



**AJLC Volume 5 Number 3 (2015) 144-158**

ISSN 2045-8525 (Online) ISSN-2045-8401(Print)

Publishers: Sacha & Diamond, England, United Kingdom

Website: [www.sachajournals.com](http://www.sachajournals.com)

Paper Status: Priority Peer Reviewed, Accepted and Published



## AN EXPLORATORY TREATISE ON CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

Prominent among the many challenges facing Nigeria is corruption. Corruption is the *primus inter pares*. It is growing at an alarming rate. It is estimated that, more than 40% of the crude oil revenue accruable to the country daily is lost to corruption. Unfortunately, the situation is even worse in the solid mineral sector. Arguably, there is no type of mineral resources in the World that cannot be found in Nigeria. All these are privately mined and stolen from the country, thereby depriving Nigeria of huge revenue that would have accrued to the Country. It is against the backdrop of this social and economic malevolent impasse that this article seeks to explore the fundamental reasons pervade corruption in Nigeria. The article further provides critical evaluation of the role of private and public actors in the sustenance of corruption. It traced the origin of corruption and attempted to adduce reasons why corruption is entrenched in Nigeria. The article proffers possible solutions for curbing the endemic malady bedeviling Nigeria.

*Keywords:* Corruption, Law, Politics, Social Justice, Economy, Nigeria.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, the most populous Black Country in the world and the biggest economy in Africa has an area of about 923, 768 square kilometers and lies between Latitudes 40 and 140 degrees north of the Equator and Longitudes 30 and 140 degrees east of the Greenwich Meridian in the West African sub region. Richly endowed with both human and material resources to the admiration and envy of other countries, the country is still wallowing in abject poverty and entangled in excruciating clutches of a hydra – headed monster called corruption.

Corruption is eating deeper into the fabric of Nigeria. Like the Medusa's hair, it has defied every attempt at eradicating it. The level of criminal activities (the chief of which is corruption) in the country is on the geometrical ascendance. Bare faced looting of public treasury, including but not limited to, fuel subsidy scam enriches only but a few while impoverishing the greater majority of the populace. Pension scam, money laundering, economic crimes of all sorts, oil bunkering, kidnapping, extra-judicial killings, the atrocious massacre of innocent souls, intellectual dishonesty are prevalent. Nepotism has made mediocrities, incompetent and inefficient corrupt public officials to be elevated to the top echelon of positions at the expense of prudent, resourceful, competent and efficient ones. Personal aggrandizement subsists to the detriment of the society and the general public.

Accusations of corruption are not too infrequently leveled against government institutions and several individuals in positions of authority. The religious sectors of the society that are supposed to be custodians of moral renaissance have jettisoned caution to the winds. They have thrown decorum to the dogs. Clergymen celebrate and worship corruption. They even conduct ostentatious thanksgiving for electoral rogues and people of questionable character and means. Clergymen rationalize evil by preaching fatalism and support whoever that is in government, whether he got there by hook or crook. It is very difficult to find an institution in Nigeria today that is exempted from this malaise.

Nigeria that was once the pride of the black race is now enmeshed in the pool of degradation and scorn. Corruption and other forms of economic vices have been on the geometric upsurge. The alarming dimension of such crimes has not gone infrequently unnoticed. In our acquisitive society, people are rated in terms of what they own as against what they are. Social climbing based on illicit wealth is not frowned upon. Some are given chieftaincy titles, knights, deacons and deaconesses as a camouflage. Public office is regarded as a vehicle to amass wealth and unbridled affluence and not as a merit for rendering invaluable services to the collective good of the whole.

In contemporary times, corruption is arguably the greatest obstacle to social and economic development *writ large*<sup>1</sup>. Economically, corruption is blamed for encouraging waste, promoting resource distribution asymmetries, distorting markets and competition, producing revenue losses, decelerating investment opportunities, privileging non-productive rent seeking activities, and fueling distortions in economic policy<sup>2</sup>. In the social arena, corruption originating from inter-ethnic rivalry and aimed at the control of State machinery for private or sectarian interests is said to be at the root of pervasive social conflicts.<sup>3</sup> In the political sphere, corruption is seen as undermining the State's capacity and its institutions to function properly to deliver public goods and services to the citizenry.<sup>4</sup> Corruption also undermines the electoral process and erodes trust and legitimacy in the polity<sup>5</sup>. Intellectual dishonesty had been and is still the bane of the Ivory Towers and has brought no mean disrepute to these institutions that some of them are today better described as glorified secondary schools.

## 2. POST-COLONIAL EXTERNALITIES

To properly appreciate the genesis and dynamics of Corruption in Nigeria, the searchlight of this discourse beams on the colonial administration and some selected post-colonial era, viz.; 1995 – 1998, 1999 – 2007, and 2007 till date. The apparent perverseness of corruption in different parts of the world has no doubt given it a pride of place on both the local and international discourse. It is trite that no region or country is immune from corruption, some

<sup>1</sup> World Bank, "World Bank's World on Governance and Public Sector Management," available at [www.worldbank.org/publicsector/anticorruption/index.cfm](http://www.worldbank.org/publicsector/anticorruption/index.cfm), accessed on 1/1/2016

<sup>2</sup> Jacqueline Coolidge and Susan Rose – Ackerman, "High – Level Rent Seeking and Corruption in African Regimes: Theory and Cases," Policy Research Working Paper, No. 1780, The World Bank, Private Sector Development Department, available at <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/intwbgovantcor/Resources/wps1780.pdf>, assessed on 1/12/2015

<sup>3</sup> Daniel E. Agbibo, and Benjamin Maiangwa, "Corruption in the Underdevelopment of the Niger Delta in Nigeria," *Journal of Pan African Studies*, 5, 8 (2012):108 – 102; Bertram Spector, *Negotiating Peace and Confronting Corruption* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> Jean – Francois Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London: Longman House, 1993) Roberta A. Johnson, *The Struggle Against Corruption: A Comparative Study* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> Shola J. Omotola, "Elections and Democratic Transition in Nigeria under the Fourth Republic," *African Affairs* 109, 437 (2010); Paul D. Ocheje, "Law and Social Change: A Socio – Legal Analysis Of Nigeria's Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act, 2000," *Journal of Africa Law* 45, 2 (2001): 173 – 195.

countries are more vulnerable than others, and may suffer more grievous consequences<sup>6</sup>. In Nigeria, corruption features prominently in the discourses of the deepening crises and contradictions of the post-colonial State.<sup>7</sup> The level of attention devoted to the topic may not be unconnected to its rapid and unprecedented expansionist tendencies to all facets of human endeavor coupled with its menacing social and economic ramifications, but also its seeming fecklessness of successive attempts to combating it.<sup>8</sup> The problem has permeated all levels of the national polity to the extent that both scholars and commentators now talk about a political culture of corruption in Nigeria.<sup>9</sup> Thus, corruption has remained protracted and the search for a panacea – a physician to heal the country of corruption continues.

