



# CORRUPTION WATCH

*Name, Nail, Shame and Shun Corrupt Leaders Anywhere, Everywhere*

MONTHLY LEAFLET OF COALITION AGAINST CORRUPT LEADERS (CACOL) OCTOBER 2008

## "Obasanjo has ruined this country...."

An open letter to Nigeria's President Obasanjo

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Special to USAfrica The Newspaper, Houston and [USAfricaonline.com](http://USAfricaonline.com)

Dear President Obasanjo:

As you may have noticed, this is my third public letter to you in the past two years. The situation in our country constitutes the burden of each letter, especially the wide, hypocritical gap between your "democratic" avowals and the tyranny in your actual practice. I am assuming the usual epistolary mode once again because of the directness of its thrust and the personal implications of its tenor. Here is another sound of alarm, another note of warning, from a compatriot saddened and scandalised by the precipitous deterioration of Nigeria under your watch. *Continues from September edition*

The second reason for the country's financial debacle is corruption, that hydra-headed monster that you and your government have said so much and done so little about. Some people say you are not corrupt personally, but such cannot be said about the political process that ensured your attainment and retention of power. And I often wonder how a sanctimonious sermoniser like you can feel so comfortable in the company of those who reek like a public latrine. For instance, during your first term, over 300 billion naira was reported to have been voted for works and transport across the country. We were assured that bad roads were about to become a thing of the past. Barely four years hence, nearly all of Nigeria's roads are still death traps while that vibrant eastern part of our country is literally detached from the rest by unmotorable stretches. Have you ever asked, as many of us are doing, what happened to the billions that were voted for works and transport? Your government plays Oliver Twist in the reverse: it robs the poor to pay the rich!

Dear President, how many more riots, how many more corpses, do you need to see in the streets before you know that your social and economic 'policies' are killing the people you vowed to protect? Deregulation. Monetisation. Privatisation. Words note more worthy for their meretricious rhyme than any humane reason.

Take deregulation as an instance. How do you "deregulate" a chaotic, import-dependent, foreign-controlled economy like ours without running into serious problems? Can you really "deregulate" what you are not in a position to "regulate" in the first place? Now that the so-called downstream sector (whatever that is supposed to mean) of the oil industry has been "deregulated", how easy has life become for the Nigerian people? Why is your emphasis always on price increase than the efficient running of Nigeria's refineries?

Those so blindly enamoured of deregulation should remember the energy crisis in the state of California in 2000 when a deregulated process precipitated extensive price-gouging by electric power companies, and the world's sixth largest economy was plunged into expensive chaos. And that happened in the USA, an ultra-developed state with a time-tested system of checks and balance! Concerning privatisation, who stands to profit by the sale of our major national holdings if not the already rich and their friends and associates?

Besides, is privatisation always the answer? Have you considered what happened to British Rail after receiving that economic dose? The IMF and World Bank nostrums being touted as panacea for our problems will only lead to greater calamities. I have yet to see one country in the so-called developing world where IMF conditionalities have resulted in a wholesome, citizen-friendly socio-economic revival.

Mr. President, we have been told time and again by you and your advisers that we should be prepared to bear the excruciating pain caused by your economic 'policies' because such pain is a prelude to the gains of future times. Shehu Shagari told us that. So did Buhari. So did Babangida. So did Abacha. Now you! Why is it that every Nigerian ruler hectors the people on the virtues of pain?

Isn't the essence, the *raison d'etre*, of any responsible government the alleviation of pain and the promotion of social welfare? Almost invariably, as our rulers preach their gospel of pain to the people, they are busy securing themselves, their families, and friends against the ravages of the beast so sadistically unleashed by them. Besides, what future 'gains' can accrue from the present "Obasanjonomics" with its rampart fuzziness and punitive anti-people 'philosophy'? How can the so many Nigerians perishing from today's pain become the inheritors of tomorrow's 'gain'?

President Obasanjo, wind back the tape to 1999. You rode into the government house on the wave of the tremendous goodwill of a people sorely tired of military dictatorship and its ruinous ways. Barely five years after, you have cultivated the arrogant, oppressive manners of our erstwhile masters. Pause awhile and do some stock-taking: you started off with a Poverty Aggravation Pogrom. You preach economic prudence and monetary discipline, yet squandered so much of the country's resources on wasteful, naira-gobbling projects such as COJA and CHOGM. Now the party is over, and the Nigerian people are being asked again to pay the bill. Mr. President, there is too much pain in the land.

