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## **Official Corruption and Patriotism in Nigerian Public Service: The Case of the Nigeria Police Force**

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**ABSTRACT** - Nigeria has had the unfortunate history of being ranked among the most corrupt countries of the world. Most times, if not placed first in the ranking, she normally occupies the second or third position by the rating of international non-governmental agencies like Amnesty International and Transparency International, among others. The situation became worst during the so-called "corrective" military regimes of General Babangida, General Abacha and General Abubakar. The average Nigerian is thus perceived as a potential criminal whose activities must of necessity be monitored, as long as he remains in his host country. This work is thus motivated by the desire to critically evaluate the causes of corruption in the public service, with emphasis on the Nigeria Police. This will lead us to an analysis of the effects which corruption has had on the patriotic activities of the Nigerian public servant, especially the Nigeria Police personnel. We have the benefit of hindsight that the Nigeria Police received some of the severest sanctions during the Murtala Mohammed "great purge" of 1975. When however, compared with what prevails today, the situation before 1975 seems to be a child's play. Things have gone quite bad, and indeed "... have fallen apart and the center cannot hold" for the Nigeria Police. We strongly take the position that there is a strong relationship between corruption and the absence of a patriotic spirit among majority officers of the Nigeria Police. We argue further that to have a corruption free and patriotic public service in Nigeria, machinery must be put in place to deliberately change the negative perception held about the state by majority of Nigerians.

**Key words:** Corruption, public service, patriotism, Police Force,

## INTRODUCTION

Nigeria as a nation has attained the proverbial ~~matures~~ age of forty and above. It was the expectation of majority of her nationals at independence (some forty seven years ago) that the long years of colonialism, oppression, segregation and all the ill treatments that accompanied these, ~~atrophied~~ on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1960. Majority of Nigerians, who were basking in ~~the~~ euphoria of a newly won independence, felt that the nation would begin to take ~~steady~~ and sure steps towards a political and economic eldorado. They had every cause to be so optimistic, especially when crude oil had been discovered in commercial quantity in the country about two years before 1960. They were more ~~sure~~ of a better tomorrow when reality dawned on them that the colonial “exploiters” had given way and able “sons and daughters of the soil” had taken effective control of the political cockpit of the polity. Hopes were indeed rising and at some ~~point~~, it looked like the better days expected was about to be realized. Those were the days when the Nigerian Naira was either higher than or equal to the British Pound Sterling. The huge foreign exchange generated from the exportation of the “black gold” (crude oil) made Nigeria one of the most attractive, newly independent nations to foreign investors.

Those were the days when final year students in Nigerian tertiary institutions were inundated with requests from automobile company officials to choose their brand of vehicles as soon as they got their jobs. This was so because these companies knew that as soon as these students got their degrees, they would be employed as middle-level managers who would be entitled to a number of allowances like “car allowance”. Nigeria was so rich then that a Head of State had had to declare et al “the problem with Nigeria is not money, but how to spend it”. Indeed, Nigeria in her foreign policy posture during that era, displayed some kind of “Father Christmas” posture; looking for African countries with financial problems to bail out. Hence, Africa was declared the centerpiece of Nigeria’s foreign policy. It did not however, take long for the above-described economic bubble to burst. Nigeria regressed from an era of economic (oil) boom to economic (oil) doom. Analysts of the Nigerian political process have advanced a number of reasons for Nigeria’s present state of affairs. The factor that appears highest in the various rankings is that of “corruption”. A number of analysts have argued that corruption crept into the Nigerian system immediately after independence in 1960. That although it did not assume the pronounced posture it holds today, it was still prevalent, particularly among government politicians and officials. However, “graft became an art of state, if not national malady, with the incursion of the military into governance, particularly with the advent of oil boom” (Tell, February 20, 2006:18). What acts then constitute corruption?

