prevention of a breach of the peace or disturbance of the public tranquility or the commission of any offence or for the public safety, may, for reasons to be recorded in writing, direct the person in respect of whom the order under Section 71 has been made to enter into recognizance, with or without

sureties, for keeping the peace or maintaining good behaviour until the conclusion of the inquiry, and may detain him in custody until such recognizance is entered into or in default of execution, until the inquiry is concluded:

Provided that:

- a. no person against whom proceedings are being taken under Section 68 shall be directed to enter into a recognizance for maintaining good behaviour; and
  - b. the conditions of such recognizance, whether as to the amount thereof or as to the provisions of sureties or the number thereof or the pecuniary extent of their liability shall not be onerous than those specified in the order under Section 71; and
  - c. no person shall be remanded in custody under the powers conferred by this section for a period exceeding fifteen days at a time.
4. For the purposes of this section the fact that a person comes within the provisions of Section 70 may be proved by evidence of general repute or otherwise.
  5. Where two or more persons have been associated together in the matter under inquiry, they may be dealt with in the same or separate inquiries as the magistrate deems fit.

## SECTION 77

1. If upon such inquiry it is proved that it is necessary *Order to give Security* for keeping the peace or maintaining good behaviour, as the case may be, that the person in respect of whom the inquiry is made should enter into a recognizance, with or without sureties, the magistrate shall make an order accordingly:  
Provided that:
  - a. no person shall be ordered to give security of a nature different from, or of an amount larger than, or for a period longer than, that specified in the order made under Section 71;
  - b. the amount of every recognizance shall be fixed with due regard to the circumstances of the case and shall not be excessive;
  - c. when the person in respect of whom the inquiry is made is a minor, the recognizance shall be entered into as provided in Section 95.
2. Any person ordered to give security for good behaviour under this section may appeal to the High Court whose decision shall be final.



## SECTION 78

If on an inquiry under Section 76 of this Law, it is not proved that it is necessary for keeping the peace or maintaining good behaviour, as the case may be, that the person in respect of whom the inquiry is made should enter into a recognizance, the magistrate shall make an entry on record to that effect, and, if such person is in custody only for the purpose of the inquiry, shall release him or if such person is not in custody, shall discharge him.

### *Discharge of Person Informed Against*

## SECTION 79

If any person in respect of whom an order requiring security is made under Section 77 of this Law is, at the time such order is made, sentenced to or undergoing a sentence of imprisonment, the period for which such security is required shall commence on the expiration of such sentence. In other cases such period shall commence on the date of such order unless the magistrate, for sufficient reason, fixes a later date.

### *Commencement of Period for which Security is Required*

## SECTION 80

The recognizance to be entered into by such person shall bind him to keep the peace or be of good behaviour, as the case may be and in the later case the commission or attempt to commit or the aiding, abetting, counseling, or procuring the commission

### *Conditions of Recognizance*

anywhere within the State at any time during the continuance of the recognizance of any offence punishable with imprisonment, wherever it may be committed, shall be a breach of the recognizance.

## SECTION 81

A magistrate may refuse to accept any surety offered under any of the preceding sections on the ground that, for reasons to be recorded by the magistrate, such surety is an unfit person.

*Power to reject  
Sureties*

## SECTION 82

1. If any person ordered to give security as aforesaid does not give such security on or before the date on which the period for which such security is to be given commences, he shall, except in the case mentioned in subsection (2) of this section, be committed to Correctional Service or if he is already in Correctional Service, be detained in Correctional Service until such period expires or until within such period he gives the security to the court or magistrate who made the order requiring it.
2. When such person has been ordered by a magistrate to give security for a period exceeding one year, such magistrate shall, if such person does not give such security as aforesaid, issue a warrant directing him to be

*Procedure on Failure of  
Person to give Security*

detained in Correctional Service pending the orders of the High Court, and the proceedings shall be laid as soon as possible before such court.

3. The High Court, after examining such proceedings and requiring from the magistrate any further information or evidence which it thinks necessary, may make such order in the case as it deems fit.
4. The period, if any, for which any person is imprisoned for failure to give security in any specified amount shall not exceed the term prescribed in respect of a like sum in the scale of imprisonment set forth in Section 422 of this Law.
5. If the security is tendered to the officer in charge of the Correctional Service, he shall forthwith refer the matter to the court or magistrate who made the order and shall await the order of such court or magistrate.

## SECTION 83

Whenever a magistrate is of opinion that any person imprisoned for failing to give security may be released without hazard to the community, such magistrate shall make an immediate report of the case for the order of the High Court, and such court may, if it deems fit, order such person to be discharged.

***Power to release  
persons Imprisoned for  
Failure to give Security  
by High Court***

## SECTION 84

The High Court may at any time, for sufficient reasons to be recorded in writing, cancel any recognizance for keeping the peace or for good behaviour executed under any of the preceding sections by order of any court.

*Power of High  
Court to Cancel  
Recognizance*

## SECTION 85

1. Any surety for the peaceable conduct or good behaviour of another person may at any time apply to a magistrate to discharge any recognizance executed under any of the preceding sections within the district to which the magistrate is assigned.
2. On such application being made, the magistrate shall if satisfied that there is good reason for the application issue a summons or warrant, as he deems fit, requiring the person for whom such surety is bound to appear or to be brought before him.
3. When such person appears or is brought before the magistrate, such magistrate after hearing such person may discharge the recognizance and in such event order such person to give, for the unexpired portion of the term of such recognizance, fresh security of the same description as the original security. Every such order shall for the purposes of Sections 79, 80, 81 and 82 be deemed to be an order under Section 71 of this Law.

*Discharge of  
Sureties*

## CHAPTER 5: BAIL AND RECOGNIZANCES

### SECTION 86

1. When any person has been taken into custody without a warrant for an offence other than an offence punishable with death, any officer in charge of a police station or other agency may in any case, and shall, if it will not be practicable to bring such person before a magistrate having jurisdiction with respect to the offence charged within twenty-four hours after he was so taken into custody, inquire into the case, and, unless the offence appears to such officer to be of a serious nature, discharge the person upon his entering into a recognizance with or without sureties for a reasonable amount to appear before a court at the time and place named in the recognizance, but where such person is retained in custody he shall be brought before a court having jurisdiction with respect to the offence or empowered to deal with such person within 24 hours whether or not the police inquiries are completed.
2. The officer in charge of a police station or any other agency may release the person arrested on bail upon entering into a recognizance with

***Release on Bail of a  
Person Arrested  
Without Warrant***

or without surety to appear before the court or at the police station or agency at the time and place named in the recognizance.

3. In the event of the accused jumping bail, the surety shall be liable to pay the sum as stated in the bail bond.
4. Where a person is taken into custody and it appears to the police officer in charge of the station that the offence is of a capital nature, the police officer shall bring the person arrested before a court having jurisdiction with respect to the offence or empowered to deal with such person within a reasonable time.

## SECTION 87

1. Where a person taken into custody is not released on bail, a court having jurisdiction with respect to the offence may be notified by an application on behalf of the arrested person. *Remedy of a Detained Person and Power of Court to Release him on Bail*
2. The court shall order the production of the person detained and inquire into the circumstances constituting the grounds of the detention and where it deems fit admit the person detained to bail.

## SECTION 88

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Law:

*Classification of Bail*

1. In any offences punishable with death, bail may be granted only by the High Court.
2. In offences punishable with life imprisonment, bail may be granted only by a Chief Magistrate and or a High Court.
3. In other felonies punishable with other terms of imprisonment, misdemeanor or simple offences, bail may be granted by any court of competent jurisdiction.
4. Each court shall create and maintain a bail register showing details of the defendant, offence charged, the conditions of bail, names, addresses and particulars of sureties (if any) and any other relevant information.
5. There shall be created a divisional bail register at all judicial divisions which should be located at the office of the Registrar of High Court in charge of the judicial division.
6. There shall be created a central bail register at the state judicial headquarters in the office of the director of litigation.
7. Where a High court has granted bail to a defendant, the same court shall try the substantive matter, provided that where the bail was granted by a vacation Judge, the matter can be assigned to any other court.

## SECTION 89

When any person has been taken into custody without a warrant, for an offence other than an offence punishable with death, the officer in charge of the police station or other place for the reception of arrested persons to which such person is brought, if after the inquiry is completed he is satisfied that there is no sufficient reason to believe that the person has committed any offence, shall forthwith release such person.

***Discharge of Person  
for want of Evidence***

## SECTION 90

Officers in charge of Police stations shall make a quarterly report to the nearest magistrate the cases of all persons arrested without warrant within the limits of their respective stations whether such persons have been admitted to bail or not. The magistrate shall notify the chief registrar of the High Court of such report who shall forward the same to the Chief Judge for necessary actions.

***Police to report  
arrest and Detention***

## SECTION 91

1. Any court, on issuing a warrant for the arrest of any person in respect of any matter other than an offence punishable with death, may if it deems fit, by endorsement on the warrant, direct that the person named in the warrant be

***Court may Direct  
Particulars of  
Security to be taken  
on Execution of  
Warrant***



released on arrest on his entering into such a recognizance for his appearance as may be required in the endorsement.

2. The endorsement shall specify:
  - a. the number of sureties, if any;
  - b. the amount in which they and the person named in the warrant are respectively to be bound;
  - c. the court before which the person arrested is to attend; and
  - d. the time at which he is to attend, including an undertaking to appear at a subsequent time as may be directed by any court before which he may appear.
3. Where such an endorsement is made, the officer in charge of any police station to which on arrest the person named in the warrant is brought, shall discharge him upon his entering into a recognizance, with or without sureties approved by that officer, in accordance with the endorsement stipulating the condition for his appearance before the court and at the time and place named in the recognizance.
4. Where security is taken under this section the officer who takes the recognizance shall cause it to be forwarded to the court before which the person named in the recognizance is bound to appear.

5. The provisions of subsections (3) and (4) shall not have effect with respect to a warrant executed outside the State.

## SECTION 92

A person charged with any offence punishable with death shall not be admitted to bail, except by a judge of the High Court.

*When bail may be granted by High Court only*

Where a person is charged with any felony other than a felony punishable with death, the court may, if it thinks fit, admit him to bail.

*When Discretionary*

When a person is charged with any offence other than those referred to in the two last preceding subsections, the court shall admit him to bail, unless it sees good reason to the contrary.

*When to be Ordinarily Granted*

## SECTION 93

Where any person is brought before a court on any process in respect of any matter not included within Section 92, such person may in the discretion of the court be released upon his entering into a recognizance stipulating the condition for his appearance before such court.

*Bail in Respect of Matters other than Offences*

## SECTION 94

The security for bail in any case shall be at the discretion of the court having regard to the circumstances of the case and shall not be excessive.

*Security for Bail*

## SECTION 95

Where in any case the person in respect of whom the court makes an order requiring that a recognizance be entered into is a minor, the minor shall not execute the recognizance but the court shall require a parent, legal guardian or other fit person, with or without sureties, to enter into a recognizance that the minor shall do what is required under the court's order.

### *Recognizance in Respect of Minors*

## SECTION 96

1. A defendant admitted to bail may be required to produce surety or sureties, as in the opinion of the court admitting him to bail, will be sufficient to ensure his appearance as and when required and shall with him or them enter into a recognizance accordingly.
2. The court shall make direction and impose conditions it deems necessary to ensure that the identity, residence and status of the surety is properly verified.
3. No person shall be denied or prevented from entering into any recognizance or standing as a surety or providing any security on the ground that the person is a woman.

### *Sureties*

## SECTION 97

A judge of the High Court may, if he deems fit, admit any person charged before a lower court in Ebonyi State subject to the jurisdiction of the High Court to bail although the court before which the charge is made has not thought fit to do so.

*Admission to bail  
after its refusal*

## SECTION 98

An application by or on behalf of a defendant to a judge of the High Court for bail in any case where a lower court has refused bail to the defendant or where the offence is not bailable by a lower court, shall be made by a motion on notice to the prosecution.

*Notice of right to  
Apply for Bail*

## SECTION 99

Notwithstanding the provisions of Sections 87 and 88, a judge of the High Court may in any case direct that any person in custody in Ebonyi State be admitted to bail or that the bail required by a magistrates' court or police officer be reviewed.

*Judge may vary bail  
fixed by Magistrate  
or Police*

## SECTION 100

When in respect of any recognizance the court has fixed the amount in which the sureties, if any, are to be bound, the recognizance need not be entered

*Before Whom  
Recognizance may  
be Executed*

before the said court, but may be entered into by the parties before any other court or before any registrar or before any superior officer of police or officer in charge of a police station or where any of the parties is in a Government Correctional Service before the superintendent or other person in charge of such Correctional Service and thereupon all the consequences of Law shall ensue and the provisions of this Law with respect to recognizance before a court shall apply as if the recognizance had been entered into before the said court.

## SECTION 101

Where as a condition for the release of any person he is required to enter into a recognizance with sureties, the recognizance of the sureties may be taken separately and either before or after the recognizance of the principal, and if so taken the recognizance of the principal and sureties shall be as binding as if they had been taken together and at the same time.

### *Mode of Entering into Recognizance*

## SECTION 102

Where a person is released on bail, the recognizance may be conditioned for his appearance at every time and place to which during the course of the proceedings the hearing may from time to time be adjourned, without prejudice, however, to the power of the court to vary the order at any subsequent hearing.

### *Conditional Bail*

## SECTION 103

1. Where the entering into of a recognizance is a condition of the release of any person, that person shall be released as soon as the recognizance has been entered into and if he is in Correctional Service or police custody, the court shall issue an order of release to the officer in charge of the Correctional Service or other place of detention and such officer on receipt of the order shall release him.
2. Nothing in this section or in any other section relating to bail shall be deemed to require the release of any person liable to be detained for some matter other than that in respect of which the recognizance was entered into or to which the bail relates.

*Discharge  
from Custody*

## SECTION 104

If it is made to appear to any court by information on oath by a complainant, surety or other person that any person bound by recognizance to appear before any court or police officer is about to leave Ebonyi State or, for the purpose of evading justice, is about to leave the division or district of the court before which he is to appear or in which he normally resides, the court may cause him to be arrested and may commit him to Correctional Service Custody until the trial unless the court deems it fit to admit him to bail upon further recognizance.

*Person Bound by  
Recognizance Absconding  
may be Committed to  
Correctional Service Custody*

## SECTION 105

Where a defendant has been admitted to bail and circumstances arise which, if the defendant had not been admitted to bail would, in the opinion of a Law officer or police officer, justify the court in refusing bail or in requiring bail of greater amount, a judge or magistrate, as the case may be, may on the circumstances being brought to his notice by a Law officer or police officer, issue a warrant for arrest of the defendant and, after giving the defendant an opportunity of being heard may either commit him to Correctional Service Custody to await trial or admit him to bail for the same or an increased amount as the judge or magistrate may think just.

***Reconsideration of Amount of Bail on Application by Law Officer or Police***

## SECTION 106

1. When a defendant who has been admitted to bail by a magistrate is indicted by a Law officer for an offence which is not bailable by a magistrate, the magistrate shall, on being informed of the fact by any superior police officer, issue a warrant for the arrest of the defendant and commit him to Correctional Service.
2. For the purposes of this section, a person shall be deemed to be indicted when the information against him has been filed in the High Court.

***Power to Revoke or Require Higher Bail***

## SECTION 107

If at any time after a recognizance has been entered into, it appears to the court that for any reason the surety or sureties are unsuitable, such court may issue a summons or warrant for the appearance of the principal, and upon his coming to the court may order him to execute a fresh recognizance with other surety or sureties, as the case may be.

*Variation of a  
Recognizance if  
Surety Unsuitable*

## SECTION 108

1. All or any of the sureties to a recognizance may at any time apply to the court which caused the recognizance to be taken to discharge the bond either wholly or so far as relates to the applicant; provided that the order for the discharge of the applicant shall not be made unless the defendant is present in the court.
2. On an application under subsection (1) of this section, the court shall issue a warrant for the arrest of the person on whose behalf the recognizance was executed and on his appearance shall discharge the recognizance either wholly or so far as relates to the applicant and shall require the person to find other sufficient sureties or meet some other conditions and if he fails to do so, may make such order as it considers fit.

*Discharge of Sureties on the  
Appearance of Another*



## SECTION 109

When a surety to a recognizance becomes insane, insolvent or dies or otherwise becomes legally incapacitated or when a recognizance is forfeited, the court may order the person from whom the recognizance was demanded to furnish fresh security in accordance with the directions of the original order and if the security is not furnished, the court may proceed as if there had been default in complying with the original order.

### *Order of Fresh Security Upon Original order*

## SECTION 110

Where a surety to a recognizance dies before the recognizance is forfeited, his estate shall be discharged from all liability in respect of the recognizance. Where a surety to a recognizance dies, the court shall issue a warrant of arrest of the defendant and upon his appearance in court shall impose fresh condition of bail.

### *Death of Surety*

## SECTION 111

1. Whenever it is proved to the satisfaction of the court by which a recognizance has been taken or, when the recognizance bond is for appearance before a court and it is proved to the satisfaction of the court, that a recognizance has been forfeited, the court shall record the grounds of proof and may call

### *Forfeiture of Recognizance*

- on any person bound by the bond to pay the penalty thereof or to show cause why it should not be paid.
2. If sufficient cause is not shown and the penalty is not paid, the court may proceed to recover the penalty from a person bound, or from his estate if he is dead, in the manner laid down in this Law for the recovery of fines.
  3. A surety's estate shall only be liable under this section if the surety dies after the recognizance is forfeited.
  4. When the penalty is not paid and cannot be recovered in manner provided in this Law, the person bound shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months.
  5. The court may at its discretion remit any portion of the penalty and enforce payment in part only.

## SECTION 112

The court may at any time cancel or mitigate the forfeiture, upon the person liable under the recognizance applying and giving security, to the satisfaction of the court, for the future performance of the condition of the recognizance and paying or giving security for the payment of the costs incurred in respect of the forfeiture or upon such other conditions as the court may think just.

### *Mitigation of Forfeiture*

## SECTION 113

Where a recognizance to keep the peace and to be of good behaviour or not to do or commit some act or thing, has been entered into by a person as principal or as surety before a court, a court, on proof of that the person bound by the recognizance as principal has been convicted of an offence which is by Law a breach of the condition of the recognizance, may by order, adjudge:

*Forfeiture on Conviction*

- a. the recognizance to be forfeited; and
- b. the persons bound by it, whether as principal or as sureties or any of those persons, to pay the sums for which they are respectively bound.

## SECTION 114

A certified true copy of the judgment of the court by which such person was convicted of such offence may be used as evidence in proceedings under Section 113 and, if such certified copy is used, the court shall presume such offence was committed by such person until the contrary is proved.

*Evidence of  
Conviction*

## SECTION 115

1. Where a defendant who is bound by recognizance or a bond to appear before a court fails to appear, the court may issue a warrant for his arrest.

*Where  
Recognizance  
Forfeited Warrant  
may Issue*

2. Where a suspect who is bound by a recognizance or a bond to appear at a police station fails to appear, the police shall apply to the court for a warrant for his arrest and the court may if satisfied with facts in support of the application issue a warrant for his arrest; provided that the magistrate upon such application may issue a warrant for his arrest and production before the Magistrate within 24 hours.

## SECTION 116

All sums paid or recovered in respect of a recognizance declared or adjudged by a court in pursuance of Section 115 of this Law to be forfeited shall be paid to the Chief Registrar of the court.

*Payment on  
Recognizance*

## SECTION 117

Any order for forfeiture made under Sections 111 or 113 shall be subject to appeal in the case of magistrate's order to the High Court and in the case of a judge's order to the Court of Appeal.

*Appeal*

## SECTION 118

1. The Chief Judge may make a regulation for the registration and licensing of corporate bodies or persons to act as bondsperson within the jurisdiction of the court in which they are registered.

*Registration of  
bonds Person*

2. A person shall not engage in the business of bail bond services without being duly registered and licensed in accordance with the subsection (1) of this section.
3. A person who engages in bail bond services without registration and license or in contravention of the regulation or terms of his license is liable to a fine of five hundred thousand naira or imprisonment for a term not exceeding twelve months or to both fine and imprisonment.
4. On conviction under this section, the court shall forward a report to the Chief Judge, and in instances of gross violation of the terms of the license the Chief Judge shall revoke the license.
5. A bonds person registered under subsection (1) of this Section may undertake recognizance, act as surety, or guarantee the deposit of money as required by the bail condition of a person granted bail by the court within the division or district in which the bondsman is registered.
6. A person or organization shall not be registered as a bondsperson unless the person is, or the organization is composed of persons of unquestionable character and integrity and deposits with the Chief Judge sufficient bank guarantee in such amount as may be determined by the Chief Judge in the

- regulation, having regard to the registered class or limit of the bondsman's recognizance;
7. A registered bondsperson shall maintain with a bank or insurance company designated in his license, such fully paid deposit to the limit of the amount of bond or recognizance to which his license permits him to undertake.
  8. The Chief Judge shall cause to be withdrawn the license of a bondsperson in the following circumstance:
    - a. where he contravenes the terms of his license;
    - b. where he unreasonably forfeits his bond for non-production of a defendant under his recognizance;
    - c. where he becomes insolvent, bankrupt or otherwise legally incapacitated; or
    - d. if he is convicted for an offence involving fraud or dishonesty.

## SECTION 119

A bondsperson may arrest a defendant or suspect who is absconding or who he believes is trying to evade or avoid appearance in court and shall:

- a. immediately hand him over to the nearest police station;
- b. the person arrested shall be taken to the appropriate court within twenty four hours.

***Bondsperson  
may Arrest  
Absconding  
Defendant or  
Suspect***

**CHAPTER 6:**  
**ENFORCING APPEARANCE IN COURT**  
**OF DEFENDANT AND WITNESSES**

**SECTION 120**

Every court has authority to cause to be brought before it any person who is within the jurisdiction and is charged with an offence committed within the State, or which according to Law may be dealt with as if such offence had been committed within the jurisdiction and to deal with such person according to Law.

*General Authority  
to Bring Persons  
Before Courts*

**SECTION 121**

A court may issue a summons or warrant to compel the appearance before it of any defendant for having committed in any place, whether within or outside Nigeria, any offence triable in the State.

*Compelling  
Appearance of  
a Defendant*

**SECTION 122**

Where a complaint is made before a magistrate as provided under this Law and the magistrate decides to issue summons in the first instance, such magistrate shall issue a summons directed to the person complained against, stating concisely the substance of such complaint and requiring him to appear at a certain time and place being not less than 48 hours after the service of such summons before the court to answer to the said complaint and to be further dealt with according to Law.

*Issue of Summons  
and Contents Thereof*

## SECTION 123

The court may, if it Thinks Fit and with the consent of the parties, hear and determine a complaint notwithstanding that the time within which the defendant was required to appear may not have elapsed.

*Hearing by Consent  
Before Return Date  
of Summons*

## SECTION 124

An application for summons under this Chapter may be made ex parte and the magistrate may make such orders as to notices as he deems fit in the circumstances.

*Discretion in Ex-parte  
Application*

## SECTION 125

Every summons issued by a court under this Law shall be in writing, in duplicate, signed by the presiding officer of such court or by such other officers as the Chief Judge may from time to time prescribe.

*Summons to be  
in Duplicate*

## SECTION 126

A summons may be issued or served on any day including a Sunday or public holiday.

*Issue and Service  
on any day*

## SECTION 127

Every summons shall be served by a police officer or by an officer of the court issuing it or other public servant or through a courier service company duly

*Service of  
Summons*



registered with the office of the Chief Judge as a process serving agent of the court.

## SECTION 128

1. The person effecting service of a summons shall effect it by delivering it:
- Normal Methods of Effecting Service and the use of Electronic Mail*
- a. if on an individual, to him personally; or
  - b. if on a firm or corporation;
    - i. to one of the partners, or
    - ii. to a director, or
    - iii. to the secretary,
    - iv. to the chief agent within the jurisdiction, or
    - v. by leaving the same at the principal place of business in Nigeria of the firm or corporation, or
    - vi. to anyone having, at the time of service, control of the business of the firm or corporation; or
  - c. if on a Local Government Council then in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Law, relating to service of court processes; or
  - d. if on the Nigeria Police Force or any police officer, to the office of the Commissioner of Police of the State.
2. The Chief Judge may make regulations or Practice Directions on the use of electronic

mails in service of summons or other processes under this Law.

## SECTION 129

If service in the manner provided by paragraph (a) of Section 128 cannot be conveniently and safely effected, the court may order that service be effected either:

*Service other  
than Personal  
Service*

- a. by affixing one of the duplicates of the summons to a conspicuous place in the premises where the person to be served ordinarily resides; or
- b. where the court is satisfied that the person to be served is literate by publication of the summons in the State Official Gazette or in a newspaper circulating within the jurisdiction of the court from which the summons issued;

Provided that before the court makes the order, the court shall also be satisfied that the person to be served ordinarily resides within the State and provided further that the court shall not make an order for substituted service of a summon unless it is satisfied that personal service cannot be conveniently and safely effected.

## SECTION 130

1. Where the person summoned is in service of Government, the court issuing the summons may send it in duplicate to the Director, Head

*Service on  
Government  
Servant*

of the Department in which the person is employed for the purpose of being served on such person, if it shall appear to the court that it may be most conveniently so served, and such Director or Head of Department shall thereupon cause the summons to be served in the manner provided by paragraph (a) of Section 128 and shall return the duplicate to the court under his signature, with the endorsement required by Section 132. Such signature shall be evidence of the service.

2. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (1) of this section, a person in the service of Government, may by order of the court, be served in any of the modes set out in Section 129 of this Law.

## SECTION 131

1. Where the officer who served a summons is not present at the hearing of the case, proof of such service, if within the division or district of the court issuing the summons, may be by endorsement on the duplicate of such summons and when service has been effected outside the division or district of the issuing court, proof of service shall be by affidavit made before a commissioner for oath or other prescribed person and such endorsement and affidavit shall form part of the record.

*Service outside  
Jurisdiction of  
Court*

2. Such endorsement and affidavit shall show the manner in which such summons was served and in the case of an affidavit may be attached to the duplicate of the summons and returned to the issuing court.

## SECTION 132

1. Where the officer who served a summons is not present at the hearing of the case, proof of such service if within the division or district of the court issuing the summons, may be by endorsement on the duplicate of such summons and when service has been effected outside the division or district of the issuing court, proof of service shall be by affidavit made before a magistrate or other prescribed person and such endorsement and affidavit shall form part of the record.
2. Such endorsement and affidavit shall show the manner in which such summons was served and in the case of an affidavit may be attached to the duplicate of the summons and returned to the issuing court.

*Proof of Service  
when Serving  
Officer not Present*

## SECTION 133

1. Where a summons has been served upon the person to whom it is addressed or is delivered to any other person, the person to whom it is addressed or the person to whom it is delivered, as the case may be, shall sign a

*Receipt of  
Service  
Summons*

receipt thereof on the back of the duplicate.

2. Where service is not effected by handing the summons to an individual but by some other method provided in this Law, the person effecting service shall endorse and sign on the duplicate particulars of the method by which he has effected service.

## SECTION 134

Every person who is required to sign a receipt on the back of a duplicate summons to the effect that he has received the summons and fails to sign such receipt may be arrested by the person serving the summons and taken before the court which issued the summons and may be detained in custody or committed to prison for such time not exceeding 14 days as the court may think necessary.

***Person Refusing to  
Give Receipt may  
be Arrested***

## SECTION 135

If the court is satisfied that the defendant has been served with a summons and the defendant does not appear at the time and place appointed in and by the summons, the court may issue a warrant to arrest him and cause him to be brought before such court.

***Summons  
Disobeyed, Warrant  
may be Issued***

## SECTION 136

Where a complaint is made before a magistrate as provided in Section 38 and such magistrate decides to issue a warrant in the first instance, he shall issue a

***Issue of Warrant for  
Defendant in the  
first Instance***

warrant to arrest the person complained against and to bring him before the court to answer the said complaint and be dealt with according to Law.

## SECTION 137

Where a warrant of arrest is issued in consequence of a complaint on oath as aforesaid, the provisions of Sections 37 to 46, and 91 shall apply to such Warrant.

*Application of  
Sections 37 to 46  
to such Warrant*

## SECTION 138

Notwithstanding the issue of a summons as in Section 176 provided, a warrant may be issued at any time before or after the time appointed for the appearance of the defendant.

*Warrant may issue  
before or after  
Return Date of  
Summons*

## SECTION 139

1. Where any person for whose appearance or arrest a court is empowered to issue a summons or warrant is confined in any prison, the court may issue an order to the officer in charge of such Correctional Service requiring him to cause such prisoner to be brought in proper custody at a time to be named in the order before such court.
2. The officer so in charge, on receipt of such order, shall act in accordance therewith and shall provide for the safe custody of the prisoner during his absence from the Correctional Service for the purpose aforesaid.

*Power of Court to  
order Prisoner to  
be Brought Before  
it*

## SECTION 140

1. If the court is satisfied that any person is likely to give material evidence for the prosecution or for the defence, the court may issue a summons to such person requiring him to attend, at a time and place to be mentioned therein before the court, to give evidence respecting the case and to bring with him any specified documents or things and any other documents or things relating thereto which may be in his possession or power or under his control.
2. If the prosecutor is not a public officer, the person to whom such summons is addressed, shall not be bound to attend unless his travelling expenses as may be determined by the court are tendered to him and the cost of bringing the witness to court shall be borne by the state.

*Issue of Summons  
for Witnesses.*

## SECTION 141

Every such summons shall be served upon the person to whom it is directed in the same manner as is set out in sections 128 or 130 or, with leave of the court section 129 and the provisions of sections 131 to 134 shall apply to such summons.

*Service of  
Summons on  
Witness*

## SECTION 142

If the person to whom any such summons is directed does not attend before the court at the time and place mentioned therein, and there does not appear to the court on inquiry to be any reasonable excuse for such non-attendance, then, after proof to the satisfaction of the court that the summons was duly served or that the person to whom the summons is directed willfully avoids service, the court, on being satisfied that such person is likely to give material evidence may issue a warrant to arrest him and to bring him at a time and place to be mentioned in the warrant, before the court in order to testify as aforesaid.