Assuredly, Nigeria has featured prominently among the world's most corrupt countries, and at times topping the list.<sup>10</sup> Corruption in Nigeria has become endemic that the country is now ably qualified to be classified as “those whose national integrity system has effectively collapsed.”<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, as the continent's most populous and oil – rich country, and the largest economy in Africa, Nigeria is not only a regional hegemon but also a force to reckon with in the global economy. As a result, whatever happens in Nigeria concerns both the region and the World at large. It is appalling and disheartening that despite the country's abundant natural resources; over 100 million of its estimated 160 million inhabitants (approximately 64 per cent) live on less than £1. 00 a day. Thus, the country has the largest number of poor people in the world after India and China.<sup>12</sup>

### 3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The imperative of a conceptual clarification of some key words becomes necessary in view of the fact that English Language is not an instrument of mathematical precision.<sup>13</sup> More so, the law by its very nature admits some ambiguities in certain respects. There is no universally accepted definition of corruption. This stems from the fact that there are various acts and omissions which may culminate to corruption depending on the peculiar circumstance of each case, provided that the *actus reus* and the *mens rea* are present in each circumstance. Naturally, a word may connote many things. It therefore becomes necessary to put in proper perspective the words used by giving their denotative meaning.

Contemporary social science defines corruption from three perspectives, *viz*: public-office centered definitions; market – centered definitions, and public interest – centered definitions.<sup>14</sup> It is important to note from the outset that there is no water-tight demarcation of the three concepts. Rather, there is an interface with one another since they all assume the separation of the public and private spheres, and view corruption as the inappropriate mix of the

<sup>6</sup> Glynn Patrick, Stephen J. Kobrin, Moises Naim, “The Globalization of Corruption,” in *Corruption and the Global Economy*, ed. Kimberly A. Elliot (Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 1997). 7 – 27.

<sup>7</sup> Shola J. Omotola, “Through a Glass Darkly: Assessing the ‘New’ War against Corruption in Nigeria,” *African Insight*, 36, 3 – 4 (2006): 229.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Smith D. Jordan, *A Culture of Corruption: Everyday Deception and Popular Discontent* (Princeton University Press, 2007); Daniel E. Agbibo, “Between Corruption and Development: The Political Economy of State Robbery,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 108 (2012): 325 – 345.

<sup>10</sup> Daniel E. Agbibo, “Corruption and Economic Crimes in Nigeria: Social and Economic Perspectives,” *African Security Review* 22, 1 (2013): 47 – 66.

<sup>11</sup> Jeremy Pope, “Comments On What Can Be Done About Entrenched Corruption?” in *Annual World Bank Conference on Development Economics*, ed. Boris Pleskovic and Joseph E. Stiglitz (Washington DC: World Bank, 1997). 91.

<sup>12</sup> DFID “DFID's Anti - Corruption Strategy for Nigeria,” January 2013, available at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/213915/anti\\_corruption\\_strategy\\_-\\_ng.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/213915/anti_corruption_strategy_-_ng.pdf) accessed 1/12/2016

<sup>13</sup> *Seaford Court Estates Limited v. Asher* (1949) 2 KB 481.

<sup>14</sup> Heidenheimer, J. Arnold, Johnston, Michael and Le Vine, T. Victor, eds., *Political Corruption: A Handbook* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1990).

two. Nonetheless, they emphasize three significant and interrelated aspects of corruption – public office; market and public interest.

### 3.1 Public - Office Centered Definitions

The public – office centered definition focuses on the misuse of public office for private gains. Bayley<sup>15</sup> defines corruption as a general term covering misuse of authority as a result of considerations of personal gain, which need not be monetary. Werlin<sup>16</sup> sees corruption as the diversion of public resources to non – public purposes. To Wilson,<sup>17</sup> corruption occurs whenever a person in exchange for some private advantage, acts other than as his duty requires. Perhaps, the most authoritative definition in this respect is from Nye<sup>18</sup> who sees corruption as:

“...a behaviour which deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private regarding (personal, close family, private clique) pecuniary or status gains; or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private – regarding influence.”<sup>19</sup>

The definition includes behaviours such as bribery (use of reward to pervert the judgment of a person in a position of trust); nepotism (bestowal of patronage by reason of ascriptive relationship rather than merit); and misappropriation (illegal appropriation of public resources for private – regarding uses).

### 3.2 The Market – Centered Definitions

The definitions of corruption were propelled by interest in earlier Western and contemporary non – Western societies, in which the norms governing public office holders are under- developed or non – existent.<sup>20</sup> Van Klaveren,<sup>21</sup> contends that:

“Corruption means that a civil servant abuses his authority in order to obtain an extra income from the public .... Thus, we will conceive corruption in terms of a civil servant who regards his office as a business, the income of which he will ... seek to maximize. The office then becomes a maximizing unit.”<sup>22</sup>

The above expression on corruption emphasizes that the crime is linked with personal rent – seeking behaviour of officials in derogation of their duties to their principals (higher officials)

<sup>15</sup> Bayley, H. David, “The Effects of Corruption in a Developing,” *Western Political Quarterly*, 19, 4 (1966): 720.

<sup>16</sup> Herbert H. Werlin, “The Consequences of Corruption: The Ghanaian Experience,” *Political Science Quarterly*, 88 (1973): 73.

<sup>17</sup> Wilson O. James, “Corruption is not Always Scandalous,” *New York Times Magazine*, 28 April 1968, 55.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Joseph S. Nye, Corruption and Political Development: A Cost Benefit Analysis,” *The American Political Science Review* 61, 2 (1967): 419.