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Corruption has been given varied definitions by academics and theorists, depending on the perspective from which they choose to look at it. An identifiable feature among all of them is that they end up with the note that its practice is a social vice which is capable of impeding genuine development in any society. The Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Act (2000) of Nigeria, defines corruption as any illegal act that includes bribery, fraud and other related offences. In the statutes of the World Bank, as cited by Akanbi, (2004) corruption is the “misuse of entrusted power for private benefit” (p.2). We will use various activities of officers and men of the Nigeria Police Force to test this conceptual approach to corrupt practices in Nigerian public service. We want to x-ray their activities as public servants and officers who have been entrusted with the security of lives and property of the nation. This analysis will help us draw concluding remarks with regard to how they have managed or misused such entrusted power for the achievement of their selfish goals and how it has impacted negatively on the level of patriotism they show towards the polity.

Akanbi has further argued that there are a lot of benefits which those involved in corrupt practices intend to accumulate. These range from money and or power to status. This corrupt practice, Akanbi (2004) argues further, is achieved through acts such as “bribery, extortion (roger, or colar, or particular in Nigerian Police local parlance), influence peddling, over-invoicing, “kick-back”, ghost-workers syndrome, award of contracts to front companies owned by public officials and payment for non-existing projects” (p.2). Many government officials use one or more of these devices to enrich themselves while occupying public office. Note must be made here that for corruption to be perfectly planned and hatched in any arm of the public sector it must involve more than one officer, it is a syndicate affair. This is why it becomes difficult most times to track down corrupt officers in a number of public agencies. Many cases of busted corruption chains have been recorded because of one disagreement or the other that arose in the ranks of such beneficiaries, else, they operate as a mafia. The benefits of such corrupt practices, in well-organized cells, flows from the most superior to the least officer. This master-servant benefiting relationship, Joseph (1991) has portrayed as one between the ‘oga’ and ‘boy’ (prebendalism and clientelism). The ‘oga’ by virtue of his position in government, dips his hands into government funds and spreads the loot (largesse of the state) to his clients.

Corrupt practices have been classified according to their degree of practice and prominence in the society. For the purpose of our study, we shall narrate that given by the United Nations Global Programme Against Corruption (UNICRL), which showcases three major categories:



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- a. **“Street Level” Corruption:** This category of corruption covers acts that are perpetuated in public administration as shown in the day to day experiences of citizens in the Police, Judiciary, Immigration Service, Licensing Authorities and Tax Offices.

Citizens for example get to a Police Station to have their relations under detention bailed and they see signs (placards) on the wall, which clearly state that “bail is free”, “Police is your friend”. To however get the bail, large sums of money must change hands with the police officers in charge (IPO). Massive corruption takes place in the motor licensing and tax offices as well. In these offices, fake receipts are issued to unsuspecting members of the public who go to such offices to transact one business or the other. Officers who work in these departments are hardly transferred. They are so connected that when even such transfer letters come, they use their connections to effect a change back to the offices they had been transferred from. This confirms the theory that cabals manage such crime prone areas of government business. The story is not different in other government agencies like the Customs, Transport, Inland Revenue and Ports services.

- b. **“Business” Corruption:** This occurs among low and medium sized businesses with or without the active connivance of the equivalent public sector officials.
- c. **“High-Level” Corruption:** This act involves huge sums of money in high power centers in finance, public services, and administration.

From the foregoing categorization, and based on our area of study (the Nigeria Police and Corruption), *category “a”* suits our objective most. This has been tagged the “Street-Level” corruption. It is so because in the course of carrying out their daily official duties, the officers and men of the Nigeria Police Force do come in direct contact with members of the public, hence, most of their activities have been derobed of secrecy. We want to understand the effect(s) corruption has had on the patriotic activities of members of the Police Force.

**Patriotism:** Patriotism like nationalism has been variously described as love of ones country and willingness to defend it at all costs. By implication, patriotism develops out of a positive feeling people hold about their country. They identify strongly with the general aspirations of the nation and consequently, do all within their ability to ensure that the interest(s) of the nation does not suffer. It means, esteeming the state more and above oneself. It is when this kind of feeling pervades the hearts of majority of citizens of a nation that it can be assumed that there is a high level of patriotism among such people. Where however, such feeling is low or non-existent, patriotism could be described as a scarce commodity in such a society. In the words of Shively (2003) patriotism like nationalism means the “passionate identification with a nation, or with a state” (p. 50). He adds the fact that patriotism can make people either passionately noble or base. It is under this

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sentiment that some citizens have performed great acts of courage and self-sacrifice while some have carried out cowardly assassinations and brutal massacres under the same influences. It predisposes a large and varied population to obey the single government of the state; and if the state (and her citizens) is attacked from outside, patriotic passion, Shively (2003), argues further makes "the defending soldiers a more formidable force than they would otherwise be" (p.50). Patriotism reaches deeply into people's psyche. It offers an identity that takes citizens beyond themselves and builds something that lasts across generations.