### *Warrant for Witness After Summons*

## SECTION 143

If the court is satisfied in the first instance, by proof upon oath, that any person likely to give material evidence, either for the prosecution or for the defence, will not attend to give evidence without being compelled so to do, then instead of issuing a summons, it may issue a warrant in the first instance for the arrest of such person.

### *Issue of Warrant for Witness in first Instance*

## SECTION 144

1. Every witness arrested under a warrant issued in the first instance, where the hearing of the case for which his evidence is required is appointed for a time which is more than twenty-four hours after the arrest, shall if

### *Mode of Dealing with Witness Arrested Under Warrant*



practicable be taken before a magistrate, and the magistrate may, on his furnishing security by recognizance to the satisfaction of the magistrate for his appearance at such hearing, order him to be released from custody, or shall, on his failing to furnish such security, order him to be detained for production at such hearing.

2. The provisions of this Law relating to bail of a defendant and of recognizance shall apply to a witness.
3. A witness arrested or detained under this Section shall not be kept in the same room or place as the defendant in whose case he is to give evidence, if the defendant is in custody: Provided that non-compliance with this subsection shall not vitiate any proceedings.

## SECTION 145

Any witness who:

- a. refuses or neglects, without reasonable cause, to attend at a court in compliance with the requirements of a summons duly served in the manner prescribed by law; or
- b. departs from the precincts of the court without the leave of the judge or magistrate holding the same shall be liable on summary conviction, to a penalty not exceeding Ten Thousand Naira or to imprisonment for any term not exceeding two months:

***Penalty on  
Witnesses Refusing  
to Attend***

Provided that no complaint shall be made for any offence under this section except by the order of the court made during the hearing of the case for which the evidence of the witness is required.

## SECTION 146

Every witness who is present when the hearing or further hearing of a case is adjourned, or who has been duly notified of the time and place to which such hearing or further hearing is so adjourned, shall be bound to attend at such time and place, and in default of so doing, may be dealt with in the same manner as if he had refused or neglected to attend before the court in obedience to a summons to attend and give evidence; provided that he has been paid his witness allowance if he is witness for the State.

### *Non-attendance of Witness on Adjourned Hearing*

## SECTION 147

1. Whenever a court issues a summons in respect of any offence for which the penalty is a fine not exceeding Ten Thousand Naira or imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or both, the court on application of the defendant:

- a. may dispense with the personal attendance of the defendant where the offence is punishable by fine or imprisonment or both; and
- b. shall dispense with personal attendance of the defendant where the offence is

### *Power to Dispense with Personal Attendance of Defendant in Certain Cases*

punishable by fine only, if the defendant pleads guilty in writing or appears and so pleads by his legal practitioner or agent.

2. The court trying a case in which the presence of the defendant has been dispensed with may, in his discretion, at any subsequent stage of the proceedings, direct the personal attendance of the defendant and, if necessary, enforce the attendance by means of the issue of a warrant to arrest the defendant and bring him before the court.
3. Where a Court imposes a fine on a defendant whose personal attendance has been dispensed with under this section, the Court may at the same time direct that if the fine is not paid within a stated time, the amount shall be recovered by distress or that the defendant shall be imprisoned for a period calculated in accordance with the provisions contained in this Law for the non-payment of a fine.
4. If, in any case under this section where the attendance of a defendant is dispensed with, previous convictions are alleged against him and are not admitted in writing or through his legal practitioner or agent, the court may adjourn the proceedings and direct the personal attendance and, if necessary, enforce his attendance in the same manner as provided in subsection (2) of this section.

## SECTION 148

Any person present in court and compellable as a witness, whether a party or not in a cause, may be compelled by the court to give evidence, and produce any document in his possession, or in his power, in the same manner and subject to the same rules as if he had been summoned to attend and give evidence or to produce such document and may be punished in like manner for any refusal to obey the order of the court.

***Persons in Court  
may be Required to  
give Evidence  
though not  
Summoned***

## SECTION 149

Where any person appears before the court on summons, recognizance or by virtue of a warrant to give evidence against any person accused of any offence, the court may order payment in accordance with the provisions of any rules of court, of the costs and expenses of such witness together with compensation for his inconvenience and loss of time.

***Expenses of Witnesses for  
Prosecution***

## SECTION 150

The court may in its discretion, at the request of any person who appears before such court on summons, recognizance or by virtue of a warrant to give evidence on behalf of a defendant, order payment in accordance with the provisions of any rules of court to such witness of such sum of the money as the court

***Expenses of Witnesses for  
Defendant***

deems reasonable and sufficient to compensate him for the expenses, inconvenience and loss of time which he incurred or sustained in attending before the court.

## SECTION 151

1. In cases involving death, the provisions of the Coroner's Law shall apply. *State to bear Expenses for Medical and other bodily Examination*
2. At any point where in the course of investigation, it becomes necessary to conduct a medical examination, including autopsy, the State shall appoint an appropriate medical practitioner to perform the examination at no cost to the complainant provided that the complainant and the defendant may, if they desire, nominate an appropriate medical personnel to be present at the examination, at their own cost.
3. Where the medical personnel appointed in accordance with (2) above declines or refuses to perform the examination, or demands any payment from either the complainant or defendant or induces any other condition on them, a report of such will be made to the Court, and the Court if satisfied of the truth of the allegation shall upon conviction under this section impose punishment of Two Months Imprisonment or (N200,000) Two Hundred Thousand Naira in lieu of imprisonment or both.

## SECTION 152

1. There shall be established a special unit in the office of the Honourable Attorney General of the State a Witness Support Unit, to be headed by an officer not below the rank of Deputy Director. *Establishment of Witness Support Unit and Witness Expenses Fund*
2. The unit shall have the responsibility to:
  - a. keep record of witnesses bound over for the State in each case;
  - b. make contacts with the witnesses to ensure they attend court;
  - c. ensure that the expenses of the witnesses are paid for attending court;
  - d. provide assistance and support to witnesses including recommending to the Attorney General any special protection that such witness may deserve and request for;
  - e. ensure that witnesses' summons are served and that they are duly complied with;
  - f. provide support and necessary information to the office of the Directorate of Public Prosecutions on the conditions, availability, disposition and itinerary of witnesses for the State, and
  - g. any other function that is incidental to the above and or as may be assigned by the Attorney General.

## SECTION 153

A witness shall take an oath or make a solemn affirmation in such manner as the court considers binding on his conscience.

*Manner of  
taking Oath or  
Affirmation*

## SECTION 154

1. When a person attending court and who is required to give evidence, without any sufficient excuse or reason:

*Witness Refusing to  
be Sworn, or Produce  
Documents*

- a. refuses to be sworn or to affirm as a witness;
- b. having been sworn or having taken affirmation refuses to answer any question put to him;
- c. refuses or neglects to produce any document or anything which he is required by the court to produce, the court may adjourn the hearing of the case and may in the meantime by warrant, commit the person to Correctional Service or other place of safe custody for a period not exceeding thirty days.

2. Nothing in this section shall:
  - a. affect the liability of the person to any other punishment for refusing or neglecting to do what is so required of him; or

- b. prevent the court from disposing of the case in the meantime according to any other sufficient evidence taken by it.

## SECTION 155

In addition to any other power conferred on a court, the court may if it considers it proper so to do, on adjournment granted at the request of either or any party, direct that the amount payable to any witness in accordance with the provisions of this Law and any rules of court or such sum not exceeding such amount aforesaid as the court may fix, shall be paid by the party requesting the adjournment to such witness as may be present and whose evidence it has not been possible to take owing to the granting of the adjournment.

*Adjournment may  
be Granted Subject  
to Costs to  
Witnesses*

## SECTION 156

The amount of the expenses and compensation payable to any witness attending before the court shall be ascertained by the registrar, certified under his hand and shall be paid out of general revenue to the witness by the Attorney General.

*Ascertainment of  
Expenses of  
Witnesses*



## CHAPTER 7: REMAND IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES

### SECTION 157

Where in any proceedings before a court the defendant is in custody and not granted bail, the court shall hear the matter from day to day until conclusion. Provided that where it is not possible to adjourn the hearing of the matter from day to day, the adjournment shall not exceed three days at any instance.

*Adjournment on  
Daily Basis where  
bail is Refused*

### SECTION 158

During remand the court may nevertheless order the defendant to be brought before it.

*Court may bring  
up Person  
Remanded During  
Remand*

### SECTION 159

If a court is satisfied that defendant who has been remanded is, by reason of illness or accident, unable to appear personally before the court at such adjournment as in Section 158 mentioned, such court may, in the absence of the defendant, order him to be further remanded for such time as may be deemed reasonable and cause him to be so informed in writing.

*Court may  
Adjourn Where  
Defendant Cannot  
Appear*

### SECTION 160

All persons committed to Correctional Service under this Law shall be committed to a Government Correctional Service or other place of safe custody.

*Place of  
Commitment*

CHAPTER 8:  
EFFECT OF ERRORS IN THE COURT PROCESS

SECTION 161

When any defendant is before a magistrate whether voluntarily, upon summons, after being arrested with or without warrant, while in custody for the same or any other offence, the proofs of evidence may be prepared or trial held notwithstanding any irregularity, illegality, defect, error in the summons or warrant, or the issuing, service, execution of the same, and notwithstanding the want of any complaint upon oath, and notwithstanding any defect in the complaint, or any irregularity or illegality in the arrest or custody of the defendant.

*Irregularity in  
Summons,  
Warrant, Service  
or Arrest*

SECTION 162

No variance between the charge contained in the summons or warrant and the offence alleged in the complaint or between any of them and the evidence adduced on the part of the prosecution, shall affect the validity of any proceedings at or subsequent to the trial.

*Variation between Charge  
and Complaint*

## SECTION 163

A summons, warrant of any description or other process issued under any written Law shall not be invalidated by reason of the person who signed the same dying, ceasing to hold office or have jurisdiction.

*Process valid  
Notwithstanding death or  
Vacation of office of Person  
Issuing*

## SECTION 164

The following provisions shall have effect in respect  
Of warrants of commitment and warrants of distress:

*Validity of  
Process*

- a. warrant of commitment shall not be held void by reason only of any defect therein, if it is therein alleged that the offender has been convicted, or ordered to do or to abstain from doing any act or thing required to be done or left undone and there is a good and valid order to sustain the same;
- b. a warrant of distress shall not be held void by reason only of any defect therein, if it is therein alleged that an order has been made, and there is a good and valid order to sustain the same and a person acting under a warrant of distress shall not be deemed a trespasser from the beginning by reason only of any defect in the warrant or of any irregularity in the execution of the warrant; but this enactment shall not prejudice the right of any person to satisfaction for any special damage caused by any defect in or irregularity in the execution of a warrant of distress.

*Warrant            of  
Commitment*

## SECTION 165

1. In addition to the provisions of this Law in respect of warrants of arrest, all summonses, warrants of every description and process of whatever description shall be sufficiently addressed for service or execution by being directed to the sheriff. *Warrant of Distress*
2. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (1) any such document may be addressed to a person by name or to an officer by his official designation.
3. Where a warrant of arrest is addressed to the sheriff such warrant may be executed by any police officer, officer of any agency authorized by any law to do so, or officer of a court.

## CHAPTER 9:

## CONTROL OF CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS

## SECTION 166

1. In any criminal proceedings and at any stage thereof before judgment the Attorney-General may enter a *nolle prosequi*, either by stating in court or informing the court in writing that the State intends that the proceedings shall not continue and thereupon the defendant shall be at once discharged in respect of the charge or *Nolle Prosequi in Criminal Proceedings*

information for which the *nolle prosequi* is entered.

2. If the defendant has been committed to Correctional Service he shall be released, or if on bail the recognizance shall be discharged, and, where the defendant is not before the court when such *nolle prosequi* is entered, the registrar or other proper officer of the court shall forthwith cause notice in writing of the entry of such *nolle prosequi* to be given to the officer in charge of the Correctional Service or other place in which the defendant may be detained and such notice shall be sufficient authority to discharge the defendant or if he is not in custody shall forthwith cause such notice in writing to be given to him and his sureties and shall in either case cause a similar notice in writing to be given to any witnesses bound over to prosecute.
3. Where a *nolle prosequi* is entered in accordance with the provisions of this section or Section 167, the discharge of a defendant shall not operate as a bar to any subsequent proceedings against him on account of the same facts.

## SECTION 167

1. During the preparation of the proofs of evidence in a charge in respect of an offence against a Law of the State, the Attorney-

*Nolle Prosequi during  
the preparation of  
proof of Evidence*

General may enter a *nolle prosequi* by informing the magistrate in whose court the defendant was charged that he intends that the proceedings shall not continue, and thereupon the defendant shall be at once discharged in respect of the charge for which the *nolle prosequi* is entered.

2. Where a *nolle prosequi* is entered under this section the provisions of subsection (2) of Section 166 shall apply and the court shall cause the appropriate action to be taken.

## SECTION 168

1. In any trial before a magistrate's court or during the preparation of the proofs of evidence in a criminal charge, any prosecutor with the consent of the court may, or on the instruction of the Attorney-General in the case of any offence against a Law of the State shall, at any time before judgment is pronounced or an information is preferred withdraw from the prosecution of any person either generally or in respect of one or more of the offences with which such person is charged and upon such withdrawal if it is made in the course of a trial:

### *Withdrawal of Prosecution Against a Person*

- a. before the defendant is called upon to make his defence, he shall be discharged in respect of such offence; or

- b. after the defendant is called upon to make his defence, he shall be acquitted in respect of such offence:

Provided that in any trial before a magistrate in which the prosecutor withdraws in respect of the prosecution of any offence before the defendant is called upon to make his defence the magistrate may in his discretion order the defendant to be acquitted if he is satisfied upon the merits of the case that such order is a proper one and when any such order of acquittal is made the magistrate shall endorse his reasons for making such order on the record.

***Before whom  
Recognizance may  
be Executed***

2. Where any private prosecutor withdraws from a prosecution for any offence under the provisions of this section the magistrate may, in his discretion, award costs against such prosecutor.
3. A discharge of a defendant under this section shall not operate as a bar to subsequent proceedings against him on account of the same facts.

## SECTION 169

A Law officer, where any charge of an indictable offence is being proceeded with summarily by a magistrate under the provisions of this Law may, at any time before the decision thereof, by order in writing under his hand, require such magistrate to stop further proceedings and to transfer the case to

***Law Officer may Require  
case to be Adjourned or  
Dealt with Specially***

another magistrate within the same chief magisterial district or to transmit the case file and all statements and documents in the case to the Attorney-General for the purpose of preparing the proof of evidence in respect of the charge with a view to preferring an information.

## SECTION 170

Where any person other than the Attorney-General prosecutes in any criminal proceedings for an offence against a Law of the State or any public officer prosecutes in his official capacity in any such criminal proceedings, such person or public officer shall prosecute such case subject to such general or specific directions as may be given by the Attorney- General.

*General control of  
prosecution by the  
Attorney-General*

## SECTION 171

Where proceedings in respect of any offence against a Law of the State within the criminal jurisdiction of a court are brought by a police officer in the exercise of his official duty and it is not provided by any written Law that such proceedings shall only be brought by or in the name of some specified persons, such proceedings may, subject to any special or general directions given by the Attorney-General, be brought in the name of the public officer or police officer instituting the proceedings or making the arrest if any, or in the case of a member of the police force in the name of the Commissioner of Police.

*Names under which  
Prosecution could be  
Instituted*



**CHAPTER 10:**  
**INSTITUTION OF CRIMINAL CASES**

**SECTION 172**

Any person may make a complaint against any other person alleged to have committed or to be committing an offence, unless it appears from the enactment on which the complaint is founded, that any complaint for such offence shall be made only by a particular person or class of persons, in which case only the particular person or a person of the particular class may make such a complaint.

***Right of making  
Complaint***

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in any Law, a police officer may make a complaint in a case of assault even though the party aggrieved declines or refuses to make a complaint.

**SECTION 173**

1. It shall not be necessary for any complaint to be in writing, unless it is required to be so by the enactment on which it is founded, or by some other enactment. If a complaint is not made in writing, the court or registrar shall reduce it into writing.
2. Subject to the provisions of Section 38, every complaint may, unless some enactment otherwise requires, be made without oath.

***Form and Requisites of  
Complaint***

3. Every such complaint may be made by the complainant in person, or by a legal practitioner representing him, or by any person authorized in writing in that behalf, and shall be heard in private.
4. Every such complaint shall be for one offence only, but such complaint shall not be avoided by describing the offence or any material act relating thereto in alternative words according to the language of the enactment constituting such offence.
5. All complaints made to the court directly under this section shall first be referred to the police and or other Law enforcement officers depending on the subject matter for investigation before any action is taken by the court.

## SECTION 174

Every complaint, summons, warrant or other document laid, issued or made for the purpose of or in connection with any proceedings before a court for any offence, shall be sufficient if it contains a statement of the specific offence with which the defendant is charged, together with such particulars as may be necessary for giving reasonable information as to the nature of the charge.

*Form of Document in  
Criminal Proceedings*

## SECTION 175

1. Any person who believes from a reasonable or probable cause that an offence has been committed by any person whose appearance a magistrate has power to compel, may make a complaint on oath thereof to a magistrate who shall consider the allegations of the complainant and may, in his discretion, refuse to issue a process and record his reasons for refusal, or may issue a summons or warrant as he shall deem fit, to compel the attendance of the defendant before a magistrate's court in district.
2. The magistrate shall not refuse to issue such summons or warrant only because the alleged offence is one for which an offender may be arrested without warrant.
3. An exception, exemption, a proviso, condition, an excuse or a qualification, whether it does or does not in any enactment creating an offence accompany in the same section the description of the offence, may be proved by the defendant, even if it is not specified or refuted in the complaint.

*Rule as to Statement of Exception*

## SECTION 176

In every case where no time is specially limited for making a complaint for a summary conviction offence in the Law relating to such offence, such

*Limitation of Period for making a Private Complaint*

complaint if made other than by a person in his official capacity shall be made within six months from the time when the matter of such complaint arose, and not after.

## SECTION 177

1. Notwithstanding anything contained in this Law, the Attorney-General may exhibit to the High Court information for all purposes regarding the enforcement of the Criminal Code or any other written Law creating offences and prescribing penalties therefore.
2. Such proceedings may be taken upon every such information so far as the circumstances of the case and the practice and procedure of the High Court will admit.

*Information by the Attorney-General*

## SECTION 178

Criminal proceedings may in accordance with the provisions of this Law be instituted:

- a. in magistrates' courts, on a charge or a complaint whether or not on oath, and
- b. in the High Court:
  - i. by information of the Attorney-General.
  - ii. by information filed in the court after the defendant has been summarily committed for perjury by a judge or magistrate under the provisions of

*Different methods of instituting Criminal Proceedings*

Chapter 12;

- iii. by information filed in the court after the preparation of the proofs of evidence;
- iv. on complaint whether on oath or not;
- v. by information or charge filed in the court by any other prosecuting authority;
- vi. by information or charge filed by a private prosecutor subject to the provision of this Law.

## SECTION 179

1. Proceedings in a magistrates' court may be instituted in either of the following ways:

***Procedure for Instituting  
Criminal Proceedings in  
Magistrates' Court***

- a. upon complaint to the court, whether or not on oath, that an offence has been committed by any person whose presence the magistrate has power to compel, and an application to such magistrate, in the manner hereinafter set forth for the issuance of either a summons directed to, or a warrant to arrest such person; or
- b. by bringing a person arrested without a warrant before the court on a charge contained in a charge sheet specifying the name, address, age, sex and occupation of the person charged, the charge against him and the time and

place where the offence is alleged to have been committed.

2. The charge sheet filed by the prosecution shall be served on the defendant within seven days of its being filed or such time as the court may allow.
3. The trial of a charge preferred under subsection (1) paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section shall commence not later than thirty days from the date of filing the charge, and the trial of the person brought under the charge shall be completed within a reasonable time.
4. Where a charge is preferred under subsection (1) paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section and the trial does not commence within thirty days of bringing the charge, or trial has commenced but has not been completed after the expiration of the time prescribed in section 259 of this Law, the Court shall forward to the Chief Judge the particulars of the charge and reasons for failure to commence the trial or to complete the trial provided that the trial shall continue from day to day pending the directive of the Chief Judge.
5. A Court seized of criminal proceedings shall in every quarter make quarterly returns of the particulars of all cases, including charges, remand and other proceedings commenced and dealt with in his Court within the quarter, to the Chief Judge.

6. In reviewing the returns made by a Court under subsections (4) and (5) of this section, the Chief Judge shall have regard to the need to ensure that:
  - a. criminal matters are speedily dealt with;
  - b. congestion of cases in courts is drastically reduced;
  - c. congestion of Correctional Services is reduced to the barest minimum; and
  - d. persons awaiting trial are, as far as possible, not detained in Correctional Service custody for unreasonable length of time.

## SECTION 180

1. The prosecution shall file and serve on the defendant or his counsel, along with the charge sheet, or any other originating process required under section 240, all documents and description of material exhibits it intends to rely on in the prosecution of the case within the time prescribed in subsection 2 of this section. *Front loading of processes at the Magistrate Court*
2. The Defendant shall file and serve on the prosecution all documents and materials it intends to rely for his defence within 14 days of service on him by the prosecution.

## SECTION 181

Subject to the provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, relating to the powers of prosecution by the Attorney-General of the State, prosecution of all offences in any court in the State shall be undertaken by:

*Prosecution  
of Offences*

- a. the Attorney-General of the State or a Law Officer in his Department;
- b. a legal practitioner authorized by the Attorney-General of the State;
- c. a legal practitioner authorized by this Law or any other enactment of the National Assembly;
- d. a member of the Nigeria Police Force;
- e. any other person authorized by any Law in Ebonyi State to prosecute offences under such Law.

## SECTION 182

1. The Comptroller of Correctional Services shall make return every quarter the Chief Judge and to the Attorney-General of all persons awaiting trial held in custody within the state for a period beyond One Hundred and Eighty days from the date of arraignment.
2. The returns referred to in subsection (1) of this section shall be in a prescribed form and shall include:

*Returns by Controller- of  
Correctional Services*



- a. the names of the persons held in custody or the Awaiting Trial Persons (ATPs);
- b. passport photograph of the persons;
- c. the date of his arraignment or remand;
- d. the date of his admission to custody;
- e. the particulars of the offence with which he was charged;
- f. the court before which he was arraigned;
- g. name of the prosecuting agency; and
- h. any other relevant information.

## SECTION 183

In every case the court may proceed either by way of summons to the defendant or by way of warrant for his arrest in the first instance according to the nature and circumstances of the case.

### *Summons and Warrant*

## SECTION 184

Subject to the powers of transfer contained in the Law constituting any court, the place for the trial of offences by such court shall be:

### *Venue*

- a. the place in which the court has jurisdiction and such offences being those committed within such place;
- b. when a person is accused of the commission of any offence by reason of anything which has been done, or of anything which has been

### *Place of Jurisdiction where Offence Committed*

### *Place of Jurisdiction where Offence Committed*

omitted to be done, and of any consequence which has ensued, such offence may be tried by a court having jurisdiction in the division or district in which any such thing has been done or omitted to be done, or any such consequence has ensued;

- c. when an act is an offence by reason of its relation to any other act which is also an offence, a charge of the first mentioned offence may be tried by a court having jurisdiction in the division or district either in which it happened, or in which the offence, with which it was so connected happened.

***When Offence  
Constituted by Relation to  
another Offence***

- d. i. when it is uncertain in which of several divisions or districts an offence was committed; or
- ii. when an offence is committed partly in one division or district and partly in another; or
- iii. when an offence is a continuing one, and continues to be committed in more divisions or districts than one; or
- iv. when it consists of several acts committed in different divisions or districts, it may be tried by a court having jurisdiction in any of such divisions or districts;

***When place Uncertain or  
Offence Distributed***

- e. an offence committed while the offender is in the course of performing a journey or voyage

***Offence Committed on a  
Journey***

may be tried by a court in or through or into the division or district of whose jurisdiction the offender or the person against whom or the thing in respect of which the offence was committed resides, is or passed in the course of that journey or voyage;

- f. an offence committed at sea or elsewhere out of Nigeria, which according to Law may be tried in Nigeria, may be so tried at any place in Nigeria to which the defendant is first brought, or to which he may be taken thereafter.

## SECTION 185

Whenever any doubt arises as to the magistrates' court before which any offence shall be charged or tried, a judge shall, upon the application of a magistrate or the defendant, decide in which magistrate's court the offence shall be charged or tried. Any such decision of a judge shall be final and conclusive and not subject to appeal.

***Judge to Decide in case of Doubt of Venue***

## SECTION 186

- 1. A magistrate, in this and in the next succeeding section referred to as the remitting magistrate, before whom any person who is within the magisterial district of such magistrate and is charged with having committed an offence within the magisterial district of another magistrate is brought shall,

***Defendant to be Remitted in certain Cases to Another Magistrate***

- unless he is authorised to proceed in the case, send him in custody to the court within the magisterial district in which the offence was committed, or require him to give security for his surrender to such last mentioned court, there to answer the charge and to be dealt with according to Law.
2. If such offence as is mentioned in subsection (1) shall have been committed in a district within which one or more courts shall have concurrent jurisdiction, the remitting magistrate shall, unless he is authorized to proceed in the case, send the person charged in custody to such one of the courts having concurrent jurisdiction as can most conveniently deal with the case, or require him to give security for his surrender to such last mentioned court, there to answer the charge and to be dealt with according to Law.
3. The remitting magistrate shall send to the court to which the person charged is remitted for trial an authenticated copy of the charge, summons, warrant, and all other process or documents in his possession, relative to such person.

*Courts  
having  
Concurrent  
Jurisdiction*

*Transmission  
of Documents*

## SECTION 187

Where any person is to be sent in custody, a warrant shall be issued by the remitting magistrate and the warrant shall be sufficient authority to any person to

*Removal  
under Warrant*

whom it is directed to receive and detain the person therein named and to carry him and deliver him up to the court to which the person charged is remitted for trial. The person to whom the warrant is directed shall execute it according to its tenor without any delay.

## SECTION 188

1. If the defendant is in custody and the magistrate directing such transfer thinks it expedient that such custody should be continued or if he is not in custody, that he should be placed in custody, the magistrate shall, by his warrant, commit the defendant to prison until he can be taken before a magistrate of the district wherein the cause of complaint arose.
2. The complaint and recognizance, if any, taken by such first named magistrate under the provisions of this Law shall be by him transmitted to the magistrate before whom the defendant is to be taken; and such complaint and recognizance, if any, shall be treated to all intents and purposes as if they had been taken by such last mentioned magistrate.
3. If the defendant is not retained or placed in custody as aforesaid, the magistrate shall inform him that he has directed the transfer of the case as aforesaid, and thereupon the

*Transfer of Case  
where cause of  
Complaint has  
arisen out of  
District of Court*

*Complaint and  
Recognizance to  
be Transmitted*

*Defendant not  
Retained or Placed  
in Custody*

provisions of the last preceding subsection relating to the transmission and use of the documents in the case shall apply.

## SECTION 189

1. Notwithstanding the provisions of Sections 183, 184 and 185; of this Law, a person may be charged and tried by a judge or magistrate of a division or district in which the person:  
*Courts may Assume Jurisdiction under Certain Conditions*
  - a. is arrested;
  - b. is in custody on a charge;
  - c. has appeared in answer to summons lawfully issued, and if the judge or magistrate considers that justice will be greater served and having regard to the accessibility and convenience of witnesses, may proceed to hear the charge.
2. The offence referred to in subsection (1) of this section shall for all purposes be incidental to or consequential on the prosecution, trial or punishment thereof be deemed to have been committed in that division or district.
3. If at any time during the course of any proceedings taken against any person before any court in pursuance of this section it appears to the court that the defendant would suffer hardship if he were proceeded against and tried in the division or district aforesaid,

the court shall forthwith, but without prejudice to a magistrate's powers under this Law, cease to proceed further in the matter.

4. Where any person is charged with two or more offences, he may be proceeded against, tried and punished in respect of all those offences in any division or district in which he could be proceeded against, tried or punished in respect of any one of those offences, and all the offences with which that person is charged shall, for all purposes incidental to or consequential on the prosecution, trial or punishment thereof, be deemed to have been committed in that division or district.

## SECTION 190

If any cause is commenced in any other division or district than that in which it ought to have been commenced, the judge or magistrate, as the case may be, may assume jurisdiction in accordance with the provisions of Section 181 and all acts performed and all decisions given by the judge or magistrate during the trial or inquiry shall be deemed to be valid in all respects as if the jurisdiction had been assumed prior to the performance of the said acts and the giving of the said decisions.

*Assumption of  
Jurisdiction after  
Commencement  
of Proceedings*

## SECTION 191

Trials shall be held:

*Trials*

1. In the High Court:
  - i. on the information filed by a law officer or private prosecutor, or a legal practitioner in the Nigeria Police Force; or
  - ii. on the information filed in the court after the defendant has been summarily committed for perjury by a judge or magistrate under the provisions of Chapter 12; or
  - iii. on information exhibited by the Attorney-General under the provisions of Section 176; or
  - iv. summarily in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 11.
2. In magistrates' courts summarily in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 11.



## CHAPTER 11: SUMMARY TRIAL

### SECTION 192

The provisions of this chapter shall apply to offences triable summarily, to with:

#### *Summary Trials*

- a. all trials in the High Court other than on information, and
- b. all trials in the High Court in respect of offences for which it is provided that a trial can be held in the High Court otherwise than on information and for which no special procedure is provided, and
- c. all trials in any Magistrate's Court to the extent of the jurisdiction of the magistrate adjudicating, and
- d. all offences declared by any written law to be triable summarily or by a magistrate.
- e. summary conviction offences.

### SECTION 193

The provisions of this Law, other than those relating to the preparation of proofs of evidence where necessary, shall apply to trials under this chapter save that where the provisions of this chapter conflict with the provisions so applied, the provisions of this chapter shall prevail.

#### *Application of Parts of the Law to Processes under this Chapter*

## SECTION 194

On the day and at the place mentioned in the summons or on the day and at the place on and to which the defendant is brought before the court under a warrant, as the case may be, the case with respect to which the complaint has been made shall be called for hearing in the court.