<sup>20</sup> John M. Mbaku, *Bureaucratic and Political Corruption in Africa: The Public Choice Perspective* (Krieger: Malabar, 2000).

<sup>21</sup> Van Klaveren, Jacob, “The Concept of Corruption” in *Political Corruption: A Handbook*, ed., Anorld J. Heidenheimer, Michael Johnston, and Victor, T. Le Vine (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1990), 26.

<sup>22</sup> Van Klaveren, Jacob, “The Concept of Corruption” in *Political Corruption: A Handbook*, ed., Anorld J. Heidenheimer, Michael Johnston, and Victor, T. Le Vine (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1990), 26.

as established by law.<sup>23</sup>The implication is that if bureaucrats are able to earn more income than from external sources – from interest groups seeking government transfers – than from their regular employment, the demands of the interest groups may override societal needs.<sup>24</sup>

### 3.3 Public Interest –Centered Definitions

The proponents of this perspective contend that public – office centered definitions are too narrow and the market – centered definitions as being too broad. The crux of the public – interest centered definitions is that there is a public which has distinct interests which are compromised by private – regarding (corrupt) conduct. In other words, public interest exponents give a pride of place to the concept of public interest in the analysis of corruption by explicitly and simply asserting the nexus between corruption and the subversion of the public interest.<sup>25</sup>Friedrich maintains that:

“... the pattern of corruption can be said to exist whenever a power holder who is charged with doing certain things, i.e., who is a responsible functionary or office holder, is by monetary or other rewards not legally provided for, induced to take actions which favour whoever provides the rewards and thereby does damage to the public and its interests.”<sup>26</sup>

According to Alatas,<sup>27</sup> corruption is about:

“... the subordination of public interests to private aims involving a violation of the norms of duty and welfare, accompanied by secrecy, betrayal, deception and a callous disregard for any consequences suffered by the public.”

A perusal of the above definitions manifests certain limitations. The first and second sets of definitions beg the following questions: which norms are the ones that will be used to distinguish corrupt from non-corrupt acts? Whose norms set the criteria? As James in his classic work in the field begins, “corruption, we would all agree, involves a deviation from certain standards of behaviours. The first question which arises is, what criteria should we use to establish those standards?”<sup>28</sup>

If the definitions are public –office centered, then, which statement of the rules and norms governing public office holders are to be employed? On the other hand, if the definitions are public interest – centered, whose evaluation of the public interest is to be operationalized? The market – centered definitions are also saddled with the same problem, since they imply the presence of an overarching authority who determines what rules should apply to public officials and those that should apply to businessmen operating in the free market.<sup>29</sup>

Aside from the foregoing, the idea of corruption as illegality – which underpins public office –centered definitions, suffers from being simultaneously too narrow and too broad in

<sup>23</sup> Susan Rose – Ackerman, *Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences, and Reform* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 2 – 5.

<sup>24</sup> Mbaku, *Bureaucratic and Political Corruption in Africa*.

<sup>25</sup> Williams, Robert, “New Concepts for Old?” *Third World Quarterly*, 20, 3 (1999): 505.

<sup>26</sup> Friedrich J. Carl, “Corruption Concepts In Historical Perspectives” in *Political Corruption: A Handbook*, ed. Arnold J. Heidenheimer, Michael Johnston and Victor T. Le Vine (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1990).

<sup>27</sup> Syed Alatas, *The Sociology of Corruption* (Singapore: Khondker, 1968): 1.

<sup>28</sup> James C. Scott, *Comparative Political Corruption* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice – Hall, 1972), 3.

<sup>29</sup> Heidenheimer et al., *Political Corruption*.

scope; all illegal acts are not necessarily corrupt and all corrupt acts are not necessarily illegal.<sup>30</sup> In Africa, Olivier de Sardan<sup>31</sup> argues that, the practices that come under the complex of corruption, while being legally culpable and widely reprovved, are nonetheless considered by their perpetrators as being legitimate, and often as not being corruption at all. Furthermore, some have argued that the assumed line of demarcation separating the public from the private sphere, implied in all three corruption definitions, seem unintelligible in an African context where corruption is largely embedded in socio– political life, reinforced by a powerful moral economy in which the spoils of the State are expected to be distributed via networks of patronage.<sup>32</sup>

Despite the foregoing setbacks, Nye’s classic definition of corruption suffices for the purpose of this discourse since it captures the abuse of a public role for private regarding gain, pecuniary or otherwise. Indeed, no phenomenon is more central to the perception and practice of Nigerian politics than the appropriation of State office for personal and sectarian gain.<sup>33</sup> As was the case under successive military rule, this phenomenon has become highly developed, embedded and destructive in Nigeria. This trend has been described as ‘prebendal’ patterns of political behavior which rests on the justifying principle that state power should be treated as “a cogeries of offices which can be competed for, appropriated and administered for the benefit of individual occupants and their support groups.<sup>34</sup>

The modern African version of this prebendal system operates in “varying systems of formal authority (including personalistic, military etc), behind a ‘camouflaging’ façade of ‘legal – rational,’ constitutional, and bureaucratic rules.”<sup>35</sup> Thus, “corruption is manifestly the primary mechanism of dominant – class formation .... It is not an aberration, but rather the way the system works in the typical African State.”<sup>36</sup> A perusal of the historical development of Nigeria confirms this perspective.

#### 4. THE POLITICAL CULTURE OF CORRUPTION: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

The dynamics of corruption and impunity in the post – colonial Nigeria can be better appreciated when compared with its experience of colonialism which created “*a culture of unbridled corruption and fettered democracy.*”<sup>37</sup> By all standards, British colonialism in Nigeria (1900 – 1960) was founded on corruption and exploitation legitimized by indirect rule - a divide and rule system that (ab)used Native Authorities as tools of local governance. Britain was the first to marshal authoritarian possibilities in indigenous culture. It was the first to realize that key to an alien power’s achieving a hegemonic domination was a cultural project: one of harnessing the moral, historical, and community impetus behind local custom to a larger colonial project.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Peter, G. John and Susan Welch, “Political Corruption in America: A Search for Definition and a Theory,” *The American Political Science Review*, 72, 3(1978):974 – 5.

<sup>31</sup> Olivier de Sardan, “A Moral Economy of Corruption in Africa,” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 37, 1 (1999): 34.