Corruption has been described as a hydra-headed monster in Nigeria's public service by a number of system analysts. It is said to have assumed a larger than life image to the point that a few Nigerians have argued that it cannot be eliminated from Nigerian public life. Corruption as already alluded to, refers to acts of dishonesty or wicked practices which is manifested through different media like embezzlement, bribery, fraud, kick-back, inflation of contract sums, examination malpractices, advanced fee fraud (419), and age falsification, among others in public and private sectors of the nation. Patriotism on the other hand, implies love of one's country and the willingness to defend it at all costs. It is a passionate feeling held about a nation by her nationals.

## **CAUSES OF CORRUPTION IN THE NIGERIA POLICE FORCE AND THEIR EFFECTS ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

We have deliberately avoided a historical analysis of the Nigeria Police Force from the colonial times till date for want of space and for the purpose of remaining focused on our subject matter. The following constitute a number of identified causes of corruption among officers and men of the Nigeria Police Force:

- (i) Lack of adequate accommodation (quarters)
- (ii) Lack of sophisticated weapons
- (iii) Lack of serviceable patrol vehicles
- (iv) Meager or no allocations (imprest) for running of police stations – hence no stationeries and items like petrol for patrol vehicles
- (v) Poor welfare packages (for example, little or no death benefits)
- (vi) Poor salary (take home pay)
- (vii) Transfer without relocation allowance
- (viii) Irregular promotion exercises.

**i. Lack of adequate accommodation:** A visit to a number of the existing Police Barracks (in the course of gathering data for this study) showed a sorry state of affairs. Evidence is there to prove that in some police barracks, two families share a one-bedroom apartment. This problem of congestion goes with the abuse and violation of young children and at times women. Most of the barracks are bereft of water and appropriate

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toilet facilities, with some making do with pit latrines. Many of the flats have had their windows damaged and residents have resorted to using cardboards and wrappers to help ensure some privacy. Faeces from burst pipes litter everywhere, emitting putrid odour and polluting the environment (TELL, June 6, 2005:27). It is to this unhealthy, psychologically dampening environment that the policeman retires, after the gruesome activities at his duty post. The effect of this on his ability to defend his nation fully can be indeed negative.

- ii. **Lack of sophisticated, modern weapons:** Most times, when officers of the Nigeria Police Force receive distress calls, on getting to the scene of crime, while exchanging fire with the men of the underworld, they come to the sudden realization that to confront the criminals is tantamount to volunteering their bodies as canon-fodders. This is so because the Police go about with old-modeled, out dated weapons while the criminals brandish modern, sophisticated weapons. The result is that at such point, the officers would abandon the scene of crime and run for their lives. It is indeed a difficult question to ask at this point; should they defend their nation or do what is humanly rational, given the circumstances they have had to operate under?
- iii. **Lack of serviceable patrol vehicles:** Closely related to the above, is the issue of availability of serviceable patrol vans. A critical review of the conditions of some patrol vehicles one finds on the streets and high ways of Nigeria reveal a very poor state. Officers of the Nigeria Police Force go about in “laughable” patrol vehicles, most without good engines, spare tyre, jack and at times windscreen. Investigations show that most of these vehicles are without enough fuel to enable officers respond to distress calls. When you find a patrol vehicle (with seven men) on motion, the observable trend is that only about three of them would be armed. The implication of this handicap is that they cannot combat organized crime effectively with criminals who operate in fast moving cars, holding sophisticated weapons. To help ameliorate these poor conditions themselves, policemen argue they have to extort N20.00 and more notes forcefully from motorists and cyclists. They claim that if they stop collecting these naira notes, “police activities will grind to a halt”.
- iv. **Meager or no allocations (impress) for the running of police stations:** Most Police stations in Nigeria showcase work environments where people are employed to do a job without being supplied with the basic working materials. They are like the Biblical story of Pharaoh who asked the children of Israel to produce bricks (blocks) without straw (cement). Most stations lack operational materials like statement forms