The people over whom you rule are tired and hungry. And very angry. You may have been prevented from seeing the corpses in the streets by the tinted glass of power, the hordes of advisers and special advisers whose 'advice' has landed us in this pitiful mess: the sycophantic clergy who keep telling you that you are God-chosen to rule Nigeria.

The sermon in the streets is several pains away from the one in their books. President Obasanjo, as I said in my letter of July 3, 2003, no Nigerian ruler has ever been as lucky as you. You ruled us, first as a military dictator, and now as a civilian president. But what legacy would you like to leave behind?

What would you like to be remembered by: the gruesome unresolved political assassinations so rampant during your rule, or the dangerous abracadabra in Anambra State? The people groan under the yoke of your rule. They yearn for a caring, listening leader, not an arrogant, insensitive, know-all despot. Peep through the tinted glass of power, Mr. President. Can you see the corpses in our streets?

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## Making a case against Obasanjo: Everybody's Business



September 3, 2008 makes it a complete year when CACOL launched itself to the limelight in a robust engagement against forces of retrogression in Nigeria as represented by the *dramatis personae* of official corruption in every facet of our national life. We undertook – and will further undertake – to bear this onerous task because a critical hiatus exists that needs to be filled by conscious and conscientious actions to destroy the leadership-inflicted virus of poverty, underdevelopment and mass suffering. For our seemingly innocuous efforts, however, we've earned harassment, detention, threat and imprisonment. We are not complaining because we know we are dealing with an almost intractable systemic failure operated by political jobbers averse to change. Through regular Press Conferences, Releases and Briefings, pamphleteering and mass protests – which have become our traditional trademark – we have been making steady onslaught against the enemies of the entrenched culture of corruption. We have submitted several petitions to the EFCC, ICPC, and the National Assembly both in Lagos and Abuja for the comprehensive probe of the eight-year tenure of Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo (rtd) to determine the level and volume of corruption in that regime and bring the culpable elements to book. When the Osun State judicial scandal broke out, and the state government's financial inducement of the State's legislators before then, we mobilized our member-organisations nationwide for mass protests in Ibadan, Osogbo and Abuja where we submitted copies of petition to the President of the Court of Appeal to set up a probe panel to investigate the allegations. For this we had to endure police brutality, detention, arraignment and remand in prison custody in Ilesha, among other humiliating treatment.

From all indications, assertions and evidences given so far at the Elumelu panel and similar ones before it, Obasanjo and those who worked in his regime could have misappropriated, misapplied, mismanaged or misdirected more funds during its eight-year tenure than all other regimes before it put together. This is evidenced by the widespread fraudulent practices that pervade all sectors of our economy ranging from energy, power, works, communications, and health to education and even justice during the period.

A few examples of **exposés** on Obasanjo prior to and during the Elumelu panel sitting from those who should know like his son, associates as well as those who served in different capacities under him, especially his ministers (including his favourite duo of Okonjo-Iweala and Oby Ezekwesili who testified that Obasanjo was arbitrary in award of contracts to nonexistent and illegal companies, giving underserved waivers of up to \$1.5bn, breaching due process at will, etc) will suffice as adequate grounds to summon him for questioning and recommendation for prosecution. Some of such earlier indictments are as follows:

- Obasanjo was accused by his own son, Gbenga to have had sex with his wife before he gave her oil contract. How many more could have happened the same way elsewhere? Any wonder then why huge contracts have been alleged to have been given to favourites, illegal and blacklisted companies.
- The Federal Government under Obasanjo was said to have acceded to an \$18m, and actually paid \$6m for non-existent court judgments by the Minister of Justice and Attorney-General of the Federation Mr. Michael Aondoakaa. How many more of such spurious bills could have been conceded and paid with Nigeria's taxpayers' hard earned money?
- President Umar Yar'Adua accused Obasanjo of having wasted \$10bn on the power sector; the Speaker House of Representatives, Dimeji Bankole put the cost of waste at \$16bn while the on-going Elumelu panel has confirmed more than \$13bn waste in the sector so far. Why on earth would the chief accounting officer of that regime of waste be exempted from giving evidence on where the money went?
- Obasanjo was also said to have misapplied the PTDF's money by PTDF Executive Secretary himself, Alh Kabir Mohammed at the sitting of the House of Representatives on Upstream Petroleum Resources. The rot in the PTDF was exposed last year during the Third-Term imbroglio that the Fund only served as conduit pipe for draining petro-dollar out of national coffers with none but only 'initiated' insiders were privy to the budget heads that warranted all expenditures from it. Why wont the president, who doubled as the Minister of Petroleum and chief signatory to Fund's accounts be called to present his balance sheet for the Fund that has developed but only private estates of its managers thereby increasing the cost of various petroleum products rather than develop the energy sector?
- Prof Ndidi Okereke Onyike, Director-General of the Nigerian Stock Exchange said that Obasanjo forced her to head TRANSCORP, a conglomerate where Obasanjo acquired about 200million shares. Was the then president courting a confidant to protect his illegal primitive accumulation? Mustn't he be made to say why he did it?
- At the sitting of the House of Representatives Committee on gas on January 23 2008, Dr Abubakar Lawal, the Group Managing Director of NNPC gave evidence that Obasanjo did not follow due process or consider equity in the establishment of gas filling stations in the country and that Obasanjo also supervised the release of funds for the projects.

