

# Fighting Corruption in African Contexts:

*Our Collective Responsibility*

Edited by

Chris Jones,  
Pregala Pillay  
and Idayat Hassan

**Cambridge  
Scholars  
Publishing**



Fighting Corruption in African Contexts: Our Collective Responsibility

Edited by Chris Jones, Pregala Pillay and Idayat Hassan

This book first published 2020

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2020 by Chris Jones, Pregala Pillay, Idayat Hassan  
and contributors

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced,  
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,  
electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without  
the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-5275-5039-7

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-5039-1

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |      |
|---|------|
| List of Contributors .....  | viii |
| Acknowledgements .....  | ix   |
| Foreword .....  | x    |
| Charity Hanene Nchimunya  |      |
| <b>PART I</b>   |      |
| 1. Ethics training at the level of Higher Education:<br>The South African case.....         | 2    |
| P. Pillay, E. A. Mantzaris and C. Mohamed Sayeed  |      |
| <b>PART 2</b>   |      |
| 2. The state of anti-corruption in Nigeria: 2015–2019 .....                                 | 22   |
| Femi Badejo (Yintab Strategy Consults, Lagos, Nigeria)                                      |      |
| 3. The dignity of corruption? .....   | 37   |
| Donald Katts (Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch, South Africa)                          |      |
| 4. The faces of corruption in Nigeria: Towards a new thinking<br>in the reverse order ..... | 52   |
| Benson Igboin Adekunle (Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko,<br>Ondo State, Nigeria)           |      |
| <b>PART 3</b>   |      |
| 5. African Union and the political economy of corruption in Africa.....                     | 74   |
| Samuel Oloruntoba (Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute,<br>South Africa)               |      |
| 6. Framework for fighting corruption in the artificial intelligence age.....                | 93   |
| Adeyinka Adedigba, Engr Folorunso and Abiodun Musa Aibinu                                   |      |

**PART 4**

7. The challenges of autocratisation, impunity and corruption with reference to South Africa's BRICS partners..... 114  
Chris Jones (Stellenbosch University, South Africa)
8. Perspectives on Sustainable Development Goal indicators to assess the impact of transnational fisheries crime on the blue economy and anti-corruption: The case of abalone in South Africa ..... 133  
Ivy Chen (Candidate attorney and research fellow in law and public policy) and C. de Coning (Professor Extraordinaire at the School of Government, University of the Western Cape and at the School of Public Leadership, Stellenbosch University, South Africa).
9. Corruption among youths aged 15–29 years in Nigeria: Its impact on our future ..... 164  
Arinola Bello (PANAFSTRAG, Nigeria)

**PART 5**

10. Church and youth involvement in political violence: A need for reassessment for a better Nigeria ..... 182  
Ezekiel Kehinde Akano (Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo State, Nigeria)
11. An ethos of responsibility as a theological paradigm for anti-corruption in Nigeria ..... 199  
Kefas Umaru (Stellenbosch University, South Africa)
12. Christian activism as responsible citizenship: Towards an anti-corruption discourse in African contexts ..... 214  
Hassan Musa (ECWA Theological Seminary, Kagoro, Nigeria)
13. An Islamic perspective on corruption control in Nigeria..... 224  
Sajo Abdullahi Mohammed (University of Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria)
14. A Christian theological perspective on combatting corruption in Nigeria..... 236  
Sunday Agang (ECWA Theological Seminary, Kagoro, Kaduna, Nigeria)

**PART 6**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| 15. International Development Partnerships and the challenge<br>of combating corruption in Nigeria .....  | 254 |
| Kelechi Iwuamadi, Roland Okoli (University of Nigeria Nsukka, Nigeria)  |     |
| 16. Corruption versus probity, accountability and good governance:<br>The place of literature and example of Başòrun Ògúnmólá<br>in <i>Ààrẹ-Àgò Aríkúyẹrí</i> ..... | 272 |
| Cornelius Onanuga (Tai Solarin College of Education, Omu-Ijebu,<br>Nigeria)   |     |
| 17. Preventing and mitigating violence against women in Elections<br>in Nigeria.....  | 284 |
| Asmau Maikudi (INEC, Zamfara State, Nigeria)  |     |
| Addendum: Communique on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> AU Anti-Corruption Conference<br>(12-13, July 2019) .....   | 296 |

