

## Nigeria and the Burden of Corruption

Olubukola Stella Adesina<sup>[a],\*</sup>

<sup>[a]</sup>Department of Political Science, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

\*Corresponding author.

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### Abstract

Corruption is a major problem confronting the world. Nigeria, in particular, has a serious problem of corruption. It is very widespread and it manifests itself in virtually all aspects of national life. Practically every government since the 1960s came into power with a promise to address corruption. The administration of President Muhammadu Buhari is not an exception, and it is demonstrating huge commitment to waging a war against this menace. Anchoring on the institutional, public choice and cultural theories, and drawing data from secondary sources, this study examines the problem of corruption in Nigeria and the anti-corruption campaign of the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari. The study argues that the fight against corruption is negatively affecting the image of the country in the international community. It concludes that the fight against corruption is a very daunting task which will require maximum cooperation from all segments of the Nigerian society.

**Key words:** Corruption; Anti-corruption campaign; Nigeria

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### INTRODUCTION

One of the major problems confronting the world is corruption. It has become one of the symbols of popular

discontent across the globe. Corruption is not in any way a new development. In fact, it is tempting to say that corruption is simply a part of the human condition. Stories of corruption dominate the media in both developed and developing countries. It has also become the focus of policymakers, watchdog groups, and scholars, most of whom share a more or less explicit assumption that corruption is inimical to good governance and economic productivity (Daniel, 2007, p.54). Corruption has been described as one of the most dangerous social ills of any society, which like a deadly virus, attacks the vital structures and obstructs society's progressive functioning, thus putting its very existence into serious peril (Gire, 1999, p.1).

The effect of corruption varies, depending on a country conditions. Although its spread and depth vary across the world, the effect of corruption is most obvious in developing countries in that limited but valuable funds and resources that are initially earmarked for industries, hospitals, schools, and other infrastructures are either outrightly embezzled, misappropriated, or otherwise severely depleted through kickbacks and over-invoicing by agents of government (Ibid.). As the former UN Secretary General Kofi Anan puts it,

This evil phenomenon (corruption) is found in all countries—big and small, rich and poor—but it is in the developing world that its effects are most destructive. Corruption hurts the poor disproportionately—by diverting funds intended for development, undermining a government's ability to provide basic services, feeding inequality and injustice, and discouraging foreign investment and aid. Corruption is a key element in economic underperformance, and a major obstacle to poverty alleviation and development.

In other words, no country is immune from corruption. The difference is that it is more evident in some countries than others because those countries with less obvious corruption have put the necessary checks and balances in place to prevent or prosecute, while the others most likely lack the political will to put it under check.

According to Bull and Newell (2003, p.1), prior to the 1990s, political scientists had tended to think of corruption as something largely confined to the developing countries, where economic hardship means that norms of “due process” tend to be less deeply rooted than they are in the wealthier liberal democracies. However, from the late 1980s, they were forced to abandon this assumption. The high profile cases of Felipe González in Spain; Neil Hamilton in Britain; Bettino Craxi in Italy; Helmut Kohl in Germany; Edith Cresson of the European Commission provide examples of some of the most well-known politicians caught up in a wave of scandals that seemed to touch an ever-increasing number of democratic countries and institutions as the subsequent decade progressed. Thus, far from viewing corruption as necessarily incidental in the liberal democracies, political scientists were now forced to consider whether democratic arrangements might not be actually harbour institutions whose functioning itself tended to stimulate corruption.

Yet, despite corruption being a major problem in the world, among the core issues that continue to generate debate include the definition of “corruption” as a concept, the causes that give rise to it, measuring its extent, location and impact, as well as how best to combat it. However, the seeming consensus among scholars is that corruption is detrimental to individuals and the society, hence, the need for its containment.

Essentially, therefore, Nigeria is not exempted from the roll call of corruption. Thus, this paper is a critical reflection on the problem of corruption in Nigeria and the anti-corruption campaign of the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari. Utilizing secondary sources of data, it focuses on the various issues relating to corruption in the country, as well as an overview of the initiatives of the Buhari administration in curbing the menace.

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## 1. WHAT IS CORRUPTION?