*Time and Place of  
Hearing*

## SECTION 195

Where a case is called up and the defendant appears voluntarily in obedience to the same summons or is brought before the court under a warrant and the prosecution is not ready or willing to proceed with his case, the court may in appropriate circumstances, strike out the charge; Provided that where evidence has been led by the prosecution, the court shall close the case of the prosecution and call upon the defendant to open his case.

*Non-appearance  
of Complainant*

## SECTION 196

1. If when a summons case is called the defendant does not appear and no sufficient excuse is offered for his absence then the court, if satisfied that the summons, if any, has been duly served, may issue a warrant, called a bench warrant, for his arrest or if not satisfied that the summons has been duly served or if a warrant had been issued, in the

*Non-appearance  
of Defendant*

first instance, for the apprehension of the defendant the court may adjourn the hearing of the case to some future day, in order that proper service may be effected or until the defendant be apprehended, as the case may be.

2. If the defendant is afterwards apprehended on a bench warrant or other warrant as aforesaid, he shall be brought before the magistrate who shall thereupon commit him by warrant to Correctional Service or to such other place of safe custody as he may think fit, and order him to be brought at a certain time and place before the court; and of such time and place the complainant shall, by direction of the magistrate, be served with due notice.

## SECTION 197

1. If, when the case is called neither the complainant nor the defendant appears, the court shall make such order as the justice of the case requires. *Non-Appearence of both Parties*
2. In such order the court may include such direction as to payment of costs as the court shall deem fit, and the payment of such costs may be enforced in the manner and subject to the conditions set forth in Chapter 31 as if it were a fine.

## SECTION 198

If, when the case is called both the complainant and the defendant appear, the court shall proceed to hear and determine the case.

*Appearance of both Parties*

## SECTION 199

If a complainant at any time before a final order is made in any case under this chapter satisfies the court that there are sufficient grounds for permitting him to withdraw his complaint the court may permit him to withdraw the same and shall thereupon acquit the accused unless the court directs that the defendant instead of being acquitted shall be discharged.

*Withdrawal of Complaint*

## SECTION 200

1. At the commencement of the hearing, the court shall state or cause to be stated to the defendant the substance of the complaint and shall ask him whether he is guilty or not guilty.
2. If the defendant pleads guilty, the prosecutor shall state the facts of the case and if the court is satisfied that the defendant intends to admit the offence and shows no cause or no sufficient cause why sentence should not be passed, the court shall proceed to convict and sentence.

*Manner of Hearing*

*When Defendant pleads Guilty*

3. If the defendant says that he is not guilty the court shall direct that all witnesses shall leave the court and upon such direction the provisions of Section 212 of the Evidence Act shall apply:

Provided that the judge or magistrate may in his discretion permit professional and technical witnesses to remain in court:

Provided further that failure to comply with the provisions of this subsection shall not invalidate the proceedings.

4. The court shall then proceed to hear the complainant and such witnesses as he may call and such other evidence as he may adduce in support of his complaint, and also to hear the defendant and such witnesses as he may call and such other evidence as he may adduce in his defence and also, if the court thinks fit, to hear such witnesses as the complainant may call in reply if the defendant has called any witnesses or given any evidence.

5. The complainant and the defendant may put questions to each witness called by the other side and where the defendant gives evidence he may be cross-examined.

6. If the defendant is not represented by a legal practitioner the court shall at the close of the examination of each witness for the prosecution ask the defendant whether he

*Witnesses in general  
to be out of Hearing*

*Hearing of  
Complainant  
and Witnesses*

*Asking of  
questions*

*Unrepresente  
d  
Defendant*

wishes to put any question to that witness and shall record his answer and such defendant may so proceed if he so wishes.

## SECTION 201

If at the close of the evidence in support of the charge, it appears to the court that a case is not made out against the defendant sufficiently to require him to make a defence, the court shall as to that particular charge, discharge him.

*Discharge of  
Defendant when  
no case to Answer*

## SECTION 202

1. At the close of the evidence in support of the charge, if it appears to the court that a prima facie case is made out against the defendant sufficiently to require him to make a defence, the court shall call upon him for his defence and:

*When a Prima facie  
case has been made  
out*

- a. if the defendant is not represented by a legal practitioner, the court shall inform him of the alternatives open to him, namely:
  - i. he may give evidence in the witness-box, after being sworn as a witness; in which case he will be liable to cross-examination; or
  - ii. he may remain silent, if he so wishes; or

- iii. he may call any witness or adduce any other evidence in his defence.
  - b. if the defendant is represented by a legal practitioner, the court shall call upon the legal practitioner to proceed with the defence.
2. If the defendant or his legal practitioner states that he has witnesses to call but that they are not present, the court may, in the circumstances set forth in section 140 to 148 take the steps therein mentioned to compel their attendance.

## SECTION 203

Failure to comply with the requirements of paragraph 1(a) in section 202 shall not of itself vitiate the trial provided that the court called upon the defendant for his defence and asked him if he had any witnesses and heard the defendant and his witnesses and other evidence, if any.

*Saving as to  
section 202(l)(a)*

## SECTION 204

If the defendant adduces in his defence new matter which the prosecution could not foresee, the prosecution may, with the leave of the court, adduce evidence to rebut such new mentioned evidence.

*New matters by  
defendant*

## SECTION 205

Whenever it appears to the court that any person who is so dangerously ill or hurt that there is a possibility he may not recover is able and willing to give material evidence relating to any offence triable summarily and it shall not be practicable to take the evidence in accordance with the provisions of this Law of the person so ill or hurt such magistrate may take in writing the statement on oath or affirmation of such person, shall subscribe the same and certify that it contains accurately the whole of the statement made by such person, and shall add a statement of his reason for taking the same and of the date and place when and where the same was taken and shall preserve such statement and file it for record.

### *Power to take Evidence of Persons Dangerously ill*

## SECTION 206

1. The court shall cause reasonable notice of the intention to take the evidence of the person who is seriously ill and of the time and place where it is to be taken, to be served upon the prosecutor and the defendant and if the defendant is in custody he shall be brought by the person in whose charge he is, under an order in writing of the magistrate to the place where the statement is to be taken. The court may allow the prosecutor and the defendant to examine such person if deemed necessary.

### *Notice to be given to Parties*



2. If the statement relates to an offence in respect of which proofs of evidence are subsequently prepared, it shall be transmitted to the office Attorney-General. *Transmission of Statement*
3. Such statement so taken may afterwards be used in evidence on the trial of any person accused of an offence to which the same relates in accordance with the provisions of Section 46 of the Evidence Act. *When Statement may be used in Evidence*
4. The signature and attestation of the judge or magistrate shall be sufficient *prima facie proof* of any statement and that the same was taken in all respects according to Law and such attestation and signature shall be admitted without further proof unless the court shall see reason to doubt the genuineness thereof. *Signature, etc, prima facie proof*

## SECTION 207

1. The court shall in every case take record of the oral evidence or so much thereof as it considers material, in a book or other device kept for that purpose and such book shall be signed by the judge or magistrate at the conclusion of each day's proceedings. *Notes of Evidence to be Taken*
2. No person shall be entitled, as of right, to inspection of or to a copy of the record so kept as aforesaid save as may be expressly provided by the rules.

3. The record so kept as aforesaid or a copy thereof purporting to be signed and certified as true copy by the court shall at all times, without further proof, be admitted as evidence of such proceedings and of the statements made by the witnesses.

## SECTION 208

Where a complaint is made by one or more parties against another party or parties and there is a cross-complaint by the defendant or defendants in such first named case with reference to the same matter, the court may if it deems fit, hear and determine such complaints in the same proceeding.

### *Cross Complaint*

## SECTION 209

Where two or more complaints are made by one or more parties against another party or parties and such complaints refer to the same matter, such complaints may, if the court deem fit, be heard and determined in the same proceeding.

### *Joinder of Complaints*

## SECTION 210

1. If, in the course of the hearing, circumstances should appear which cause the court to be of the opinion that the offence, on account of its aggravated character or other sufficient reason, is not suitable to be disposed of by

### *Procedure where offence appears unsuitable for determination by court of limited Jurisdiction*

such court, then such court may instead of adjudicating, either of its own motion or on the direction of the Attorney-General, transmit the documents, statements or matters mentioned in Section 180 and all other documents before the court pertaining to the case to the Attorney-General.

2. The Attorney-General shall thereupon cause proofs of evidence to be prepared in respect of the charge and may, thereafter, prefer an information against the defendant.

## SECTION 211

Upon the conclusion of the hearing, the court shall either at the same or at an adjourned sitting, give its decision on the case either by dismissing or convicting the defendant and may make such other order as may deem just.

*Giving of decision  
upon Conclusion  
of Hearing*

## SECTION 212

1. On any summary trial the court may, whether the complaint be dismissed or not, bind over either the complainant or defendant, or both, with or without a surety or sureties, to be of good behaviour. Where any person so bound, in default of compliance with the order, he may be imprisoned for any term not exceeding three months, in addition to any other punishment to which such person is

*Power to bind  
Parties to be of  
good Behaviour*

liable.

2. Provided that before any such binding order, pursuant to subsection 1 of this section or order for imprisonment or any other punishment under subsection (2) of this section is made, the person to be affected shall be given an opportunity to be heard.

## SECTION 213

1. Where a complaint is dismissed on merits, such dismissal shall have the same effect as an acquittal. *Effect of judgment of dismissal "on merits" and "without prejudice"*
2. Where a complaint is struck out or dismissed and not on merits or stated to be without prejudice, such dismissal shall not have the same effect as an acquittal.

## CHAPTER 12:

### SUMMARY PROCEDURE IN PERJURY

## SECTION 214

If it appears to a court that a person has been guilty of perjury in any proceeding before it, the court, subject to the provisions of section 216, may :

### *Perjury. Summary Procedure*

- a. commit him for trial upon information of perjury and bind any person by recognizance to give evidence at his trial; or

- b. try him summarily as for a contempt of court and if he is found guilty commit him to prison for six months or impose a fine on him in accordance with the scale of fine as provided in this Law.

## SECTION 215

Where a judge or magistrate decides to try a person summarily under section 214 as for contempt of court, such judge or magistrate shall specify the perjury alleged and shall direct the attention of the person to be charged to the inconsistencies upon which such charge is based and shall require him to give his explanation to such inconsistencies and shall record such explanation.

*Decision to try  
summarily*

## SECTION 216

1. If a magistrate orders a person to be imprisoned or to pay a fine under section 214 he shall neither issue a warrant of commitment nor make an order for imprisonment for nonpayment of the fine, but shall either remand such person or release him on a recognizance with or without sureties to come up before the court when called upon and shall forthwith forward to the Chief Judge or such judge as the Chief Judge may direct a certified true copy of the proceedings and the Chief Judge or judge as aforesaid may without hearing argument

*When a person is  
ordered to be  
Imprisoned or  
Fined*

and in the absence of the person concerned, set aside or confirm such order or reduce the sentence of imprisonment or the amount of the fine and shall inform the magistrate immediately of his decision.

2. If the Chief Judge or judge does not wholly set aside the magistrates' order, the magistrate shall forthwith issue a warrant of commitment or make the necessary order for payment of the fine in accordance with the terms of the Chief Judge's or judge's order.

*Issue of warrant of commitment or order for payment of fine*

## SECTION 217

Any imprisonment or fine ordered under this chapter shall be a bar to any other proceedings for the same offence except where the order of a magistrate has been wholly set aside.

*Bar to other Proceedings*

## CHAPTER 13:

### **SUMMARY TRIAL BY MAGISTRATE OF ADULT CHARGED WITH AN INDICTABLE OFFENCE**

## SECTION 218

Where a person who is an adult is charged before a magistrate court with any indictable offence other than a capital offence or an offence punishable with imprisonment for life, the court may subject to the

*Summary trial by magistrate of Indictable Cases*

provisions of this Law or any other Law for the time being in force and to the extent of the jurisdiction of the magistrate adjudicating, deals summarily with the offence.

## SECTION 219

1. Trials in the High Court may be recorded electronically by retrievable audio visual means such that where a trial judge is unable to conclude a trial, another judge may be assigned to conclude the proceedings without having to start *de novo*; Provided that nonrecording of proceedings shall not vitiate a valid trial. *Trials*
2. The transcript of the electronic recording of the proceedings of the court shall be produced and signed by the judge and such signed transcript shall constitute proper signing of the record book of the court.

## SECTION 220

Any written Law in force at the commencement of this Law which relates to the summary trial by a magistrate of indictable offences or which refers to indictable offences which are triable summarily by a magistrate shall, subject to the provisions of this section, be construed, as the case may be, as applying to summary trial by a magistrate of indictable offences under this section or as referring to all indictable offences which are triable summarily by a magistrate thereunder.

*Summary trial by  
magistrate of  
Indictable  
Offences*

## SECTION 221

Notwithstanding the provisions of sections 223 to 226 of this Law, a magistrate, without prejudice to any other power which he may possess and contained in this Law, may for the purpose of ascertaining whether it is expedient to deal with a case summarily, either before or during the hearing of the case, adjourn the case and remand the person charged for a period not exceeding forty eight hours or release him on bail.

*Power to remand  
person Charged*

## SECTION 222

1. Any person convicted of any indictable offence tried summarily may, instead of or in addition to any punishment to which he is liable, be ordered to enter into his own recognizance, with or without sureties, in such amount as the court deems fit that he shall keep the peace and be of good behaviour for a reasonable period as may be fixed by the court.
2. Such person may be ordered to be imprisoned until such recognizance, with sureties if so directed, is entered into; Provided that such imprisonment for not entering into recognizance shall not together with the fixed term of imprisonment, if any, extend for a term longer than the longest term for which he might be sentenced to be imprisoned without fine.

*Security for keeping  
the peace, in  
indictable cases  
triable Summarily*



**CHAPTER 14:**  
**REMAND AND OTHER**  
**INTERLOCUTORY PROCEEDINGS**

**SECTION 223**

1. A person arrested for an offence which the Magistrate has no jurisdiction to grant bail shall within a reasonable time of arrest be brought before a Magistrate Court for Remand.
2. An application for remand under this section shall:
  - a. be made in the prescribed “Report and Request for Remand Form” as contained in Form 12, in the First Schedule to this Law; and
  - b. be verified on oath and contain reasons for the remand request.
3. No charge or application for remand shall be entered in the magistrate court unless it is accompanied by the original case file, which shall be tendered as exhibit during the proceedings.
4. At the end of the proceedings of the day, the magistrate shall transmit the original case file to the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.
5. The investigation report of the Investigation Police Officer, or officer of any agency, shall be on oath and may at the trial be admitted as evidence in chief of such officer.

*Applications for  
Remand or  
other  
Interlocutory  
Proceedings*

## SECTION 224

1. Where the Magistrate, after examining the reason for the arrest and for the request for remand in accordance with the provisions of section 223 of this Law, is satisfied that there is probable cause to remand the person pending the receipt of a copy of the legal advice from the Director of Public Prosecutions and arraignment of the person before the appropriate court, as the case may be, may remand the person in custody *Magistrate may Remand in Prison Custody*
2. In considering whether “probable cause” has been established for the remand of a person pursuant to subsection (1) of this section, the court may take into consideration the following:
  - a. the nature and seriousness of the alleged offence;
  - b. reasonable grounds to suspect that the person has been involved in the commission of the alleged offence;
  - c. reasonable grounds for believing that the person may abscond or commit further offence if he is not committed to custody; and
  - d. any other circumstances of the case that justifies the request for remand.

## SECTION 225

The court may, in considering an application for remand brought under section 223 of this Law, grant bail to the person.

*Court may grant bail in remand Proceedings*

## SECTION 226

1. Where an order of remand of the person is made pursuant to section 224 of this Law, the order shall be for a period not exceeding fourteen days in the first instance, and the case shall be returnable within the same period.
2. Where, on application in writing, good cause is shown why there should be an extension of the remand period, the court may make an order for further remand of the person for a period not exceeding fourteen days and make the proceedings returnable within the same period.
3. Where the person is still in custody on remand at the expiration of the period provided for under subsection (1) or (2) of this section, the court may on application of the person grant bail upon such conditions as the court may deem fit.
4. At the expiration of the remand order made pursuant to subsection (1) or (2) of this section, and if the person is still remanded with his trial having not commenced, or

*Time Protocol for Remand orders*

charge having not been filed at the relevant court having jurisdiction, the court shall issue a hearing notice on the Commissioner of Police or any other Law enforcement agency concerned and the Director of Public Prosecutions of the State and adjourn the matter within a period not exceeding fourteen days of the expiration of the period of remand order made under subsection (1) or (2) of this section, to inquire as to the position of the case and for the Commissioner of Police and the Director of Public Prosecutions to show cause why the person remanded should not be unconditionally released.

5. Where the Commissioner of Police and the Director of Public Prosecutions show good cause pursuant to subsection (4) of this section and make a request to that effect, the court:
  - a. may extend the remand of the person for a final period not exceeding thirty days for the person to be arraigned for trial before an appropriate court or tribunal; and
  - b. shall make the case returnable within the said period of thirty days from the date the hearing notice was issued pursuant to subsection (4) of this section.

6. Where good cause is not shown for the continued remand of the person pursuant to subsection (4) of this section, or where the person is still on remand custody after the expiration of the extended period under subsection (5), the court shall, with or without an application to that effect, forthwith grant bail to the person on such condition(s) as the magistrate may deem fit in the circumstances;

Provided that the matter shall be adjourned from time to time within such period as the magistrate may deem fit, after which the defendant may be discharged.

7. No further application for remand shall be entertained after the proceeding in subsection (6) of this section.

## SECTION 227

1. The powers conferred on the court under this Part may be exercised by the court:  
*When court may exercise Power of Remand*
  - a. whether the person remanded is present in court or not; and
  - b. on its own motion or on application, including an application by a person in charge of the Correctional Service or other place of custody where the person remanded is detained.
2. The legal advice of the Director of Public Prosecutions shall in all cases be copied to the

magistrate, and the magistrate may act only on the copy of the advice to make any order that may be necessary in the circumstances.

3. Where the legal advice of the Director of Public Prosecutions indicates that the person remanded has no case to answer, the magistrate shall discharge the person forthwith.

## SECTION 228

1. During remand, the magistrate may nevertheless order the person remanded to be brought before it.
2. The magistrate may order that the person remanded be transferred to a hospital, asylum or any suitable place for the purpose of giving him medical treatment, or may make any order that it considers necessary at any time during the remand period.

*Court may bring up  
Person Remanded  
or make any order  
During Remand*

## SECTION 229

Where an adult charged with an indictable offence is being tried summarily by a magistrate, such magistrate shall, at the request of any person in charge of the prosecution, made at any time before judgment, adjourn the hearing of the charge in order that the Attorney General may be consulted with a view to obtaining an order as in section 169 to have the case dealt with as one for trial on information in

*Adjournment for  
Attorney  
General's  
Decision*

accordance with the provisions of Chapter 16. Provided that the order of the Attorney General shall be filed within thirty days from the date the magistrate grants such request of the prosecution, failing which the magistrate shall proceed to try and conclude the case summarily.

## **CHAPTER 16:**

### **SUMMARY TRIAL BY MAGISTRATE OF CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON CHARGED WITH AN INDICTABLE OFFENCE**

#### **SECTION 230**

Where a child or young person is charged before a magistrate with any indictable offence, other than a capital offence, the magistrate, if he thinks it expedient so to do, may subject to the extent of his jurisdiction and without consulting the parent or guardian, deal summarily with the offence and, in case of the child or young person being found guilty, inflict the same description of punishment as might have been inflicted if the case had been tried on indictment: Provided that in the case of a child, he may be committed to an approved institution or borstal home, or social welfare institution for reformation and training.

*Summary trial of  
child by Magistrate  
for Indictable  
Offence*

## SECTION 231

For the purpose of proceedings under this chapter the magistrate shall, at any time during the hearing of the case at which he becomes satisfied by the evidence that it is expedient to deal with the case summarily cause the charge to be reduced into writing if this has not been already done.

*Charge to be  
Reduced to writing  
when Offence tried  
Summarily*

## SECTION 232

Nothing in this Chapter shall be construed as authorizing the trial of an infant.

*No trial of an  
Infant*

## SECTION 233

Where a court orders a child or young person to undergo corporal punishment such punishment shall be carried out in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 36 relating to corporal punishment.

*Whipping in  
accordance with  
Chapter 36*



## CHAPTER 16: TRIAL ON INFORMATION

### SECTION 234

Where a trial is to take place in the High Court after the preparation of proofs of evidence in respect of the charge, such trial shall be on information.

*Trial on  
Information*

### SECTION 235

1. Where an offence for which the Magistrate court has no jurisdiction to try is preferred against a defendant, the police shall tender the original case file in the manner provided under section 223 of this Law for onward transmission by the magistrate to the office of the Attorney General.
2. The office of the Attorney General shall, within fourteen days of receipt of the police case file, issue his legal advice and where he is of the opinion that the defendant has no *prima facie* case to answer, he shall serve a copy of the legal advice o:
  - a. the police or the head of the police legal unit or such other Law enforcement agency that filed the charge.
  - b. the magistrate before whom the person was remanded in Correctional Service, if he is in remand custody, or before whom

*Case files, Legal  
Advice, and  
related  
Proceedings*

- the person was granted bail, if he is on bail; and
- c. the defendant, or through the Correctional Service authority, if he is remanded in custody, or through his legal representative, if any;
3. The magistrate shall on receipt of the legal advice, order for the production of the defendant and discharge him.
4. Where the Director of Public Prosecutions is of the opinion as contained in the legal advice that the person has a *prima facie* case to answer, he shall file and serve the charge or information in accordance with the provisions of this Law.
5. A form as prescribed in the First Schedule to this Law, indicating a desire to be represented by legal practitioner of his choice or by a legal practitioner from the Office of the Citizens Rights and Mediation Center, Legal Aid Council of Nigeria or any other organization providing free legal representation to defendants shall be attached to each legal advice for the purpose of endorsement by the person in respect of whom legal advice is preferred and against whom the information is filed.
6. Where the defendant indicates in the form referred to in subsection (5) of this section

that he wishes to be represented by such legal practitioner or any other organization providing free legal representation, he shall forward the form to the Chief Registrar of the court before whom the charge or information for his trial has been filed and the Chief Registrar shall, within fourteen days of receipt of the form, inform the legal practitioner or any other organization providing free legal representation for the defendant, and by notice in writing inform the defendant of the particulars of the legal representation arranged for him.

## SECTION 236

Every information shall bear the date when it is signed and with such modifications as shall be necessary to adopt it to the circumstances of each case, may commence in the following form-

### *Form of Information*

The State v. A.B.

In the High Court of Ebonyi State

The .....Judicial Division  
At the sessions holden at ..... on the  
..... day of ....., 20.....the court  
is informed by the Attorney-General (or A.B.) on  
behalf of the State that C.D. is charged with the  
following offence (or offences).

## SECTION 237

## 1. An information shall contain:

*Contents of  
Information  
and Indictment*

- a. a description of the offence charged in such information or, where more than one offence is so charged, of each offence so charged, shall be set out in the information in a separate paragraph called a count;
- b. a count of an information shall commence with a statement of the offence charged, called the statement of offence;
- c. the statement of offence shall describe the offence shortly in ordinary language, avoiding as far as possible the use of technical terms and without necessarily stating all the essential elements of the offence and if the offence charged is one created by a written Law, shall contain a reference to that written Law;
- d. after the statement of offence, particulars of that offence shall be set out in ordinary language;

Provided that where any written Law limits the particulars of an offence which are required to be given in an information nothing in this paragraph shall require any more particulars to be given than those so required;

- e. where an information contains more than one count, the counts shall be numbered consecutively;
  - f. Proof of evidence.
2. The information and all accompanying processes shall be served on the defendant or his legal representative, if any.

## SECTION 238

### *Contents of Proofs of Evidence*

1. The proof of evidence shall consist of:
- a. the list of witnesses,
  - b. the list of exhibits to be tendered,
  - c. Sworn statement of all prosecution witnesses intended to be called at the trial,
  - d. sworn police investigation report
  - e. copies of statement of the defendant,
  - f. any other document, report, or material that the prosecution intends to use in support of its case at the trial,
  - g. particulars of bail or any recognizance, bond or cash deposit, if defendant is on bail,
  - h. particulars of place of custody, if the defendant is in custody,
  - i. particulars of any plea bargain arranged with the defendant,

- j. particulars of any previous interlocutory proceedings, including remand proceedings, in respect of the charge,
  - k. any other relevant document as may be directed by the court;
- 2. Where at the close of the case for the prosecution, the defendant intends to present a defense, he shall within 30 days file and serve on the prosecution, written deposition of all his witnesses, list of documents and materials to be relied upon during trial if any;
- 3. The prosecution and the defence may during trial, by leave of court, file and serve additional evidence.

## SECTION 239

- 1. Subject to the provisions of this section an information shall be filed by the Attorney-General through the Director of Public Prosecutions or any officer in his department, or by any other person authorized by this law to do so, before the High Court charging any person with an offence for which that person shall lawfully be charged.
- 2. An information shall be signed by a Law officer or any person authorized by the Attorney-General in that regard.
- 3. Whenever an information has been filed in the court, the Chief Judge or Administrative Judge shall take appropriate steps to ensure

*Procedure on  
Information*

*Signing of  
Information*

that the information filed is assigned to a judge within seven days of its filing.

4. On assigning the information, the appropriate court to which the information is assigned shall within fourteen days of such assignment issue hearing notices to the witnesses and the defendant and a production warrant properly endorsed by the Judge in respect of the defendant if he is in custody, for the purpose of ensuring his appearance on the date of trial and the Registrar shall ensure the prompt service of the notice and information not less than three days from the date stated therein for the hearing of the information.
5. If the defendant in the information is in custody, the notice of trial and the information shall be delivered to him through the Superintendent of Correctional Services in which he is detained and the warrant for his production shall be served on such officer of the Correctional Service.
6. If the defendant is not in custody, the hearing notice and information shall be served on him personally.
7. Where it is impossible or impracticable to effect personal service of the hearing notice and information on the defendant, same may be served on him, with leave of court through his legal practitioner, if any or on his surety or sureties or on any adult in his household and such service shall be deemed to be due service on the defendant:

Provided that nothing in this section shall prevent the defendant from being tried by reason only that the notice of trial and information were served on him less than three days before the date of trial, if he consents to being so tried.

## SECTION 240

1. In prosecuting a case at the magistrate court, the *Trial at the Magistrate Court* prosecution shall file:
  - a. sworn statements of witnesses and documents he wishes to rely on and list of exhibits,
  - b. where the defendant is not represented by a lawyer, prosecution will take his oral evidence in chief and be cross examined,
  - c. where the defendant person who initially was not represented, obtains legal representation, the outstanding prosecution witness shall adopt their written sworn deposition as their evidence in chief.
2. The forms set out in the Third Schedule hereto or forms conforming thereto as nearly as may be, shall be used in the cases to which they are applicable and in other cases forms to the like effect or conforming thereto as nearly as may be shall be used, the statement of offence and the particulars of offence being varied according to the circumstances of each case.



**SECTION 241**

No other charge shall be joined with a charge punishable with death and not more than one charge punishable with death shall be charged in the same information, except where the offences are committed in one transaction.

**Information to**

**Contain only one**

**Capital Offence**

**SECTION 242**

Subject to the provisions of this section an information charging any person with an indictable offence may be preferred by any person before the High Court charging any person with an indictable offence for which that person may lawfully be indicted, and wherever an information has been so preferred the registrar shall, if he is satisfied that the requirements of section 243 have been complied with, file the information and it shall thereupon be proceeded with accordingly:

**Information may be**

**filed at the Registry of**

**the High Court**

Provided that if the registrar shall refuse to file an information, a judge, if satisfied that the said requirements have been complied with, may, on the application of the prosecutor or on his own motion, direct the registrar to file the information and it shall be filed accordingly.

**SECTION 243**

Subject as hereinafter provided no information charging any person with an indictable offence shall be preferred unless either:

- a. the information is preferred after the preparation of the proofs of evidence in the charge, or
- b. the information is preferred pursuant to an order made under Chapter 12 to prosecute the person charged for perjury, or
- c. the information is preferred in cases other than those mentioned in paragraph (a) or (b) where because of the special circumstances of such cases the Attorney-General considers that an information should be filed without recourse to the procedure referred to in paragraph (a):

Provided that where the information is preferred after the preparation of the proofs of evidence it may include either in substitution for or in addition to counts charging the offence for which the proofs of evidence have been prepared, any counts founded on facts or evidence disclosed in the proofs of evidence being counts which may lawfully be joined in the same information.

**Procedure on**

**Information of**

**Offenders**

**SECTION 244**

If an information preferred otherwise than in accordance with the provisions of section 243 has been filed by the registrar the information shall be liable to be quashed:

Provided that if the information contains several counts, and the said provisions have been complied with as respects one or more of them, those counts only that were wrongly included shall be quashed under this section.

**SECTION 245**

Where a person is convicted on an information, or on any count of an information, preferred under paragraph (a) or (b) of section 243, that information or count shall not be quashed under this section in any proceedings on appeal unless application was made at the trial that it should be so quashed.

**SECTION 246**

The registrar shall receive an information from a private person where:

a. the information is endorsed by a Law officer to the effect that he has seen such information and declines to prosecute the offence set out in the information; and

**When Information  
should be Preferred**

**Information not to be  
Quashed on Appeal  
except Application for  
it made at Trial**

**Information by Private  
Person**

b. the private person has entered into a recognizance in such sum as may be fixed by the court, with or without surety, to prosecute the information to conclusion at the times at which the defendant shall be required to appear and pay such costs as may be ordered by the court or instead of entering into a recognizance has deposited in the registry of the court, such sum of money as the court may fix.

#### **SECTION 247**

Where any private person has complied with the provisions of section 246, the information shall be signed by such person and not by a Law officer and such person shall be entitled to prosecute the information.

**Conditions for Private**

**Prosecutors**

#### **SECTION 248**

The place of trial shall be determined in accordance with the provisions of section 184.

