

How Corruption Delivered Quadruplet In Nigeria And Made Buhari/Osinbajo Administration Anti Graft Meddlesome Interloper

.....Intersociety

(Onitsha Nigeria: 9th October 2017)-Corruption has given birth to quadruplet or quadrupled in Nigeria since the inception of the Buhari/Osinbajo Administration in late May 2015. It has also made the Buhari/Osinbajo Administration a meddlesome interloper in matters of fight against corruption in the country. In other words, the central Administration is an imposter in anti corruption crusade in Nigeria. As a matter of fact, corruption which traditionally and globally has its root in immorality or integrity decadence is the very foundation upon which the Administration was founded. From the composition of the present Administration and its Political Party to its policies, actions and inactions since June 2015, the Administration sinks in corruption and infests everybody with same till date.

Sadly, the same Administration turns around and shouts loudest as a government with core foundation of anti corruption. This the Buhari/Osinbajo Administration does by brazenly and massively deploying all the instruments of the State to brainwash and mislead mostly *un-attentive or uninformed or misinformed* members of the public into believing that "it is fighting corruption". The Administration has also succeeded in "conquering" the mindsets and rational senses of the *attentive or informed* members of the public especially the Media and the rights CSOs and activists to the extent that they now join the Administration in parroting and shouting anti corruption.

Just as every coercive establishment in Nigeria is instituted with anti corruption unit numbering over 22, there are also various dimensions of corruption. These dimensions include moral corruption (founder of mother corruption), political corruption, demographic corruption, structural corruption, cultural corruption, institutional (legislative, executive, judicial and governance) corruption, ICT and cyber corruption, to mention but a few. The triplet of corruption is nepotism, favouritism and abuse of office/power which have collectively remained the stock-in-trade of the present central Government in the country.

During the 2015 Presidential Election, for instance, hundreds of thousands, if not millions of constitutionally forbidden under-age voters in core Northern Nigeria were armed with PVCs and allowed to vote with their illegal votes counted and accepted which substantially formed the bulk of the "winning votes" of the present central incumbent. In the same exercise, there were no declared invalid votes in core Northern States of Kebbi, Zamfara, Sokoto, etc. That is to say that all the under-age voters and teeming blind citizens in the Zone voted faultlessly. Our question is: are these not clear cases of *demographic and political corruption*?

At the National Convention that produced the incumbent Presidency of Nigeria as flag bearers of their Party, it was widely reported how huge sums of money in foreign currencies ranging were given by leading contestants or through their camps to each of the over 5000 party delegates. During the recent governorship primaries of the central ruling Party in Anambra State, same was repeated. Our further questions are: *where is it provided in Nigeria's 1999 Constitution or the Electoral Act of 2010 as amended for bribes to be offered to delegates by aspirants or their camps as a condition for voting for an aspirant of their choice? What can be more act of corruption than this?*

Further, among the "heavy weights" of the present central Government and its ruling party in Nigeria is somebody who was a common staff of a multinational company, from where the said person left and joined politics leading to the said person's emergence as a governor in a Southern State. Eight years after, the person became four times richer than his or her former multinational company with multibillion dollar stakes or investments in oil, aviation, estates, hotel, print and electronic media as well as owner of brand new private jets. The questions as to how he made the suspicious wealth in such quick succession have remained sketchy and unanswered till date.

There is also another person who went to a Southern State's Government House in 2002 with a Sagem Mobile Phone and a Mercedes 200 (Flat Boot) to pick up a government appointment. The person later emerged governor in 2007 and eight years after, the person became questionably and stupendously rich, to the extent that today, the person is one of the movers and shakers of the central ruling Party. How he or she made such intimidating wealth in a twinkle of an eye has remained sketchy till date.

Another person who is also rated as one of the movers and shakers of the central ruling Party struggled and served as mere hospital or clinic attendant before 1999 from where the said person was picked and sponsored by his or her boss to become a State legislator in a Southern State; years later he or she became a governor. Today, he or she is widely and circumstantially believed to be stupendously rich; with billions of naira worth of moveable and immoveable wealth to his or her malicious credit. How the said person made such stupendous wealth in quick succession has remained sketchy till date.