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Traditionally, corruption refers to moral impurity. It always involves a failure to conform to some social standards. The word itself derives from the Latin word *corruptus*, meaning “to spoil, pollute, abuse, or destroy”, depending on the context. But the concept of corruption has changed over the centuries and varies somewhat across cultures. It has been used in broad terms to describe any deviation from the norm that is considered improper, most especially improper behaviour linked to one’s official position.

Like many other complex phenomena, corruption is difficult to define in concise and concrete terms. The literature contains many definitions of corruption, as scholars either seek a comprehensive term or focus on a single aspect. One of the reasons for the difficulty in defining corruption lies in the complexity of the concept. Corruption is a phenomenon that may refer to many

different human activities and behaviour in differing circumstances. As the causes and effects of corruption are different depending on the context of the country, it is perhaps not surprising that a single comprehensive definition that covers all the manifestations of corruption is difficult to formulate.

Also, Akindele (2005, p.9) observed that definitions of corruption have ranged from its typification as using of public or official positions in ways that forsake public interests; deviant behaviours that encourage private gains at public expense; maladjusted behaviours that flagrantly violate the acceptable and legitimized norms of societal expectations; to its conceptualization as spoiled, unethically polluted, and, rotten behaviours that diverge from the formal and expected role which the society demands of everybody. The phenomenon has been qualified by several adjectives, such as “economic”, “political”, “financial”, “administrative”, “bureaucratic”, “moral or ethical”.

Brooks (1910, p.46) defined corruption as “the intentional misperformance or neglect of a recognized duty, or the unwarranted exercise of power, with the motive of gaining some advantage more or less directly personal”. Senturia (1931) sees it as the misuse of public power for private gains. Alatas (1990) defines corruption as the abuse of trust for the sake of private benefits. Nye (1970) defines it as:

... a behaviour, which deviates from the normal duties of a public role because of private relationships (family, close private clique), pecuniary or status gain: or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private relationship. This includes such behaviour as bribery (use of reward to pervert the judgment of a person in a position of trust); nepotism (bestowal of patronage by reason of a restrictive relationship rather than merit); and misappropriation (illegal appropriation of public resources for private-regarding uses).

To Samuel Huntington (1968), where political opportunities are scarce, corruption occurs as people use wealth to buy power, and where economic opportunities are few, corruption occurs when political power is used to pursue wealth..

Interestingly, in general, corruption is most commonly defined as the misuse or the abuse of public office for private gain as in the definition by World Bank (1997) and UNDP (1999). Corruption in private life (religious institutions, educational institutions, associations, clubs and so on) is not often considered. Most of the definitions by scholars describe it as involving the improper and unlawful behaviour of public-service officials, both politicians and civil servants, whose positions create opportunities for the diversion of money and assets from the government to themselves and their accomplices. According to the World Bank, public office is abused for private gain when an official accepts, solicits, or extorts a bribe. It is also abused when private agents actively offer bribes to circumvent public policies and processes for

competitive advantage and profit. Public office can also be abused for personal benefit even if no bribery occurs, through patronage and nepotism, the theft of state assets, or the diversion of state revenues. Corruption manifests in various forms and a wide array of illicit behavior, such as bribery, extortion, fraud, nepotism, graft, speed money, pilferage, theft, embezzlement, falsification of records, kickbacks, influence peddling, and campaign contributions.

Transparency International (TI) defines corruption as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain” at three levels: petty (management level), grand (leadership level) and political (systemic level). Grand corruption consists of acts committed at a high level of government that distorts policies or the central functioning of the state, enabling leaders to benefit at the expense of the public good. Petty corruption refers to everyday abuse of entrusted power by low- and mid-level public officials in their interactions with ordinary citizens, who often are trying to access basic goods or services in places like hospitals, schools, police departments and other agencies. Political corruption is a manipulation of policies, institutions and rules of procedure for the allocation of resources and financing by political decision makers, who abuse their position to sustain their power, status and wealth. On his part, Shah (2007) proposes a four-fold classification of corruption as follows:

- a) Petty corruption—involving individual public officials who abuse their offices by demanding bribes and kickbacks, diverting public funds or doling out favours in return for personal gratification;
- b) Grand corruption—which refers to the theft or misuse of vast amounts of resources by state officials, including politicians and government bureaucrats;
- c) State or regulatory capture and influence peddling - a situation where private individuals collude with public officials or politicians for their individual and mutual benefits; and
- d) Patronage, paternalism, clientilism and being a ‘team player’, which is a situation where public officials use their official position to provide assistance to clients or colleagues from the same geographic, ethnic, or cultural origin in order to enable them to receive preferential treatment from the public sector

Alatas (1990) divided corruption into seven distinct types: autogenic, defensive, extortive, investive, nepotistic, supportive, and transactive. Autogenic corruption is self-generating and typically involves only the perpetrator. A good example would be what happens in cases of insider trading. A person learns of some vital information that may influence stocks in a company and either quickly buys or gets rid of large amounts of stocks before the consequences arising from this information

come to pass. Defensive corruption involves situations where a person needing a critical service is compelled to bribe in order to prevent unpleasant consequences being inflicted on his interests. For example, a person wanting to travel abroad within a certain time frame needs a passport in order to undertake the journey but is made to pay bribes or forfeit the trip. This person’s corruption is in self-defense. Extortive corruption is the behavior of a person demanding personal compensation in exchange for services. Investive corruption entails the offer of goods or services without a direct link to any particular favor at the present, but in anticipation of future situations when the favour may be required. Nepotistic corruption refers to the preferential treatment of, or unjustified appointment of friends or relations to public office, in violation of the accepted guidelines. The supportive type usually does not involve money or immediate gains, but involves actions taken to protect or strengthen the existing corruption. For example, a corrupt regime or official may try to prevent the election or appointment of an honest person or government for fear that the individual or the regime might be probed by the successor(s). Finally, transactive corruption refers to situations where the two parties are mutual and willing participants in the corrupt practice to the advantage of both parties. For example, a corrupt business person may willingly bribe a corrupt government official in order to win a tender for a certain contract.

The costs of corruption have been identified to include lost resources wasted on unproductive expenditure (such as bribes) and misallocated to those with power or money, public official effort diverted from the public interest to self-dealing and, at the political level, unstable government and alienated citizens (Klitgaard, 1988, p.46), increased costs of doing business, unfair allocation of public entitlements, poor quality consumer products and reduced public safety (Rose-Ackerman, 1996, pp.3-4).

For the purpose of having a working definition, this study adopts the definition by Gire (1999, p.4) who defined corruption as a betrayal of trust resulting directly or indirectly from the subordination of public goals over those of the individual.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study relied on a theoretical framework based on three theories prominent in literature in explaining corruption in Africa: the institutional, public choice and cultural theories. The institutional theory focuses on what it considers as the weak institutional structures, processes and capacities of African countries. Thus, the rule of law is weak, the government is corrupt, the judiciary system is incapacitated, and procurement systems are compromised and “institutions are either themselves havens of corruption” (Falola, 2008, p.17). The theory argues that Africa operates more through informal structures and processes, with an “economy of affection” that allows for

flexible and manipulative rules of political and economic transactions in which negotiations through bribery are a major means of securing agreements, contracts and political consent. Even when anti-corruption institutions exist, they mimic a dysfunctional public sector. For this approach, the recipe lies in building institutions and invigorating them.

The public choice theory, rooted in the neo-liberal paradigm, argues that policy makers manipulate macro-economic policies for pecuniary ends and promote various forms of rent-seeking activities. Public officials exploit the system to their advantage because of the weak restraining institutions. Also, the over-bloated nature of governments provides incentives for corruption in which public officials, in the absence of restraining powers, behave as rational actors who maximally exploit the system to their benefit. Thus, in order to combat corruption, a wholesale restructuring of the state would be required, including measures aimed at downsizing it and prosecuting second generation of neo-liberal reforms (CODESRIA, 2008).

On its part, the cultural theory contends that embedded in Africa's social structure—its values, mores and social organization—are normative traits that are conducive for corruption to thrive. The “traditional” mode of social relations, of kinship and the extended family system encourages patron-client relations in which political power is usually appropriated to benefit family, group and ethnic ties. Corruption thrives in this social milieu. Also, traditional culture of gift-giving has generated debates as to whether it can lead to corrupt tendencies. The question is: How does one draw a line between gift-giving and corruption?