**Venue**

#### **SECTION 249**

Notwithstanding the provisions of sections 184 and 185 of this Law :

**Change of venue:  
Cause Commenced in  
wrong Division**

a. where any cause is commenced in any other division than that in which it ought to have been commenced, it may, notwithstanding, be

tried in that division in which it was commenced, unless the defendant shall object thereto at or before the time when he is called upon to plead or to state his answer in such cause, in which case the court shall transfer the case to the proper division where it ought to have been commenced.

b. either the prosecutor or the defendant, whenever he considers that the ends of justice so require, in any case may apply to the court either to transfer the hearing from one division to another or from one part of one division to another part of the same division.

## **SECTION 250**

Where a case is transferred from one place in a division to another place in the same division or to another division, the case shall be tried and determined at the place or in the division to which it has been transferred; and all recognizance, subpoenas, and proceedings in or relating to the case are deemed to be returnable at the latter place or division and all witnesses who are or summoned to attend the trial shall be informed accordingly and shall attend at such latter place or division

**Effect of Change of  
Venue**

**SECTION 251**

The registrar or any other person directed by the court, shall endorse on, or annex to, every information delivered to the sheriff or proper officer, for service, a notice of trial and such notice shall specify the particular sessions at which the party is to be tried on the Information and shall be in the following form or as near to it as may be:

**Form of notice of trial****NOTICE OF TRIAL**

A. B. Take notice that you will be tried on the information of which this is a true copy, at the session to be held at on  
the     day of. 20

Also find attached is the “Information on Legal Representation” Form which you must complete and return to the Registry of this court within fourteen days of service on you of this notice of trial.

**SECTION 252**

The Chief Judge may engage the service of a reputable company for the purpose of undertaking service of criminal processes, and such company shall serve all processes in accordance with this Law.

**Registered courier  
Companies may Serve  
Processes**

**SECTION 253**

The person serving the copy of information and notices shall immediately submit to the registrar or other proper officer a return of the mode of service with the necessary endorsement of service of the documents on the person named for service on the notice or information.

**Return of Service****SECTION 254**

Where a person against whom an information has been duly preferred, and on whom the information and notice of trial have been duly served, does not appear to plead to the information, whether he is under recognizance, to appear or not, the court may issue a warrant for his arrest.

**Warrant where****Defendant does not****Appear****SECTION 255**

1. The Sheriff or other proper officer aforesaid shall, as soon as may be after having received a copy of the information and notice of trial, and three days at least before the day specified therein for trial or within such lesser time as the court may for good cause order, by himself or his deputy or other officer, deliver to the party charged the said copy and notice and explain to him the nature thereof and when the said party is not in custody or shall have been

**Time and mode of  
Summoning Parties on  
Information**

admitted to bail and cannot readily be found he shall leave a copy of the said information and notice of trial with some one of his household, for him at his dwelling-house or with someone of his bail, for him, and if none of such can be found, shall affix the said copy and notice to the outer or principal door of the dwelling-house of the party charged or of any of his bail:

Provided that :

a. nothing herein contained shall prevent any person in custody or awaiting trial at the opening of or during any sessions, from being tried thereat, if he shall have been served with a copy of the information and notice of trial not less than three days before the date on which he is to be tried;

b. such last mentioned period of three days may be reduced to a shorter period if such person shall express his assent thereto and no special objection be made thereto on the part of the State.

2. The Sheriff or other proper officer shall in like manner deliver to each witness the said notice of trial.

**Prisoner may be tried**

**at Once**



**SECTION 256**

Where any person against whom an information has been duly preferred, and who is then at large, does not appear to plead to such information, whether he is under recognizance to appear or not, the court may issue a warrant for his apprehension.

**Bench Warrant where  
accused Person does  
not Appear**

**SECTION 257**

1. Where a person is accused of a capital offence the State shall be represented by a Law officer, state counsel or legal practitioner and if the defendant is not defended by a legal practitioner the court shall assign a legal practitioner for his defence.

**Counsel for State and  
Defence in Capital  
Cases**

2. The State shall set up and fund a Public Defence Fund at the Citizens Rights and Mediation Center for purpose of providing free legal services to indigent defendants.

**SECTION 258**

1. The person to be tried on an information or charge shall be arraigned in accordance with the provisions of this Law relating to the taking of pleas and the procedure on it.

**Time for Raising  
Certain Objections,  
day-to-day trial and  
Adjournments**

a. An objection to the information or charge may be taken before the plea of the defendant. Thereafter, all objections to the charge shall be taken at the final

address.

b. Any interlocutory appeal in respect of an objection taken before plea shall not operate as a stay of proceedings in the trial court.

2 a. Upon arraignment the trial of the defendant shall proceed from day-to-day until the conclusion of the trial.

b. Where day-to-day trial is impracticable after arraignment, each party shall be entitled to not more than two adjournments and there shall not be more than two adjournments at the instance of the court, Provided that no adjournment during trial shall exceed 14 days inclusive of weekends.

c. In all circumstances, the court may award reasonable costs in order to discourage frivolous adjournments against either party.

## **SECTION 259**

### **Time Standards**

In all criminal proceedings, the court proceedings shall be guided by the following maximum time standards:

a. For capital offences, a maximum period of 540 (Five Hundred and Forty) days

b. For other offences triable on information, a

maximum period of 360 (Three Hundred and Sixty) days

c. For all summary trials, a maximum period of 180 (One Hundred and Eighty) days

d. For bail applications, a maximum period of 30 days

e. For all other interlocutory applications, a maximum period of 90 (ninety) days

## **SECTION 260**

1. Where a case cannot be concluded within the stipulated time standards, the trial court may, suomotu, or on application of any party, extend the time to a period not exceeding half of the period originally stipulated:

**Court may Extend**

**Time**

Provided that in such proceedings, the court may:

a. Award cost/Impose penalty on any party causing delay

b. Reconsider the issue of bail

c. Make any order or give such directives in any other manner the court considers fit in the circumstances of the case. Provided also that if the matter is not concluded within the extended time, the matter shall proceed and the court shall report the matter to the Chief Judge.

2. In computing time, the period of court vacation, annual leave of a magistrate and industrial actions shall not be taken into account.

### **SECTION 261**

1. A case management register shall be maintained in the office of the Chief Registrar, who shall submit quarterly reports of compliance with the time standards to the Judicial Service Commission of Ebonyi State for appropriate disciplinary action in cases of default by any court.

**Case Management  
Register to be  
Maintained by Chief  
Registrar**

2. For the purpose of this section, the 'Chief Registrar' means the Chief Registrar of the High Court and the Chief Registrar of the Customary Court of Appeal.

### **SECTION 262**

1. A person who is summoned as a witness whether for the prosecution or for the defence, shall be bound to attend the court on the day fixed for the trial of the case and on subsequent dates until the conclusion of the case or until he has been discharged by the court from further attendance.

**Attendance of Witness  
Bound by Recognizance  
to Attend**

2. Any person whose attendance as a witness, whether for the prosecution or for the defence,

is required in any case and who has not been bound by recognizance to attend as a witness on any date fixed for the trial of the case, may be summoned by a writ of subpoena.

### **SECTION 263**

If a person who has been summoned to attend as a witness, whether for the prosecution or for the defence, does not attend the court on the day fixed for the trial of the case or on any further adjourned date, and he offers no reasonable excuse for his absence, despite the fact that he was duly served with the notice of the trial, the court may issue a bench warrant that the person be arrested and be brought before the court, at a time to be mentioned in the warrant, in order to give evidence on behalf of the prosecution or of the defence, as the case may be.

**Warrant for arrest of  
witness not Attending  
on Recognizance**

### **SECTION 264**

Where a person named on a summons or writ of subpoena wilfully refused to accept service of the summons or writ of subpoena, the court shall issue a warrant for the person to be arrested and be brought before the court at a time to be mentioned in the warrant in accordance with the summons or writ of subpoena.

**Warrant for arrest of  
witness Disobeying  
Summons**

**SECTION 265**

A person who fails to attend as witness in either of the cases mentioned in sections 262 and 263 of this Law without reasonable explanation shall be liable, on the summary order of the court, to a fine in a reasonable sum to be fixed by the court, but not less than Five Thousand Naira and in default of payment, to imprisonment for a term corresponding to the fixed sum, but the period of imprisonment shall not exceed two months.

**Fine for nonAttendance  
of Witness**

**SECTION 266**

The registrar, on being furnished with the names and places of abode of witnesses on behalf of the prosecution or defence whose attendance is required to be secured by subpoena, shall prepare and deliver to the sheriff for service a writ or writs of subpoena under section 262(2) of this Law directed to such witnesses, together with as many copies thereof as there may be witnesses named in such writ or writs.

**Service of Subpoena**

**SECTION 267**

In addition to the provisions of this chapter and to the other express provisions of this or any other Law relating to trials of indictable offences the provisions of this Law relating to evidence, adjournment, addresses, the discharge and sentencing of convicted persons, the awarding of compensation, costs and

**Application of Law to  
Trials under this Part**

the directing and ordering of forfeitures and also all other incidental matters relating to the trial of a case shall be applicable to a trial on information.

### **SECTION 268**

The judgment and subsequent sentence of the court shall be endorsed by the registrar on the information.

**Recording of  
Judgment and  
Sentence**

## **CHAPTER 17:**

### **PREPARATION AND USE OF PROOFS OF EVIDENCE**

#### **SECTION 269**

1. Notwithstanding the provision of any other Law, preliminary inquiry or preliminary investigation into a criminal charge by a magistrate or any court with a view to determining whether or not a person is to be committed to the High Court for trial shall cease to apply in the State

**Proofs of Evidence to  
replace Preliminary  
Inquiry**

2. Where formerly there is in the Criminal Procedure Law or any other existing law any provision which required or had the effect of requiring the holding of a preliminary inquiry or preliminary investigation (howsoever worded or expressed) by a court or magistrate in any criminal charge, then instead of such preliminary investigation, there shall, in

respect of any such charge be prepared the proofs of evidence for the purpose of determining whether or not an information may be preferred.

### **SECTION 270**

The proofs of evidence in respect of a criminal charge shall, subject to the direction and control of the Attorney-General, be prepared by Law officers in the Ministry or in the case of a private prosecution, by the private prosecutor in accordance with the provisions of this chapter.

**Proofs of Evidence by  
Law Officers**

### **SECTION 271**

Proofs of evidence shall be prepared in all charges relating to:

**Cases to which taking  
of Proofs of Evidence  
Applicable**

- a. capital offences;
- b. offence punishable with imprisonment for life; and
- c. any indictable offence in respect of which the defendant has elected to be tried by the High Court under section 272 of this Law.

### **SECTION 272**

Where a charge for an indictable offence is filed at the magistrate court, the defendant may, before his plea is taken, apply to the court that he elects to be tried at the high court.

**Indictable cases on  
Election of the  
Defendant**



### **SECTION 273**

1. Where the defendant applies for election under section 267 of this Law, the magistrate shall record the said application and if he grants the application transmit the case file to the office of the Attorney General for information at the High court.

2. The magistrate may refuse to grant such application for election where the justice of the case so demand, and therewith shall proceed with the hearing of the case.

**Procedure by  
magistrate after  
Charge read or  
Election Made**

### **SECTION 274**

1. The Prosecution shall file and serve on the defendant the proof of evidence which shall consist of :

- a. a statement of the charge against the defendant
- b. where the defendant has applied for election a statement that he elected to be tried by the High Court;
- c. the name, address and statement of any material witness whom the prosecution intends to call;
- d. the name, address and statement of any material witness whom the prosecution does not intend to call:

**Contents of Proofs of  
Evidence**

Provided that the submission of such names shall not prevent the prosecution from calling any such witness at the trial if the prosecution later so desires;

- e. the copy of any report, if available, made by a doctor about the state of mind of an defendant in custody;
- f. records of convictions, if any, affecting the credibility of any witness for the prosecution;
- g. statements of the defendant;
- h. an inventory of all the exhibits to be produced to the court at the trial,
- i. sworn statement of all prosecution witnesses intended to be called at the trial
- j. sworn report of the police investigating officer
- k. copies of documents to be relied upon and other exhibits intended to be relied upon,
- l. any other statement, report or document which the prosecution may consider relevant to the case

2. Where at the close of the case for the prosecution, the defendant intends to present a defense, he shall within 30 days file and serve on the prosecution, written deposition of all his witnesses, list of all the exhibits intended to be tendered and copies of documentary evidence to be tendered.

**SECTION 275**

In prosecuting a case at the Magistrate Court, the prosecution shall file:

**Trial at the Magistrate  
Court**

- a. sworn statement of witnesses and documents he wishes to rely on and list of exhibits,
- b. where the defendant is not represented by a lawyer, prosecution will take his oral evidence in Chief and be cross examined,
- c. where the defendant who initially was not represented, obtains legal representation the outstanding prosecution witness shall adopt their written sworn deposition as their evidence in Chief.

**SECTION 276**

1. After the preparation of the proofs of evidence the Attorney-General may, if he deems it necessary or expedient so to do remit or cause to be remitted to the magistrate before whom the charge was laid or to any other magistrate, the statement of any witness for the purpose of verification.
2. The magistrate shall thereupon fix a date when the witness and the defendant shall be summoned before him for the purpose of the verification of the statement of such witness.
3. On the date fixed under subsection (2), the Clerk of Court shall read out the statement of

**Verification of  
Statement of Witness**

the witness in the presence of the witness and the defendant and the witness shall then verify such statement on oath.

4. After the verification of the statement of the witness the magistrate shall inform the defendant of his right, and shall give him the opportunity to cross-examine the witness.

5. The defendant or his counsel may then proceed to cross-examine the witness if he desires to do so, and the answers of the witness to such cross-examination as well as the fact that the defendant was informed of his right and given the opportunity to cross-examine (where he or his counsel did not elect to do so) shall be recorded by the magistrate and shall form part of the proofs of evidence.

6. Such verified proofs of evidence which include the witness's answers given in cross-examination and the fact that the defendant was informed of his right and given the opportunity to cross-examine, shall be remitted back to the Attorney-General by the magistrate.

## **SECTION 277**

1. The magistrate shall, after the charge has been read or after the defendant has elected to be tried by the High Court, as the case may be, or at any time thereafter bind over every witness

**Binding over of  
Witnesses**

present in court or brought before him subsequently to attend to give evidence at the trial of the defendant before the High Court, whether or not the prosecution intends to call all such witnesses.

2. Subject to the provisions of any other written law, if among the witnesses bound over under subsection (1), there be any that the prosecution does not intend to call at the trial such witness shall nevertheless continue to be present at the trial for such reasonable period as might enable the defendant or his counsel to make up his mind as to whether or not he will call any of them to give evidence for the defence.

3. Every witness bound over under this section shall enter into a recognizance and such recognizance shall specify the name and surname of the person entering into it, his occupation or profession, if any and his address.

4. The recognizance shall be acknowledged by the person entering into it and be subscribed by the magistrate before whom it is acknowledged.

5. A witness who refuses, without reasonable excuse, to enter into such recognizance may by a warrant by the magistrate be committed to prison or to other place of safe custody, there to be kept until after the trial, or until the

witness enters into a recognizance before a magistrate:

Provided that if the defendant is afterwards discharged any magistrate may order any such witness to be discharged forthwith.

### **SECTION 278**

The magistrate before whom the defendant is charged shall direct the prosecuting police officer to make inventory of, label or otherwise make all articles, if any, connected with the charge and it shall be the duty of such police officer or any other police officer generally or specially instructed in that behalf by the State Commissioner of Police to comply with such direction.

### **SECTION 279**

If at the conclusion of the taking of the proofs of evidence the Attorney-General is satisfied there is prima facie evidence from the record to put the defendant on trial on all or any of the charges against him, he shall prefer an information against the defendant in respect of such charge or charges.

### **SECTION 280**

If the record of the proofs of evidence does not in the opinion of the Attorney-General disclose sufficient evidence to support the charge or charges against the

#### **Marking of Exhibits**

**Prima-facie case-  
information to be  
Preferred**

**Discharge of defendant  
when there is no Prima  
Facie Case**

defendant, the Attorney-General shall so inform the magistrate in writing, and the magistrate shall, as soon as possible thereafter, summon the defendant to the court and discharge him.

## **SECTION 281**

Nothing contained in this chapter shall prevent the prosecutor in any case from giving in evidence at the trial any admission or confession or other statement of the defendant made at any time which is by Law admissible in evidence.

### **Evidence by Prosecutor**

## **SECTION 282**

1. Subject to subsection (3) where the Attorney-General prepares an information, after the preparation of the proofs of evidence under this chapter, he shall cause sufficient copies of the information and of the proofs of evidence to be transmitted to the registrar of the High Court in which the trial is to take place.

### **Information and proofs**

#### **of evidence to be**

#### **transmitted to High**

#### **Court**

2. Upon the receipt of the documents mentioned in subsection (1), the registrar shall proceed in accordance with Chapter 16 of this Law and any other Law for the time being in force in the State in that regard, and shall furnish every defendant, free of charge, a copy of the information and of the proofs of evidence.

3. The records transmitted to the registrar of the High Court under subsection (1) shall not

include any particulars of the defendant's previous convictions. Such particulars shall be supplied to the High Court after the defendant has been convicted.

## **CHAPTER 18: THE CHARGE**

### **SECTION 283**

Charges may be as in the form set out in the Second Schedule and may be modified in such respects as may be necessary to adapt them to the circumstances of each case.

**Form of charges in  
Second Schedule to be  
used and Adapted**

### **SECTION 284**

Every charge shall state the offence with which the defendant is charged and if the written Law creating the offence gives it any specific name the offence may be described in the charge by that name only.

**Name of the offence**

**Section**

### **SECTION 285**

If the written Law which creates the offence does not give it any specific name so much of the definition of the offence must be stated as to give the defendant notice of the matter with which he is charged.

**Absence of name of  
the Offence**



**SECTION 286**

The written Law and the section of the written Law against which the offence is said to have been committed shall be set out in the charge.

**Written Law****SECTION 287**

The fact that a charge is made is equivalent to a statement that every legal condition required by Law to constitute the offence charged was fulfilled in the particular case.

**Effect of Making a Charge****SECTION 288**

If the defendant has previously been convicted of any offence and it is intended to prove such previous conviction for the purpose of affecting the punishment which the court may award, the subsequent offence shall first be charged and then, if the previous offence is one, which under the provisions of any written Law, may be so charged a statement of such previous offence containing the fact, date and place of such previous conviction shall be added.

**Previous Conviction****SECTION 289**

The charge shall contain such particulars as to the time and place of the offence and the person, if any, against whom or the thing, if any, in respect of which

**Particulars of Charge**

it was committed as are reasonably sufficient to give the defendant notice of the matter with which he is charged.

### **SECTION 290**

Where the defendant is charged with criminal breach of trust, fraudulent appropriation of property, fraudulent falsification of accounts or fraudulent conversion it shall be sufficient to specify that gross sum in respect of which the offence is alleged to have been committed and the dates between which the offence is alleged to have been committed without specifying particular items or exact dates and the charge so framed shall be deemed to be a charge of one offence within the meaning of section 305.

**Breach of Trust  
Fraud, etc**

### **SECTION 291**

The particulars in the charge shall describe the offence shortly in ordinary language avoiding as far as possible the use of technical terms.

**Description of the  
Offence**

### **SECTION 292**

Where the nature of the offence is such that the particulars required by sections 284 or 286 do not give the defendant sufficient notice of the matter with which he is charged, the charge shall also contain such particulars of the manner in which the offence was committed as will be sufficient for that purpose.

**Insufficient  
Particulars**

**SECTION 293**

1. In every charge words used in describing an offence shall be deemed to have been used in the sense attached to them respectively in the written Law creating such offence.

**Sense of Words used  
in Charge**

2. Figures and abbreviations may be used for expressing anything which is commonly expressed thereby

**SECTION 294**

The description of property in a charge shall be in ordinary language and such as to indicate with reasonable clearness the property referred to and if the property is so described it shall not be necessary, except when required for the purpose of describing an offence depending on any special ownership of property or special value of property, to name the person to whom the property belongs or the value of the property.

**Owner and Value of  
Property**

**SECTION 295**

Where property is vested in more than one person and the owners of that property are referred to in the charge, the property may be described as being owned in accordance with the appropriate provision set out in sections 336 to 343.

**Joint Owners**

**SECTION 296**

1. Coins and currency notes may be described as money, and any averment as to any money, so far as regards the description of the property, shall be sustained by proof of any amount of coin or currency note, although the particular species of coin of which such amount was composed or the particular nature of the currency note shall not be proved.

**Coin or Currency****Notes**

2. In cases of stealing and defrauding by false pretences, such coin or currency note may be described by proof that the defendant dishonestly appropriated or obtained any coin or currency note or any portion of the value thereof, although such coin or currency note may have been delivered to him in order that some part of the value thereof should be returned to the party delivering the same or to any other person, and such part shall have been returned accordingly.

**SECTION 297**

Where the ownership of the property is described as being in any company, association, club or society by its registered title, proof of the registration of the company, association or society shall not be required unless the court decides that such proof shall be given, in which case the further hearing may be

**Proof of Registered****Title**

adjourned for the purpose or the court may, in its discretion, amend the proceedings by substituting the name of some person or persons for such registered title.

## **SECTION 298**

Where a written Law constituting an offence states the offence to be the omission to do any one of any different acts in the alternative, or the doing or the omission to do any act in any one of any different capacities, or with any one of any different intentions or states any part of the offence in the alternative, the acts, omission, capacities, or intentions, or other matters stated in the alternative in the written Law, may be stated in the alternative in the charge.

**Provision as to**

**Statutory Offences**

## **SECTION 299**

It shall not be necessary in any charge where the offence is one constituted by a written Law to negative any exception or exemption from or qualification to the operation of the written law creating the offence.

**Provision as to**

**negative Provisions in  
Offences**

## **SECTION 300**

The description or designation of the defendant in a charge or of any other person to whom reference is made therein may be described in the manner set forth in section 344.

**Description of Persons**

**SECTION 301**

Where it is necessary to refer to any document or instrument in a charge, it shall be sufficient to describe it by any name or designation by which it is commonly known, or by the purport of such document, without setting out the content or attaching a copy of such document to the charge.

**Description of  
Document**

**SECTION 302**

Subject to any other provisions of this Law, it shall be sufficient to describe any place, time, thing, matter, act, or omission whatsoever to which it is necessary to refer in any charge in ordinary language in such manner as to indicate with reasonable clearness the place, time, thing, matter, act, or omission referred to.

**General rule as to  
Description**

**SECTION 303**

It shall not be necessary in stating any intent to defraud, deceive or injure to state an intent to defraud, deceive or injure any particular person, where the written Law creating the offence does not make an intent to defraud, deceive or injure a particular person an essential ingredient of the offence.

**Statement of Intent**

**SECTION 304**

The following persons may be charged or tried together or separately as the court may deem fit:

- a. persons accused of the same offence committed in the course of the same transaction;
- b. persons accused of an offence and persons accused of abatement or of an attempt to commit the same offence;
- c. persons accused of more than one offence of the same or similar character committed by them jointly;
- d. persons accused of different offences committed in the course of the same transaction; and
- e. persons accused of offences which include theft, extortion, criminal misappropriation and persons accused of receiving or retaining or assisting in the disposal or concealment of property, the possession of which has been transferred by offences committed by the first named persons, or of abatement of or attempting to commit any of the last named offences.

**When persons may be**

**Charged Jointly**

**SECTION 305**

For every distinct offence with which any person is accused there shall be a separate charge and every such charge shall be tried separately except in the cases mentioned in sections 306 to 311.

**Separate charges for  
Distinct Offences**

**SECTION 306**

When a person is accused of more offences than one committed within the period of twelve months from the first to the last of such offence whether in respect of the same person or thing or not, he may be charged with and tried at one trial for any number of them not exceeding three.

**Three offences of the  
same kind within  
twelve months may be  
charged together**

**SECTION 307**

Any offence shall be deemed to be an offence of the same kind as an attempt to commit such an offence where such attempt is itself an offence.

**Attempt same as  
Substantive Offence**

**SECTION 308**

If in one series of acts or omissions so connected together as to form the same transaction or which form or are part of a series of offences of the same or a similar character, more offences than one are committed by the same person, charges for such offences may be joined and the person accused tried for these offences at one trial.

**Trial for more than  
one Offence**



**SECTION 309**

If the acts or omissions alleged constitute an offence falling within two or more separate definitions in any written Law for the time being in force under which offences are defined or punished, the person accused of them may be charged with and tried at one trial for each of such offences.

**Offences falling within  
two definitions**

**SECTION 310**

If several acts or omissions of which one or more than one would by itself or themselves constitute an offence, constitute when combined a different offence, the person accused of them may be charged with and tried at one trial for the offence constituted by such acts or omissions when combined or for any offence constituted by any one or more of such acts.

**Acts constituting one  
offence but  
Constituting when  
combined a Different  
Offence**

**SECTION 311**

If a single act or omission or series of acts or omissions is of such a nature that it is doubtful which of several offences the facts of which can be proved will constitute, the defendant may be charged with having committed all or any of such offences and any number of such charges may be tried at once or he may be charged in the alternative with having committed any of the said offences.

**Where it is Doubtful  
which Offence  
Committed**

**SECTION 312**

Where any person is arraigned for trial on an imperfect or erroneous charge, the court may permit or direct the framing of a new charge or add to or otherwise alter the original charge.

**Procedure on  
Imperfect Charge**

**SECTION 313**

1. Any court may permit any alteration or addition to any charge at any time before judgment is given or verdict returned.

**Court may alter  
Charge**

2. Every such alteration or addition or new charge shall be read and explained to the defendant

3. No formal application shall be required for the alteration or amendment of a charge before any court.

**SECTION 314**

1. If a new charge is framed or alteration made to a charge, the court shall forthwith call upon the defendant to plead thereto and to state whether he is ready to be tried on such charge or altered charge.

**Procedure on  
Alteration of Charge**

2. If the defendant declares that he is not ready, the court shall consider the reasons he may give and if proceeding immediately with the trial is not likely in the opinion of the court to

prejudice the defendant in his defence or the prosecutor in his conduct of the case, the court may proceed with the trial as if the new or altered charge had been the original charge.

3. If the new or altered charge is such that proceeding immediately with the trial is likely, in the opinion of the court, to prejudice the defendant or the prosecutor, the court may either direct a new trial or adjourn the trial for such date as the court may consider necessary.

4. Where a charge is so amended, a note of the order for amendment shall be endorsed on the charge, and the charge shall be treated for the purpose of all proceedings in connection therewith as having been filed in the amended form.

### **SECTION 315**

When a charge is altered, amended or substituted after the commencement of the trial, the prosecutor and the defendant shall be allowed to recall or resummon any witness who may have been examined and examine or cross-examine such witness with reference to such alteration.

**Recall of Witnesses**

**when Charge**

**Altered**

**SECTION 316**

No error in stating the offence or the particulars required to be stated in the charge and no omission to state the offence or those particulars shall be regarded at any state of the case as material unless the defendant was in fact misled by such error or omission.

**Effect of Error****SECTION 317**

Subject to the provisions of section 258 of this Law, any objection to a charge for any formal defect on the face of such charge shall be taken immediately after the charge has been read over to the defendant and not latter.

**Objection to charge to  
be taken at Plea****SECTION 218**

No judgment shall be stayed or reversed on the ground of any objection which if stated after the charge was read over to the defendant or during the progress of the trial might have been amended by the court because of any:

**Objection cured by  
Verdict**

a. variance between the charge or any process relating thereto and the evidence adduced in support of the charge as to the time at which the cause of complaint is alleged to have arisen if it is proved that such complaint was in fact made within the time, if any, limited by Law for making the same; nor

b. variance between the charge or any process relating thereto and the evidence adduced in support of the charge as to the place in which the cause of complaint is alleged to have arisen; nor

c. alleged defect in substance or in form between any complaint, warrant or other process relating to the charge and the evidence adduced in respect of the charge.

### **SECTION 319**

Where a person is charged with an offence but the evidence establishes an attempt to commit the offence he may be convicted of having attempted to commit that offence although the attempt is not separately charged.

**Full offence Charged,  
Attempt Proved**

### **SECTION 320**

Where a person is charged with an attempt to commit an offence but the evidence establishes the commission of the full offence the defendant shall not be entitled to an acquittal but he may be convicted of the attempt and punished accordingly.

**Attempt charged, full  
Offence Proved**

### **SECTION 321**

Where a person has been convicted of an attempt under either section 319 or 320 such person shall not subsequently be liable to be prosecuted for the

**Liability as to Further  
Prosecution**

offence for which he was convicted of attempting to commit.

### **SECTION 322**

If upon the trial of any person for any misdemeanor or simple offence, it shall appear that the facts proved in evidence amount in Law to a felony, such person shall not by reason thereof be entitled to be acquitted of such misdemeanour or simple offence and no person tried for such misdemeanour or simple offence shall be liable to be afterwards prosecuted for felony on the same facts, unless the court shall deem fit, in its discretion, to stop the trial and to direct that such a person be charged for felony, in which case such person may be dealt with in all respects as if he had not been put upon his trial for such misdemeanour or simple offence.

**Person tried for  
misdemeanor not to be  
acquitted if felony  
proved, unless court so  
directs**

### **SECTION 323**

Where a person is charged with stealing anything and it is proved that he received the thing knowing the same to have been stolen, he may be convicted of receiving stolen property under section 393 of the Criminal Code Law although he was not charged with that offence.

**When stealing is  
charged and Receiving  
Proved**

**SECTION 324**

If on any trial for burglary, house-breaking or related offence the facts proved in evidence justify a conviction for some other of the said offences and not the offence with which the defendant is charged, he may be found guilty of the said other offence and thereupon he shall be punished as if he had been convicted on a charge or an information charging him with such offence.

**Person charged with  
Burglary may be  
Convicted of Kindred  
Offence**

**SECTION 325**

When a person is charged with stealing anything and it is proved that he obtained the thing in any such manner as would amount under the provisions of the Criminal Code to obtaining it by false pretences with intent to defraud, he may be convicted of obtaining it by false pretences with intent to defraud although he was not charged with that offence.

**Conviction of false  
Pretences on Charge  
of Stealing**

**SECTION 326**

When a person is charged with obtaining anything by false pretences with intent to defraud and such thing is capable of being stolen and it is proved that the defendant stole the thing, he may be convicted of stealing it although he was not charged with that offence.