## CHAPTER 2

# THE STATE OF ANTI-CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA: 2015–2019

**BABAFEMI A. BADEJO**

(FORMER HEAD OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS, UNAMID, SUDAN)

### **Abstract**

Corruption is a major problem for Nigeria. A campaign by President Muhammadu Buhari to tackle corruption head-on was very much welcomed in the 2015 elections in Nigeria. How has he fared in his fight against corruption? What efforts have been made? What are the outcomes? What has been left undone? What are the challenges? What could still be done? These are the questions posed in this contribution. President Buhari made several declarations and put in place some technologically backed anti-corruption measures. In addition, completion of the Nigerian Anti-Corruption Strategy, along with a focused punitive approach, has brought hope to the anti-corruption struggle. However, a number of actions (or inactions) by the President and the ruling party have raised questions as to whether the anti-corruption measures were truly intended to go beyond the rhetorical level. We suggest that there is not much difference with respect to corruption before and during the Buhari era.

**Keywords:** corruption; anti-corruption; public sector; private sector; social sector; Buhari administration; development; challenges; party; strategy; UNCAC; security vote

### **Introduction**

It is no longer news that corruption is endemic in Nigeria. It remains the major bane of the country, despite close competition for that title in the form of failure of leadership. Corruption is a significant threat to the corporate existence of Nigeria as a country. Many experts, journalists and even

political leaders have recognised the scale of the damage being done to Nigeria by corruption. An inverse relationship between corruption and development is well established (Oluwalaiye and Awolaja, 2007; Nageri, Umar and Abdul 2013; Odubunmi and Agbelade 2014). In this vein, a summation by the current Chairman of Nigeria's Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) is very apt:

Today, corruption is a major threat to the corporate existence of Nigeria. It undermines public institutions, destroys investment climate, subverts the rule of law, perpetuates human rights abuses, erodes the quality of life and allows organised crime, terrorism and other threats to human security to flourish. (Owasanoye 2019:3)

President Muhammadu Buhari made anti-corruption the cornerstone of his campaign for office in 2015, offering a message that resonated well with the Nigerian public. Reading the writing on the wall, the then candidate Muhammadu Buhari summed up the situation with the conclusion that “if we don't kill corruption, corruption will kill us.”

His stance on corruption resonated far beyond Nigeria. The African Union selected President Buhari as its champion for the 2018 Anti-Corruption Theme of the Year, adopting him as a role model of sorts.

At the time of writing, Buhari has had four years in office and has started a new term. The pertinent question is how he has fared in his push against corruption. What efforts have been made? What outcomes can we see? What has been left undone? What are the challenges? What could still be done? These are some of the questions we try to grapple with in this study.

However, it should be noted that this chapter will not include an analysis of corruption within any of the 36 states or the Federal Capital Territory. Rather, our focus would be on the leadership at federal level.

### **The conceptual problem**

A dominant problem in the war against corruption involves coming to grips with what it is and its varying manifestations in society. Attempts to define corruption have tended to operate on the assumption that a state (or government, as the expression of the state) exists to provide services as a common good. It is expected that government officials will be solely remunerated from budgetary allocations in a very transparent manner, and would not have to resort to extorting money from the public and/or skewing policies for private gains. Deviation from such norms results in a conception

that sees corruption as “behaviour which deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private-regarding (personal, close family, private clique) pecuniary or status gains; or violates rules against the exercise of certain private-regarding influence” (Nye 1967:419).

The World Bank, in attempting to provide guidance on understanding corruption, follows the conception that emphasises immoral deviation by public officials as signifying corruption, treating corruption as “the abuse of public office for private gain” (Bhargava 2006). The Transparency International (TI) version avoids direct mention of the public sector in its conceptualization of corruption, defining it as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain” (Transparency International 2011). However, TI’s acceptance of the centrality of public officials in the measurement of corruption emerges when one examines the process used to calculate the corruption perception index, which offers a metric for perceptions of public officials by the business community (Badejo 2019). This bias against public officials in the analysis of corruption is seen among scholars and observers alike (Campbell and Page 2018:2).