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### 3. THE PROBLEM OF CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

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Like many countries, Nigeria has a serious problem of corruption. It is very widespread and it manifests itself in virtually all aspects of national life. Practically every government since the 1960s came into power with a promise to address corruption. In its Annual Report for 2012, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) observed that

corruption in the public sector remains a sore spot in Nigeria's quest to instil transparency and accountability in the polity. The failure to deliver social services, the endemic problem of the power supply and the collapse of infrastructure are all linked with corruption.

It is a pointer to the fact that the citizenry's quality of life is negatively impacted on by the high rate of corruption in Nigeria. A report by Amundsen (2010), observed that “corruption pervades all levels of government in Nigeria, and the country is infamous for its high levels of corruption, and for the international effects of organised financial crime originating in the country” (Amundsen,

2010). Also, at a public lecture, former President Olusegun Obasanjo summed the state of corruption in Nigeria thus:

The story of my country Nigeria is fairly well known. Until 1999, the country had practically institutionalized corruption as the foundation of governance. Hence institutions of society easily decayed to unprecedented proportions as opportunities were privatized by the powerful. This process was accompanied, as to be expected, by the intimidation of the judiciary, the subversion of due process, the manipulation of existing laws and regulations, the suffocation of civil society, and the containment of democratic values and institutions. Power became nothing but a means of accumulation and subversion as productive initiatives were abandoned for purely administrative and transactional activities. The legitimacy and stability of the state became compromised as citizens began to devise extra-legal and informal ways of survival. All this made room for corruption. (Obasanjo, 2003)

Heilman and Ndumbaro (2002, p.2), in their study on Tanzania, noted that corruption can occur within two different types of social, political and economic milieu. According to them, the first is a situation where individuals misuse public office for personal gain. This type of corruption takes place in a modern, rational, Weberian bureaucratic system, where there is a clear division between public and private life. Societal norms support bureaucratic procedures that emphasize equal treatment based on the unbiased application of laws. For example, merit criteria are used for hiring, promotion, and dispersing service. In such a system, corrupt behavior violates bureaucratic procedures, organizational norms, laws, and larger societal expectations for the appropriate behavior of its public officials. With the second situation the problem is not rogue individuals but, rather, a system where corruption is embedded in society. In this situation, corruption is institutionalized and becomes the norm rather than the exception. The extensive literature on “patronage” and “big man” politics stands as testimony that, for many observers of Africa, corruption is a core element of the state and society. In short, the patronage networks—to which public officials belong—uphold the value of appropriating resources from the state to further the collective interests of the family, clan, ethnic group, region, or religion.

The Nigerian corruption situation, just as observed in Tanzania, fits the criteria of systemic corruption. Corruption has become part and parcel of daily life and is tolerated, accepted, and institutionalized to the extent that both people who give and receive bribes have internalized that behavior. Smith (2015, p.59) also observed that in a country where the World Bank estimates that more than half of the population lives below the poverty line, most people do not benefit substantially from either the formal mechanisms of government or the more informal networks of patronage that constitute a significant proportion of the everyday political economy. But even ordinary citizens have daily experiences with corruption in their efforts to forge better lives for themselves and their families, as they

confront and participate in forms of corruption in schools, hospitals and a wide range of other efforts to obtain basic resources and services from the state. At the same time that Nigerians aspire to a modern life style, they become increasingly caught up in corruption. While millions of poor Nigerians are largely excluded from the struggle for wealth and power that occurs at the nexus between the state and the networks of patron age that vie to control it, even the poor are aware that it is through these social connections, and increasingly through corruption, that people access the state's resources and those of the national economy.