<sup>32</sup> Peter Ekeh, “Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 17,1 (1975): 91 – 112.

<sup>33</sup> Larry Diamond, *Review of Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria: The Rise and Fall of the Second Republic* by Richard Joseph, *African Affairs* 88, 351(1989): 284 – 286.

<sup>34</sup> Richard A. Joseph, *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria: The Rise and Fall of the Second Republic*(Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987), 8.

<sup>35</sup> Diamond, *Review of Democracy and Prebendal Politics*, 284.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*; see also, Patrick Chabal and Jean Paschal Daloz, *African Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* (Oxford: James Curey, 1999).

<sup>37</sup> OniguOtite, “On Sociological Study of Corruption,” in *Nigeria: Corruption in Development*, ed. Femi Odekunle (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1982), 12.

<sup>38</sup> Mahmoud Mandani, *Citizen and Subjects: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Kampala: FountainPublishers, 1996), Chapter 8.

The colonial administrative language had a different morality from existing African discourses, which translated into different normative and cognitive standards of behaviour. A case in point is the encouragement of native authorities, a percentage of the populace to forced labourers on road clearing and railway construction made perfect sense in the British colonial mindset as a way to have inhabitants contribute to the development of the colony. The exercise translated to an abuse of authority on the local level where it significantly diverged from people's expectations, both in terms of the role of authority and the processes by which it was imposed.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates of Nigeria in 1914 was far from being in the interest of the two protectorates but for the greed and avarice of the colonialists that led to the marriage of inconvenience – a lie told by the British colonial masters. Because of their inordinate corrupt disposition to exploit the State for their exclusive benefit, they liquidated social structures against corruption associated with pre-colonial Africa and replaced and/ or transformed them to suit their own purposes.

The aforesaid processes led to the emergence of two publics in Africa such that while the primordial public (ruled by indigenous shared norms and customs) was built on a system of accountability and control, based on moral principles, the civic public (ruled by the post-colonial State and its institutions) became a contested terrain for private accumulation based on amoral principles. This marked the genesis of official corruption in Nigeria and the manifestation of a privatized State: a State appropriated to the service of private interests by the dominant faction of the elite.<sup>40</sup> The failure of the polity elites who took over power from the colonialists, in attempting to address the root of these problems, and particularly the inability to transform and indigenize the imported social structures, complicated matters in post-colonial period.

The failures of post-colonial Nigeria are not too infrequently attributed to rampant corruption and frenetic looting by the ruling cabal.<sup>41</sup> Thus, the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character.<sup>42</sup> Corruption emerged as a serious issue during the oil windfall of the 1970s. The stakes for the control of power at the centre was raised in this period, and corruption in the guise of populist economic policies, became an explicit instrument of personal political agenda.<sup>43</sup> The situation deteriorated during the second Republic under President Shehu Shagari when the State did not only become prebendal, but also predatory.<sup>44</sup> These were manifested by the fact that State's offices were seen as 'national cakes' to be appropriated and then exploited as benefits by the office holders. Such a practice was legitimated by a set of political norms, according to which the appropriation of such offices is not just an act of individual greed or ambition, but concurrently the satisfaction of the short-term objectives of a sub-set of the general population.

The second coming of the military to the political arena in 1983 marked the peak of corruption in Nigeria. This was evident under Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha regimes, where the system was not only prebendal, but also praetorian.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Admitting van den Bersselaar and Stepanie Decker, "No Longer at Ease: Corruption as an Institution in West Africa," *International Journal of Public Administration*, 34, 11 (2011): 744.

<sup>40</sup> Michael Johnson, "What Can Be Done About Entrenched Corruption?" in *Annual World Bank Conference on Development Economics*, ed. Boris Pleskovic and Joseph E. Stiglitz (Washington DC: World Bank, 1977). 89 – 90.

<sup>41</sup> Daniel E. Agbiboa, "Leaders of Leeches: Corruption and the Cycle of Dysfunction in Nigeria," *Loyola Journal of Social Sciences*, xxv, 1(2011): 83 – 132.

<sup>42</sup> Chinua Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria* (London: Heinemann, 1983), 1.

<sup>43</sup> President Olusegun Obasanjo, cited in Omotola, "Through a Glass Darkly," 217.

<sup>44</sup> Jibrin Ibrahim, "Corruption in Nigeria: Transition, Persistence and Continuity," *The Nigerian Social Scientist* 6, 2, (2003): 3 – 13.

<sup>45</sup> A praetorian system is one that, "is corrupt and an unstable regime of coups, cliques and conspiracies tempered only by occasional political dictatorships." Its major features include indiscipline, mercinerism, self-seeking, greed and avarice, sale of public office and prebendalism. Praetorianism

#### 4.1 The Military Regime (1985 – 1993)

During the military regime headed by General Ibrahim Babangida, the major feature of corruption was that of pervasive culture of impunity. In that era, it was permissible for any of his officials to loot the States' treasury to their heart's content with impunity, as long as they remained absolutely loyal and committed to the 'military president.' In the eight years of General Ibrahim Babangida's reign, the regime failed woefully to take a stance against corruption. Instead, it proceeded with hitherto unknown a *sui generis* military autocracy, grounded on cronyism, blatant corruption of high profile individuals and groups in society and ruthless and systematic suppression of real and imagined opponents of the administration. Pertinently, corruption in the regime was propelled by two factors: the eight year tenure of the regime and the upsurge in oil revenue, including but not limited to the famous oil windfall occasioned by the Gulf (Iraqi) War in 1991. A whopping sum of US\$12.67 billion earned during the war was reported to be unaccounted for by the General Ibrahim Babangida-led regime.<sup>46</sup>

A curious, worrisome and unimaginably appalling action taken by the General Ibrahim Babangida's regime in the late 1980s was the release of the ill – amassed assets seized from top government officials who served in General Yakubu Gowon's regime, after three officials of the regime were found guilty of corrupt enrichment by a special military tribunal. These seized assets were brazenly returned to their 'owners'.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, General Ibrahim Babangida released most of the corrupt politicians incarcerated by Major General Muhammadu Buhari's regime and restored to them their lost military ranks, in addition to tendering a national apology to the affected officers. In 1991, General Ibrahim Babangida's regime also formally rehabilitated all the politicians who had been probed, found guilty of corruption, and dismissed with ignominy from office by General Murtala Mohammed's regime.<sup>48</sup> Consequently, General Ibrahim Babangida's regime sent the wrong signal to public officials and the general public that corruption in the public sector was a pardonable offence, thereby making conformance to ethical standards appear to be foolish and stupid.