The clear focus on the public sector when defining corruption, as epitomised by the World Bank and Transparency International, as well as Campbell and Page, presents a limited focus. It is not only people entrusted with power in the public sector who are corrupt. Those in other positions of power and/or authority also use their influence for self-enrichment.

It is also important to note that corruption can be for the direct benefit of a self and/or a third party. When it is for a third party, the benefit is not for “private gain”. For instance, corruption for the benefit of a member of a shared ethnic group is not unheard of. In such cases, the parties involved may not even know each other but the one in a position of power or authority benefits a fellow kinsman.

Furthermore, the analysis of corruption cannot be limited to the public sector only. A great deal of corruption is also happening in the private sector, as we have argued elsewhere (Badejo 2019). When a bank manager in the private sector eases the processes involved in granting a loan in exchange for a percentage of the total amount being advanced, this is corruption in the private sector. The bank manager is making private gain at the expense of the bank’s shareholders, as well as the economy at large. Exploring this issue further, several studies on the banking sector in Nigeria have noted that senior managers in the banking sector, probably as a result of regulatory weakness or collusion, are giving out huge unsecured loans,



sharing out the money and subsequently declaring the loans as bad debts (Badejo 2019). The funds of private depositors disappear as a result (Nwanze 2006; Kanu and Okorafor 2013).

A 2015 study on illicit financial flows reasoned along similar lines, suggesting that focus on public officials alone is not enough when it comes to the conceptualization of corruption. The authors observed that,

while public sector agents play an important part in corruption, private sector actors often initiate and benefit from such acts. We therefore wish to underscore the importance of promoting transparency in interactions between Governments and Business in Africa, and suggest the introduction of lifestyle audits as a routine legal requirement when there is evidence of unexplained wealth. (AU/ECA 2015:48)

The report pointed to several aspects of corruption in the private sector, including irregularities by multinational companies through tax evasion (ibid:48).

Corruption has permeated society, and is beyond being limited to the public and private sectors; in fact, beyond the point where it is worth looking at it in terms of sectors alone. Corruption is rife in the home and in social institutions. A 2016 qualitative study on views of Nigerians reached a similar conclusion. In general, respondents suggested that wherever you have greedy individuals, corruption will take place. They pointed out that even non-governmental organisations (NGOs) easily procure receipts for money they need to account for (Ipadeola 2016).

We have highlighted the inadequacy of elegant but insufficient definitions that fail to deal with the pandemic that corruption has become in many countries, and especially in Nigeria. Religious institutions and civil society organizations regularly manipulate their respective books to avoid taxation. Extortion from the populace at large, such as demanding tithes to guarantee a pleasurable life in the afterlife, constitutes corruption.

In addressing the inadequacies of the existing definitions, we suggest that corruption should be looked at as “The abuse of power and/or authority, including manipulation of rules or opportunities, or extortion from another in the public, private or social realms for self or filial/familial relations or inducement (bribery), by another in furtherance of undue gain to the self or a desired third party”.

### **Tackling Corruption under the Buhari Administration**

Earlier, we referred to President Muhammadu Buhari's assessment of corruption in Nigeria while he campaigned for office. At least with regards to his public pronouncements, Muhammadu Buhari's assessment did not change on assuming office. At the first World Economic Summit on corruption organised by the UK Government in January 2016, when David Cameron was Prime Minister, President Buhari stated that:

when I came to office, corruption had become endemic and systemic, threatening the very foundation of our national life, security and democracy. As a result, I have demonstrated zero tolerance for corruption [and] corrupt practices by combating corruption head-on. We are determined to bring integrity to governance through leadership by example.