Aganyi and Ameh (2009, p.129) identified some of these forms of corruption common in Nigeria to include:

- a) Intentional distortion of financial records.
- b) Misappropriation of assets whether or not accompanied by distortion of statement.
- c) Payment for contracts of jobs not executed.
- d) Ten percent kick backs from contracts awarded.
- e) Intentional loss of receipts and mutilation of account documents.
- f) Insertion of fictitious names in the payment voucher and the amount involved paid to unauthorized persons.
- g) Using government official letter head paper to order for goods for private use purporting that it belongs to government.
- h) Paying public cheques into private account for any reason best known to the officer.
- i) Paying twice the cost of item(s) using the same document.
- j) Leaving ex-employees on the pay roll and collecting the said amount for private use.
- k) Charging the public or students unauthorized fees that are not utilized for the supply of any material for the institution.
- l) Doctoring marks for students for personal reasons.
- m) Asking and receiving cash or material before approving projects.
- n) Having carnal knowledge of opposite sex before transacting business.
- o) Receiving cash or kind to write project for student.
- p) Disposal of any government assets without due approval.
- q) Auctioning government property to one self at little or no cost.
- r) DOLLING money to people to allow you stay in an office for another term.
- s) Over-inflating the cost of items purchased for the public.
- t) Diversion of workers' salaries and allowances for personal use.

Some others not included in their list include: Bribing policemen, bribing electricity workers, bribing to collect international passport, fuel subsidies scam, and so on. In essence, the role that ordinary citizens play in the social

reproduction of corruption, even as the vast majority is acutely aware that the system disproportionately benefits a few at the expense of the many, is inherent in a political economy of patronage (Smith, 2015, p.59).

Thus, from the endemic nature of corruption in the country, it is really not surprising that Nigeria scores poorly on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) (see Table 1).

**Table 1  
Nigeria's Ranking on the Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (2005-2013)**

Year	Corruption perception index rank
2005	152 out of 158
2006	150 out of 163
2007	132 out of 147
2008	121 out of 150
2009	130 out of 150
2010	134 out of 178
2011	143 out of 182
2012	139 Out of 175
2013	144 out of 175

Source: Transparency International, CPI, 2005-2013.

In the 2014 CPI assessment, the country gained two points compared to 2013, receiving a score of 27 on a scale from 0 (most corrupt) to 100 (least corrupt). With a rank of 136 out of 175 countries assessed (the same as Cameroon, Iran, Lebanon, Kyrgyzstan and Russia), Nigeria thus ranks among the 39 most corrupt countries in the world (Transparency International, 2014). Also, data obtained from the 2013 Global Corruption Barometer (GCB), assessed by Transparency International, indicates that the population's perception of corruption is increasing. According to the report, when asked whether corruption had increased, stayed the same or decreased between 2011 and 2013, 72% of respondents answered that it had increased and only 8% said it had declined. Citizens' experiences with corruption in the country are also alarming. More than 80% of those who came into contact with the police reported paying bribes, and the figures are also significant regarding education services, utilities, and registry and permit services, among others.

With regard to the magnitude of corruption in the country, studies suggest that public funds of between US\$300 and US\$400 billion have been lost to corruption since Nigeria became independent in 1960 (Amundsen, 2010). By some accounts, former military head of state, General Sani Abacha's looting of the country, estimated at \$12 to \$16 billion, tops the list of grand corruption in the history of Nigeria.

In 2006, the former head of EFCC, Nuhu Ribadu, estimated that Nigeria lost some USD 380 billion to corruption between independence in 1960 and the end

of military rule in 1999 (BBC, 2006). A recent report by Global Financial Integrity (GFI, an international illicit financial outflow watchdog), estimates that Nigerian leaders from 1970 to 2008 stole more than USD 89.5 billion from the national purse, and that Nigeria lost more money through illegal outflows than any country in the world during the period. Some western diplomats estimate that Nigeria lost a minimum average of USD 4 billion to USD 8 billion per year to corruption over the eight years of the Obasanjo administration (HRW 2007, pp.31-32).

Other examples illustrate how Nigerian politicians and subsequent heads of the national oil company have abused their power and control over the oil industry to divert public money. A case in point, among many of such, is the trial and incarceration of James Ibori, former governor of Delta State, who was found guilty of laundering money stolen from Nigerian public coffers by a UK court. He was said to have bought several houses around the world, including one in the UK valued at £2.2 million (US\$2 million), luxury cars and a private jet, in addition to holding bank accounts in several other countries.