General Ibrahim Babangida's regime not only encouraged corruption by pardoning corrupt officials convicted by his predecessors and returning their ill-gotten seized assets, the regime also officially sanctioned corruption in the country and made it difficult to apply the only potent measures, long prison terms and seizure of ill-gotten wealth, for fighting corruption in Nigeria in the future. This pattern of mindless pardoning and recycling corrupt leaders has continued unabated to this day in Nigeria.

The General Ibrahim Babangida's administration frantically sought for ways of truncating his own transition program to democratic rule and prop up support for military rule. States were created as a key strategy to dismantle the opposition or recruit new ranks of support

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is therefore the military equivalent of the corrupt society. See Omotola, "Through the Glass Darkly." 218.

<sup>46</sup> Daniel E. Agbiboa, "The Corruption – Underdevelopment Nexus in Africa: Which Way Nigeria?" *Journal of Social, Political and Economic Studies*, 34, 4 (2010): 474 – 509.

<sup>47</sup> Paul D. Ocheje, "Law and Social Change: A Socio – Legal Analysis of Nigeria's Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences, Act 2000," *Journal of African Law* 45, 2, (2001): 171.

<sup>48</sup> Among the prominent of these were Chief Jim Nwobodo, a former Governor of the old Anambra state, who was convicted of corruption, sentenced to 22years imprisonment and ordered to refund N9.95 million, but later became a senator and sports minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; Chief Solomon Lar, a former governor of Plateau state, found guilty of corrupt operation of a 'security' vote, and sentenced to 21 years in jail, but later became the chairman of the then ruling People's Democratic Party; Chief Samuel Ogbemudia, former military administrator of the then Bendel state, found guilty of corrupt enrichment and made to forfeit millions of Naira worth of assets to the Federal Government by a special military tribunal

under General Murtala Mohammed's regime in 1975, but went on to become a civilian governor of the same state in 1983; Chief Philip Asiodu, found guilty of corruption by the same tribunal, but who later became senior presidential adviser on the economy.



for increasingly corrupt and dysfunctional military rule.<sup>49</sup> This was also part of a wider program of the regime's survival. The Interim National Government of Chief Ernest Shonekan was invited to take over power from General Ibrahim Babangida after his regime was forced to step aside in 1993 due to an election debacle. The interim government was however, ousted after only three months by a military coup led by General Sani Abacha.

#### 4.2 Military Regime (1993 – 1998)

At inception, the military government headed by General Sani Abacha suspended the operations of certain sections of the constitution, annulled the organs of government, banned political parties and dismantled democratic structures. According to General Abacha, the Western-style democracy is not always suitable in Africa. Issues cause division when it is consensus that is needed.<sup>50</sup> Rule of Law was dealt a fatal blow under his reign. Decree No. 12, 1994, which ousted the authority of the courts to investigate the actions of the members of the regime was promulgated. No one could challenge the actions of the regime in the regular courts of the land as doing so was considered a treasonable felony. In situations like this, the State effectively ceases to exist as a State, properly so called, and compromises its ability to pursue development.<sup>51</sup>

In the five years of his dictatorial avalanche and frenetic looting, General Abacha paralyzed governance and pauperized the citizenry.<sup>52</sup> The regime notoriously arrested and incarcerated the perceived opponents of the regime while his kitchen cabinet looted and stashed abroad the wealth of this nation. No wonder then that a report on corruption, published in 1997 and 1998 by Transparency International listed Nigeria as the most corrupt nation in the World—a ranking which led to the perception of Nigeria as a country synonymous with corruption.

Concerted international pressure forced General Sani Abacha to propose a three-year time table for transition to democratic rule in October 1995. The program never saw the light of day till the sudden demise of General Sani Abacha in June 1998. Since his death, the Swiss Government was reported to have repatriated the sum of US\$700 million stolen by the late dictator and deposited in several Swiss banks. The Nigerian Government has also recovered over US\$100 million of the funds stolen by Abacha and his family from the autonomous British Island of Jersey and an estimated US\$150 million from Luxembourg. Other funds belonging to the late dictator remain frozen in Liechtenstein, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom. In November, 2009, General Abacha's son was convicted by a Swiss court for his role in a criminal organization and seized US\$350 million in assets stolen from Nigeria.<sup>53</sup> As a result of the high rate of venality in public life, poverty has now embedded itself among Nigerians.<sup>54</sup>

The Nigerian leaders had between 1960 and 1999 stolen close to US\$400 billion.<sup>55</sup> This amount is six times the Marshal Plan, the sum total needed for post-war reconstruction of devastated Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War. An official report of an international development agency confirmed that in 2000, the standard of living in Nigeria was roughly equal to what it was in the early 1970s, a period immediately after the three years civil war.<sup>56</sup> Ironically, General Olusegun Obasanjo,<sup>57</sup> who later became the president of Nigeria in

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<sup>49</sup> Brennan Kraxberger, "The Geography of Regime Survival: Abacha's Nigeria," *African Affairs* 103, 412 (2004): 429.

<sup>50</sup> BBC News Africa, "Nigeria: General Abacha's Era of Dictatorship." April 25, 1998, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/analysis/81060.stm>, last accessed on June 10, 2015.

<sup>51</sup> Agbiboa, "Leaders and Leeches," (supra) 96.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid 92.

<sup>53</sup> Ocheje, "Law and Social Change." 171.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Daniel E. Agbiboa, "Corruption and Economic Crime in Nigeria: Social and Economic Perspectives," *African Security Review*, 22, 1 (2013): 47 – 66.

<sup>56</sup> Ocheje, "Law and Social Change." 176.