In setting about dealing with this scourge, President Buhari made use of a number of instruments that he inherited from his predecessors and improved the implementation of others. These include:

- Corrupt Practices Decree of 1975, promulgated under the regime of Murtala Mohammed
- Code of Conduct Bureau, established in 1990
- Advance Fee Fraud and Other Related Offences Decree of 1995, introduced by the Abacha regime and later re-enacted as the Advance Fee Fraud and Other Related Offences Act, 2006 by Olusegun Obasanjo's administration
- Corrupt Practices and Money Laundering Act, 2004
- Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Establishment) Act, 2004
- Procurement Act, 2007
- Executive Order No. 6, 2018

These instruments were introduced alongside the establishment of anti-corruption agencies and institutions such as:

- Nigerian Extractive Industrial Transparency Initiative (NEITI)
- Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC)
- Technical Unit on Governance and Anti-Corruption Reforms (TUGAR)
- Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)

- Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit (BMPIU) which later transformed into the Bureau for Public Procurement (BPU)
- Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU)
- Presidential Advisory Committee Against Corruption (PACAC)

Other policies that had been under discussion in Nigeria, or were already agreed, were activated by the Buhari Government within this period. These include:

- a whistleblowing policy
- Bank Verification Number (BVN) – actually a Central Bank of Nigeria policy
- Treasury Single Account Policy (TSA)
- The National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS)

In August 2015, Buhari appointed the membership of the Presidential Advisory Committee Against Corruption (PACAC). The Committee was led by a reputable lawyer, Professor Itse Sagay, who had shown some inclinations towards anti-corruption activities. The same can be said of the first Executive Secretary of PACAC, Professor Bolaji Owasanoye, and several other members of the Committee, especially those who came from academia. This committee was to serve as a think-tank for the “President’s strategy to combat corruption in Nigeria. Its mandate includes promoting reform agenda[s] in anti-corruption, advising on the prosecution of the war against corruption, and implementation of reforms in criminal justice system” (see <http://anticorruption-manifesto.org/statement.php?i=3andname=>).

The varying anti-corruption tools to which the administration has access have been playing different roles in the anti-corruption campaign. For instance, the Economic and Financial Crimes Committee (EFCC) has been pursuing a strong punitive approach towards curbing corruption. Three and a half years into Buhari’s time in office, Ibrahim Magu, Acting Head of EFCC, stated that he had secured 703 convictions of corrupt individuals. These include some senior military officers and politicians. Among the politicians were Governors Joshua Dariye and Jolly Nyame.

The cases of the two former governors, who are now in jail, commenced under the preceding administration. In July 2007, Joshua Dariye – a two-term governor of Plateau State from 1999 to 2007 – was dragged before the High Court for diverting around N2 billion into his and other private pockets. The amount included funds for the amelioration of ecological disaster in his state. He was only sentenced to 14 years in prison, on 12 June

2018 (Punch, 13 June 2018), and his prison term was subsequently reduced to 10 years by the Court of Appeal. Similarly, former Governor Jolly Nyame – a two-term Governor of Taraba State from 1999 to 2007 – was sentenced to 14 years in jail for the misappropriation of N1.64 billion belonging to Taraba State, after an 11-year-long trial (Punch, 31 May 2018). The Court of Appeal subsequently reduced the prison term imposed by the Abuja High Court by two years (Daily Post, 16 November 2018).

While it is possible to argue that the cases against the two Governors were not initiated under the Buhari administration, it is important to accept that a lacklustre prosecution on the subsequent takeover of both or either cases or outright withdrawal of the cases would have resulted in a different outcome. As we will show later, similar cases have been withdrawn.

Varying large sums have been indicated as recovered as a result of the administration's whistleblowing policy.<sup>1</sup> In addition, a sizeable number of assets have been forfeited through court processes initiated by the EFCC. These include real estate holdings, such as those of Patience Jonathan, wife of the previous President of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan, and \$40 million worth of jewellery which famously belonged to the former Minister of Petroleum Resources, Diezani Allison-Madueke (Sahara Reporters, September 10, 2019), as well as real estate purportedly belonging to her.<sup>2</sup>