Other notable cases of corruption allegations include: the former Inspectors General of Police, Tafa Balogun and Ehindero, Orji Uzo Kalu, former Abia State governor, Jolly Nyame, former governor of Taraba State, Joshua Chibi Dariye, former governor of Plateau State; and Saminu Turaki, former governor of Jigawa State. Others include Chief James Ibori, former Governor of Delta State, Lucky Igbenedion, former Governor of Edo State, Chimaroke Nnamani, former governor of Enugu State, and Boni Haruna, former governor of Adamawa State, Abubakar Audu, former governor of Kogi, late Diepreye Alamieyeseigha (who was later granted state pardon by President Goodluck Jonathan) and Timipre Silva, both former governors of Bayelsa State, and Adebayo Alao-Akala, former governor of Oyo State.

Some of the factors identified as having been instrumental in enthroning corrupt practices in Nigeria include greed, the character of the Nigerian State and its elite, the nature of Nigeria's political economy, the weak nature of governmental institutions, a dysfunctional legal system, a culture of affluence and ostentatious living, extended family pressures; and quite frequently, ethnic loyalties and competitive ethnicity (Agbu, 2003). The effects of corruption in Nigeria are numerous: lack of basic infrastructure like good road networks, misuse of natural resources, inadequate power and water supply, mediocrity in professional and leadership positions, defective leadership outputs, fuel scarcity in an oil producing nation, falling standards of education and work output, high unemployment rates, the ever-widening gap between the rich and poor, international effects such as the tarnished image of the country in the international circles and the caution exercised by foreign nationals in entering business transactions with Nigerians thereby weakening the economic sector (Waziri, 2010, p.3).

#### 4. ANTI-CORRUPTION CAMPAIGN OF THE BUHARI ADMINISTRATION

In his inaugural speech on May 29, 2015, President Muhammadu Buhari, who noted that the country is facing "pervasive corruption" among many other challenges, promised Nigerians and the whole world that his administration was out to tackle corruption in the country. He stated:

As far as the constitution allows me I will try to ensure that there is responsible and accountable governance at all levels of government in the country. For I will not have kept my own trust with the Nigerian people if I allow others abuse theirs under my watch. (Buhari, 2015)

In a goodwill message to the Conference of Catholic Bishops of Nigeria in Port Harcourt in September, 2015, President Buhari noted that corruption in Nigeria is so endemic that it constitutes a parallel system, pointing out that it is the primary reason for poor policy choices, waste and bare-faced theft of public resources. According to him, it is the main reason why a potentially prosperous country struggles to feed itself and provide jobs for millions (Anonymous, 2015). Elsewhere, President Buhari had also promised to intensify his anti-corruption campaign in the country, making it clear that no individual found corrupt would be spared by his administration. He vowed to step up this campaign through the reinvigoration of all anti-corruption agencies in the country such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offenses Commission.

As part of his first steps of waging war against corruption, President Buhari inaugurated a seven-man Presidential Advisory Committee against Corruption headed by Professor Itse Sagay, a prominent professor of law and civil rights activist. The Committee is to advise the present administration in the prosecution of the war against corruption and the implementation of required reforms in Nigeria's criminal justice system, and also to develop comprehensive interventions for achieving recommended reforms (ChannelsTv, 2015).

Another initiative in the Buhari Administration's anti-corruption drive was the directive in August 2015 by the Federal Government that all receipts or revenue due to the Federal Government or any of its agencies must be paid into a Treasury Single Account (TSA) or designated accounts maintained and operated in the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), except otherwise expressly approved. A TSA is a unified structure of government bank accounts enabling consolidation and optimal utilization of government cash resources. It is a bank account or a set of linked bank accounts through which the government transacts all its receipts and payments and gets a consolidated view of its cash position at any given time. This presidential directive is aimed at ensuring transparency and accountability in the operations of public

accounts and at ending the previous public accounting situation of several fragmented accounts for government revenues, incomes and receipts, which in the recent past has meant the loss or leakages of legitimate income meant for the federation account.

A lot of issues have emerged in relations to the anti-corruption campaign of the Buhari Administration. The first issue is the magnitude of the corruption problem in Nigeria. Since the handing over of power by President Goodluck Jonathan to President Buhari on May 29, 2015, several allegations of corruption that has emerged include:

(a) Dasukigate

Perhaps one of the biggest scams in the history of Nigeria, Sambo Dasuki and four others are standing trial for allegedly laundering and diverting \$2.1 billion (N546 billion) arms fund. Also, some media organisation were indicted. However, the media organisations, mostly newspaper publishers, claimed the money was meant for compensation for the damages the Military cost them in 2014. Some of the media organisations are now returning N9million each to the Office of the National Security Adviser though NPAN.