1999, who himself not a saint commented on unfettered nature of corruption under the military in Nigeria:

There was corruption ...everywhere and all the time! Corruption was not only rife, it had eaten so deeply into the marrow of our existence that looters and fraudsters had become our heroes, and it seemed we could no longer place any faith in honesty and decency and work.<sup>58</sup>

#### 4.3 Democratic Regime (1999 – 2007)

Though democratically elected president of Nigeria in 1999, General Obasanjo's psyche was far from being truly demilitarized. A former military ruler and a respected international statesman for having handed over power to civilians in 1979, was expected to break away from the country's tradition of corrupt and repressive past.<sup>59</sup> Despite early promise, President Obasanjo's era was bedeviled with high level corruption and infrastructural development failure. In his inaugural speech in 1999, President Obasanjo, stated that:

“... Corruption, the greatest bane of society today, will be tackled head-on at all levels....No society can achieve anything near its full potential if it allows corruption to become full blown cancer as it has become in Nigeria”.<sup>60</sup>

Thus, President Obasanjo promised Nigerians in particular and the World generally that corruption will not be business as usual under his stewardship. To this end, he established the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). Under Nuhu Ribadu, the EFCC recovered over US\$5 billion in stolen assets and prosecuted corrupt businessmen, politicians and policemen.

In an unprecedented moves in 2005, Tafa Balogun, the then Inspector General of Police, was convicted of corruption and jailed; The Education Minister, and the Minister for Housing and Urban Development were dismissed from office for bribing legislators to pass a budget and selling government properties respectively. In collaboration with the London Metropolitan Police, the EFCC also uncovered some high profile cases among Nigerian Governors. One was found to operate 25 bank accounts in London to juggle money and evade the law. Like many governors of his ilk, he used front agents to penetrate western real estate markets where he purchased expensive properties. The London Metropolitan Police determined that he had acquired £10 million in benefits through criminal conduct in London, while at the home front the EFCC were able to restrain proceeds of his crimes worth US\$34 million.<sup>61</sup> Secondly, the other pleaded guilty in the Southwark Crown Court in London to charges of money laundering and other financial crimes totaling N12.4 billion (US\$79 million) he had committed during his eight years in office. He was sentenced to 13 years in prison.<sup>62</sup>

Sequel to the foregoing, Transparency International's 2005 report showed that under the regime in focus, Nigeria moved from third to sixth position within a year as the most

<sup>57</sup> General Olusegun Obasanjo was the military head of State from February 1976 – October 1, 1979 following the assassination of General Murtala Mohammed on February 13, 1976.

<sup>58</sup> Daniel E. Agbiboa, “Between Corruption and Development: The Political Economy of State Robbery in Nigeria,” *Journal of Business Ethics*, 108, 3 (2012): 325 – 345.

<sup>59</sup> Adebajo, Adekeye, “Hegemony on Shoestring: Nigeria's Post-Cold War Foreign Policy” in *Gulliver's Troubles: Nigeria's Foreign Policy after the Cold War*, ed. Adekeye, Adebajo and Abdul R. Mustapha (Pietermaritzburg: University of Kwazulu – Natal Press, 2008).

<sup>60</sup> Omotola, “Through a Glass Darkly,” 221.

<sup>61</sup> Agbiboa, “Leaders and Leaches.”(supra).

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

corrupt nation in the world – an improvement on the 2003 and 2004 performance when it occupied first and second positions, respectively. This attracted commendation from Daniel Kaufmann, the head of global programs of the World Bank, when he observed that, “Nigeria is changing for the better ... if the current momentum is maintained and deepened, the progress made in the fight against corruption could become irreversible.”<sup>63</sup>

Sadly, the anti-corruption crusade was short-lived. The administration soon became littered with postures of reform, with grandiose promises coupled with conspicuous lack of delivery. The EFCC was accused of manipulation by Obasanjo to target his political opponents in a selective manner. The International Crises Group (ICG) observed that the “EFCC was used as a political weapon to whip political foes, especially State governors likely to stand for the presidency and their supporters into line.”<sup>64</sup> For instance, five State governors, some of whom were considered contenders to the PDP presidential nomination, were impeached in 2005-2006 on allegations of corruption.<sup>65</sup>

President Obasanjo’s surreptitious botched attempt to alter the constitution in April 2006 to afford him the opportunity of running for a third presidential term badly damaged his democratic credentials. He reportedly offered bribes of US\$400, 000 to senators and members of the House of Representatives; had armed police break up a meeting in Abuja of legislators and governors opposed to the third term, and threatened State governors who failed to support his bid with impeachment.<sup>66</sup> President Obasanjo’s legacy was further dragged to the mud by an ugly spat with his Vice President, Atiku Abubakar, which saw both men wash their dirty linen in the public accusing each other of corruption regarding the government’s petroleum trust fund. Additionally, under President Obasanjo, who acted as his own oil minister throughout his eight years reign, Nigeria held the most fraudulent elections in the annals of the country. Ballot boxes were stuffed and stolen, voters intimidated, and results were falsified in areas where voting did not take place.<sup>67</sup>

Akin to his military predecessor, President Obasanjo’s administration openly encouraged corruption with impunity. A case in point was that of Chief Olabode George, a chieftain of the Obasanjo’s ruling PDP and a former Chairman of the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA). In August 2008, Olabode George was charged and convicted of contract related offences of close to N100 billion dating back to his time at NPA. In October 2009, Olabode George was convicted and sentenced to two and half years in prison. However, when Olabode George emerged from prison in 2011 after serving the prison term, he was treated to a rapturous and heroic welcome by the political elite including to the dismay of all and sundry, President Olusegun Obasanjo and the then Defence Minister, Ademola Adetokumbo. Human Rights Watch clearly captured the true position of things at the time, “...this action showed that proven criminality was no bar to the highest echelons of politics in Nigeria.”<sup>68</sup> Reacting to the lavish reception, former anti-corruption czar, Nuhu Ribadu said, “it is really a shameful thing that has happened. Instead of hiding their heads in shame, they have the effrontery to celebrate corruption. In fact, it is a national shame.”<sup>69</sup> The frontline opposition party at the time, Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), reacted thus, “the PDP’s action sends a wrong signal to Nigerian

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<sup>63</sup> Daniel E. Agbiboa, “Underdevelopment in Practice: Nigeria and the Enduring Problem of Corruption,”

<sup>64</sup> International Crises Group (ICG), “Nigeria’s Election: Avoiding a Political Crises,” Africa Report No. 123 (2007): 3.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Agbiboa, “Serving the Few, Starving the Many: How Corruption Under-develops Nigeria and how there is an Alternative Perspective to Corruption Clean – ups,” *Africa Today* 58, 4(2012): 111 – 132.