The Nigerian National Assembly – with a Senate as its upper legislative chamber and a House of Representatives serving as the lower chamber – have not been exempt from scandal, with members taking as they like from the national treasury. The politicians voted to fix their respective emoluments at levels that are, comparatively speaking, among the very highest in the world. Many have procured resources to execute projects in their constituencies but proceeded to loot the allocations. However, the new leadership at the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) has been in pursuit of the embezzlers within the National Assembly. As Sadiq Radda, Executive Secretary of PACAC, stated in an interview at the 14<sup>th</sup> Anti-Corruption Situation Room in Maiduguri, the "ICPC has recovered about N900 billion [in] constituency projects funds from some National

---

<sup>1</sup> Kemi Adeosun, then Minister of Finance in March 2018, stated the total was N7.8 billion (naira), US\$378 million and UK £27,800. President Buhari, on 29 May 2018 indicated that a total of N 500 billion had been recovered.

<sup>2</sup> The cases involving Patience Jonathan and Diezani Allison-Madueke are currently on appeal at the time of writing.

Assembly members (<https://www.sunnewsonline.com/fg-recovers-n900b-looted-by-nass-members/>).

The general push for the recovery of stolen funds that took place under previous regimes, including the sums appropriated by former President General Sani Abacha, has only brought about a trickle of returns. The few payments from Abacha's foreign accounts proves that President Buhari was wrong to refuse to acknowledge that the late President Abacha had stolen public funds (see *This Day News Magazine* 9 June 2008). The small receipts that are trickling in are being portrayed as an instrument of anti-corruption, and are said to be yielding resources for a school feeding programme and other Federal Government programmes such as the National Social Investment Policy.

According to President Buhari, his implementation of the Treasury Single Account Policy (TSA), backed up with the introduction of the Bank Verification Number (BVN), has been yielding positive results. At his opening of e-Nigeria in Abuja on 5 November 2018, Buhari stated:

The enforcement of the use of the policy on TSA, the integrated Payroll and the Bank Verification Number and the impact they have made on the administration's public financial management reforms cannot be overemphasised.... In addition to the consolidation of accounts and elimination of ghost workers that resulted in a combined savings of about N24.7bn, the TSA facilitated the recovery of huge sums of money, including the recent N1.6bn from a single account. (Punch, 6 November 2018)

President Umaru Yar'Adua's short administration in September 2009 embarked on the process of establishing a National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS). This development followed Nigeria's signing of Article 5 (1) of the UN Convention Against Corruption, within which a sub-clause states that:

Each State Party shall, in accordance with the fundamental principles of its legal system, develop and implement or maintain effective, coordinated anti-corruption policies that promote the participation of society and reflect the principles of the rule of law, proper management of public affairs and public property, integrity, transparency and accountability". (UNODC 2004:9)

However, Yar'Adua's successor, President Goodluck Jonathan, abandoned any further efforts beyond this initial action, and the situation remained unchanged until Buhari assumed office.

PACAC and the Federal Ministry of Justice collaborated under the Buhari administration to realise the NACS, which was finally approved by the Federal Executive Council (FEC) on 5 July 2017 (see Waziri-Azi 2017). Following the FEC's approval, the Federal Government constituted a 20-member Committee with a mandate to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy, which covered the period from 2017 to 2021. Also, an Inter-Ministerial Committee was established, comprising five ministers plus the Attorney-General of the Federation as coordinator. Being higher in rank to the monitoring and evaluation committee, this body is expected to play a moderating role and ensure the smooth running of the monitoring and evaluation committee. The implementation of the NACS 2017–2021 commenced with the identification of 26 pilot ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs).

### **Inability to tackle corruption under the Buhari administration**

Nepotism, commonly understood as filling public positions with family members and friends, is a form of corruption. Junaid Mohammed has detailed the ways in which President Buhari has been deeply involved with nepotism in office. In an interview in July 2016, Mohammed described nepotism under Buhari as the worst Nigeria has ever faced (Punch 23 July 2016). He described how the presidency revolves around an unelected nephew of President Buhari, while the son of the same nephew acts as Personal Assistant to the President. The President's niece has been appointed as a Commissioner on the Independent National Elections Commission, the body responsible for carrying out competitive elections in Nigeria, including for the presidency. The immediate younger brother of this Commissioner currently serves as a Minister.