(b) Diversion of One Trillion by Former EFCC Boss, Ibrahim Lamorde

Former Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, Ibrahim Lamorde, was accused of fraudulently diverting over N1tn proceeds from corruption recovered by the agency. A petition by George Uboh alleged that part of the diverted fund included the loot recovered from a former Governor of Bayelsa State, Diepreye Alamieyeseigha; and ex-Inspector-General of Police, Tafa Balogun. Lamorde, who is yet to clear his name in the scandal, was later sacked as EFCC chairman on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2015 by President Muhammadu Buhari.

(c) NIMASA N2.6 Billion Scam

Former Director-General of the Nigeria Maritime Administration and Safety Agency, NIMASA, Patrick Ziadeke Akpobolokemi and five other staff of the agency are currently standing trial on a 22-count charge for allegedly stealing the sum of N2.6 billion belonging to NIMASA.

(d) N6 Billion Bribe to Christian Leaders

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 2015, the then Director-General, Buhari Presidential Campaign organisation, Rotimi Amaechi of Rivers State, accused some church leaders of taking N6 billion bribe from the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, to campaign against the presidential candidate of All Progressives Congress, APC, General Muhammadu Buhari (rtd). Meanwhile, Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, and the PDP denied the allegation but in a twist, a Borno-based Pastor, Kallamu Musa-Dikwa, on February 19, said that the money that was given to Pastors by the [former] president was actually N7bn and not N6bn as alleged by Amaechi.

(e) Illegal Diversion of \$322 million (N83.72 Billion) Abacha's loot by Ex-President Goodluck Jonathan and Ngozi Okonjo Iweala

It was alleged that Former Minister of Finance Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala approved the diversion of \$322 million Abacha's loot to former National Security Adviser (NSA) Sambo Dasuki to fund the purchase of arms to fight Boko Haram terror. Okonjo-Iweala admitted transferring the money to Dasuki on approval of President Goodluck Jonathan but maintained that the money was to be treated as a loan.

(f) Saraki's False Asset Declaration Scam

Just after emerging as the Senate President against the wish of his party, Bukola Saraki was arraigned by the Code of Conduct Bureau for alleged anticipatory declaring of assets owned while he was Governor of Kwara state in 2003. Saraki was also accused of operating a foreign bank account while he was Governor, a punishable offence under the code of conduct act for public office holders. The trial is on-going.

(g) N195 Billion Maina Pension Scam

The anti-graft agency is investigating how the biometric contract allegedly awarded to streamline pension administration under Abdurasheed Maina actually became a conduit for stealing pension fund. Alhaji Maina misappropriated billions of naira worth of pension funds, which he claimed to have recovered from pension thieves. The senate committee probing pension funds management accused him of mopping up pension funds of about N195 Billion from banks and depositing the money in his private accounts. On the 2nd November 2015, Maina was declared wanted by the EFCC (Naijaonpoint, 2015).

Other corruption allegations under investigation include:

- \$2.2 billion illegally withdrawn from Excess Crude Oil Accounts of which \$1bn was supposedly approved by President Jonathan to fund his reelection campaign without the knowledge of the National Economic Council made up of State Governors and the President and Vice President. NEITI discovered \$11.6 bn were missing from Nigeria LNG Company Dividend Payments.
- 60 million barrels of oil valued at \$13.7bn allegedly stolen under the watch of the national oil giant, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation from 2009 to 2012.
- NEITI indication of losses due to crude swaps due to subsidy and domestic crude allocation from 2005 to 2012 indicated that \$11.63bn had been paid to the NNPC but that "there is no evidence of the money being remitted to the federation account."
- Diversion of 60% of \$1bn foreign loans obtained from the Chinese by the Ministry of Finance.
- Diversion of \$2.2 million vaccination medicine fund, by Ministry of Health.
- Diversion of Ebola fight fund up to 1.9bn naira.