**Conviction of stealing  
on charge of false  
Pretences**

**SECTION 327**

If on any trial for rape or for defilement of a girl under the age of thirteen years, the facts proved in evidence authorize a conviction under Section 203 of the Criminal Code or for an indecent assault and not the offence with which the defendant is charged, he may be convicted of an offence under Section 203 of the Criminal Code or indecent assault, as the case may be, and thereupon he shall be punished as if he had been convicted on a charge or an information charging him with such offence or indecent assault.

**On charge of rape  
Conviction under  
Section 203 of  
Criminal Code or of  
Indecent Assault may  
Follow**

**SECTION 328**

If on any trial for an offence under Section 203 of Criminal Code, the facts proved in evidence warrant a conviction for an indecent assault and not the offence charged, the defendant may be convicted of indecent assault although he was not charged with that offence.

**On charge under  
Section 203 of Criminal  
Code Conviction of  
Indecent Assault may  
follow**

**SECTION 329**

Where upon the trial of any person for the murder of any child or for infanticide, it appears upon the evidence that such person was not guilty of murder or of infanticide, as the case may be, but was guilty of the offence of concealment of birth, such person may be found guilty of that offence.

**Where murder or  
Infanticide is charged  
and Concealment of  
Birth is Proved**



**SECTION 330**

1. Where upon the trial of a woman for the murder of her newly born child, it appears upon the evidence that having regard to the provisions of Section 282 of the Criminal Code she was not guilty of murder but was guilty of infanticide, she may be found guilty of infanticide.

2. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to preclude a woman who is tried for the murder of her newly-born child from being convicted of manslaughter, or being found guilty but insane, or being found guilty of concealment of birth.

**SECTION 331**

In addition to the provisions hereinbefore specifically made whenever a person is charged with an offence constituting of several particulars a combination of some only of which constitutes a complete lesser offence and such combination is proved but the remaining particulars are not proved he may be convicted of such lesser offence or may plead guilty thereto although he was not charged with it.

**Where murder is****Charged and****Infanticide Proved****Where offence proved****is included in Offence****Charged**

**SECTION 332**

When a person is charged with an offence and facts are proved which reduce it to a lesser offence he may be convicted of the lesser offence although he was not charged with it.

**Where a lesser Offence  
is proved, Conviction  
may Follow**

**SECTION 333**

When more charges than one are made against a person and a conviction has been had on one or more of them, the prosecutor may with the consent of the court, withdraw the remaining charge or charges or the court of its own motion, may stay the trial of such charge or charges.

**Withdrawal of  
Remaining Charges on  
Conviction on one of  
Several Charges**

**SECTION 334**

Such withdrawal shall have effect of an acquittal on such charge or charges, unless the conviction which has been had is set aside, in which case subject to any order of the court setting aside such conviction, the court before which the withdrawal was made may, on the request of the prosecutor, proceed upon the charge or charges so withdrawn.

**Court may proceed  
upon withdrawn  
Charges in Certain  
Circumstances**

**SECTION 335**

1. A trial for the offences referred to in sub section 4 of this section may not, where the court so determines, be held in an open court.

**Procedure for trial on  
Charge for Certain  
Offences**

2. The names and identity of the victims of such offences or witnesses shall not be disclosed in any charge, information, record or report of the proceedings and it shall be sufficient to designate the names with alphabets.

3. Where in any proceedings the court determines that it is necessary to protect the identity of the victim or a witness, the court may take any or all of the following measures:

- a. receive evidence by video link;
- b. permit the witness to be screened or masked;
- c. receive written deposition of any expert witness;
- d. any other measure that the court considers appropriate in the circumstance.

4. The provisions of this section shall apply to:

- a. Offences under sections 196, 198, 200, 203, 204, 205, 209, 222 and 308 of the Criminal Code
- b. Offences under Prevention of Terrorism Act 2011
- c. Offences relating to trafficking in persons
- d. Any other offence that may be permitted by a Law of the State House of Assembly or an Act of the National Assembly.

5. Any contravention of the provisions of sub section 2 of this section shall be an offence and liable on conviction to a minimum term of one year imprisonment.

## **CHAPTER 19:**

### **DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY AND PERSONS IN THE COURT PROCESS**

#### **SECTION 336**

Where in any complaint, summons, warrant of any description, charge sheet, information or any document whatsoever issued by a court in the exercise of its criminal jurisdiction it is necessary to refer to the ownership of any property whether movable or immovable which belongs to or is in the possession of more than one person the provisions of sections 337 to 343 shall apply.

#### **SECTION 337**

If the property belonged to or was in the possession of more than one person whether as partners in trade or otherwise, joint tenants, tenants in common or joint owners or possessors it may be described in the name of any one of such persons and another or others.

**Methods of stating**

**Ownership of**

**Property**

**Joint Owners**

**SECTION 338**

Property of a company, association, club or society may subject to the provisions of any other written Law be described as the property of an official of such company, association, club or society, or alternatively belonging to such company, association, club or society by its legal or registered title.

**Companies and  
Associations**

**SECTION 339**

Property belonging to or provided for the use of any public establishment, service or department may be described as the property of the State.

**Public Department**

**SECTION 340**

Where it is necessary to state the ownership of any church, chapel, mosque or building or place set apart for religious worship or of anything belonging to or being in the same, it may be stated that such church, chapel, mosque or building or place, or such thing is the property of any clergyman, minister or other person officiating therein or of the churchwarden or churchwardens of such church, chapel, mosque or building or place, without its being necessary to name him or them.

**Places of Worship**

**SECTION 341**

Where it is necessary to state the ownership of any money or other property whatsoever in the charge, custody or under the control of any public officer, such money or property may be stated to be the money or property of the State.

**The control of public  
Offices**

**SECTION 342**

Where it is necessary to state the ownership of any work or building made, erected or maintained either wholly or in part at the expense of the public revenue of the State or of any town or village thereof or of any Local Government, or of anything belonging to or being in or used in relation to the same, or of anything provided for the use of any part or of any public institution or establishment or of any materials or tools provided or used for repairing any such work or building or any public road or highway or of any other property whatsoever, whether movable or immovable as aforesaid, it shall be sufficient to state that such property is the property of the State or of the town or village, or of any Local Government as the case may be, without naming any of the inhabitants of any such areas or jurisdictions.

**Public Building,  
Works or Institutions**

**SECTION 343**

Property belonging to a woman who has contracted a marriage under the Marriage Act or a marriage under native and custom may be stated as belonging to such married woman.

**Married Women's  
Property**

**SECTION 344**

Where in any complaint, summons, warrant of any description, charge sheet, information or any document whatsoever issued by a court in the exercise of its criminal jurisdiction it is necessary to refer to any person the description or designation of that person shall be such as is reasonably sufficient to identify him, without necessarily stating his correct name or his abode, style, degree or occupation and if, owing to the name of the person not being known or for any other reason it is impracticable to give such a description or designation, such description or designation shall be given as is reasonably practicable in the circumstances, or such person may be described as “a person unknown”.

**Description of persons  
in Criminal Process**

Provided that no person who is accused of an offence shall be described as “a person unknown” except in the case of a verdict found upon a coroner's inquisition.

**SECTION 345**

Every woman who has contracted a marriage under the Marriage Act or a marriage under native Law and custom, shall have in her own name against all persons whatsoever, including the husband of such marriage, subject as to the provisions of any other Law, the same remedies and redress by way of criminal proceedings for the protection and security of her own separate property as if such property belonged to her as an unmarried woman.

**Remedies of married**

**woman against her**

**Husband and Others in**

**Respect of Property**

**SECTION 346**

In any proceeding taken under the provisions of section 245 of this Law, the husband and wife shall be competent and compellable witnesses in accordance with the provisions of the Evidence Act.

**Husband and wife**

**Competent Witnesses**

**CHAPTER 20:****DEFENDANT - ATTENDANCE TO COURT  
AND REPRESENTATION BY COUNSEL****SECTION 347**

A magistrate may dispense with the personal appearance of a defendants in a charge for a simple offence, provided that the defendant pleads guilty in writing or appears and so pleads by a legal practitioner.

**Court may dispense**

**with the Presence of**

**Defendant at trial**



**SECTION 348**

The magistrate trying any case in which the presence of the defendant has been dispensed with may, in his discretion, at any subsequent stage of the proceedings, direct the personal attendance of the defendant and, if necessary, by means of the issue of a warrant to apprehend the defendant and bring him before the court.

**Warrant may issue in  
Default of Attendance**

**SECTION 349**

If a magistrate imposes a fine on a defendant whose personal attendance has been dispensed with, the magistrate may at the same time provide either that if the fine be not paid within a stated time the amount shall be recovered by distress or that the accused shall be imprisoned for a period calculated in accordance with the provisions contained in section 422 for the non-payment of a fine.

**Recovery of Fine by  
Distress or  
Imprisonment**

**SECTION 350**

If, in any case in which the attendance of a defendant is dispensed with, previous convictions are alleged against such person and are not admitted in writing or through such person's legal practitioner, the magistrate may adjourn the proceedings and direct the personal attendance of the defendant and, if necessary, enforce such attendance in the same manner as in section 348.

**Allegation of Previous  
Conviction where  
Presence of Defendant  
is Dispensed with**

**SECTION 351**

Whenever the attendance of a defendant has been dispensed with and his attendance is subsequently required the cost of any adjournment for such purpose shall be born in any event by the defendant.

**Cost of Attendance in  
Default**

**SECTION 352**

Where a defendant appears before a court on a summons he may be required to enter the dock or to stand or sit adjacent thereto as may be ordered by the court.

**Position in court of  
Defendant**

**SECTION 353**

1. Both the complainant and defendant shall be entitled to conduct their respective cases in person or by a legal practitioner.
2. Where the defendant is in custody or on remand he shall be allowed the access of such legal practitioner at all reasonable times.
3. Where the defendant elects to defend himself in person, the court shall inform him of all his rights within the trial and of the possible consequences of such election.

**Counsel for  
complainant and  
Defendant**

**Right of Defendant to  
Defend Himself**

**CHAPTER 21:****DETERMINATION OF AGE OF DEFENDANT****SECTION 354**

Where a person is before any court and it appears to the court that such person is an infant or a child or a young person, or an adult, the court may make due inquiry as to the age of that person and for that purpose may take such evidence as may be forthcoming at the time or at the time to which the inquiry may be adjourned but an order or judgment of the court shall not be invalidated by any subsequent proof that the age of that person has not been correctly stated to the court and the age presumed or declared by the court to be the age of that person shall for the purposes of this Law be deemed to be the true age of that person.

**SECTION 355**

Where in a charge for any offence, it is alleged that the person by or in respect of whom the offence was committed was a child or young person or was under or above any specified age and he appears to the court to have been at the date of the commission of the alleged offence a child or young person or to have been under or above the specified age, as the case may be, he shall for the purpose of this Law be presumed at that date to have been a child or young person or to have been under or above that age, as the case may be, unless the contrary is proved.

**Presumption and  
Determination of Age**

**Where defendant is  
presumed to be under  
or above a Specific age  
at time of Alleged  
Offence**

**CHAPTER 22:****RIGHT OF THE PUBLIC TO ATTEND THE COURT SITTINGS****SECTION 356**

1. Subject to the provisions of sections 357 to 359 and of any other written law specifically relating thereto the room or place in which any trial is to take place under this Law shall be an open court to which the public generally may have access as far as it can conveniently contain them.

**Public to have Access  
to Hearing**

2. The judge or magistrate presiding over such trial may, in his discretion and subject to the provisions of section 358, exclude the public at any stage of the hearing on the grounds of public policy, decency or expedience:

3. Where the court is sitting in a place other than in a building the authority given to exclude the public shall be construed as being authority to prevent the public approaching so near to where the court is sitting as, in the opinion of the judge or magistrate, to be able to hear what is taking place at the trial or be able to communicate with any person allowed to be present thereat

**SECTION 357**

In addition to and not in mitigation of any powers which a court may possess to hear proceedings in camera the court may, where a person who in the opinion of the court has not attained the age of eighteen is called as witness in any proceedings in relation to an offence against or any conduct contrary to decency or morality, direct that all or any persons not being members or officers of the court or parties to the case, their legal practitioners or persons otherwise directly concerned in the case, be excluded from the court during the taking of the evidence of such person.

**Court may be cleared  
whilst child or young  
Person is giving  
Evidence in Certain  
Cases**

**SECTION 358**

1. An order made under section 356 or 357 excluding the public from a court shall not unless specifically stated:

- a. authorize the exclusion of *bona fide* representatives of a newspaper or news agency, or
- b. apply to messengers, clerks and other persons required to attend at the said court for purposes connected with their employment.

2. Where such an order is made the judge or magistrate, as the case may be, shall record

**Order under section  
356 or 357 not to  
Apply to press and  
Certain Others**

the grounds upon which such decision is taken.

### **SECTION 359**

No infant, other than an infant in arms or child shall be permitted to be present in court during the trial of any person charged with an offence or during any proceedings preliminary thereto and if so present, shall be ordered to be removed unless he is the person charged with the alleged offence or his presence is required as a witness or otherwise for the purposes of justice, in which event he may remain for so long as his presence is necessary.

**Prohibition on**

**Children's Presence in**

**Court at trial of other**

**Persons**

## **CHAPTER 23:**

### **PLEA TO INFORMATION OR CHARGE**

#### **SECTION 360**

The person to be tried upon any charge or information shall be placed before the court unfettered unless the court shall see cause otherwise to order and the charge or information shall be read over and explained to him to the satisfaction of the court by the registrar or other officer of the court and such person shall be called upon to plead instantly thereto, unless where the person is entitled to service and the court finds that he has not been duly served therewith.

**Pleading to Indictment  
or Charge**

**SECTION 361**

Where the fact of a previous conviction of a defendant is a fact in issue, the prosecution shall prove the same in accordance with the provisions of the Evidence Act or otherwise to the satisfaction of the court.

**Proof of Previous  
Conviction**

**SECTION 362**

1. Any defendant against whom a charge or information is filed may plead:

**Pleas of Autrefois  
Acquit or Convict;  
Pardon**

- a. that he has been previously convicted or acquitted, as the case may be, of the same offence; or
- b. that he has obtained a pardon for his offence.

2. If either of such pleas is pleaded in any case and denied to be true in fact, the court shall try whether such plea is true in fact or not.

3. If the court holds that the facts alleged by the defendant do not prove the plea, or if it finds that it is false in fact, the defendant shall be required to plead to the charge or information.

**SECTION 363**

1. If the defendant when called upon to plead remains silent or refuses to answer, the court shall enter a plea of not guilty on his behalf.

**Where Defendant  
Remains silent or  
Refuses to take a  
Plea**

2. Such plea shall have the same effect as if the defendant actually pleaded to the charge.

3. The court may inquire into the mental state of the defendant, and if the court is satisfied that the defendant is of sound mind, the court shall proceed with his trial.

4. If the court finds that the defendant is of unsound mind, the provisions of this Law in relation to persons of unsound mind shall apply.

### **SECTION 364**

1. If the defendant pleads guilty to any offence with which he is charged, the court shall record his plea as nearly as possible in the words used by him.

#### **Effect of plea of Guilty**

2. The prosecution shall state the facts of the alleged offence to which the defendant has pleaded, and if satisfied that he intended to admit the truth of all the essentials of the offence which he has pleaded guilty, the court shall convict him of that offence and pass sentence upon or make an order against him unless there shall appear sufficient cause to the contrary.

3. Where the defendant pleads guilty to a capital offence, a plea of not guilty shall be recorded for him.



**SECTION 365**

1. If the defendant pleads guilty to any offence not contained in the charge or information on which he was arraigned, the court shall direct the prosecution to amend the charge or information to include the admitted offence.

**Amending charge**

**where the Defendant**

**Pleads Guilty to an**

**Offence not Charged**

2. In such a situation, a fresh plea of the defendant shall be taken on the amended charge or information.

**SECTION 366**

Every person who pleads not guilty shall be deemed to have submitted himself to trial.

**Effect of Plea of not  
Guilty**

**SECTION 367**

1. Notwithstanding anything in this Law or any other enactment, the prosecutor may receive, consider and accept that a person charged with an offence pleads guilty for a lesser offence where the prosecutor is of the view that the acceptance of such agreement is in the interest of justice, the public interest, public policy and the need to prevent abuse of the legal process.

**Defendant may plead  
guilty for lesser  
Offence(s) than  
Offence Charged**

2. The prosecutor and the defendant or his legal practitioner may before the plea to the charge, enter into an agreement in respect of:

a. the terms of the plea bargain which may include the sentence recommended within the appropriate range of punishment stipulated for the offence(s) charged or a lesser offence of which he may be convicted on the charge, and

b. an appropriate sentence to be imposed by the court if the defendant is convicted of the offence to which he intends to plead guilty.

3. The prosecutor may only enter into an agreement contemplated in subsection (2) of this section:

a. after consultation with the police responsible for the investigation of the case and the victim, and

b. with due regard to the nature of and circumstances relating to the offence, the defendant, the victim and public interest.

4. In determining whether it is in the public interest to enter into a plea bargain, the prosecution shall weigh all relevant factors, including:

a. the defendant's willingness to cooperate in the investigation or prosecution of others;

b. the defendant's history with respect to criminal activity;

- c. the defendant's remorse or contrition and his willingness to assume responsibility for his conduct;
  - d. the desirability of prompt and certain disposition of the case;
  - e. the likelihood of obtaining a conviction at trial, the probable effect on witnesses;
  - f. the probable sentence or other consequences if the defendant is convicted;
  - g. the need to avoid delay in the disposition of other pending cases;
  - h. the expense of trial and appeal; and
  - i. the defendant willingness to make restitution or pay compensation to the victim where appropriate.
5. The prosecution shall afford the complainant, victim of the alleged crime or his representative the opportunity to make representations to the prosecutor regarding:
- a. the content of the agreement; and
  - b the inclusion in the agreement of a compensation or restitution order.
6. An agreement between the parties contemplated in subsection (2) shall be reduced to writing and shall:
- a. state that, before conclusion of the agreement, the defendant has been

informed:

- i. that he has a right to remain silent,
  - ii. of the consequences of not remaining silent, or
  - iii. that he is not obliged to make any confession or admission that could be used in evidence against him;
- b. state fully, the terms of the agreement and any admission made; and
- c. signed by the prosecutor, the defendant, the legal practitioner and the interpreter, as the case may be.

7. The presiding judge or magistrate before whom the criminal proceedings are pending shall not participate in the discussion contemplated in subsection (2):

Provided that he may be approached by counsel regarding the contents of the discussions and he may inform them in general terms of the possible advantages of discussions, possible sentencing options or the acceptability of the proposed agreement.

8. Where a plea agreement is reached by the prosecution and the defence, the prosecutor shall inform the court that the parties have reached an agreement and the presiding judge or magistrate shall then inquire from the defendant to confirm the correctness of the agreement.

9. The presiding judge or magistrate shall ascertain whether the defendant admits the allegation in the charge to which he has pleaded guilty and whether he entered into the agreement voluntarily and without undue influence and may:

a. If satisfied that the defendant is guilty of the offence to which he has pleaded guilty, convict the defendant on his plea of guilty to that offence, or

b. If he is for any reason of the opinion that the defendant cannot be convicted of the offence in respect of which the agreement was reached and to which the defendant has pleaded guilty or that the agreement is in conflict with the defendant's right referred to in subsection (6) of this section, he shall record a plea of not guilty in respect of such charge and order that the trial proceed.

10. Where a defendant has been convicted in terms of subsection (9) (a), the presiding judge or magistrate shall consider the sentence as agreed upon and if he is:

a. satisfied that such sentence is an appropriate sentence, impose the sentence; or

b. of the view that he would have imposed a lesser sentence than the sentence agreed, impose the lesser sentence; or

c. of the view that the offence requires a heavier sentence than the sentence agreed upon, he shall inform the defendant of such heavier sentence he considers to be appropriate.

11. Where the defendant has been informed of the heavier sentence as contemplated in subsection (10) (c) above, the defendant may:

a. abide by his plea of guilty as agreed upon and agree that, subject to the defendant's right to lead evidence and to present argument relevant to sentencing, the presiding judge or magistrate proceeds with the sentencing, or

b. withdraw from his plea agreement, in which event the trial shall proceed *de novo* before another presiding judge or magistrate, as the case may be.

12. Where a trial proceeds as contemplated under subsection (11) (a) or *de novo* before another presiding judge, or magistrate, as contemplated in subsection (11) (b):

a. No references shall be made to the agreement;

b. No admission contained therein or statements relating thereto shall be admissible against the defendant; and

c. The prosecutor and the defendant may not enter into a similar plea and sentence

agreement.

13. When a person is convicted and sentenced under the provisions of subsection (10) of this section, he shall not be charged or tried again on the same facts for the greater offence earlier charged to which he had pleaded to a lesser offence.

14. The prosecution may enter into plea bargain with the defendant, with the consent of the victim or his representative, during or after the presentation of the evidence of the prosecution, but before the presentation of the evidence of the defence and in no case after the dismissal by the court of an objection to admission of evidence tendered by the prosecution to evidence, provided that any of the following conditions are present;

a. Where the evidence of the prosecution may be insufficient to prove the offence charged beyond reasonable doubt but may be sufficient to prove other lesser offence;

b. Where the defendant has agreed to return the proceeds of the crime or make restitution to the victim or his representative of property in crimes against property and those committed by public officer in relation to public funds such as but not limited to the crime of plunder, graft and corrupt practices,

bribery and economic crimes, the defendant makes a full restitution of the property or public funds involved; and

c. Where in a case involving conspiracy the defendant has fully cooperated with the investigation and prosecution of the crime by providing relevant information for other conspirators.

15.

Notwithstanding any provision contained under this section, no plea agreement shall be entered into without the written consent of the Attorney General of the State or any officer of his department authorized by him in writing; Provided that there shall be no plea bargain in any charge involving murder, kidnapping, armed robbery, rape, defilement, sexual assault or terrorism.

### **SECTION 368**

1. Before a person takes his plea, the court shall **Plea to Information or Charge** inform him of his rights under the provisions of section 353 of this Law.
2. The person to be tried on a charge or an information shall be:
  - a. brought before the court unfettered unless the court sees cause otherwise to order, and the charge or information shall be read over and explained to him to the satisfaction of the court by the registrar



or other officer of the court; and

b. called upon to plead instantly unless, where the person is entitled to service of the information, he objects to the nonservice and if the court finds that he has not been duly served.

3. The court shall record the fact that it is satisfied that the defendant understands the charge or information read over and explained to him in the language he understands, and shall record the plea of the defendant to the charge or information as nearly as possible in the words used by him.

## **CHAPTER 24:**

### **ADDUCING EVIDENCE AND EXAMINATION OF WITNESSES**

#### **SECTION 369**

After the defendant has pleaded not guilty to the charge or information the person appearing for the prosecution may open the case against the defendant and then adduce evidence in support of the charge.

**Presentation of case  
for Prosecution**

#### **SECTION 370**

Any exception, exemption, provision, condition, excuse, or qualification, whether it does or does not in any enactment creating an offence accompany in

**Rule as to Statement  
of Exception**

the same section the description of the offence, may be proved by the defendant, but need not be specified or negated in the complaint, and if so specified or negated, no proof in relation to the matter so specified or negated shall be required on the part of the complainant.

### **SECTION 371**

Subject to the provisions of any other written law, the examination of witnesses shall be in accordance with the provisions of the Evidence Act.

**Application of the  
Evidence Act**

### **SECTION 372**

1. When any person attending either in obedience to a summons or by virtue of a warrant or being present in court and being verbally required by the court to give evidence in any case:

**Witness refusing to be  
Sworn or Produce  
Documents**

- a. refuses to be sworn as a witness; or
- b. having been so sworn, refuses to answer any question put to him by the sanction of the court; or
- c. refuses or neglects to produce any documents which he is required by the court to produce; without in any such case offering any sufficient excuse for such refusal or neglect, the court may, if it thinks fit, adjourn the hearing of the case for any period not exceeding eight days

where practicable, and may in the meantime, by warrant, commit such person to prison or to other place of safe custody, unless he sooner consents to do what is so required of him.

2. If such person, upon being brought before the court at or before such adjourned hearing again refuses to do what is so required of him, the court may if it deems fit, again adjourn the hearing of the case, and commit him for the like period, and so again from time to time until such person consents to do what is so required of him.

3. Nothing herein contained shall affect the liability of any such person to any other punishment or proceeding for refusing or neglecting to do what is so required of him, or shall prevent the court from disposing of the case in the meantime according to any other sufficient evidence taken by it.

### **SECTION 373**

The court at any stage of any trial, or other proceedings under this Law may either of its own motion or on the application of either party to the proceedings call any person as a witness or recall and re-examine any person already examined and the court shall examine or recall and re-examine any such person if his evidence appears to the court to be essential to the just decision of the case.

**Power to call or Recall**

**Witnesses**

**SECTION 374**

Certificates signed by a Government chemist, pathologist, entomologist or superintendent of a forensic science laboratory or the Accountant-General shall be admissible in evidence in accordance with the provisions of section 55 of the Evidence Act.

**Certificates of certain  
Government Technical  
Officers**

**CHAPTER 25: VISIT TO LOCUS****SECTION 375**

It shall be the duty of a court trying a case summarily to make or cause to be made such locus inspection as the circumstances of the case may require.

**Locus Inspection**

**SECTION 376**

1. Where it appears to the court that in the interest of justice the court should have a view of any place, person or thing connected with the case, the court may, where the view relates to a place, either adjourn the court to that place and there continue the proceedings or adjourn the case and proceed to view the place, person or thing concerned.

**View by court of**

2. The defendant shall be present at the view.

**Locus**

**SECTION 377**

In the case of any view being had the court shall give such directions as may seem requisite for the purpose of preventing communication between the witness and the defendant.

Provided that a breach of any such directions shall not affect the validity of the proceedings unless the court otherwise directs.

**CHAPTER 26: ADDRESSES****SECTION 378**

1. After the case for the prosecution is concluded, the defendant or the legal practitioner representing him, if any, shall be entitled to address the court at the commencement or conclusion of his case, as he thinks fit and if no witnesses have been called for the defence, other than the defendant himself or witnesses solely as to the character of the defendant and no document is put in as evidence for the defence, the person appearing for the prosecution shall not be entitled to address the court a second time but if in the opening case for the defence the person appearing for the defendant has in addressing the court introduced new matter without supporting it by evidence, the court in

**No Communication  
Between Defendant  
and Witnesses During  
visit to Locus**

**In certain cases  
Prosecution has no  
Right of Reply**

its discretion, may allow the prosecution to reply.

2. Addresses under the provision of subsection (1) of this section shall be in writing unless otherwise directed by the court.

**Addresses to be in  
Writing**

3) Where the address is in writing the court may still allow the person making the address reasonable time to highlight certain points contained therein.

### **SECTION 379**

If any witness, other than the defendant himself or witnesses solely as to the character of the defendant, is called or any document is put in as evidence for the defence, the person appearing for the defendant shall be entitled after evidence on behalf of the defendant has been adduced to address the court a second time on the whole case and the prosecution shall have a right of reply.

**Cases in which  
Prosecution may  
Reply**

### **SECTION 380**

The provisions of sections 378 and 379 shall not affect the right of reply by a Law officer.

**Reply by Law officer or  
police Officer who is a  
Lawyer**

### **SECTION 381**

In cases where the right of reply depends upon the question whether evidence has been called for the defence, the fact that the defendant has been called as

**Right of Reply**

a witness shall not of itself confer on the prosecution the right of reply:

Provided that a Law officer or a police officer who is a legal practitioner when appearing personally as counsel for the prosecution shall in all cases have the right of reply.

## **SECTION 382**

1. Where a question as to the interpretation of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria arises in the course of a trial and is referred to the Court of Appeal under the provisions of the Constitution, the court before which the question arose may in its discretion:

**Reference to the Court  
of Appeal**

- a. adjourn the trial until the question has been considered and decided;
- b. conclude the trial and postpone the verdict until such time as the question has been considered and decided: or
- c. conclude the trial and pass sentence but suspend execution until such time as the question has been considered and decided and in any such case the court in its discretion shall commit the defendant or convicted person to prison or admit him to bail in accordance with the provisions of this Law.

2. When the question referred to subsection (1) (a) of this section has been decided by the Court of Appeal the Court shall:

- a. continue the trial or discharge the defendant;
- b. acquit or convict the defendant; or
- c. order the execution of the sentence as the circumstance may require.

### **SECTION 383**

Subject to the provisions of the Constitution, an application for stay of proceedings in respect of a criminal matter brought before the Court may not be entertained until judgment is delivered.

#### **Stay of Proceedings**

## **CHAPTER 27: JUDGMENT**

### **SECTION 384**

When the case for both sides is closed, the court shall consider its verdict and for this purpose may adjourn the matter for judgment.

#### **Deliberation by Court**

### **SECTION 385**

The judge or magistrate shall record his judgment in writing and every such judgment shall contain the point or points for determination, the decision thereon and the reasons for the decision and shall be

#### **Judgment to be in Writing**



dated and signed by the judge or magistrate at the time of pronouncing it;

Provided that in the case of a magistrate in lieu of writing such judgment, it shall be a sufficient compliance under this section if the magistrate:

- a. records briefly in the book his decision thereon and where necessary his reasons for such decision and pronounces it, or
- b. records such information in a prescribed form.

### **SECTION 386**

If the court finds the defendant not guilty, he shall forthwith be discharged and an order of acquittal recorded.

### **SECTION 387**

If the court convicts the defendant or he pleads guilty, it shall be the duty of the registrar to ask the defendant whether he has anything to say why sentence should not be passed on him according to Law, but the omission of the registrar to ask him or his being so asked by a judge or magistrate instead of the registrar shall have no effect on the validity of the proceedings.

### **SECTION 388**

If the court finds the defendant guilty the court shall either pass sentence on the accused or make an order

**Defendant to be**

**Discharged if Found**

**not Guilt**

**Defendant to be asked  
Whether he has  
Anything to say before  
Sentence**

**Sentence**

or reserve judgment and adjourn the case to some future date.