The picture becomes even more grim when the focus is extended to people in public office in Daura and Katsina, President Buhari's town and state in the Nigerian federation. His exclusionary style is clearly visible in the disproportionate number of other appointments – such as chiefs of security apparatuses and heads of parastatals – given to Muslim males from northern Nigeria.

In his Special Press Statement of January 2018 on President Muhammadu Buhari, titled "The Way Out: A Clarion Call for Coalition for Nigeria Movement", former President Olusegun Obasanjo, reflecting on the documented nepotism of the Buhari administration, highlighted the leader's

nepotic deployment bordering on clannishness and inability to bring discipline to bear on errant members of his nepotic court. This has grave consequences on [the] performance of his government to the detriment of the nation. It would appear that national interest was being sacrificed on the altar of nepotic interest. (Punch, 24 January 2018)

The problem of nepotism in governance is not limited to denying more capable hands the chance to be involved in running the affairs of the State. It is further compounded when familial or other close relationships result in the condoning of excesses that should be punished. On this, Obasanjo noted:

There were serious allegations of round-tripping against some [members of the] inner caucus of the Presidency which would seem to have been condoned. I wonder: if such actions do not amount to corruption and financial crime, then what is it? [A] culture of condonation and turning blind eye will cover up rather than clean up. And going to justice must be with clean hands". (ibid)

The problem of President Muhammadu Buhari's acceptance of corruption is very broad. For instance, despite there being an arrest warrant out for the former Chairman of the Pensions Reforms Commission, Abdulrasheed Maina, with respect to allegations that he enriched himself to the tune of billions from the nation's pensioners, he was allowed to quietly re-enter the country with the knowledge of President Buhari. The President remained silent on the matter, despite supposedly having been personally warned by the Head of the Civil Service.

Former governors, ministers and other senior executives who have for years been under investigation by the EFCC over allegations of the misappropriation of funds have been welcomed by the President into the ruling party, the All Progressive's Congress (APC), on the understanding that they will ensure the success of the President and the APC at the polls. Many of these figures, including appointed ministers, had properties that had formerly been seized returned to them when they were appointed to prominent positions within the government. A recent example was when the Office of the Attorney-General submitted a *nolle prosequi* to end a case, in clear exchange for support for the ruling party in the Senate. In the heat of a presidential campaign in Benin, Adams Oshiomole, Chairman of the ruling party, actually said: "We have quite a number of other leaders who have come... in fact, once you have joined the APC, all your sins are forgiven" (<http://saharareporters.com/2019/01/18/join-apc-and-all-your-sins-will-be-forgiven-oshiomhole-declares>).

There is also a body of evidence that suggests extensive cherry picking when it comes to justice in the Buhari-led fight against corruption. Many senior APC members remain untouchable and cannot be investigated or charged in court by the EFCC, despite being the subject of petitions. Rather, it is petitions against their adversaries that receive speedy attention. None of the Nigerians named in the Panama or Paradise papers have been charged several years later (Badejo 2017).

A relic of military rule in Nigeria is the provision for security votes in the budgets of the Federal and State governments. This is a slush fund that is very opaque and lacks accountability. According to Katherine Dixon, Director for Defence and Security at Transparency International, “the security vote is one of the most durable forms of corruption operating in Nigeria today,” (<https://punchng.com/govts-fuelling-corruption-with-n241bn-annual-security-votes-ti/>). Rather than demonstrating the leadership needed to stop this blatant avenue for theft, President Muhammadu Buhari increased the vote in the 2018 budget by 43% over that of 2017 (ibid).

A major ongoing corruption case has roots in the Goodluck Jonathan administration, which preceded Muhammadu Buhari’s ascension to office in 2015. A sum of approximately \$2 billion was set aside to procure equipment for the military to effectively fight the Boko Haram insurgency. Col. Sambo Dasuki (retired), as President Jonathan’s National Security Adviser was charged with the management of the funds. After about six months in office, President Buhari ordered Dasuki’s arrest. According to a BBC news report, Dasuki was accused of awarding phantom contracts to buy 12 helicopters, four fighter jets and ammunition for fighting Boko Haram. Dasuki, who complained of not getting a fair chance to defend himself, denied any wrongdoing, dismissing the allegations as “politically motivated” (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-34973872>).