for both complainants and suspects, foolscap sheets, duplicating papers, biros, files, fuel for patrol vehicles and outside investigation, money to pay informants, bail forms and other expenses. With the absence of all these from the Police Headquarters, police officers have argued, they have to improvise by asking their clients (Nigerian citizens) to pay for these items, including bail fees that ought to be obtained free.

- v. **Poor welfare packages:** A Nigerian police sergeant once exclaimed in frustration that enlisting into the force is like signing for permanent suffering (in life and even at death). This appears to be the mindset of the average police officer in Nigeria. After recruitment, the old tradition of supplying policemen with essentials like uniforms, boots, barrette has been discontinued. The officers now have to procure these items from their meager salaries. This is apart from the money a number of them have to corruptly part with before they get recruited into the force. Many other welfare deprivations, they have to suffer between their recruitment year and their discharge year from the force cannot be compared with the ones they have to suffer during retirement, or as some have argued, at death. It is on record that when policemen die in active service, the authorities are so less concerned that the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) in charge of the station the late officer served last has to internally arrange the burial. This includes asking other officers in that division to contribute personally towards the burial arrangements. Worst still, no sooner had the late officer been buried than other officers who have to occupy the deceased officer's apartment immediately, throw his wife, children and other dependants out of their barracks accommodation. Mean while the late officer or police authorities to cater for the dependants of these men, in case of death while on active service, had put little or no arrangement in place. When they die, their families have to pass through very difficult or impossible procedures to access the accruing death benefits. Hence, a number of police officers have argued that while alive and on the job, they have to make adequate provisions for the rainy day, so that when retired or dead, their families would not suffer much. It is on this basis that they justify their collection of 'tolls' at the various checkpoints. This act amounts to corruption and anti-patriotism, but justified on the grounds that the system has refused to make provision for a corrupt free police force in Nigeria.

- vi. **Poor salary:** Officers of the Police Force have argued severally that they do not get commensurate pay for the risky services they render the nation. By this, they mean to state that the take home pay of the average police officer is nothing to write home about, with regard to economic realities in the country. With the current inflationary trend of the country which is put



at more than 12%, and apart from the numerous legal and illegal deductions made from the salaries of policemen, a Constable, research has proved, has a take home pay of N6, 800= (before August 2006). The fresh Corporal gets N10, 500=, while the Sergeant gets not more than N14, 000= at the end of the month. At the end of the month, new or younger Inspectors of police take home a little over N12, 000=. The police officers have argued that this is not good enough for people who have to risk their lives for there to be peace in the larger society. Such poor salary package is enough to dampen patriotic gestures and encourage corrupt practices among officers and men of the Nigeria Police Force.

- vii. **Transfer without relocation allowance:** Research has come to reveal the fact that policemen are transferred most times, without relocation allowance and other entitlements. Where such is provided, most officers have argued, amount to paltry sums not good enough for a local (intra-city) movement. Thus, the policeman has to virtually pay his way to his new place of posting, no matter how far. At times, accommodation is not made available in months at the new station, that some policemen have to make do with converting all broken down vehicles into sleeping materials at night. The ones that cannot bear it, go outside the barracks to rent rooms where they live in the midst of civilians as neighbours. The rent goes beyond the average policeman's salary in most cases and to meet up with such demands, they engage in unpatriotic activities.
- viii. **Irregular promotion exercises:** This is another factor which serving policemen have pointed to as a militating factor to effective job performance. Some officers complain of remaining on a rank for as long as ten or more years. They thus argue that if the authorities cannot approve of and give them their due, they have to use other corrupt avenues to fill the existing gap.