### **SECTION 389**

1. Where a defendant is found guilty of an offence, the court may in passing sentence take into consideration any other charge that is pending against him if the defendant admits the other charge and desires that it be taken into consideration and if the prosecutor of the other charge consents.

**Conviction on other  
Charges Pending**

2. Where such a desire is expressed and consent given, the court shall enter or cause an entry to that effect to be made on the record and upon sentence being pronounced, the defendant shall not, subject to the provisions of sections 528 to 530 or unless the conviction which has been heard is set aside, be liable to be charged or tried in respect of any such offence so taken into consideration.

### **SECTION 390**

Where a judge or magistrate having tried a case is prevented by illness or other unavoidable cause from delivering his judgment or sentence, such judgment and the sentence, if the same has been reduced into writing and signed by the judge or magistrate, may be delivered and pronounced in open court in the presence of the defendant by any other judge or magistrate.

**Delivery of Judgment  
when judge or  
Magistrate is  
Unavoidably Absent**

## **CHAPTER 28: SENTENCES**

### **SECTION 391**

1. The Court shall, in pronouncing sentence, consider the following factors in addition to sections 392 of this Law.

- a. the objectives of sentencing, including the principles of reformation and deterrence;
- b. the interest of the victim, the convict and the community;
- c. appropriateness of non-custodial sentence or treatment in lieu of imprisonment;
- d. previous conviction of the convict.

2. A court, after conviction, shall take all necessary evidence or information in respect of each convict that may guide it in deciding the nature and extent of sentence to pass on the convict in each particular case, even though the convicts were charged and tried together.

#### **Sentence and Sentencing Hearing**

### **SECTION 392**

1. On conviction, a court may sentence the convict to a term of imprisonment as prescribed by the enabling Law.

2. In exercising its discretion of sentencing or review of sentence, the court shall take into

#### **Guiding Objectives of Sentencing**

consideration the following factors;

- a. each case should be treated on its own merit;
- b. the objectives of sentencing, including the principles of reformation, should be borne in mind in sentencing a convict;
- c. a trial court ought not to pass the maximum sentence on a first offender;
- d. the period spent in custody awaiting or undergoing trial ought to be considered in sentencing a convict;
- e. trial court shall conduct an inquiry into the defendant's antecedents before sentencing;
- f. it may be desirable to adjourn for sentencing in order to have time to consider any evidence adduced at the sentencing hearing in accordance with section 391 of this Law;
- g. where there is doubt as to whether the defendant or convict has attained the age of seventeen, the court should resolve the doubt in his favour;
- h. a defendant may not be given consecutive sentences for two or more offences committed in the same transaction;
- i. an appeal court may not increase the sentence of a lower court beyond the

maximum number of years the lower court has power to impose; and

j. sentencing to a term of imprisonment shall apply only to those offenders who should be isolated from society and with whom other forms of punishment have failed or is likely to fail.

## **SUSPENDED SENTENCE**

### **SECTION 393**

When a person is convicted of any offence the court may, instead of passing sentence, release the offender upon his entering into his own recognizance, with or without sureties, in such sum as the court may deem fit, on the condition that he shall appear and receive sentence at some future sitting of the court or when called upon.

**Security for coming up  
for Judgment**

## **CHAPTER 29: CAPITAL SENTENCE**

### **SECTION 394**

The punishment of death is inflicted by hanging the offender by the neck until he be dead.

**Execution of Sentence  
by Death**

**SECTION 395**

Sentence of death shall be pronounced in the following form: **Death sentence - how**

“The sentence of the court upon you is that you be **Pronounced**  
hanged by the neck until you be dead and may the Lord  
have mercy on your soul.”

**SECTION 396**

Where sentence of death has been passed such sentence **Prior Formalities**  
shall only be carried out in accordance with the  
provisions of this chapter. **Generally**

**SECTION 397**

Where a woman found guilty of a capital offence is found **Where Pregnancy is**  
in accordance with the provisions of Section 410 to be **Found**  
pregnant the sentence of death shall not be passed on her  
but in lieu thereof she shall be sentenced to imprisonment  
for life after six months of child birth.

**SECTION 398**

Where a convict who in the opinion of the court had not **Where offender is a**  
attained the age of eighteen years at the time the offence **Young Person**  
was committed is found guilty of a capital offence,  
sentence of death shall not be pronounced or recorded but  
in lieu of it the court shall sentence the person to life  
imprisonment or to such other term as the court may deem  
appropriate in consideration of the principles in section  
392 of this Law.

**SECTION 399****Judge's Certificate**

1. A Judge who pronounces a sentence of death shall issue, under his hand and the seal of the court, a certificate to the effect that sentence of death has been pronounced upon the person named in the certificate, and the certificate shall be sufficient and full authority in law for the detention of the convict in safe custody until the sentence of death pronounced upon him can be carried into effect and for carrying the sentence of death into effect in accordance with and subject to the provisions of this Part.

2. Where the court, either at trial or on appeal, considers it appropriate, it may issue a report for the purpose of advice on the exercise by the President of the powers of prerogative of mercy under this Part, and the report shall form part of the record of proceedings in the case

**SECTION 400****Steps to be taken by  
the Registrar**

The registrar of the court by which the person is sentenced to death shall, as soon as practicable after sentence has been pronounced:

a. hand two copies of the certificate issued by the Judge under the provisions of section 399 of this Law to the Commissioner of Police, one copy of which shall be retained by the Commissioner of Police and the other

handed to the superintendent or other officer in charge of the prison in which the convict is to be confined;

b. transmit to the sheriff one copy of the certificate; and

c. file one copy of the certificate with the record of the proceedings in the case.

#### **SECTION 401**

1. Where a person has been sentenced to death and has exercised his legal rights of appeal against the conviction and sentence and the conviction and sentence have not been quashed or the sentence has not been reduced, or has failed to exercise his legal rights of appeal or having filed an application for leave to appeal, or an appellant has failed to perfect or prosecute the application or appeal within the time prescribed by Law; and

2. Where the convict desires to have his case considered by the Committee on Prerogative of Mercy, he shall forward his request through his legal practitioner or officer in charge of the Correctional Service in which he is confined to the Committee on Prerogative of Mercy. The Committee on Prerogative of Mercy shall consider the request and make their report to the Governor of the State.

**Convict may send  
request to Committee  
on Prerogative of  
Mercy**



**SECTION 402**

- |    |  |                                  |
|----|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. | Where a person:  | <b>State at which</b>            |
| a. | has been sentenced to death; and   | <b>Governor is to</b>            |
| b. | has exercised his legal rights of appeal against the conviction and sentence and the conviction and sentence has not been quashed or the sentence has not been reduced or has failed to exercise his legal rights of appeal or having filed an application for leave to appeal or an appeal, has failed to perfect or prosecute such application or appeal within the time prescribed by Law; the Governor shall consider the report made under section 401 and after obtaining the advice of the Advisory Council on Prerogative of Mercy decide whether or not to commute the sentence to imprisonment for life or commute the sentence to any specific period or decide whether the prisoner should be otherwise pardoned or reprieved. | <b>Consider</b><br><b>Report</b> |
2. Where, for the purposes of subsection (1) of this section, the Advisory Council on the Prerogative of Mercy is required to advise the Governor in relation to any person sentenced to death, the Attorney-General shall cause a record of the case to be prepared and submitted to the Advisory Council and the Advisory Council shall, in giving its advice, have regard to the matters set out in that record.

**SECTION 403**

If the Governor decides that the sentence should not be commuted or that the offender should not be pardoned or reprieved, he shall cause the Sheriff to be informed and the sentence of death pronounced upon the offender shall be carried into effect in accordance with the provisions of this Law and the sheriff shall make arrangements accordingly pursuant to the sentence of death pronounced upon the offender.

**Where no  
commutation, pardon  
or Reprieve is  
Granted**

**SECTION 404**

1. Where the Governor decides that the sentence should be commuted or that the offender should be otherwise pardoned or reprieved, he shall issue an order, a copy of which shall be sent to the superintendent or other officer in charge of the Correctional Service in which the offender is confined, and another copy thereof shall be sent to the Sheriff, directing that the execution should not proceed and that the offender be in Correctional Service in accordance with the recommendation, or that the offender be released, subject to such conditions, if any, as may be specified.

**Where Commutation,  
Pardon or Reprieve is  
Granted**

2. The sheriff and the superintendent or other officer in charge of the Correctional Service in which the offender is confined shall comply with and give effect to every order issued under the provisions of subsection (1).

**SECTION 405**

Section 401 to 404 shall apply where the sentence of death has been passed for an offence in respect of which the power of pardon is vested in the Governor

**Application of  
Sections 401 to 404**

**SECTION 406**

1. If the Governor decides that the sentence should not be commuted or that the convict should not be pardoned or reprieved, the order of the Governor shall be duly signed by him and sealed as in one of the forms set out in the Fourth Schedule of this Law or as near to it as circumstances permit.

**Order of Governor  
where pardon or  
Reprieve is not  
Granted**

2. The order of the Governor:

a. shall state the place and time, where and when the execution is to be and give directions as to the place of burial of the body; or

b. may direct that the execution shall take place at such time and such place and the body of the person executed shall be buried at such place as shall be appointed by some officer specified in the order.

3. When the place or time of execution or the place of burial is appointed by some person and is not stated in the order of the Governor, the specified officer shall endorse on the order over his signature the place and time of

execution and place of burial.

4. A copy of the order issued by the Governor shall be forwarded to the official in charge of the Correctional Service in which the person sentenced is confined, and the official in charge of the Correctional Service shall give effect to the order of execution.

**Copy of order to be  
sent to Correctional  
Service Official**

#### **SECTION 407**

When the place or time of execution or the place of burial is appointed by some person and is not stated in the Governor's order, the specified officer shall endorse on the order over his signature the place and time of execution and place of burial or someone or more of them according to the terms of the order.

**Endorsement on the  
order by Specified  
Officer**

#### **SECTION 408**

A copy of the Governor's order under his hand and the Public Seal shall be sent to the sheriff of the area in which the execution is to be carried into effect and the sheriff shall have effect given thereto:

**Copy of Order to be  
Sent to Sheriff**

Provided that if for any reason a copy of the Governor's order is not received by the Sheriff before the date fixed therein or endorsed thereon for execution, the said Sheriff shall nevertheless have the order carried into effect on the earliest convenient day after receipt thereof.

**SECTION 409**

The said copy of the Governor's order under his hand and the Public Seal or the directions issued by the sheriff under the last preceding section shall be sufficient authority in Law to all persons to carry the sentence into effect in accordance with the terms thereof.

**Order to be Sufficient****Authority****SECTION 410**

1. Where a woman convicted of an offence punishable with death alleges that she is pregnant, or where the court before or by which a woman is so convicted thinks fit so to do, the court shall, before sentence is passed on her behalf, determine the question whether or not she is pregnant.

**Procedure where****woman Convicted of****Capital offence is****Alleged to be Pregnant**

2. The question whether the woman is pregnant or not shall be determined by the court on such evidence as may be presented to the court by the woman or on behalf or by the prosecution.

**Proof of Pregnancy**

3. Where the court finds that the woman in question is not pregnant the court shall pronounce sentence of death upon her.

**Court pronounces****sentence on the woman**

4. An appeal shall lie to the Court of Appeal against such finding and the Court of Appeal, if satisfied that the finding should be set aside, shall quash the sentence passed on her and in lieu thereof pass on her a sentence of imprisonment for life.

**if she is not Pregnant****Court of Appeal may****quash the Sentence**

5. The rights conferred by this section on a woman convicted of an offence punishable with death shall be in substitution for the right of such a woman to allege in an application for stay of execution that she is pregnant.

**Substitution of death  
Sentence**

6. The court shall report to the Advisory Council on the Prerogative of Mercy any case in which the court passes a sentence of imprisonment for life under this section.

**Court reports to  
Council**

## **CHAPTER 30: IMPRISONMENT**

### **SECTION 411**

Imprisonment shall be with labour unless otherwise ordered by the court.

### **SECTION 412**

Where the court has power to pass a sentence of imprisonment, the court may, in case of a simple offence, in lieu of passing sentence of imprisonment, may order that the offender be detained within the precincts of the court or at any police station till such hour, not later than eight in the evening on the day on which he is convicted, as the court may direct;

**Imprisonment to be  
with labour unless  
Otherwise Ordered**

**Power to order  
detention for one day  
in Precincts of the  
Court**

Provided that the court shall, before making an order of detention under this section, take into consideration the distance between the place of detention and the offender's abode, if his abode is

known to or ascertainable by the court, and shall not make any such order of detention under this section as will deprive the offender of a reasonable opportunity of returning to his abode on the day on which such order of detention is made.

### **SECTION 413**

Where a sentence of imprisonment is passed on any person by a court, the court may order that the sentence shall commence at the expiration of any other term of imprisonment to which that person has been previously sentenced by any competent court or tribunal in Nigeria. However, where two or more sentences passed by a Magistrates' Courts are ordered to run consecutively, the aggregate term of imprisonment shall not exceed four years or the limit of jurisdiction of the adjudicating magistrate whichever is greater.

**Consecutive Sentences  
of Imprisonment**

### **SECTION 414**

A sentence of imprisonment takes effect from and includes the whole of the day of the date on which it was pronounced.

**Date from which  
Sentence Commences**

### **SECTION 415**

1. A person convicted of an offence punishable by  
a. imprisonment as well as fine, and sentenced to pay a fine, whether with or

**Power to order  
Payment of fine in lieu  
of Imprisonment**

without imprisonment; or

b. imprisonment or fine, and sentenced to pay a fine, may be ordered to serve imprisonment, on default of payment of the fine, for a certain term, which imprisonment shall be in addition to any other imprisonment to which he may have been sentenced.

2. In the case of a conviction in the High Court, the amount of the fine shall be in the discretion of the court, and any term of imprisonment imposed in default of payment of the fine shall not exceed two years.

3. In the case of a conviction in a Magistrate's Court:

a. the amount of the fine shall be in the discretion of the court but shall not exceed the maximum fine authorized to be imposed by the Magistrate by or under the Magistrates' Court Law; and

b. no term of imprisonment imposed in default of payment of the fine shall exceed the maximum fixed in relation to the amount of the fine by the scale specified in section 422 of this Law.

4. In no case shall any term of imprisonment imposed in default of payment of a fine which has been imposed by virtue of the power in that behalf contained in subsection (1) exceed



the maximum term authorized by the written Law for such offence.

5. The provisions of this section shall not apply in any case where a written Law provides a minimum period of imprisonment to be imposed for the commission of an offence.

6. The table of fines can be varied by an Order of the Governor at the advice of the Honourable Attorney General.

#### **SECTION 416**

A person who escapes from lawful custody while undergoing a sentence involving deprivation of liberty is liable upon recapture to undergo the punishment which he was undergoing at the time of his escape, for a term equal to that during which he was absent from Correctional Service, after the escape and before the expiration of the term of his original sentence, whether at the time of his recapture the term of that sentence has or has not expired.

**Escaped prisoners;  
effect of Escape on  
Punishment**

#### **SECTION 417**

Where a sentence or conviction does not order the payment of money but orders that the offender be imprisoned the court shall issue a warrant of commitment accordingly.

**Direct Imprisonment**

## SECTION 418

A warrant under the hand of the judge or magistrate by whom any person shall have been sentenced or committed to Correctional Service for non-payment of a penalty or fine shall be full authority to the superintendent of any Correctional Service and to all other person for carrying into effect the sentence described in such warrant not being a sentence of death.

**Authority for  
Carrying out  
Sentences not  
Capital**

## SECTION 419

The court may at any time amend any defect in substance or in form in any order or warrant of commitment and no omission or error as to time and place and no defect in form in any order or warrant of commitment given under this Law, shall be held to render void or unlawful any act done or intended to be done by virtue of such order or warrant if it is therein mentioned, or may be inferred therefrom, that it is founded on a conviction or judgment sufficient to sustain the same.

**Error or Omission  
shall not affect  
Legality of Act**

## CHAPTER 31 - FINES

## SECTION 420

A person convicted of an offence punishable by:

a) imprisonment as well as fine, and sentenced to pay a fine, whether with or without

**Fines, Imprisonment  
in default of**

imprisonment; or

d. imprisonment or fine and sentenced to pay a fine, may be ordered to serve imprisonment, in default of payment of the fine, for a certain term, which imprisonment shall be in addition to any other imprisonment to which he may have been sentenced.

## SECTION 421

Where by any written Law the court is empowered to impose a penalty for a summary conviction offence, it may in the absence of express provision to the contrary in the same or any other written Law, order a defendant who is convicted of such offence, in default of payment of the sum of money adjudged to be paid under the order, either forthwith or at the time specified in the order, as the case may be, to be imprisoned, with or without labour, in accordance with the scale set forth in section 422.

**General power of  
awarding  
Imprisonment in  
Default of Payment  
of Penalty**

## SECTION 422

c. The Governor shall have power to review from time to time the provisions for fines, compensation or sums of money under the Law.

**Scale of imprisonment  
for Non-payment of  
money Adjudged to be  
Paid**

d. Subject to the provisions of the written Law on which the order is founded, the period of imprisonment, whether with or without

labour, which is imposed by the court in respect of the non-payment of any sum to be paid by an order, shall be such period as in the opinion of the court will satisfy the justice of the case but shall not exceed the maximum fixed in the following scale:

Limitation of imprisonment in default of payment of fine shall not exceed the following where fine:

3. does not exceed ₦3,000 .. seven days
  4. above ₦3000 but not exceeding ₦ 5000 .. fourteen days;
  5. above ₦ 5000 but not exceeding ₦ 10,000 .. one month;
  6. above ₦ 10,000 not exceeding ₦ 20,000 ..two months;
  7. above ₦ 20,000 but not exceeding ₦50,000 .. six months;
  8. above ₦ 50,000 but not exceeding ₦100,000 eight months;
  9. above ₦ 100,000 .. One year;
- e. No commitment for non-payment of a fine shall be for a period longer than two years, except where the Law under which the conviction has taken place enjoins or allows a longer period.

## SECTION 423

A court in fixing the amount of any fine to be imposed on an offender shall take into consideration, amongst other things, the means of the offender so far as they appear or are known to the court and where a fine is imposed, the payment of the court fees and police fees payable in the case up to and including conviction shall not be taken into consideration in fixing the amount of the fine or be imposed in addition to the fine, but the amount of the fine, or of such part thereof as may be paid or recovered, shall be applied as follows:

### **Payment and Allocation of Fines and Fees**

- c. in the first instance in the payment to the informant, complainant or victim of any court or other fees paid by him and ordered by the court to be repaid to him;
- d. in the second instance the payment of any court fees not already paid by the informant, complainant or victim which may be payable under the rules of court;
- e. the balance, if any, remaining after the above payments have been made shall be paid into general revenue.

## SECTION 424

In any case where an order is made against any person for the payment of a sum of money and such person is in default of payment and liable to be imprisoned, the court may do all or any of the following;

**Power to Commit  
Defendant in Certain  
Cases**

- d. issue a warrant of commitment forthwith;
- e. allow time for the payment of the said sum;
- f. direct payment of the said sum to be made by installments; or
- g. direct that the person liable to pay the said sum shall be at liberty to give security, to the satisfaction of the court, either with or without a surety or sureties, for the payment of the said sum or any installments thereof.

## SECTION 425

- f. Where time has been allowed for the payment of a sum adjudged to be paid upon conviction or order, further time may on an application by or on behalf of the person liable to pay the sum, be allowed by a court having jurisdiction to issue a warrant of commitment in respect of the non-payment of that sum, the court may, subject as aforesaid, direct payment by instalments of the sum so adjudged to be paid.

**Allowance of Further  
time and Payment by  
Installments**

g. Where a sum of money is directed to be paid by instalments and default is made in the payment of any one instalment, the same proceedings may be taken as if default has been made in the payment of all the instalments then remaining unpaid.

h. If before the expiration of the time allowed, the person convicted surrenders himself to the court having jurisdiction to issue a warrant of commitment in respect of the non-payment of the sum and states that he prefers immediate committal to awaiting the expiration of the time allowed, the court may, if it deems fit, issue a warrant committing him to prison.

i. A warrant of commitment issued under the provisions of this section may be executed on any day, including a Sunday or a public holiday.

## SECTION 426

If the person liable to pay any sum and to whom time has been given to pay either with or without a surety or sureties makes default in such payment or fails to enter into the security required by the court, the court shall issue its warrant of commitment requiring any police officer to take and convey such person to Correctional Service and there deliver him to the superintendent of Correctional Services and require him to receive such person into the Correctional

**Power to Postpone  
Issue of Warrant of  
Commitment**

Service and there to imprison him with or without labour, as the case may be, for such time as may be directed and appointed by the warrant of commitment, unless the sum of money adjudged to be paid by the order and also all other costs, charges and expenses shall be paid.

### **SECTION 427**

Where application is made to the court for a warrant for committing a person to Correctional Service for non-payment of any sum of money adjudged to be paid by an order, the court may, if it deems it expedient so to do, postpone the issue of such warrant until such time and on such conditions if any, as to the court may deem just.

#### **Time and Condition**

### **SECTION 428**

When the court orders the imprisonment of any person, the court may, if it thinks fit, order that such imprisonment shall not commence forthwith, but shall commence on any day not more than three months after the date of such order as the court may fix, and in such case the court may either release the person until such day or discharge him upon his entering into a recognizance, with or without sureties, conditioned for his reappearance on such day to undergo such imprisonment.

#### **Limit of three Months**



## SECTION 429

Any warrant of commitment issued under the provisions of this chapter may be executed on any day including Sunday or public holiday.

**Execution of  
Warrants**

## SECTION 430

In all cases where any person against whom a warrant of commitment for non-payment of any sum of money adjudged to be paid by an order is issued, pays or tenders to the person having the execution of the same, the sum or sums in such warrant mentioned together with the amount of the expenses of such warrant up to the time of such a payment or tender, the person having the execution of such warrant shall cease to execute the same.

**Payment of Penalty to  
Person Executing  
Warrant**

## SECTION 431

Where any person is brought to any Correctional Service to be imprisoned by virtue of a warrant of commitment there shall be endorsed on such warrant the day on which such person was arrested by virtue thereof and the imprisonment shall be computed from such day and inclusive thereof.

**Commencement of  
Imprisonment**

## SECTION 432

Where any person has been committed to Correctional Service by the court for default in finding a surety or sureties the court may, on application made to it by such person or by some person acting on his behalf, inquire into the case of such person, and if upon new evidence produced to the court or proof of a change of circumstances the court thinks having regard to all the circumstance of the case that it is just so to do, the court may reduce the amount for which it was ordered that the surety or sureties should be bound, or dispense with surety or sureties, or otherwise deal with the case as the court may think just.

**Varying of or  
Discharging order for  
Sureties**

## SECTION 433

1. Where a person has been committed to Correctional Service by the court for nonpayment of a sum of money adjudged to be paid by an order, the person may pay or cause to be paid to the officer in charge of the Correctional Service the sum mentioned in the warrant of commitment together with the amount of the costs, charges and expenses, if any, and the officer in charge of the Correctional Service shall receive the sums and discharge the person, unless he is in custody for some other matter.

**Right of Person  
Imprisoned in Default  
to be Released on  
Paying Sum**

2. In a case where under subsection (1) of this section a sum has been received in part

satisfaction of a sum due from a prisoner in consequence of the conviction of the court, the sum shall be applied:

3. firstly, towards the payment in full or in part of any costs or damages or compensation which the court may have ordered to be paid to the complainant; and

4. Secondly, towards the payment of the fine, if any, imposed on the prisoner.

d. Subject to the provisions of subsection (2) of this section, where an amount is paid towards a fine:

3. the imprisonment shall be reduced by a number of days bearing as nearly as possible the same proportion to the total number of days for which the person is committed as the sum so paid towards the fine bears to the amount of the fine for which the person is liable; and

4. the superintendent or other officer in charge of a Correctional Service in which a person who has made the part payment is confined shall as soon as practicable thereafter take the person before a court which shall:

- i. certify the amount by which the term of imprisonment originally awarded is reduced by such payment in part

satisfaction, and

- ii. make such order as the circumstances require.

4. Where, in the opinion of the superintendent or other officer, the delay occasioned by taking the person before a court is such that the person will be detained beyond the date on which he should by reason of the part payment be released, the superintendent or other officer may release the person on the day which appears to the superintendent or other officer to be the correct day, endorse the warrant accordingly and shall, as soon as practicable thereafter, inform the court of the action taken and the court shall make such order or record as the court may consider to be required in the circumstances.

5. In reckoning:

- a. the number of days by which a term of imprisonment would be reduced under this section, the first day of imprisonment shall not be taken into account; and
- b. the sum which will secure the reduction of a term of imprisonment, fractions of a naira shall be omitted.

## SECTION 434

In any case where under the last preceding section a sum has been received in part satisfaction of a sum due from a prisoner in consequence of the conviction of the court such sum shall be applied firstly, towards the payment in full or in part of any cost, damages or compensation which the court may have ordered to be paid to the complainant, victim or his next of kin and, secondly, towards the payment of the fine, if any, imposed on the prisoner.

**Application of a sum  
Received from  
Prisoner**

## SECTION 435

1. Subject to the provisions of section 434 where an amount is paid towards a fine the procedure as hereunder in this subsection set forth shall be followed:

**Part Payment after  
Commitment**

d. the imprisonment shall be reduced by a number of days bearing as nearly as possible the same proportion to the total number of days for which such person is committed as the sum so paid towards the fine bears to the amount of the fine for which such person is liable,

e. the superintendent or other officer in charge of a Correctional Service in which a person who has made such part payment is confined shall as soon as practicable take such person before a

court and such court shall certify the amount by which the term of imprisonment originally awarded is reduced by such payment impart satisfaction and shall make such order as is required in the circumstances;

Provided that where in the opinion of the superintendent or other officer as aforesaid, the delay occasioned by taking such person before a court shall be such that the person will be detained beyond the date upon which he should by reason of such part payment be released, such superintendent or other officer may release such person on the day which appears to such superintendent or other officer to be the correct day, endorse the warrant accordingly and shall as soon as practicable thereafter inform the court of the action taken and such court shall thereupon make such order or record as the court shall consider to be required in the circumstances.

2. In reckoning the number of days by which any term of imprisonment would be reduced under this section, the first day of imprisonment shall not be taken into account and in reckoning the sum which will secure the reduction of a term of imprisonment, fractions of a kobo shall be omitted.

## SECTION 436

Where, under the authority of a written Law, the court imposes a fine or a pecuniary penalty whether or not that fine or penalty is accompanied by a power to impose imprisonment, and no special provision other than recovery by distress is made for the recovery of the fine or penalty, the court may:

**Fines may be ordered  
to be Recoverable by  
Distress**

3. order the fine or penalty to be recoverable by distress; and
- b) in default of the distress satisfying the amount of the fine or penalty, order that the offender be imprisoned, in accordance with the scale set out in section 422 of this Law.

## SECTION 437

Where the court orders a sum to be recoverable by distress the court shall issue its warrant of distress for the purpose of recovering the same, such warrant shall be in writing and signed by the court, it shall authorize the person charged with the execution thereof to take any money as well as any goods of the person against whom distress is levied and any money so taken shall be treated as if it were the proceeds of sale of goods taken under the warrant.

**Warrant of Distress**

## SECTION 438

In the execution of a distress warrant the following provisions shall have effect:

**Procedure on the  
execution of Distress  
Warrants**

6. a warrant of distress shall be executed by or under the direction of the sheriff;
7. if the person charged with the execution of the warrant is prevented from executing the warrant by the fastening of doors or otherwise, the court may, by writing under his hand endorsed on the warrant, authorize him to use such force as may be necessary to enable him to execute the warrant;
8. the wearing apparel and bedding of the person and of his family to the value of twenty thousand naira, the tools and implements of his trade, shall not be taken;
9. except as provided in paragraph (e) of this subsection and so far as the person on whose movable property the distress is levied consents in writing to an earlier sale, the goods distrained on shall be sold at public auction not less than five days and not more than fourteen days after the making of the distress, but where consent in writing is so given, the sale may be in accordance with the consent;
10. subject to paragraph (d) of this section, the goods distrained on shall be sold within the



time fixed by the warrant, unless the sum or charges, if any, of taking and keeping the goods distrained on, for which the warrant was issued are sooner paid;

11. if a person charged with the execution of a warrant of distress:

m. Wilfully retains from the proceeds any property sold to satisfy the distress, or

n. otherwise exacts any greater costs or charges than those to which he is, for the time being, entitled by law or makes any improper charge, he is liable, on summary conviction before a court, to a penalty not exceeding twenty thousand naira, but nothing in this paragraph shall affect the liability of the person to be prosecuted and punished for extortion; or for the return of the sum of money or value of the item extorted, by the person;

12. a written account of the costs and charges incurred in respect of the execution of a warrant of distress shall, as soon as practicable, be delivered by the person charged with the execution of the warrant to the court, and the person on whose movable property the distress was levied may, at any time within one month after the making of the distress, inspect the account, without payment of any fee or reward, at any time

during office hours and to take a copy of the account;

d. a person charged with the execution of a warrant of distress shall sell the distress or cause the distress to be sold, and may deduct out of the amount realized by the sale all costs and charges actually incurred in effecting the sale and shall pay to the court or to some person specified by him, the remainder of the amount, in order that:

e. the amount may be applied in payment of the sum for which the warrant was issued, and of the proper costs and charges of the execution of the warrant, and

7. the surplus, if any, may be rendered to the person on whose movable property the distress was levied.

## SECTION 439

Where a part only of the amount ordered to be recovered by distress is so recovered the period of imprisonment ordered to be suffered in default of recovery of the amount imposed shall be reduced accordingly and shall bear the same proportion to the full period as the amount recovered bears to the total amount ordered to be recovered, the warrant of commitment shall be drawn up accordingly.