The Buhari administration accused the former National Security Advisor of sharing the money among friends and members of the People’s Democratic Party (PDP), the then ruling party. However, at the time of writing, Dasuki remains in detention despite being granted bail by four different Nigerian High Court judges.<sup>3</sup> Many of those initially alleged to have received his largesse remain free, ostensibly for paying some of the

---

<sup>3</sup> Some Nigerians suggest that the fact that Dasuki remains in detention despite the rulings of High Court judges may relate his earlier role in overthrowing Buhari as military Head of State. Nevertheless, the Attorney-General of the Federation has indicated that it is an issue related to security.



money back. Some have joined the current ruling party having obtained freedom through opaque means. There may be a few in court or yet to be charged by the EFCC.<sup>4</sup>

The Auditor-General of the Federation is constitutionally required to submit audit reports to both Houses of the National Assembly on the activities of the public sector within 90 days of receipt of the Accountant-General's financial statement. Each House is then required to pass the report on for consideration by a committee responsible for public accounts (Constitution of Nigeria, Section 85 [5]). According to Anthony Ayine, the Federal Auditor-General, the National Assembly has not considered any of the reports submitted to it since Nigeria ended the military dictatorship in 1999 (Premium Times, 8 April 2019). On 19 August 2019, Ayine made it clear that more ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) had been acting in corrupt ways under President Buhari than under previous administrations. In particular, he singled out culpable bodies that included the presidency, the EFCC, and the National Assembly. Without offering any explanation, the President declined to sign a bill that would have compelled MDAs to respond to the Auditor-General (The Guardian, 19 August 2019).

### Challenges

The efforts to fight corruption in Nigeria are far too feeble to handle the magnitude of the pandemic consuming the country. That every new administration pays lip service to the eradication of corruption in Nigeria is not in doubt (Badejo 2019). Yet it persists.

An African proverb observes that “the fish rots from the head”. A corrupt society inevitably has a corrupt head or, if one prefers, leadership that condones corruption. A leadership that truly wants to change the situation can go a long way in managing and reducing the scourge of corruption. The President is unable to demonstrate true leadership by getting rid of corrupt politicians in his cabinet, despite wearing the mantle of a continental anti-corruption activist.

Similarly, a citizenry that merely throws up its hands in helplessness constitutes a major challenge for the eradication of corruption. Knowing the importance of eliminating this scourge, many civil society organizations not

---

<sup>4</sup> The Dasuki case and some of the charges and convictions support the fact that the military in Nigeria is awash with corruption, especially with many convictions, charges and petitions against former and serving service chiefs amongst others.

currently involved in the malaise would be required to organise people against corruption.

As can be seen, some minor technological efforts could offer the necessary small steps towards the radical reduction in corruption. In support of the BVN, for instance, more and stronger efforts should go into making Nigeria less of a cash economy, which would make it easier to follow the paper trail of payments.

The Chairman of the ICPC has called attention to the onerous efforts involved in collaboration at the international level on the recovery of stolen funds, despite the internationally agreed position that states should assist one another (Owasanoye 2019). This is a major challenge that requires the collaboration of other countries. Of course, this situation is understandable given the fact that many powerful countries are major beneficiaries of illicit financial flows from Africa.

### **Conclusion**

The period from 2015 to 2019, which marked President Muhammadu Buhari's first term as the executive head of Nigeria, witnessed some progress in the anti-corruption campaign. The publicity that accompanied these efforts has attracted an international response. For instance, the African Union selected Buhari as the 2018 anti-corruption champion of the organization. However, organizations like Transparency International appeared less impressed, and Nigeria's position on the Corruption Perception Index remains low.

There is no doubt that President Muhammadu Buhari could do more to reduce the pandemic of corruption in Nigeria. He needs to speak up more and make it clear that he does not condone corruption among those around himself or within the ruling party.