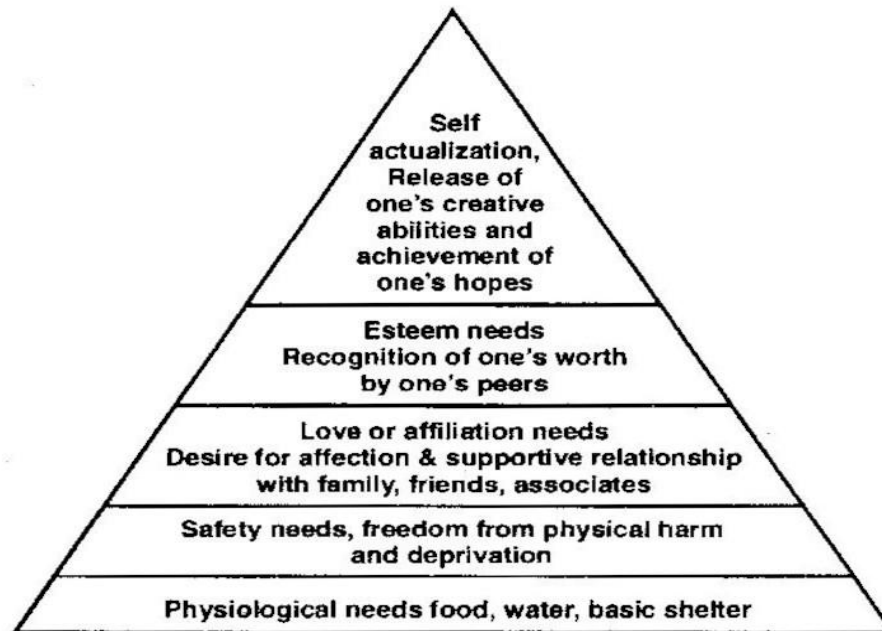
### **Corruption and the theory of human motivation**

Having identified a number of the reasons adduced by serving and retired police officers as factors that necessitate corrupt practices in their ranks; the following questions have become necessary. Can these problematic and corruption prone conditions not change? Can the average police officer become less corrupt and more patriotic? What way forward for this indispensable arm of the public sector in Nigeria? An attempt to answer these questions would lead us to looking at the prescriptions of Abraham Maslow in his human relations theory tagged "Hierarchy of Needs".

Maslow was a psychologist who advanced the basic findings of Elton Mayo when he proposed his famous "needs hierarchy" in a 1943 article, "A Theory

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of *Human Motivation*", and his 1954 book, *"Motivation and Personality"*. Maslow asserts that humans have five sets of goals or needs. These, he arranged in a hierarchy of strength of need as illustrated in figure 1:



**Figure 1: Needs hierarchy (from Abraham Maslow,1970; *Motivation and Personality*, Harper & Bros., NY.)**

To Maslow(1970), once the lower needs are met, they cease to be motivators for human behaviour. The higher needs, Lemay(2001) has added however, "will not serve as motivators until the lower needs are met" (p.121). Thus, a person will risk danger to get food, water, or shelter, after which, his thoughts turn to higher needs. Hence, the average policeman in Nigeria dumps the spirit of patriotism and respect for the rules to the mud and engages in corrupt practices to satisfy her/his physiological needs. They engage in these irrespective of the risk involved to fulfill their family's food, water and shelter needs, which to a large extent, the present salary scale cannot cater for. According to Maslow, "while it is true that man lives by bread alone", it is only the case where there is no bread. When there is plenty of bread, higher needs emerge – and these needs, rather than simple physiological hunger, dominate the human organism. As these are met, higher needs emerge, and so on to the top of the hierarchy (Lemay, 2001). The case of the average Nigeria policeman is that with his present salary structure, he can hardly get enough "bread" for himself and family, how much more go for the higher needs. It is most likely that when these lower needs are properly taken care of, the police officer may have no reason to engage in corrupt practices.