**Part payment Reduces  
Period of  
Imprisonment in  
Proportion**

## CHAPTER 32: COSTS, COMPENSATION AND DAMAGES

### SECTION 440

4. A criminal court may, within the proceedings or while passing judgment, order that the defendant or convicted person shall pay a sum of money: **Power of court to order Payment of Expenses or Compensation**
3. as compensation to any person injured by the offence, irrespective of any other fine or other punishment that may be imposed or that is imposed on the defendant or convict, where substantial compensation is in the opinion of the court recoverable by civil suit; **Provided the court is satisfied that the convict shall pay the compensation.**
4. in compensating a bona fide purchaser for value without notice of the defect of the title in any property in respect of which the offence was committed and has been compelled to give it up;
5. indefraying expenses incurred in medical treatment of a person injured by the defendant in connection with the offence.
5. If the fine referred to in subsection (1) of this section is imposed in a case which is subject to appeal, no payment additional to the fine shall

be made before the period allowed for presenting the appeal has elapsed or, if an appeal is presented, before the decision on the appeal.

6. Order for cost or compensation may be made under this section irrespective of the fact that no fine has been imposed on the defendant in the judgment effect unless confirmed by the council.

### **SECTION 441**

3. At the time of awarding compensation in any subsequent civil suit relating to the same matter the court shall take into consideration any sum paid or recovered as compensation under this section.

**Payment to be taken  
into Consideration in  
Subsequent Civil Suit**

4. The pendency of criminal proceedings shall not be a bar to a civil action in respect of the same subject matter

### **SECTION 442**

A court after conviction may adjourn proceedings, to consider and determine sentence appropriate for each particular convict:

**Power of Court to  
Order Restitution**

f. in addition to or in lieu of any other penalty authorized by Law, order the convict to make restitution or pay compensation to any victim of the crime for which the offender was convicted, or to the victim's estate;

g. order for the restitution or compensation for the loss or destruction of the victim's property and in so doing the court may direct the convict:

4. to return the property to the owner or to a person designated by the owner,

5. if the return of the property is impossible or impracticable, to pay an amount equal to the value of the property, or

iii) if the property to be returned is inadequate or insufficient, to pay an amount equal to the property calculated on the basis of what is fair and just.

## SECTION 443

5. The court may, in a proceeding instituted by a private prosecutor or on a summons or complaint of a private person, on acquittal of the defendant, order the private prosecutor or person to pay to the defendant such reasonable costs as the court may deem fit.

**Cost against Private  
Prosecutor**

6. No order as to costs as aforesaid may be made if the court considers that the private prosecutor had reasonable grounds for making his complaint and the costs awarded shall not exceed Twenty Thousand Naira (₦ 20,000.00) in the case of an award by a judge or Ten Thousand Naira (₦ 10,000.00) in the case of an award by a magistrate.

**Order may not be  
Made under Certain  
Conditions**

## SECTION 444

Costs may be awarded under this chapter and may be in addition to any compensation awarded and accepted under section 446.

**Costs may be Awarded**

## SECTION 445

In this chapter “private prosecutor” does not include any person prosecuting on behalf of the State, a public officer prosecuting in his official capacity or a police officer prosecuting in his official capacity.

**Meaning of “Private  
Prosecutor**

## SECTION 446

d. Where a person causes the arrest, or arrest and charge of any person or persons and it appears to the Court that there was no sufficient ground for causing the arrest, or that the accusation is false, vexatious or frivolous, it may for reason recorded order the person to pay reasonable compensation to the person or persons arrested or arrested and charged.

**Compensation in case  
of false and Vexatious  
Charge**

e. The Court may, in default of payment of such compensation or any part of it, award a term of imprisonment against the person against whom the order was made, for any term not exceeding the term prescribed in respect of a like sum in the scale of imprisonment set out in this Law or the Court may sentence the person to Community Service in accordance

with provisions of this Law.

f. Subject to the provisions of the Constitution relating to appeals, a person against whom an order for payment of compensation is made under this section may appeal against the order as if he had been convicted after trial by the Court that issued the order.

g. If in any case before a court one or more persons is or are accused of any offence and the court which heard the case discharges or acquits any or all of the defendants and the judge or magistrate presiding over the court is of opinion that the accusation against any or all of them was false and either frivolous or vexatious the judge or magistrate may for reasons to be recorded, direct that compensation, to such an amount not exceeding Twenty Thousand Naira (N20,000.00) as he may determine, be paid to the defendant or to each or any of them by the person upon whose complaint the defendant was or were charged.

## SECTION 447

Any compensation ordered to be paid under this Law or any other Law, relating to any criminal proceedings, may be enforced as if it were a fine.

**Enforcement of  
Award of  
Compensation**

## SECTION 448

3. Where a convict is ordered to pay a fine, or a person is ordered to pay compensation to another person under section 440 of this Law, or a person is subject to recovery of penalty for forfeiture of a bond under this Law, the Court passing the sentence or making the order may, notwithstanding that, in default of the payment of the fine or compensation or penalty, the person may be imprisoned, issue a warrant for the levy of the amount by any means permitted by Law, including:

### **Warrant for Levy of Fine**

6. by the seizure and sale of any movable property belonging to the person;

7. by the attachment of any debts due to the person; and

8. by the attachment and sale of any immovable property of the convict situated within the jurisdiction of the court.

4. A warrant for seizure and sale of the movable property of a person under this section shall be addressed to the court within whose jurisdiction it is to be executed.

5. When execution of a warrant is to be enforced by attachment of debts or sale of immovable property, the warrant shall be sent for execution to any court competent to execute



orders for the payment of money in civil suits and the court shall follow the procedure for the time being in force for the execution of such orders.

## SECTION 449

e. Where a convict has been ordered by Court to pay a fine with or without a sentence of imprisonment in default of payment of the fine, the Court may issue a warrant or exercise all or any of the following powers:

**Powers of Court when  
convict is Sentenced to  
fine Only**

- e. allow time for payment of the fine;
- f. direct that the fine be paid by installments;
- g. postpone the issue of a warrant;
- h. without postponing the issue of a warrant, postpone the sale of any property seized under the warrant;
- i. postpone the execution of the sentence of imprisonment in default of payment of the fine.

f. An order made in the exercise of the powers referred to in subsection (1) of this section may be made subject to the convict giving such security as the court may consider fit, by means of a bond with or without sureties, in which case, the bond may be conditioned either for the payment of the fine in

accordance with the order or for the appearance of the convict as required in the bond or both.

4. The Court may also, in the exercise of the powers referred to in subsection (1) of this section, order that the execution of the sentence of imprisonment on a convict who has been committed to prison in default of payment of a fine, be suspended and that he be released but only subject to the convict giving security as specified in subsection (2) of this section.

5. If the fine or any installment of the fine not being paid in accordance with an order under this section, the authority making the order may enforce payment of the fine or of the balance outstanding, by any means authorized in this Law and may cause the offender to be arrested and may commit or recommit him to prison under the sentence of imprisonment in default of payment of the fine.

## SECTION 450

1. Where in a charge of an offence relating to property and the Court is of the opinion that the evidence is insufficient to support the charge, but that it establishes wrongful conversion or detention of property, the Court may order that such property be restored and

*Award of damages for  
wrongful Conversion or  
Detention of Property*

may also award reasonable damages to the person entitled to the property.

4. The damages awarded under this section, shall be recovered in like manner, as compensation or fine.

5. Any sum so awarded as compensation shall be specified in the order of discharge or acquittal, as the case may be, and the court may order that in default of payment within such time as the court deems proper of any sum awarded for compensation, the person making default be imprisoned, with or without labour, for any term not exceeding the term prescribed in respect of a like sum in the scale of imprisonment set forth in section 422.

## **SECTION 451**

The provisions of sections 440 to 446 shall be subject to any express provision made in any written Law relating to the procedure to be followed in awarding costs or compensation in respect of conditions specified in such written Law.

**Saving of express  
procedure for  
Awarding Costs and  
Compensation**

## **SECTION 452**

An appeal shall lie against any order awarding costs under this chapter, if made by a magistrate to the High Court and if made by a judge to the Court of Appeal.

**Order to pay costs  
Appealable**

## SECTION 453

3. The person to whom compensation is awarded may refuse to accept any such order for compensation but where any person receives compensation for an injury under the award of the court as above mentioned or where the offender, having been ordered to make compensation, suffers imprisonment for non payment thereof, the receipt of such compensation, or the undergoing of such imprisonment, as the case may be, shall be a bar to any action for the same injury.

4. Before making an order under subsection (1) the court shall explain the full effect of that subsection to the person to whom compensation would be payable.

**Injured person may  
refuse to accept  
Compensation:  
Payment of  
Compensation is bar to  
Further Liability**

## CHAPTER 33: DAMAGES IN CASES OF DISHONESTY

## SECTION 454

Where in a charge of stealing or receiving stolen property, the court shall be of opinion that the evidence is insufficient to support that charge, but that it establishes wrongful conversion or detention of property, the court may order that such property be restored, and may also award damages:

**Wrongful conversion  
or Detention of  
Property - where  
Evidence Insufficient  
to Support Charge**

Provided that the value of such property and the amount of Damages Awarded shall not together amount in value to Two Hundred Thousand Naira (N200,000.00).

## **CHAPTER 34: PROBATION AND NON CUSTODIAL ALTERNATIVES**

### **SECTION 455**

c. Where a person is charged before a court with an offence punishable by the court, and the court thinks that the charge is proved but is of the opinion that having regard to:

**Conditional release of  
Offenders**

4. the character, antecedents, age, health, or mental condition, of the person charged;

5. the trivial nature of the offence; or

6. the extenuating circumstances under which the offence was committed, it is inexpedient to inflict a punishment or any other than a nominal punishment or that it is expedient to release the offender on probation, the court may, without proceeding to conviction, make an order specified in subsection (2) of this section.

d. The court may make an order under subsection (1) of this section:

a. dismissing the charge; or

- b. discharging the offender conditionally on his entering into a recognizance, with or without sureties, to be of good behaviour and to appear at any time during such period not exceeding three years as may be specified in the order.
- e. The court may, in addition to an order under subsection (2) of this section, order:
  - c. the offender to pay such damages for injury or compensation for any loss suffered by a person by reason of the conduct or omission of the offender, and to pay such costs of the proceedings as the court thinks reasonable; and
  - d. if the offender has not attained the age of eighteen years and it appears to the court that the parent or guardian of the offender has condoned (conducted) the commission of the offence, the parent or guardian of the offender to pay the damages and costs specified in paragraph (a) of this section.
- f. Where an order under this section is made, the order shall:
  - 5. for the purpose of reinvesting or restoring stolen property and of enabling the court to make orders as to the restitution or delivery of property to the owner; and

- b. as to the payment of money upon or in connection with such restitution or delivery have the like effect as a conviction.

## **SECTION 456**

The court may, in addition to any such order, order the offender to pay such damages for injury or compensation for loss suffered by any person or to pay such costs of the proceedings as the court thinks reasonable and if the offender has not attained the age of seventeen years and it appears to the court that the parent or guardian of the offender has condoned to the commission of the offence the court may under and in accordance with the provisions of Children and Young Persons Law after hearing such parent or guardian, order payment of such damages and costs by such parent or guardian.

**Compensation for loss  
or Injury and costs  
may be Awarded**

## **SECTION 457**

Where an order under this section is made, the order shall, for the purpose of reverting or restoring stolen property and enabling the court to make orders as to the restitution or delivery of property to the owner and as to the payment of money in connection with such restitution or delivery, have the like effect as a conviction.

**Restitution of Stolen  
Property**

## SECTION 458

A recognizance ordered to be entered into under this Part shall, if the court so orders, contain a condition that the offender be under the supervision of such person or persons of same sex as the convicted person, called a probation officer, as may, with the consent of the probation officer, be named in the order during the period specified in the order.

**Probation orders and  
Conditions of  
Recognizance**

## SECTION 459

A recognizance under this chapter may contain such additional conditions with respect to residence, abstention from intoxicating liquor and any other matters as the court may, having regard to the particular circumstances of the case, consider necessary for preventing a repetition of the same offence or the commission of other offences.

**Content of  
Recognizance**

## SECTION 460

The court by which a probation order is made shall furnish to the offender a notice in writing stating in simple terms the conditions he is required to observe.

**The Court makes a  
Notice in Writing**



## SECTION 461

The person named in a probation order may at any time be relieved of his duties and in that case or in case of the death of the person so named, another person may by consent be substituted by the court before which the offender is bound by his recognizance to appear for conviction or sentence.

**Relieving probation  
officer of his Duties**

## SECTION 462

4. A probation officer shall, subject to the directions of the court:

**Duties of Probation  
Officers**

3. if the person on probation is not actually with the probation officer, visit or receive reports on the person under supervision at such reasonable intervals as may be specified in the probation order but not less than each quarter or subject as the probation officer may think fit;

4. see that he observes the conditions of his recognizance;

5. report to the court as to his behaviour; and

6. advise, assist, and befriend him and when necessary to endeavour to find him suitable employment.

5. The Chief Judge shall make regulations with respect to the appointment of probation

officers, including designation of persons of good character as probation officers from which list a court within the district or division of the probation officer resides may make its appointment.

### SECTION 463

The court before which a person is bound by a recognizance under this Part to appear for conviction and sentence or for sentence may:

#### **Variation of terms and Conditions of Probation**

15. at any time if it appears to it on the application of the probation officer that it is expedient that the terms or conditions of the recognizance should be varied, summon the person bound by the recognizance to appear before it and if he fails to show cause why the variation should not be made:

c. vary the terms of the recognizance by extending or diminishing the duration, which shall not exceed three years from the date of the original order, or

d. alter the conditions or insert additional conditions; or

16. on application being made by the probation officer, and on being satisfied that the conduct of the person bound by the recognizance has been such as to make it unnecessary that he be any longer under supervision, discharge the recognizance.

## SECTION 464

If the court before which an offender is bound by his recognizance under this chapter to appear for conviction or sentence is satisfied by information on oath that the offender has failed to observe any of the conditions of his recognizance, it may issue a warrant for his arrest or may if it deems fit instead of issuing a warrant in the first instance issue a summons to the offender and his sureties, if any, requiring him or them to attend at such court and at such time as may be specified in the summons.

**Provisions in case of  
offender Failing to  
Observe Conditions of  
Release**

## SECTION 465

The offender when arrested shall if not brought forthwith before the court before which he is bound by his recognizance to appear for conviction or sentence be brought before another court.

**Offender may be  
brought before  
Another Court**

## SECTION 466

The court before which an offender on arrest is brought or before which he appears in pursuance of such summons as aforesaid may if it is not the court before which he is bound by his recognizance to appear for conviction or sentence, remand him in custody or on bail until he can be brought before the last mentioned court.

**Bail or Remand**

## SECTION 467

An offender so remanded in custody may be committed during remand to any Correctional Service to which the court having power to convict or sentence him has power to commit prisoners. In the case of a child or young person he shall, if remanded, be dealt with wherever practicable in accordance with the provisions of the Children and Young Persons Law.

**Committal to  
Correctional Service  
During Remand**

## SECTION 468

A court before which a person is bound by his recognizance to appear for conviction and sentence on being satisfied that he has failed to observe any conditions of his recognizance may forthwith, without further proof of his guilt, convict and sentence him for the original offence.

**Conviction of Original  
Offence**

## SECTION 469

1. Notwithstanding the provision of any other legislation creating an offence, and where the court sees reason, the court may order that the sentence it imposed on the convict be, with or without conditions, suspended, in which case, the convict shall not be required to serve the sentence in accordance with the conditions of the suspension, if any.

**Suspended Sentence  
and Community  
Service**

c. The court may, with or without conditions, sentence the offender to perform specified service in his community or such community or place as the court may direct.

d. The court, in exercising its power under subsections (1) or (2) of this section shall have regard to the need to:

j. reduce congestion in prisons;

k. rehabilitate prisoners by making them to undertake productive work; and

l. prevent minor offenders mixing with hardened criminals.

Provided that suspended sentence or community service shall not apply in offences involving the use of violent weapon or firearm.

## SECTION 470

d. There shall be established by the Chief Judge in every Judicial Division a Community Service Centre to be headed by a Registrar who shall be a legal practitioner and shall be responsible for overseeing the execution of Community Service Orders in that Division.

**Arrangements for  
Community  
Service**

e. The Registrar shall be assisted by suitable personnel who shall supervise the implementation of Community Service Orders that may be handed down by the courts.

3. The functions of the Community Service

Centre include:

- a. document and keeping detailed information about offenders sentenced to Community Service including the name of the offender, the sentence, the date of the sentence, the nature, duration and location of the Community Service, the physical address of the offender, the physical measurement, photograph, full fingerprint impressions and other means of identification as may be appropriate;
- b. providing assistance to the court in arriving at appropriate Community Service Order in each case;
- c. monitoring the operation of Community Service in all its aspects;
- d. counselling offenders with a view to bringing about their reformation;
- e. recommending to the court a review of the sentence of offenders on Community Service who have shown remorse;
- f. proposing to the Chief Judge measures for effective operation of Community Service Orders;
  - g. ensuring that supervising officers perform their duties in accordance with

the Law; and

- h. performing such other functions as may be necessary for the smooth administration of Community Service Orders.

4. Where the court has made an order committing the offender to render community service, the community service shall be in the nature of:

- a. environmental sanitation, including cutting grasses, washing drainages, cleaning the environment and washing public toilets;
- b. assisting in the production of agricultural produce, construction, or mining; and
- c. any other type of service which in the opinion of the court would have a beneficial and reformatory effect on the character of the offender.

5. The Community Service sentence shall be performed as close as possible to the place where the offender ordinarily resides to ensure that the community can monitor his movement.

6. Before passing a community service order, the court shall consider the circumstances, character, antecedents of the offender and other factors that may be brought to its attention by the Registrar of the Community Service Centre.

7. A person sentenced to community service shall not at the same time be sentenced to a term of imprisonment for the same offence, but may in default of performing his community service diligently and to the satisfaction of the court, be sentenced to a term of imprisonment for the remaining part of his community service to which he is in default or neglect.

8. Upon sentence to community service, an offender shall be required to produce a guarantor who shall undertake to produce the offender if the offender absconds from community service.

9. The guarantor shall be a relation of the offender or any other responsible person of adequate means or substance who shall produce the offender when required by the court, failing which the guarantor shall be liable to a fine of one hundred thousand naira or more as the circumstances of each case may require.

## **SECTION 471**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. The Community Service Order shall be performed for a period of not more than six months and the offender shall not work for more than five hours a day. | <b>Performance of<br/>Community Service<br/>Order</b> |
|--|---|



2. The offender shall be under the supervision of a supervising officer or officers or Non-Governmental Organizations as may be designated by the Community Service Centre.
3. The Community Service Order shall contain such directives as the court may consider necessary for the supervision of the offender.
4. The Registrar of the court making the Community Service Order shall forward to the Registrar of the Community Service Centre a copy of the Order together with any other documents and information relating to the case.

## SECTION 472

1. If at any time during the community service period, the Registrar of the Community Service Centre informs the court of the default of the offender in complying with the directives of the Community Service Order, the court may issue a summons requiring the offender to appear before it.
2. If the offender fails, refuses or neglects to appear in obedience to the summons, the court may issue a warrant of arrest.
3. If it is proved to the satisfaction of the court that the offender has failed to comply with any of the requirements of the Community

**Default of offender in  
complying with  
Community Service  
Order**

Service Order, the court may:

- a. vary the Order to suit the circumstances of the case; or
  - b. impose on him a fine not exceeding One Hundred Thousand Naira (~~₦~~ 100,000.00) or cancel the Order and sentence the offender to any punishment which could have been imposed in respect of the offence, but the period of community service already performed may count in the reduction of the sentence.
4. A supervising officer shall not employ the offender for his or her personal benefit.
  5. If a supervising officer employs the offender for his or her personal benefit, the officer is liable to a fine of One Hundred Thousand Naira (~~₦~~ 100,000.00) or more, or such other punishment as the court considers fit.

### **SECTION 473**

Where an offender has been ordered to undergo community service on conviction by an original court but has committed another offence during the period of community service, the following rules shall apply:

#### **Commission of Further Offence**

- a. the subsequent court may add to the sentence or impose a term of imprisonment which might have been passed by the original court

- and cancel the order of community service;
- b. the subsequent court may take into account the period of Community Service served in reduction of the term of imprisonment;
  - c. where the original court is a High Court and the subsequent court is a subordinate court, the subordinate court shall send the copy of the proceedings to the High Court and on receipt of the proceedings from the subordinate court, the High Court shall proceed under paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section; and
  - d. where the original court is a subordinate court and the subsequent court is a High Court dealing with the matter at first instance or on appeal, the High Court shall proceed under paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section.

## SECTION 474

d. An offender undergoing community service who intends to change his or her place of residence shall inform the supervising officer of his intention to do so.

3. On receipt of the information, the supervising officer shall furnish the Registrar of the Community Service Centre with the information giving the details of the case.

**Amendment and  
review of  
community  
service Orders**

4. On application by the Registrar of the Community Service Centre, the court shall make appropriate amendment in the Community Service Order and inform the court having jurisdiction for the area where the offender intends to reside.
5. The court shall give the offender a copy of the amended Community Service Order which the offender shall present to the subsequent Community Service Centre.

## **SECTION 475**

1. Where an offender has been ordered to undergo community service for a period of more than four months, the supervising officer shall, from time to time, give a report to the Registrar on the offender's performance and general conduct.
2. The supervising court based on the report made by the Registrar, may reduce the period of the community service specified in the Community Service Order by not more than one third where the offender is of good conduct.
3. The Registrar shall make a report to the supervising court on the termination of a Community Service Order.

### **Discharge of Community Service Order**

4. The supervising officer who is to be responsible for the supervision of an offender shall be the officer designated by the Registrar of the Community Service Centre and if that supervising officer dies or is unable for any reason to carry out his duties, another supervising officer shall be appointed by the Registrar of the Community Service Centre.

5. Where the offender is a female, the supervising officer shall be a female.

## SECTION 476

1. A person convicted of an offence triable summarily may be sentenced and ordered to serve the sentence at a Rehabilitation and Correctional Centre in lieu of imprisonment.
2. A court in making an order of confinement at a Rehabilitation and Correctional Centre shall have regard to the following: the age of the person convicted; the fact that the person convicted is a first offender; and any other relevant circumstances necessitating an order of confinement at a Rehabilitation and Correctional Centre.
3. A court may make an order directing that a child standing criminal trial be remanded at Rehabilitation and Correctional Centre.

**Confinement in  
Rehabilitation and  
Correction Centre**

4. A person on probation shall not move away from the jurisdiction of Ebonyi State or such locality as the court may order without the order of court until the period of his probation is expired’.

## **CHAPTER 35: PAROLE**

### **SECTION 477**

1. Where upon the Comptroller General of Correctional Services makes a report to the court recommending that a person:
  - a. sentenced and serving his sentence in Correctional Service is of good behaviour; and
  - b. has served at least one third of his Correctional Service term, if he is sentenced to imprisonment for a term of at least nine years or if he is sentenced to life imprisonment, the court may, after hearing the prosecution and the prisoner or his legal representative, order that the remaining term of his imprisonment be suspended, with or without conditions, as the court considers fit, and the prisoner shall be released from Correctional Service on the order.
2. A prisoner released under subsection (1) of this section shall undergo a rehabilitation programme in a Government Facility or any

**Court may direct  
Release of Prisoner  
before Completion of  
Sentence**

other appropriate facility to enable him to be properly reintegrated to the society.

3. The Comptroller-General of Correctional Services shall make adequate arrangement, including budgetary provision, for the facility.
4. *This section shall not apply to offence of murder, kidnapping, rape, armed robbery and other offences with sentences not less than nine years.*

## CHAPTER 36: WHIPPING

### SECTION 478

No juvenile offender shall be sentenced to be whipped more than once for the same offence.

**To be Whipped once  
Only**

### SECTION 479

Notwithstanding the provisions of any written Law, no sentence of whipping shall be passed on any female or on any male other than a juvenile offender.

**Persons who are not to  
be Sentenced to  
Whipping**

### SECTION 480

Whipping shall be with a light cane or birch or whip, and the number of strokes shall be specified in the sentence and shall not exceed twelve. A whip means a whip of a pattern approved by the Commissioner for Justice.

**Whipping with a light  
Rod and not more than  
Twelve Strokes**

## SECTION 481

Where a juvenile offender is convicted of one or more offences at one trial the total number of strokes awarded shall not exceed twelve.

**Whipping of juvenile  
Offender**

## SECTION 482

In the case of a sentence or order involving corporal punishment such punishment shall be carried out at such place as the court may direct and as soon as practicable unless the juvenile offender convicted gives notice of appeal or of his intention to apply for leave to appeal, as the case may be, in which case such punishment shall not be carried out until the determination of the appeal, or in case where application, and pending the determination of the application to appeal or the appeal, as the case may be, the accused shall be kept in custody or may be released on bail as the court may order.

**Infliction of Sentences  
of Corporal  
Punishment**

## SECTION 483

Where a sentence or order of corporal punishment has upon appeal been confirmed or varied the sentence or order of corporal punishment as confirmed or varied, as the case may be, shall be carried out as soon as practicable thereafter and if the juvenile offender upon whom the sentence or order is to be carried out is on bail and does not surrender to

**Where court may  
Order the Arrest of  
Juvenile Offender**



his bail, or if not in custody does not voluntarily surrender himself, the court which convicted such person may issue a warrant to arrest the said juvenile offender who shall thereupon be apprehended and the sentence or order of corporal punishment shall thereafter be carried out as soon as practicable.

## **CHAPTER 37:**

### **SEIZURE, RESTITUTION, FORFEITURE AND DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY**

#### **SECTION 484**

1. Either before a charge is preferred or during or at the conclusion of any trial, the court may make such order as it thinks fit for the disposal whether by way of forfeiture, confiscation, delivery to any person or otherwise of any movable or immovable property produced before it regarding which any offence appears to have been committed or which has been used for the commission of any offence in the case of any movable property, the production of title document, deed, certificate of occupancy or receipt of purchase of such property shall be deemed as production of the property itself before the court for the purposes of this section.
2. Where the court orders the forfeiture or confiscation of any property as provided in

**Order for Disposal of  
Property Regarding  
which Offence  
Committed**

subsection (1) but does not make an order for its destruction or for its delivery to any person, the court may direct that the property shall be kept or sold and the same if sold, the proceeds thereof shall be held as it directs until some person establishes to the court's satisfaction a right thereto. If no person establishes such a right within six months from the date of forfeiture or confiscation of such property, the proceeds thereof shall be paid into and form part of the general revenue.

3. The power conferred by subsections (1) and (2) upon the court shall include the power to make an order for the forfeiture or confiscation or for the destruction or for the delivery to any person of such property, but shall be exercised subject to any special provisions regarding forfeiture, confiscation, destruction, detention or delivery contained in the written Law under which the conviction was had or in any other written Law applicable to the case.

4. When an order is made under this section in a case in which an appeal lies such order shall not, except when the property is livestock or is subject to speedy and natural decay, be carried out until the period allowed for presenting such appeal is entered until the disposal of such appeal.

5. In this section, the term "property" includes, in the case of property regarding which an

offence appears to have been committed, not only such property as has been originally in the possession or under the control of any party, but also any property into or for which the same has been converted or exchanged and anything acquired by such conversion or exchange, whether immediately or otherwise.

### **SECTION 485**

The court may order the seizure of any instruments, materials or things which there is reason to believe are provided or prepared, or being prepared with a view to the commission of any offence triable by the court and may direct the same to be forfeited, confiscated, held or otherwise dealt with in the same manner as property under section 484.

**Seizure of things  
Intended to be used in  
Commission of  
Offence**

### **SECTION 486**

On a conviction for an offence relating to seditious or obscene publication, the court may order the confiscation and destruction of all the copies of the publication or thing in respect of which the conviction was had and which are in the custody of the court and also all those which remain in the possession or power of the person convicted.

**Destruction of  
Seditious, Prohibited  
or Obscene  
Publications and of  
Obscene Objects**

## SECTION 487

The court may on a conviction for an offence relating to adulterated or unfit food, drink or drug, order the food, drink or drug in respect of which conviction was had and also all other unfit or adulterated food, drink or drug which remain in the possession or power of the person convicted to be destroyed.

**Unfit or Adulterated  
Food**

## SECTION 488

Whereas a magistrate is satisfied by information on oath that there is reasonable ground for believing that there is in the State in any building, ship, carriage, receptacle or place anything in respect of which an order may be made under sections 485 and 487 such magistrate may issue a search warrant to search for any such thing and if such thing be found the same shall be brought before any court and dealt with as the court may think proper.

**Search Warrant may  
be used to Search for  
things Subject to  
Sections 485 and 487**

## SECTION 489

1. Whenever a person is convicted of an offence attended by criminal force and it appears to the court that by such force any person has been dispossessed of any immovable property, the court may, if it thinks fit, order the possession of the same to be restored to such person.

**Restoration of  
Possession of  
Immovable Property**

2. No order under subsection (1) shall prejudice any right or interest to or in such immovable property which any person, including the person convicted, may be able to establish in a civil suit.

**Effect of the Order**

## **SECTION 490**

When any person is convicted of any offence which includes or amounts to stealing or receiving stolen property and it is proved that any other person has bought the stolen property from him without knowing or having reason to believe that the same was stolen, and that the money has on the arrest of the convicted person been taken out of his possession, the court may, on the application of such purchaser and on the restitution of the stolen property to the person entitled to the possession thereof, order that out of such money a sum not exceeding the price paid by such purchaser shall be delivered to him.

**Payment to Innocent  
Person of Money  
Found on Defendant**

## **SECTION 491**

Where upon the arrest of a person charged with an offence, any property, other than that used in the commission of the offence, is taken from him, the court before which he is charged may order that the property or a part thereof be:

**Restitution and  
Disposition of  
Property found on  
Person Arrested**

- a. restored to the person who appears to the court to be entitled thereto, and, if he be the person

- charged, that it be restored either to him or to such other person as he may direct; or
- b. applied to the payment of any costs or compensation directed to be paid by the person charged.

## SECTION 492

1. Where any person is convicted of having stolen or having received stolen property, the court convicting him may order that such property or a part thereof be restored to the person who appears to it to be the owner thereof, either on payment or without payment by the owner to the person in whose possession such property or a part thereof then is, of any sum named in such order.