- NIMASA Fraud under investigation by EFCC, inclusive of accusation of funding PDP and buying a small piece of land for 13 billion naira.
- Ministry of Finance led by Okonjo Iweala hurried payment of \$2.2 million to health ministry contractor in disputed invoices.
- NDDC scams and multifarious scams including 2.7 billion naira worth of contracts that do not confirm to the Public Procurement Act.
- Police Service Commission Scam investigated by ICPC that revealed misappropriation of over 150 million naira related to election related trainings. ICPC made refund recommendations, but many analysts indicated prosecution was more appropriate.
- Ex-Petroleum Minister, Diezani Alison-Madueke's and former Aviation Minister, Stella Oduah's corruption allegations.
- Many other high profile corruption cases are already in court or under investigation.

The administration's ability to investigate, prosecute and punish those who are found culpable in regards to these cases and many more will form part of the determinant of the success of the anti-corruption campaign.

Another major issue that has been raised regarding the Buhari Administration's anti-corruption initiative is the allegation of selective prosecution of corrupt politicians and officials. Some people alleged that the anti-corruption war of the Buhari administration is selective and targeting only members of the opposition Peoples Democratic Party. For instance, former Governor of Kaduna State, Balarabe Musa is not satisfied with Buhari's tactics. According to him, it is only by probing suspected corrupt persons in the All Progressives Congress that President Buhari would have fulfilled his promise of waging a holistic war against corruption.

Also, the declaration of assets done by the President and his deputy, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo is perceived by many as a step in the right direction amounting to show leadership by example. However, other public office holders including state governors are shying away from following this path of probity by refusing to publicly declare their assets. OECD (2011) noted that a great number of countries around the world have introduced systems of asset declaration for public officials in order to prevent or combat corruption. However, one of the indications that the anti-corruption efforts of the administration may have started yielding fruit is the recent order by the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS) to all its serving officers to declare their assets, just as the service also retired 29 senior officers in addition to five others who voluntarily retired (*The Nation*, 2015).

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## 5. THE WAY FORWARD

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Not unmindful of the magnitude of the war against corruption ahead of him, President Buhari noted while

addressing the Nigerian community during a state visit to India in October, 2015 that:

The anti-corruption campaign will be on-going for many years. We are committed to the enthronement of good governance that plugs the loopholes in public sector accounting, and the use of scarce resources for public good. We are determined to demonstrate exemplary leadership that will make our citizens to change their ways in a manner that lays a solid foundation for reconstruction and development. (Anonymous, 2015b)

The effort of the Buhari administration in tackling corruption is highly commendable. However, a lot still need to be done if a lasting solution is to be found to this menace. All arms and levels of government must be involved in this anti-corruption campaign. Political will, which the present administration appears to be exhibiting, is the key to the fight against corruption. The commitment to rid Nigeria of corruption will be tested by how far and how well President Muhammadu Buhari handles the many corruption allegations, scandals and cases under investigation or already in the courts.

For an effective anti-corruption campaign, therefore, there is a need for effective anti-corruption legislation and the provision of adequate law enforcement tools. Also, government needs to provide adequate human, financial and physical resources for the institutions directly involved in the anti-corruption campaign. There is also a need for an independent, skilled, effective and corruption-free judiciary. In addition, an independent, courageous and skilled media is crucial for providing balanced information to the public.

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## CONCLUSION

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Corruption is a major challenge in Nigeria and it is negatively affecting Nigeria's image in the international community. Many Nigerians suffer ill treatment outside the country, even in other African countries, as a result of the persistence of the negative image of the country.

Some of the most often mentioned political institutional factors which might reduce the level of corruption are accountability, transparency, checks and balances, a free press, an independent anti-corruption agency, civil society participation and an independent court system. When there is inadequate transparency, accountability, and probity in the use of public resources, the state fails to generate credibility and authority. Systemic corruption undermines the credibility of democratic institutions and counteracts good governance; thus, the reason for more co-ordinated anti-corruption efforts.

There is a need for civic education to be revived as an integral part of the school curricula at all educational levels, whereby Nigerian students are taught the values of patriotism and service. Thus, for the Buhari Administration to succeed in combating corruption in Nigeria, all hands must be on deck to wage the war against corruption.



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