Those who form part of the movers and shakers of the central ruling Party in Nigeria are supposedly Military/Service pensioners (including supposed Custom and Police pensioners). By the terms of their service to Nigeria and Nigerians, they are Federal Government Military/Service pensions' recipients; yet these Military/Service "pensioners" have become so rich and worth billions of dollars on account of their rabid corrupt practices while in office or post public office graft complicity; to the extent that that they now build and own multibillion naira private universities within and beyond borders of Nigeria. Some, if not many of them also own private jets. How a common Military/Service pensioner can singlehandedly build a university or own private jet (s) and other multibillion naira wealth remains "one of the wonders of corruption and its "fight" in Nigeria".

What about *Senior Lawyers of questionable conscience* mostly based in Lagos and Abuja? These questionable senior lawyers with some, if not many of them either serving in the present central Government or supporting same as "activist lawyers" virtually work hand in glove with the said *doyens of corruption* peopling the present central Government of Nigeria. During the aborted graft trial of one of the former Governors of a Southern State, it was the same *Senior Lawyers of questionable conscience* that technically scuttled same till date.

Today, many, if not most of these "senior lawyers" are questionably rich with multibillion naira worth of choice properties scattered in choice places of Abuja, Lagos, Kaduna, Port Harcourt as well as beyond the borders of Nigeria. In Nigeria of today, *electioneering and corruption related briefs* are defensively the costliest briefs in the country's legal consulting industry. Some of these "senior lawyer" especially of Lagos and Abuja residency know no other art of professional legal practice and its prowess except running from pillar to pole pursuing election related and corruption defensive briefs. In the days of Chief Gani Fawehimni, SAN, any consultancy involving alleged perpetrators of violent crimes and corruption practitioners was conscientiously forbidden and declared a "no go area" in the legal icon's chambers and conscience.

There are also *corrupt decampees or political party lepers* who mindlessly pillaged and plundered their State resources when holding sway as Governors of their respective States. One of them was a plunderer governor in one of the Southern States who later had multibillion naira graft cases hung around his neck in court; leading to his desperate decampment to the present central ruling Party for waiver. Graft cases involving a former governor of Bayelsa State and that of Kogi State were also unceremoniously dropped on orders of the present central Government with their indicted properties returned. These are just to highlight but few.

Executive cover-ups in corruption cases under the present central Government of Buhari/Osinbajo are mind boggling and second to none. As crude as Obasanjo's Government (1999-2007) was but it remains the best central Administration in recent times in Nigeria to have fought corruption with semblance of human face and civility. Despite the fact that his Government/Party was in control of or produced most of the 36 State Governors of the Federation, yet it got to a point where *the fear of Nuhu Ribadu and his EFCC was the beginning of wisdom for then sitting Governors and Ministers; especially looter and plunderer Governors and Ministers and other top public office holders.*

This remarkable trend was disastrously reversed by the Yar'Adua/Jonathan Administration, starting from mid 2007 upwards. Before the coming of the present Administration in late May 2015, the Jonathan Administration was the *most corruption friendly central Government in Nigeria in recent times*; a disastrous feat already quadrupled by the present central Government.

Instances of central *executive cover-ups* in high profile public office holders' corruption scandals in Nigeria since June 2015 are: *the multimillion naira (if not dollar) Gen Tukur Buratai illicit Dubai Properties and his multibillion naira Tukur & Tukur Industrial scale Farms Limited in North-Central Nigeria (said to include a huge construction site, a tarred road, a zoo, a guesthouse, chalets, a restaurant, a cinema hall, a mini-stadium and other leisure facilities), the June 2016 criminal renting and furnishing of an Abuja Mansion by Ibrahim Magu of EFCC valued at N83M, the \$2M "recovery" at Abuja Judges' Houses of 8th October 2016.*

The rest are: *the "recovery" of N13.3B on 12th April 2017 at Ikoyi Towers, the \$9.8M "recovery" of 3rd February 2017 at the Kaduna House of a former GMD of NNPC, the N49M Kaduna Airport "recovery" of 14th March 2017, the N448M "recovery" at Lagos Bureau de Change Plaza of 7th April 2017, N250M Balogun Market "recovery" of 2017, the recent "recovery" of over 1000 illicitly (?) imported Pump Action guns and the \$26B NNPC contract scandal involving its serving GMD.* This is to mention but a few. Till date, these high profile cases of corruption, whether real, imagined or stage managed; have remained swept under the carpet under the present central Presidency of Buhari/Osinbajo.