### **Restitution of Property Stolen**

2. An order made under subsection (1) shall not apply to:
- a. any valuable security which has been bona fide paid or discharged by any person liable to pay or discharge the same; or
- b. any negotiable instrument which have been bona fide received by transfer or delivery by any person for a just and valuable consideration without notice or without any reasonable cause to suspect that it has been stolen.

### ***Exceptions to Restitution Order***

## SECTION 493

Where any person is charged with an offence relating to counterfeit note or coin and in that person's possession, actual or constructive, was found any counterfeit note or coin or any matter or thing intended to be used for the purpose of making counterfeit notes or coins then, whether such charge proceeds to conviction or not, such note or coin or matter or thing shall not be returned to the person charged or the person from whom the same was taken but shall be destroyed in such manner as the court may order.

**Destruction of Articles  
Relating to  
Counterfeiting where  
Charge is Laid**

## SECTION 494

Where any person comes into possession of any note or coin which he believes to be counterfeit or of any matter or thing which in his opinion is to be used for the purpose of making counterfeit notes or coins, he may hand such note, coin, matter or thing to any administrative officer, officer of the Central Bank of Nigeria or any bank or to any Police Officer not below the rank of an inspector, and such Administrative Officer, Officer of the Central Bank of Nigeria or Police Officer if satisfied that such note or coin:

**Destruction of Articles  
Relating to  
Counterfeiting where  
Charge is Laid**

- a. is not counterfeit, or that any of such articles are not intended to be used for the purpose of making counterfeit notes or coins, shall return the note, coin or such articles, as the case may

be, to the person purporting to be the owner thereof, if known; and

- b. is counterfeit or such matter or thing is intended to be used for the purpose of making counterfeit notes or coins and if no charge is to be preferred against any person in connection with any such note, coin, matter or thing, may destroy or cause to be destroyed such note, coin, matter or thing in such manner and by such person as may be approved by the Central Bank of Nigeria or Commissioner for Finance:

Provided that notice shall have been given to the person who appears to be the owner of such note, coin, matter or thing, if such person is known and can easily be found, that such note, coin, matter or thing will be destroyed at the end of a specified number of days unless such owner shows that the note or coin is not counterfeit or that the matter or thing shall have no claim against any such administrative officer, officer of the Central Bank of Nigeria, police officer or the Government in respect of any such note, coin, matter or thing so destroyed.

## SECTION 495

Subject to the express provisions of any written Law relating thereto every article, not pecuniary, forfeited in respect of a summary conviction offence or the

**Mode of Dealing with  
Forfeiture not  
Pecuniary**



seizure, forfeiture or disposition of which may be enforced by the court may be sold or disposed of in such manner as the court may direct, and the proceeds of such sale shall be applied in the like manner as if the proceeds were a penalty imposed under the written law on which the proceeding for the forfeiture is founded.

## **CHAPTER 38:**

### **DETENTION DURING THE GOVERNOR'S PLEASURE**

#### **SECTION 496**

When any person is ordered to be detained during the Governor's pleasure he shall notwithstanding anything in this Law or in any other written law contained be liable to be detained in such place and under such conditions as the Governor may direct and whilst so detained shall be deemed to be in legal custody.

**Conditions Attached to  
Detention During  
Pleasure**

#### **SECTION 497**

1. A person detained during the Governor's pleasure may at any time be discharged by the Governor on license.
2. A license under subsection (1) may be in such form and may contain such conditions as the Governor may direct.

**Discharge of Detainee  
by License**

**Form of License**

3. A license under this section may at any time be revoked or varied by the Governor and where a license has been revoked the person to whom the license relates shall proceed to such place as the Governor may direct and if he fails to do so, may be arrested without warrant and taken to such place.

**Revocation of License**

**CHAPTER 39:**  
**DETENTION IN A SAFE CUSTODY OR**  
**SUITABLE PLACE OTHER THAN**  
**CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OR MENTAL**  
**HEALTH ASYLUM**

**SECTION 498**

1. When a person is ordered to be detained in a safe custody or suitable place other than Correctional Service or mental health asylum, he is notwithstanding anything in this Law or in any other written Law, liable to be detained in a Correctional Service or asylum or such other place as provided under this Law or any Law as the Attorney-General may direct and whilst so detained shall be deemed to be in legal custody.
2. A person detained in a safe custody or suitable place other than Correctional Service or mental health asylum may at any time be discharged by the Attorney-General on licence.

**Conditions attached to  
detention in a safe  
Custody or Suitable  
place other than  
Correctional Service or  
Mental Asylum**

3. The Attorney-General may at any time revoke or vary a licence and where a licence has been revoked, the person to whom the license relates shall proceed to such place as the Attorney-General may direct and if he fails to do so may be arrested without warrant and taken to the place.

**Validity of Action of  
Council or  
Committee**

## **CHAPTER 40: PERSONS OF UNSOUND MIND**

### **SECTION 499**

For the purposes of this chapter unless the context otherwise requires:

**Interpretation**

**“asylum”** includes a lunatic asylum, a mental home or other hospital, a Correctional Service and any other suitable place of safe custody for medical observation;

**“medical officer”** means the medical officer attached to any asylum or any medical officer from whom a court requires an opinion.

### **SECTION 500**

1. When a judge or magistrate has reason to suspect that the defendant is of unsound mind and consequently incapable of making his defence, the judge or magistrate shall in the first instance investigate the fact of such unsoundness of mind.

**Procedure when  
Defendant is  
Suspected to be of  
Unsound Mind**

2. The investigation may be held in the absence of the defendant if the court is satisfied that owing to the state of the defendant's mind it would be in the interests of the safety of the defendant or of other persons or in the interests of public decency that he should be absent, and the court may receive as evidence a certificate in writing signed by a medical officer to the effect that such defendant is in his opinion of unsound mind and incapable of making his defence or is a proper person to be detained for observation in an asylum, or the court may if it sees fit, take oral evidence from a medical officer on the state of mind of such defendant.

**Procedure for  
Investigation in the  
Absence of the  
Defendant**

3. If the judge or magistrate is not satisfied that such person is capable of making his defence, the court shall postpone the trial and shall remand such person for a period not exceeding one month to be detained for observation in an asylum.

**Defendant is Detained  
for Observation if the  
Court is not Satisfied**

4. The medical officer shall keep such person under observation during the period of his remand and before the expiration of such period shall certify under his hand to the court his opinion as to the state of mind of such person, and if he is unable within the period to form any definite conclusion, shall so certify to the court and shall ask for a further remand. Such further remand may extend to a period of two months.

**The Medical Officer  
shall Certify his  
Finding**

## SECTION 501

Any court before which a person suspected to be of unsound mind is accused of any offence may, on the application of a law officer or defendant's legal practitioner made at any stage of the proceedings prior to the trial, order that such person be sent to an asylum for observation.

**Application for  
Medical Examination  
of Defendant**

## SECTION 502

1. The medical officer may, notwithstanding any other provision of law detain any such defendant for such period, not exceeding one month or such period as the judge or magistrate may allow, as may be necessary to enable him to form an opinion as to the state of mind of such person, and shall forward a copy of his opinion in writing to the court.
2. If such medical officer shall certify that the defendant is of sound mind and capable of making his defence, the court shall, unless satisfied by the defence that the defendant is of unsound mind, proceed with the trial.
3. If such medical officer shall certify that such person is of unsound mind and incapable of making his defence, the judge or magistrate shall, if satisfied of the fact, find accordingly, and postpone the trial.

**Detention of the  
Defendant by Medical  
Officer for Observation**

**Certificate of Medical  
Officer**

**Court may Postpone  
Trial under Certain  
Circumstances**

4. The trial of the issue as to whether or not the defendant is of unsound mind and incapable of making his defence shall, if the finding is that he is of sound mind and capable of making his defence, be deemed to be part of his trial before the court.
5. The certificate of the medical officer shall be receivable as evidence under this section.

**The evidence proving  
Soundness of Mind is  
Deemed a Part of Trial**

**Evidence of Medical  
Certificate**

### **SECTION 503**

If the defendant is certified to be of unsound mind and incapable of making his defence it shall not be necessary for him to be present in court during proceedings under this chapter.

**Defendant may not  
Attend Court**

### **SECTION 504**

Whenever a defendant is found to be of unsound mind and incapable of making his defence, the court, if the offence charged is bailable by the court, may, in its discretion, release him on sufficient security being given that he shall be properly taken care of and shall be prevented from doing injury to himself or to any other person, and of his appearance when required before the court or such officer as the court appoints in that behalf.

**Release of person of  
Unsound mind  
Pending Investigation  
or Trial**

## SECTION 505

If such a defendant is before a magistrate charged with an offence which is bailable by a judge but not by a magistrate or if the offence is bailable by a magistrate but the magistrate refuses to grant bail, such magistrate shall inform the defendant of his right to apply to a judge for bail.

**Magistrate informs the  
Defendant of his right  
to Apply to a Judge for  
Bail**

## SECTION 506

1. If the offence charged is not bailable by the Magistrate's Court or if a judge has refused bail under section 505 or after an application made under section 505 or if sufficient security is not given or if no application is made for bail the judge shall report the case to the Commissioner of Justice who after consideration of the report may, in his discretion, order the defendant to be confined in an asylum or other suitable place of safe custody and the judge shall give effect to such order.
2. Pending the order of the Commissioner of Justice the defendant may be committed to prison or other suitable place of safe custody for safe custody.

**Procedure when  
Offence is not Bailable**

## SECTION 507

Whenever a trial is postponed under subsection (3) of section 500 the court may continue with the trial or commence the trial de novo depending on the circumstances of the case and require the defendant to appear or be brought before such court.

### Resumption of Trial

## SECTION 508

When the defendant has been released under section 504 the court may at any time require the defendant to appear or be brought before it and may again proceed under section 500.

### Resumption of Proceedings

## SECTION 509

Whenever any person is acquitted upon the ground that at the time at which he is alleged to have committed an offence he was by reason of unsoundness of mind incapable of knowing the nature of the act alleged as constituting the offence or that it was wrong or contrary to law, the finding shall state specifically whether he committed the act or not.

### Judgment of Acquittal on ground of Mental Disorder

## SECTION 510

1. Whenever the finding states that the defendant committed the act alleged, the court before which the trial has been held shall, if such act would but for incapacity found have

### Safe Custody of Person Acquitted



constituted an offence, order such person to be kept in safe custody in such place and manner as the court thinks fit and shall report the case for the order of the Attorney-General.

2. The Attorney-General may order such person to be confined in an asylum, prison or other suitable place of safe custody.

## SECTION 511

When any person is confined under section 506 or section 510 the medical officer of the Correctional Service if such person is confined in a Correctional Service, or the medical officer attached to the asylum if he is confined in any asylum, shall keep him under observation in order to ascertain his state of mind and such medical officer shall make a special report for the information of the Attorney-General as to the state of mind of such person at such time or times as the Attorney-General shall require.

### **Observation of Prisoners of Unsound Mind**

## SECTION 512

If the medical officer of a Correctional Service or the medical officer attached to an asylum in which a person is confined under section 506 or section 510 shall certify that such person in his judgment may be discharged without danger of his doing injury to himself or to any other person, the Attorney-General may thereupon order him to be discharged or to be detained in custody or Correctional Service or to be transferred to an asylum if he has not already been

### **Procedure when Person of Unsound mind is Reported Jit for Discharge**

sent to such an asylum, and in case he orders him to be transferred to an asylum may require the Director of Medical Services of the State to appoint two medical officers to report on the state of mind of such person and upon any other facts the Attorney- General may require and on receipt of such report the Attorney-General may order his discharge or detention as he deems fit.

### SECTION 513

Where a person is confined in Correctional Service or any asylum, the Attorney-General may direct his transfer from one Correctional Service or asylum to any other Correctional Service or asylum as often as may be necessary.

**Transfer from one  
place of Custody to  
Another**

### SECTION 514

1. Whenever any relative or friend of any person confined under sections 506 or 510 desires that such person shall be delivered over to his care and custody, the Attorney-General upon the application of such relative or friend and on his giving security to the satisfaction of the Attorney-General that the person delivered shall be properly taken care of and shall be prevented from doing injury to himself or to any other person, may in his discretion order such person to be delivered to such relative or friend.

**Delivery of person of  
Unsound Mind to  
Care of Relative**

Provided that if such person is confined under the provisions of section 506, the Attorney- General may further require such relative or friend to give security to the satisfaction of the Attorney-General that if at any time it shall appear to the Attorney-General that such person is capable of making his defence, such relative or friend shall produce such person for trial.

5. Whenever such person is so delivered to the care and custody of any person, it shall be upon condition that he shall be produced for the inspection of such officer and at such times as the Attorney-General directs.

6. Sections 511 and 512 shall *mutatis mutandis* apply to persons delivered to the care and custody of persons under this section.

## SECTION 515

Whenever it shall be necessary to remove a prisoner to a prison or asylum under the provisions of sections 500 to 513, an order for such removal given under the provisions of the said Sections shall be sufficient authority for such removal and the detention of such prisoner notwithstanding that such prison or asylum is situate in another State in Nigeria.

*Removal to another  
State*

## **CHAPTER 41: TRIAL OF CORPORATION**

### **SECTION 516**

The provisions of this chapter shall apply to all trials held under this Law and where there is a conflict between the provisions of this chapter and any other provisions of this Law, the provisions of this chapter shall prevail.

**Application of this  
Chapter**

### **SECTION 517**

c. In this chapter “representative” in relation to a corporation means a person duly appointed by the corporation to represent it for the purpose of doing any act or thing which the representative of a corporation is by this chapter authorized to do, but a person so appointed shall not, by virtue only of being so appointed, be qualified to act on behalf of the corporation before any court for any other purpose.

**Interpretation**

d. A representative for the purposes of this chapter need not be appointed under the seal of the corporation, and a statement in writing purporting to be signed by a managing director of the corporation, or by any person (by whatever name called) having, or being one of the persons having, the management of

the affairs of the corporation, to the effect that the person named in the statement has been appointed as the representative of the corporation for the purposes of this chapter, shall be admissible without further proof as prima facie evidence that the person has been so appointed.

### **SECTION 518**

Where a corporation is called upon to plead to any charge or information it may enter in writing by its representative a plea of guilty or not guilty or any such plea as may be permitted under this Law, and if either the corporation does not appear by a representative or, though it does so appear, fails to enter as aforesaid any plea, the court shall order a plea of not guilty to be entered and the trial shall proceed as though the corporation had duly entered a plea of not guilty.

#### **Plea by Corporation**

### **SECTION 519**

An information may be preferred against a corporation after the preparation of the proofs of evidence relating to the charge.

#### **Information Against a Corporation**

### **SECTION 520**

An information under section 519 may include, either in substitution for or in addition to counts

#### **Joinder of Counts in same Information**

charging the offence for which proof of evidence have been prepared counts which may be lawfully joined in the same information and are founded on facts or evidence disclosed in the proofs of evidence.

## SECTION 521

A representative may on behalf of a corporation:

**Power of  
Representative**

- a. state whether the corporation is ready to be tried on a charge or information or altered charge or information to which the corporation has been called on to plead under the provisions of subsection (1) of section 314;
- b. consent to the hearing and determination of a complaint before the return date of a summons in accordance with section 123;
- c. express assent to the trial of the corporation on information, notwithstanding that a copy of the information and notice of trial have not been served on the corporation three days or more before the date on which the corporation is to be tried.

## SECTION 522

Where a representative appears, any requirement of this Law that anything shall be done in the presence of the defendant, or shall be read or said or explained to the defendant, shall be construed as a requirement

**Matters to be read or  
said or Explained to  
Representative**

that thing shall be done in the presence of the representative or read or said or explained to the representative.

### **SECTION 523**

Where a representative does not appear, any such requirement as is referred to in section 518 of the Law shall not apply.

**Non Appearance of  
Representative**

### **SECTION 524**

Subject to the preceding provisions of this chapter, the provisions of this Law relating to the inquiry into and trial of offences shall apply to a corporation as they apply to an adult.

**Saving**

### **SECTION 525**

A corporation may be charged jointly and tried with an individual for any offence.

**Joint charge against  
Corporation and  
Individual**

## **CHAPTER 42:**

## **PREVIOUS ACQUITTAL OR CONVICTION**

### **SECTION 526**

In this chapter “offence” includes an offence against the Law of any other State in Nigeria.

**Interpretation**

## SECTION 527

1. Without prejudice to section 321, a person charged with an offence shall not be liable to be tried for that offence if it is shown that he has previously been convicted or acquitted:
  - a. of the same offence by a competent court;
  - b. by a competent court on a charge on which he might have been convicted of the offence charged; or
  - c. by a competent court of an offence other than the offence charged, being an offence for which, apart from this Section, he might be convicted by virtue of being charged with the offence charged.
2. Nothing in subsection (1) of this Section shall prejudice the operation of any Law giving power to any court, on an appeal, to set aside a verdict or finding of any other court and order a re-trial.

**Person once convicted  
or Acquitted not to be  
Retried for Same or  
Related Offence**

## SECTION 528

A person acquitted or convicted of any offence may afterwards be tried for any distinct offence for which a separate charge might have been made against him on the previous trial.

**May be tried again on  
Separate Charge in  
Certain Cases**



## SECTION 529

A person acquitted or convicted of any offence constituted by any act or omission causing consequences which together with such act or omission constitute a different offence from that for which he was acquitted or convicted may afterwards be tried for such last mentioned offence if the consequences had not happened or were not known to the court to have happened at the time when he was acquitted or convicted when such consequences create the offence of murder or manslaughter.

**Consequences  
Supervening or not  
known at Previous  
Trial**

## SECTION 530

A person acquitted or convicted of any offence constituted by any act or omission may notwithstanding such acquittal or conviction, be subsequently charged with and tried for the same or any other offence constituted by the same acts or omissions if the court by which he was first tried was not competent to try the offence with which he was first charged.

**Where court at first  
Trial was not  
Competent**

## SECTION 531

The dismissal of a complaint or the discharge of the defendant is not an acquittal for the purposes of sections 527 to 530.

**Dismissal of Charge**

## **CHAPTER 43:**

### **INQUIRIES BY DIRECTION OF ATTORNEY-GENERAL**

#### **SECTION 532**

Where a sworn information is made before any magistrate that an offence against a Law of Ebonyi State has been committed, the Attorney-General may, whether or not any known person be charged with the commission of the offence, direct any magistrate to hold an inquiry under this chapter and may, if he deems fit, direct that such inquiry be held in camera.

**Inquiries by direction  
of Attorney-General**

#### **SECTION 533**

The officer so directed shall then examine on oath concerning such offence any person whom he has reason to believe to be able to give material evidence concerning it, other than a person confessing himself to be the offender, and shall take the deposition of such witness and, if he sees cause, bind such witness by his own recognizance to appear and give evidence at any place where, and at any time when, he may be called upon to do so.

**Conduct of Inquiry**

## SECTION 534

At the conclusion of an inquiry under this chapter the said magistrate shall forward to the Attorney- General the original depositions and recognizances of the witnesses together with his report upon the proceedings and shall state in such report his opinion as to the persons implicated in the commission of such offence.

**Report**

## SECTION 535

The provisions contained in this Law relating to summoning witnesses and to compelling their attendance and to their examination on oath and to binding them over to give evidence, shall apply for the purposes of an inquiry under this chapter.

**Procedure**

## SECTION 536

If a person is put upon his trial for an offence respecting which an inquiry under this chapter has been held, he shall, if he so requests, be supplied free of charge with an authenticated copy of all depositions taken at such inquiry.

**Person charged  
Entitled to Copy of  
Deposition**

## SECTION 537

A witness examined at such inquiry shall not be excused from answering any question on the ground that the answer thereto may incriminate or tend to

**Statements of  
Witnesses Privileged**

incriminate him but any confession or answer by a person to a question put at such examination shall not, except in the case of any criminal proceeding for perjury committed at or after the holding of such inquiry, be in any proceeding admissible in evidence against him.

## **CHAPTER 44:**

### **THE JUSTICE SECTOR REFORM TEAM**

#### **SECTION 538**

1. There is hereby established a body to be known as the Ebonyi State Justice Reform Team (in this Law referred to as “the ESJRT”).
2. The Criminal Justice Committee Law of Ebonyi State is hereby repealed
3. The ESJRT shall consist of-
  - a. the Honourable Attorney General / Commissioner of Justice, Ebonyi State who shall be the chairman;
  - b. the Chief Judge;
  - c. the President Customary Court of Appeal;
  - d. the Commissioner of Police;
  - e. the Controller of Correctional Services;
  - f. a respected private legal practitioner or

**Establishment of the  
Ebonyi State Justice  
Reform Team**

**Repeal of Cap —  
Laws of Ebonyi State**

- justice sector expert from academia;
- g. a High Court Judge;
- h. a Judge of the Customary Court of Appeal;
- i. the Chief Registrar of the High Court;
- j. the Chief Registrar of the Customary Court of Appeal;
- k. the Director of Public Prosecutions;
- l. the Administrative Chief Magistrate, Abakaliki Magisterial District;
- m. a Representative of the State House of Assembly;
- n. a Chairman of any NBA branch in Ebonyi State to be elected from among the Chairmen of the branches;
- o. two representatives of civil society organisations based in the State;
- p. a representative of the Ministry for Chieftaincy Affairs;
- q. a Representative of the State Traditional Rulers' Council;
- r. the Zonal Director of the Legal Aid Council;
- s. the Zonal Director of the National Human Rights Commission;
- t. a representative of Ministry of Women Affairs;

- u. a representative of the National Council of Women Society;
  - v. the Director, Citizens Rights and Mediation Centre; and
  - w. the Officer in Charge Community Policing in Ebonyi State.
4. The Attorney General shall appoint persons mentioned in subsection (3)(f) and (o) of this section
5. Members of the Team shall hold office for four years renewable only once and may be paid such allowances as may be determined by the Attorney-General.

## SECTION 539

1. Subject to any other provision of this Law, the team shall perform the following functions:
- Functions of the Team*
- a. monitor delivery of justice;
  - b. identify issues that prevent effective, fair and efficient criminal justice delivery in the State;
  - c. initiate reforms and help identify reform options;
  - d. influence service delivery organisations to provide improved services;
  - e. monitor implementation of projects and other initiatives;

- f. co-ordinate through cross-organizational relationship and building within the team;
- g. identify the problems that militate against speedy, efficient and equitable administration of justice in the State;
- h. offer relevant and practicable suggestions for reform to the appropriate authorities;
- i. promote and facilitate stakeholders' interactions in the justice sector;
- j. facilitate the increased use of alternative dispute resolution methods;
- k. facilitate human rights observance in the administration of justice;
- l. act as an effective link between stakeholders including the donor community and the State Government in the reform of the justice sector;
- m. encourage effective and responsible policing by adoption of international policing best practices in the State;
- n. encourage the adoption of international minimum standards for treatment of offenders and prisoners in the State; and
- o. encourage processes for ensuring public safety and security.

2. The Team shall adopt a Charter to regulate the carrying out of its functions.
  3. Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1) of this section, the Team shall ensure that:
    - a. the provisions of this Law are effectively and efficiently implemented in the State;
    - b. congestion of criminal cases in courts is drastically reduced;
    - c. congestion in Correctional Services is reduced to the barest minimum;
    - d. the relationship between the organs charged with the responsibility for all aspects of the administration of justice is cordial and there exists maximum cooperation amongst the organs in the administration of justice in the State;
    - e. it collates, analyzes and publishes annually information in relation to the administration of criminal justice sector in the State; and
    - f. it carries out such other activities as are conducive to the effective and smooth administration of criminal justice.
- Further Functions of  
the Team**



## SECTION 540

1. The team shall establish and maintain a secretariat with such number of staff as it considers necessary for the efficient running of its affairs;
2. The Secretariat shall be headed by the Secretary who shall be appointed by the Attorney-General on the recommendation of the Committee.
3. The Secretary shall be a legal practitioner of not less than five years post call experience and shall possess sound knowledge of the practical functioning of the criminal justice system and adequate experience in justice system administration.
4. Subject to the provision of any other Law in this regard, the Secretary shall hold office on such terms as to emoluments and otherwise as may be specified in his letter of appointment.
5. The Secretary shall be responsible for the execution of the policy of the team and the day to day running of the affairs of the team.

### **Secretariat of the Team**

## SECTION 541

1. There shall be the following officers of the Team who shall be elected from among its members for three years tenure renewable

### **Officers of the Team**

only once, namely:

- a. The Team facilitator
- b. The Deputy Team facilitator
- c. Secretary
- d. Publicity Secretary/PRO

2. The officers mentioned in subsection (1) of this section shall have the following functions:

**Duties of the Officers  
of the Team**

- a. The facilitator shall:
  - i. preside over all meetings of the ESJRT and facilitate meetings of the Management Committee
  - ii. coordinate the activities of the members of the Team in the discharge of their duties, and
  - iii. approve expenditure for the running of the Team's secretariat
- b. The Deputy facilitator shall, in the absence of the facilitator perform all the functions in subsection (2) (a) of this section.
- c. The Secretary shall on the advice of the facilitator:
  - i. be in charge of the day to day running of the Team secretariat, including managing the Registry

- ii. manage the financial affairs of the team and ensure that relevant financial record and reports are prepared
  - iii. circulate notices and minutes of meetings to members
  - iv. record proceedings during meetings of the Team
  - v. perform or cause to be performed all other such functions as the facilitator may from time to time assign to him.
- d. The Publicity Secretary shall:
- i. publicize activities of the team
  - ii. arrange for meetings and other social functions as directed by the Teams facilitator
  - iii. perform any other duty which may be assigned to him by the Teams' Facilitator.

## **SECTION 542**

1. The Team shall maintain an account to be known as the Reform Team's Account. All sums accruing to the Team shall be paid into the said account. The Facilitator, Deputy Facilitator and Secretary shall be signatories to the said account. Any two of the named
- Funds and Accounts**

signatories will be sufficient to make withdrawals from the said account.

2. The Secretary shall submit to the Attorney-General not later than 30<sup>th</sup> September in each financial year, an estimate of its expenditure and income during the next financial year.

### **SECTION 543**

The Team shall prepare and publish an annual report of its activities. **Annual Report**

### **SECTION 544**

1. For the purpose of carrying out the functions conferred on the Team under this Law, the Team: **Power to obtain Information**
  - a. shall have a right of access to all the records of any of the organs in the administration of justice sector to which this Law applies; and
  - b. may by notice in writing served on any person in charge of any such organs require that person to furnish information on such matters as may be specified in the notice.
2. A person required to furnish information pursuant to subsection (1) of this section shall comply with the notice within a stipulated time.

## SECTION 545

The Team may adopt a charter or make any standing orders regulating its proceedings.

**Charter and Standing  
Order**

## CHAPTER 45: MISCELLANEOUS

### SECTION 546

1. Subject to the express provisions, if any, of the rules, the forms and precedents contained in the First, Second and Third Schedules may, in accordance with any instructions contained in the said forms, and with such variations as the circumstances of the particular case may require, be used in the cases to which they apply and, when so used, shall be good and sufficient in Law.

**Use of forms in First  
Second and Third  
Schedule**

2. The forms in the said Schedules may be added to, revoked, replaced or varied by the rules in all respects as if they had originally been so made.

### SECTION 547

From and after the coming into operation of this Law no person shall be committed for trial on a coroner's inquisition.

**No Committal for trial  
by Coroner**

## SECTION 548

Subject to the provisions of sections 549 and 550, in every proceeding had before any court such fees as may be prescribed under this Law shall be paid.

**Payment of Fees**

## SECTION 549

A court may in any proceeding in which good cause appears to the court for so doing, suspend payment of any fees payable therein until the conclusion of such proceeding and the court may then direct such fees to be paid as costs by any party to the proceeding by whom the court has power to order costs to be paid or remit the payment of such fees.

**Court may Waive Fees**

## SECTION 550

The provisions of this Law relating to fees and to the giving of security shall not apply to the State or to any public officer acting in his official capacity.

**State not Required to  
Pay Fees**

## SECTION 551

The Chief Judge may make rules in respect of all or any of the following matters:

**Power to make Rules  
of Court**

- a. fees to be paid under this Law;
- b. forms to be used for the process and procedure of the courts;
- c. accounts to be rendered of moneys received

by any person under this Law;

- d. the method of issue of process under this Law; and the manner of receipt of and accounting for fees in respect of such process;
- e. prescribing anything or any person required to be prescribed under the provisions of this Law; and
- f. generally for carrying into effect the purpose of this Law. Where rules are made under this section, separate rules shall be made in respect of the practice and procedure in the High Court and in Magistrates' Courts, save where the procedure prescribed by such rules applies equally to the High Court and to Magistrates' Courts.

## SECTION 552

The Purpose of this Law is to make Provisions for *Object and Purpose* Procedure to be followed in Criminal Cases in High Court and Magistrates' Courts in Ebonyi State and for Other Matters Related Thereto.

## SCHEDULE I

# FORM A

This printed impression has been carefully compared by me with the Bill which has been passed into Law by the Ebonyi State House of Assembly and found by me to be a true and correctly printed copy of the said Bill.

**ANASI PATRICIA O. (MRS)**  
**CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY,**  
**EBONYI STATE OF NIGERIA.**

Dated this..... day of.....2019

## FORM B

**ENGR. CHIEF DAVID NWEZE UMAHI**

Assented to by me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of. \_\_\_\_\_ 2019

**(FNSE, FNATE)**

GOVERNOR,  
EBONYI STATE OF NIGERIA

# FORM C

I withhold my assent.

**GOVERNOR  
EBONYI STATE OF NIGERIA**

Dated this

day of

2019



**FORM D**

This Bill to which the Governor has by Letter Reference No .....

Dated this ..... day of.....2019

Signified the withholding of his assent has again been passed by the House of Assembly  
of Ebonyi State of Nigeria by a two third majority this .....day of  
.....2019.

CLERK OF THE EBONYI STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Dated at Abakaliki this .....day of.....2019

**OR**

Passed by the House of Assembly of Ebonyi State of Nigeria by a two third

majority this.....day of .....2019

This printed impression has been carefully compared by me with the Bill which has been  
passed into Law by the House of Assembly of Ebonyi State of Nigeria and found by me to  
be a true and correctly printed copy of the said Bill.

CLERK OF THE EBONYI STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Dated this ..... day of.....2019