<sup>67</sup> Adebajo, et al (supra).

<sup>68</sup> Human Rights Watch (HRW), “Corruption on Trial?” available at

<http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/nigeria0811WebPostRpdf>, last accessed July 30, 2015.

<sup>69</sup> Vanguard (Nigeria), “Anger, Shock Greet Lavish Reception for Bode George,” February 28, 2011, available

at: <http://www.vanguardngr.com/2011/02/anger-shock-greet-lavish-reception-for-bode-george/>, last accessed July 31, 2015.

youths that it is alright to steal or mismanage public funds, since it can even turn them into a 'hero' like Olabode George."<sup>70</sup>

In the end, President Obasanjo's democratic rule was a bundle of contradictions. The Northern hegemony considered him an indispensable force for political stability, he midwived the worst period of instability in Nigeria. Earlier considered a force for unity, he presided over a country that was more divided than any time since the end of the civil war (1967-1970). Considered a force for national salvation, he instead watched helplessly as the country was nearly torn apart by sectarian violence.<sup>71</sup> While much of the decay in the Nigerian polity had set in under the venal regimes of Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha, the situation was further aggravated under President Olusegun Obasanjo's reign. His anti-corruption crusade can at best be described as a slip shod doer who takes five steps forward and three steps backwards. And so the search for a physician for Nigeria continues.

#### 4.4 Democratic Regime (2010 – 2015)

President Goodluck Jonathan was the first university graduate and a doctorate degree holder to assume the reigns of this country as the executive president of Nigeria. As a result, Nigerians in particular and the world at large had great expectations from him. That was however, not to be as all hopes were dashed at the altar of the hydra-headed monster that had eaten deep into the fabric of the nation. Corruption remained protracted and unabated. Corruption reached a crescendo under the administration in question in all facets of the economy.

A recent report on the oil and gas sector of the economy by the Chairman of the Petroleum Task Force, Nuhu Ribadu, revealed that nearly US\$30 billion was lost in the last decade in gas price fixing scam implicating government officials and foreign energy firms.<sup>72</sup> The 205 pages parliamentary report uncovered a long list of wrong doings involving the major actors in the oil and gas industry. Specifically, the report showed that oil and gas companies owe the Nigerian treasury a combined sum of US\$3 billion royalties.<sup>73</sup> Between 2005 and 2011, another US\$566 million was owed by companies for signature bonuses (right to explore oil blocks)<sup>74</sup>. The report further revealed that fifteen fuel (gasoline) importers collected more than US\$300 million recently for fuel they never imported, while more than one hundred oil marketers collected the same amount on several occasions.<sup>75</sup>

In April 2012, a House of Representatives Committee headed by Farouk Lawan, charged with investigating the fuel subsidy program between 2009 and 2012 uncovered massive fraud, corruption and inefficiencies in the fuel subsidy program. The report alleged misappropriation of US\$6 billion in the fuel subsidy scam, with little or non-existent oversight function by the relevant government agencies.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, the report cited the stealing of N32.8 billion (US\$210 million) Police Pension Fund, which led to the arraignment of six suspects including a director at the Police Pensions Fund office, Atiku Abubakar Kigo, who later became a permanent secretary in the Ministry of Niger Delta, and the criminal charges against the former Governor of Bayelsa State, Timipre Silva, for laundering N5 billion (US\$32

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> BBC News Africa, "Nigerian Fuel Subsidy Report Reveals US\$6 bn. Fraud" April 24, 2012, available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17823959>, last accessed July 20, 2015.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> BBC News Africa, "Nigeria: Oil-Gas Sector Mismanagement Costs Billions," October 22, 2012, available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-20081268>, last accessed July 25, 2015.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> *Sahara Reporters*, "US\$6 bn Fuel Subsidy Scam: International Criminal Court Asked to Prosecute Indicted Nigerian Officials," April 22, 2012, available at <http://saharareporters.com/news-page/6bn-fuel-subsidy-scam-international-criminal-court-asked-prosecute-indicted-nigerian-offic>, last accessed August 1, 2015.

million) of the State's funds.<sup>77</sup> In 2011, the Nigerian government paid 900 times more in the subsidy than was budgeted, an indication of complicity of the relevant ministry and parastatals in the arrangement.<sup>78</sup> In July 2012, the government released a list of those who had benefitted illegally from the subsidy fund, which implicated key government officials in the administration.<sup>79</sup>

President Goodluck Jonathan did not depart from the ways of his predecessors. He also embraced a system that rewards corruption rather than punish it. He granted a pardon to ex-Bayelsan Governor and former ally, Diepreye Alamiyeseigha (1999 – 2005), who was convicted of stealing millions of dollars during his tenure, because he had been “remorseful.”<sup>80</sup> He was also declared free to contest elections again like General Olusegun Obasanjo, who was convicted of treason and sentenced to death by a military tribunal, whose sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment by General Sani Abacha. General Abdulsalam Abubakar later gave him a presidential pardon that qualified him to run for the presidential election. Professor Wole Soyinka described such an action thus, “what is going on right now gives a picture of a government that is floundering and justifying the unjustifiable. It amounts to encouragement of corruption.”<sup>81</sup>

To worsen the situation, Olabode George, an ex-convict, was made the chairman, south-west of the ruling PDP. AhmoduAlli, President Olusegun Obasanjo's Ambassador designate to the United States who was out rightly rejected by the United States; was later reposted to the United Kingdom as the country's High Commissioner, and was also rejected; and subsequently to South Africa and again was rejected by South Africa as Nigeria's High Commissioner as a result of his political antecedents. Surprisingly, and to the utter dismay of the entire World, the same Ahmodu Alli that was nominated three times, rejected three times, by three different countries, was later appointed the campaign director of President Goodluck Jonathan in the 2015 presidential election. What more does one expect from drinking water from a dirty cup? The result of that election speaks volumes.