With the exception of those tagged "State enemies", all the appointees, supporters and decamped and "repented enemies" of the present central Government are steadily shielded from corruption investigation and prosecution especially since June 2015. Former NSA, Col Sambo Dasuki as a leading "enemy" of the present central Government in Nigeria has been in detention since July 2015 despite several court bail pronouncements in his favour.

Through abuse of power and office and executive corruption, Sheik Ibrahim Ez-Zaky and his beloved wife-Zenaatu have remained detained since 14th December 2015 after they were battered and lacerated with live bullets on the express orders of the COAS. Their continued detention without release or fair trial is not grounded in any section of the 1999 Constitution or constitutionally compatible legislation in Nigeria.

From the foregoing, therefore, corruption has given birth to quadruplet or quadrupled in Nigeria since late May 2015. That is to say that it has become scientifically revolutionalized and made institutionally compliant. When it truly comes to fight against corruption in Nigeria, the present central Government is a meddling interloper; likewise its complicit CSOs and activists including the so called "activist lawyers".

Corruption as a *white collar* crime per Prof Edwin Sutherland (1949) of the Chicago School of Criminology has remained the livewire of the present central Government of Nigeria since its inception in late May 2015. Few codified and institutional anti corruption mechanisms put in place in Nigeria such as Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal; EFCC and ICPC; likewise processes and procedures for asset declarations and verifications have also been brutally muzzled, militarized, bastardized and corrupted. The rights of the citizens and the general public in Nigeria to publicly scrutinize, question, authenticate or challenge declared assets of public office holders in Nigeria are not only denied but also shrouded in *official secret legislation or Act*.

Despite strong recommendations contained in the **United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)**, which specifically and strongly recommended for 60% State efforts to be geared towards **Prevention**, 20% for **Prosecution/Punishment** and 20% for **international cooperation, technical cooperation and information exchange among Member-States**; the present central Government in Nigeria has not only digressed gravely but also mindlessly turned its so called “anti corruption crusade” into instrument for pursuit of vendetta, criminal labelling and stigmatization; by mindlessly directing all its State arsenals against the opponents of the Administration and providing waivers for appointees and supporters and “repented enemies” of the Administration. The UN Anti Corruption Convention was entered into force on 14th of December 2005 with 176 signatories and 140 full State-Parties including Nigeria, which signed it on 3rd December 2003 and ratified same on 14th December 2004.

For purpose of putting the records straight, **the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)** provides: *corruption can be prosecuted after the fact, but first and foremost, it requires prevention. An entire chapter of the Convention is dedicated to prevention, with measures directed at both the public and private sectors. These include model preventive policies, such as the establishment of anticorruption bodies and enhanced transparency in the financing of election campaigns and political parties. States must endeavour to ensure that their public services are subject to safeguards that promote efficiency, transparency and recruitment based on merit.*

Once recruited, public servants should be subject to codes of conduct, requirements for financial and other disclosures, and appropriate disciplinary measures. Transparency and accountability in matters of public finance must also be promoted, and specific requirements are established for the prevention of corruption, in the particularly critical areas of the public sector, such as the judiciary and public procurement. Those who use public services must expect a high standard of conduct from their public servants.

Preventing public corruption also requires an effort from all members of society at large. For these reasons, the Convention calls on countries to promote actively the involvement of non-governmental and community-based organizations, as well as other elements of civil society, and to raise public awareness of corruption and what can be done about it. Article 5 of the Convention enjoins each State Party to establish and promote effective practices aimed at the prevention of corruption.

Signed:

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