## **THE NIGERIA POLICE FORCE, OFFICIAL CORRUPTION AND PATRIOTISM IN NIGERIA**

From the foregoing, it is a truism that corruption is rife among the officers and men of the Nigeria Police Force. These range from mounting illegal tolls (road blocks) on the nation's local ways and high ways, accepting of bribe to pervert justice, illegal detention of Nigerians, squeezing money from detainees relations in the name of buying pen, foolscap sheets and files, collecting huge sums of money to effect bail for detainees, colluding with criminals, election riggers, fraudsters, assassins and bunkerers. A famous case in Nigeria that buttresses how unpatriotic the Nigeria Police officers have become was the extra judicial killing of six traders of Igbo extraction on June 7, 2005, at Abuja. This has been variously code-named "Apo Killings". Initially, the officers claimed that the slain were armed robbers who were killed during a robbers-police shoot-out session. However the Tell Magazine (August 1, 2005) revealed that providence:

*Knocked the bottom out of the claims as numbing evidence of police culpability in the killings started to trickle in. Ten suspects arrested over the killings succumbed to the investigative ingenuity of homicide detectives from the Force Criminal Investigation Department, FCID, by confessing their culpability in the killings (p.25)*

These murdered traders were said to have had a little brush with a superior police officer while driving home that evening. Invariably, the officer concerned quickly sent a radio message to a patrol team around to look out for that vehicle and this they did by summarily executing all it's occupants, including a female. A review of the data collected by the Civil Liberties Organization (CLO) on Nigeria from January 2004 to November 2004 would show how the Police Force has slid deeply, becoming a terror machine, killing innocent citizens they were employed to protect. Excerpts:

- On January 22, 2004, Chief Samuel Ekpelle and his son, Stanley Ekpelle, were shot and killed by the Police in Owerri, Imo State. The Police claimed they were robbers.
- On Saturday, June 13, 2004, an armed Police officer allegedly killed a lorry driver, Sylvester Okeke, at a checkpoint in Awgu, Enugu State over the deceased's refusal to give a ₦20 bribe.
- On September 23, 2004, Master Chibuzor Egesimba was killed by a bullet that was fired by a cop in Artisan Market in Enugu, Enugu State.
- On Sunday, June 4, 2004, a policeman for refusing to part with a bribe hit Sylvester Okeke, a native of Umuhu Village in Awgu town of Enugu State, with the butt of a gun. He collapsed and died.

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- On Thursday, November 18, 2004, 16-year-old Kelechi Okechukwu, a Senior Secondary student, was shot and killed by a policeman in Okija, Anambra State. The boy was arrested after an attempted failure to arrest the father over a 419 (fraud) case.
- On November 14, 2002, policemen manning a roadblock killed four and injured eight Christian worshippers returning from a vigil at Enugu. The incident happened at Ogbunike tollgate, when the driver refused to part with N60= bribe but gave N20= instead. The infuriated policemen subsequently opened fire at close range, killing the driver and three passengers instantly while the rest escaped to safety.
- On Monday, May 31, 2004, John Folle was shot dead by a policeman in Emadaja Community of Udu Local Government of Delta State while trying to mediate between a policeman and a citizen.
- On June 3, 2004, Kehinde Adeniji (driver) and Bolanle Bamidele (passenger) were killed by a policeman at a roadblock allegedly mounted by the policemen between Ita-Odo and Aramoko. They were traveling from Ikole-Ekiti to Ibadan when they were stopped and asked to pay N20=, which the driver declined.
- On July 7, 2003, Tunde Andoyin, 23, was shot and killed in front of his 5, Fawehinmi Street, Surulere, Lagos residence while observing the nationwide strike by the NLC. One Mr. Obi, a policeman while targeting protesters, allegedly shot him.
- On Monday, July 12, 2004, Corporal Adejare Apata shot and killed Saheed Aborishade in front of the Nigeria Police Post, Orogun in Oyo State as a result of his refusal to part with N100= bribe.
- On Saturday, July 24, 2004, Muiyiwa Popoola, an engineer, was shot dead by a policeman on the street of Ado-Ekiti. The police claimed that he was a robbery suspect but latter apologized and said the killing was an error.
- On Tuesday, September 14, 2004, Chummy Oyibo, a barber was shot by a trigger-happy policeman in Jaji Street, Kubwa, Abuja over the deceased's alleged romance with the policeman's girlfriend.
- On Thursday, September 9, 2004, 40-year-old Sunday Edo was beaten to death by two policemen – Constables Mohammed and Mohammed Kibu in Jigawa State for his inability to repair their compact disk, CD player.
- In October 2002, a police inspector, shot and killed Lawan Kyari, a Shuwa businessman and his son over the former's refusal to part with bribe in Mabosho village in Mafia Local Government Area of Borno State.