In 2013, a report submitted to the U.S. Congress by the Secretary of State confirmed massive corruption at all levels of the Jonathan led government. The report captioned, “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2012,” stated that massive widespread, pervasive corruption affected all levels of government and security forces in Nigeria.”<sup>82</sup> The report stated that though Nigerian law provides for criminal penalties for official corruption, the government did not implement the law effectively, and officials of the government not too infrequently engaged in corrupt practices with impunity.<sup>83</sup>

#### 4.5 Democratic Regime (2015 to Date)

President Muhammadu Buhari came to power on May 29, 2015, on the heels of massive corruption that pervaded the administration of his predecessor. The opposition party, All Progressive Congress (APC), the majority of the membership of which were drawn from the

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Refworld, “No End in Sight: Violence in the Niger Delta and Gulf of Guinea,” March 8, 2013, available at <http://www.refworld.org/docid/513d9cd02.html>, last accessed June 21, 2015.

<sup>79</sup> BBC News Africa, “Nigeria: Oil- Gas Sector Mismanagement,” (supra).

<sup>80</sup> BBC News Africa, “Nigeria Pardons Goodluck Jonathan Ally, Alamiyeseigha,” March 13, 2013, available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-Africa-21769047>, last accessed July 18, 2015.

<sup>81</sup> *The Herald*, “Alamiyeseigha's Pardon Encourages Culture of Corruption – Soyinka,” March 21, 2013, available at <http://www.theherald.ng.com/alamiyeseighaspardon-encourages-culture-of-corruption-soyinka/>, last accessed July 20, 2015.

<sup>82</sup> Tokunbo Adedaja, “US Report: There's Massive Corruption in Nigeria,” *This Day Live*, April 21, 2013, available at <http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/us-report-there-s-massive-corruption-in-nigeria/145531/>, last accessed June 30, 2013.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

People's Democratic Party (PDP), capitalized on the general discontent of the masses over corruption that has brought the 'giant of Africa' to her knees and promised to purge the country of the hydra – headed monster, if elected into office.

Although, President Muhammadu Buhari assumed office on May 29, 2015, it took him four months to submit his ministerial list to the National Assembly for approval. An indication that he was ill- prepared to assume the reigns of the administration of the country. If not, how could one explain the fact that a party that was declared a winner in early April could not constitute a cabinet till five months thereafter? Worse still, the arrow-head of the regime, General Mohammadu Buhari who was avowed to stamp out corruption from the country's psyche, on September 30, 2015, announced the names of his 'untainted saints' ministerial nominees. Surprisingly and to the utter dismay of political watchers in Nigeria in particular and the World at large, the list released so far is far from being those of 'untainted saints' as some of the nominees are members of the old political brigade that are alleged to have crippled the economy of their States through corrupt enrichment. Thus, what we have now is the proverbial 'old wine in a new keg'.

Prior to the release of the political nominees, the regime had been that of a 'one – man's riot squad'. The helmsman of the regime was and is still popularly known as, 'Baba go slow' and people are beginning to wonder if he will be able to deliver on his campaign promises. That notwithstanding, the regime has opened up the can worms to showcase the spate of corruption that was the bane of the past administration and has promised to bring the culprits to book irrespective of their political affiliations. The whole World is now waiting patiently to see if he will have the political will to purge Nigeria of this malaise so that the 'change' mantra will not end in mere rhetoric. And whether President Muhammadu Buhari is the much needed physician for Nigeria is left for hour and time to clarify.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

A traditional Igbo adage says that, "one who knows not the point at which it started raining on him definitely will not know the point at which the rain will stop." To this end, this article modestly examined the evolution of corruption in Nigeria with particular reference to how the corrupt practices of post-colonial rulers of Nigeria have corruptly consolidated and turned the pride of the black race to a crippled giant. Nigeria's corruption profile has risen to an alarming level as many convicted politicians continue to go scot free or at best are given kid's glove sentence that makes mockery of their monumental theft. The ugly trend has not only made Nigeria a slip - shod doer on the anti-corruption front but also smacks a general lack of the political will to fight the menace. Therefore, it is not surprising that Transparency International ranks Nigeria as one of the most corrupt countries in the World.

For the crusade against corruption to yield the desired result, calls for concerted efforts of both national and international strategies. At the national front, the current helmsman, President Muhammadu Buhari must manifestly show a commitment to break the jinx of the bad practices of the previous administrations, especially the political interference with anti-corruption investigations and prosecutions. This should be reinforced with the requisite political will to ensure that those accused of corruption are properly investigated, prosecuted, punished, blacklisted and banned from politics and holding of public offices, if found guilty. This is without prejudice to their positions, ethnic and, political affiliations. The government should as a matter of urgency set up a crack team of an independent investigation panel to review cases of corruption within the public and private sectors. The crack team should be composed of men of proven integrity as against people with moral turpitude. More importantly, the anti-corruption agencies should as a matter of necessity be independent of government influence and interference. Furthermore, since the public service, by virtue of its nature is a hot bed for corruption, there is the need to set up whistle blowing sections in every public office. This will

enable the public servants to report the corrupt practices of their superiors to the appropriate authorities without fear of intimidation, stagnation or of any other kind.

At the international realm, a friend in need is a friend in deed. Nigerian Allies should mount political pressure on the government to allow the anti-corruption agencies an unfettered leverage to pursue robust and independent investigation of high profile corruption. They should actively pursue opportunities to bring criminal charges against government officials who commit financial crimes in foreign lands. They should also employ visa bans on corrupt Nigerian officials. The names of the Nigerian officials denied visas on allegations of corruption should also be in the public domain. Furthermore, they should take proactive measures to disallow political rogues from having a safe haven to stash their ill-gotten wealth in foreign bank accounts. To this end, they should regard and treat corruption as a crime against humanity because it deprives the home country the necessary wherewithal to develop the country thereby depriving the citizens of the relevant means of livelihood. Hence, the majority of the citizens of the country with enormous human and material resources are wallowing in excruciating penury.

## 6. CONCLUSION

To whom much is given, much is expected. Nigeria being endowed with so much human and material resources, so much is expected from the country. Sadly, and to the utter dismay of the entire world, the wealth of the country is resting in the hands of few individuals who in one way or the other have corruptly enriched themselves at the expense of the generality of the entire populace. Thus, if all the above recommendations are implemented, it is strongly believed that corruption will be stamped out from the country and the wealth of the nation will be evenly distributed and Nigeria, the sleeping giant will wake up from its slumber to assume its rightful place in the grand scheme of things and the comity of nations.

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*258 Kingsland Road, Hackney, London E8 4DG, England, United Kingdom.*

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