Based on his actions, the President has yet to show clear leadership that recognises the unpalatable consequences of corruption. Individuals will continue to engage in corruption as long as the incentives to do so outweigh the disincentives. In effect, there is a need to apply vigorous punitive approaches to combatting corruption.

Beyond punishment, however, there must be simultaneous efforts to pursue holistic prevention and recovery strategies. For instance, assenting to anti-corruption measures – such as boosting the Auditor-General's role

and pursuing the vigorous implementation of the NACS – is necessary. It is not enough to set up Committees and then forget about them. The lack of implementation of the NACS signifies a lack of seriousness on the part of the federal government. Pleas for international collaboration would be taken more seriously if partners are seeing concerted efforts to reduce corruption at home.

### References

- Adeola, G. L. 2015. "The deepening culture of corruption in Nigerian society: Implications for governance, development and stability". *American International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences* 9(3):221–229.
- Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria Act No. 4, 2010 and its subsequent amendments.
- Badejo, B. A. 2019. "Persistence of corruption in Nigeria." In Sunday Bobai Agang et al., 2019, *A multi-dimensional perspective on corruption in Africa: Wealth, power, religion and democracy*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Badejo, B. A. 2017. Africa avoids accountability to Panama Papers. <https://medium.com/integrity-online/africa-avoids-accountability-on-panama-papers-e7964069b062> (accessed 8 March 2019).
- Badejo, B. A. 2017. *From Panama to Paradise Papers*. <https://medium.com/integrity-online/from-panama-to-paradise-papers-103ad1d3d343> (accessed 24 October 2018).
- Bhargava, V. 2006. Curing the cancer of corruption. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTABOUTUS/Resources/Ch18.pdf> (accessed 3 April 2018).
- Buhari, M. 2015. Buhari's speech to lawyers: Let's see corruption in its true colours. <http://thenewsnigeria.com.ng/2015/08/buharis-speech-to-lawyers-lets-see-corruption-in-its-true-colours/> (accessed 3 April 2018).
- Buhari, M. 2016. Speech at the Anti-Corruption Summit, London. [www.venturesafrica.com/president-buharis-speech-at-the-anti-corruption-summit-in-london/](http://www.venturesafrica.com/president-buharis-speech-at-the-anti-corruption-summit-in-london/) (accessed 4 March 2017).
- Campbell, J. and Page, M. T. 2018. *Nigeria: What everyone needs to know*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Illicit Financial Flows. 2015. Report of the high-level panel on illicit financial flows from Africa, commissioned by the AU/ECA Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

- Ipadeola, O. 2016. Qualitative study on the patterns, experiences and manifestations of corruption in Nigeria, UNODC Research Report.
- Kanu, I. S. and Okorafor, O. E. 2013. The nature, extent and economic impact of fraud on bank deposits in Nigeria. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, 4(9):253–265.
- Nwanze, C. 2006. *Bank fraud expose: With cases and preventive measures*. Lagos: CBN Press.
- Transparency International. 2011. <https://www.transparency.org> (Accessed 5 June 2018).
- Nye, J. 1967. Corruption and political development: A cost-benefit analysis. *American Political Science Review* 56(1):417–427.
- Odunmi, A. S. and Agbelade, L. I. 2014. Corruption and economic growth in Nigeria. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development* 5(6):45–56.
- Oluwalaiye, O. B. and Awolaja, G. O. 2007. The impact of corruption on a national economy: Evidence from Nigeria, in A. D. Aina, (ed.) *Corruption and the challenge of human development*. Babcock University Press, Ilishan-Remo, pp. 217–228.
- Owasanoye, B. 2019. War against corruption and Nigeria's foreign policy under the President Buhari Administration. Paper presented at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, 31 January 2019.
- Nageri, K. I., Umar, G. and Abdul, F. A. 2013 Corruption and economic development: Evidence from Nigeria. *Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review* 3(2):46–56.
- UNODC. 2004. *United Nations Convention against Corruption*. New York: United Nations.
- Waziri-Azi, F. 2017. An evaluation of the Nigerian National Anti-Corruption Strategy. *European Journal of Research in Social Sciences* 5(5):1–9.