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- On September 30, 2002, a police corporal, B.S. Ya'u, in Tunga Ward, Minna metropolis, shot and killed two secondary school students and a bus conductor following a disagreement between him and community members.
- On May 18, 2004, policemen from the Kaduna State Police Command arrived at Tudun Wada Cemetery, Bachama Road, on the outskirts of Kaduna, North central of Nigeria, with truckload of corpses of 15 suspected robbers for burial. It was later discovered that the bodies were those of protesters who were arrested during the NLC-organized protest, which commenced on May 11, 2004.

***Source: Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO)***

Further statistics would show that the incidents of police brutality on the masses and extra-judicial killings is rather on the increase and steps must be taken to stem the tide before Nigeria slides into the Hobbesian "state of nature".

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

First, we recommend that for these unpatriotic acts to be put at the back of the Nigeria Police Force, periodic psychiatric test must of necessity be conducted on police officers, especially before being given arms to go on patrol or special assignments.

Second, Nigerians need to collectively come to terms with the reality that corruption does not do any society good, that it is anathema to national development, growth and pride. There must thus, be the collective will to stamp out corruption from the public life of Nigerians generally. It is a true statement that you cannot have bribe takers where there are no bribe givers. Third, there should be full implementation of the statutes already on ground, which prescribe commensurate punishment for corrupt officers. Here we observe that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has made some tangible impact. Although, more action is still required in this angle.

Fourth, instead of the practice of out rightly condemning officers and men of the police force, their welfare needs should be attended to adequately. For this to be achieved, there must be a radical institutional reform that should sweep from the Inspector-General of Police to the least ranking officer (private), since it has been severally revealed that a number of released police officers allowances are cornered by the superior officers (SPOs). If this can be carried out successfully, we submit that only a pathological thief will go on with the present thieving activities of men of the force. Then, such officers can be easily identified and dismissed from the force. Under these welfare reforms, mechanisms should be put on ground to ensure prompt promotion of officers when they are due for one.

Fifth, the present administrations war against corruption must not only be sustained but also made to out live this era. For the first time in the history of this country, a serving Inspector General of Police (IGP) was arrested on corrupt charges, judicially tried and sentenced to some months in prison. This is a proof that where the political will exist, corrupt officers can be arrested and brought to book in Nigeria's public service and once more, the spirit of patriotism will be resurrected among public servants in the country.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Nigeria Police Force is a very important arm of the nation's public service, shouldered with the responsibility of defending and protecting the lives and property of Nigerians. This formed the reason for the establishment of the force and the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria makes adequate provisions for the Force. For instance, the Constitution (1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria) states that:

*The President or such other Minister of the Government of the Federation as he may authorize in that behalf may give to the Inspector-General of Police such lawful directions with respect to the maintenance and securing of public safety and public order as he may consider necessary, and the Inspector-General of Police shall comply with those directions or cause them to be complied with ( S215, ss3).*

Our study however revealed that a number of incidents involving officers of the Niger Police Force contradict this constitutional provision among others, which require policemen to protect lives and property of Nigerians. Police officers brazenly engage in corrupt practices with little or no regard to the fact that they are under the full glee of members of the public on daily basis. This amounts to having a force that is populated by unpatriotic Nigerians, who seem to use their official capacity to extort money from the citizens they were employed to protect from acts such as extortion and theft. They wantonly destroy lives at the slightest provocation. They use the arms purchased with taxpayers' money to intimidate, illegally detain and in extreme cases, kill taxpayers, extra-judicially. Officers boldly declare at checkpoints or police stations, "I will shoot you to death and nothing will happen".

The present day policeman (data has revealed) is more corrupt than his counterparts in the early 1970s when Murtala Mohammed carried out the "great purge" of 1975.



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