How much arbitrariness did the late regime of Obasanjo perpetrated while it held sway, any wonder then that the Ministry of Power denied knowledge of how contractors handling the various National Independent Power Stations were paid between 60 and 100 per cent of contract sums without evidence of performance?

**Apart from the aforesaid, which are contained in our petitions** to the anti-graft agencies; we would like the National Assembly to investigate the following.

- The entire 2007 budget with a view to finding out whether monies were actually expended on what they budgeted this is against the backdrop of the information provided by the chairman of the House of Committee on Power and Steel that his committee was told that "the money appeared in the 2007 budget but was not utilized".
- The \$400 million World Bank loan that Olusegun Obasanjo raised for the moribund power sector project.
- The \$3.2 billion Obasanjo regime drew from the allocation of 36 states and 774 local governments as contribution to the implementation of the NIPP;

Furthermore, we would not want Nigerians to allow themselves to be hoodwinked by the above-the-law posturing of one of its own, Dr Iyabo Obasanjo-Bello who believed that she could get away with any scandalous crime no matter what anybody or institution does on such. The National Assembly should be pressured to relieve her of principal positions in the Senate and hand her over to the EFCC or ICPC for proper investigation on:

- her roles in the sharing of the unspent budget of the Federal Ministry of Health,
- her role in the award of N4.1bn unexecuted contract to her company M. Schneider Energy Nigeria for the construction of the 5MVA Borokiri sub-station and its three components in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

**Equally the National Assembly should also be pressured to use the evidence given against**

- Energo Nigeria Limited to call for the prosecution of the former military head of state, General Abdulsalami Abubakar for failure to execute the N19 billion transmission substation contract where he collected N13 billion but executed less than five percent of the contract.
- The House should also probe the circumstances that surrounded the collection of N10 million by the House of Representatives Committee on Health for capacity-building trip to Ghana from the stolen unspent budget of the Federal Ministry of Health. That the money was returned is an afterthought. It is our belief that the Dr. Alaba Ojomo-led Committee ought not to have collected any money of which source was not ascertained in the first place, especially from a Ministry the Committee is to oversee its affairs.
- Last but not the least, the Case of Mrs Patricia Etteh should be revisited. Since it has been found that the woman is truly indicted in the house renovation scandal, it is only normal that she be released by the House to the anti-graft agencies and made to face full consequences of her action. This will not make it a negative precedence, it will, as well serve as deterrent to others who might be thinking in her like.

It is in consideration of the **negative impact all these arbitrariness** and others yet to be exposed has on the lives of ordinary Nigerians that we hereby call on members of the Nigerian public, who have thus far been tagged complacent, to compel the National Assembly to carry out a comprehensive examination of how those eight years of monumental waste the affairs of Nigerians was managed under the 'imperial' supervision of General Olusegun Obasanjo who reduced Nigeria into a huge garrison where the subjects had no say, and where a say is forced, was made to matter not in its administration. We equally call on the National Assembly to live up to the expectation of the Nigerian electorates and full heartedly, join in this noble crusade aimed at salvaging the hapless citizens from the doldrums of socio-economic enslavement.

If every other official involved in the matters under examination were invited but Obasanjo, their boss, it would amount to preferential treatment and exercise of selective justice. Such preferential treatment will not only rubbish whatever good intention that might have informed the effort of the House of Representatives, it will also paint the House as another pack of opportunistic rent seekers. And such will embolden present and future leaders to be more brazen in squandering the nation's resources.

We hereby demand that all those who have been mentioned as having their hands in the squander mania that has made the life of an average Nigerian more miserable between 1999 and 2007 no matter how big, powerful or influential must be brought to justice. We believe all further investigations could be completed within four weeks and the process of prosecution of General Obasanjo and other indicted persons begins forthwith. This is our minimum demand.

**Corruptionists are evil, they are sadists** who enjoy seeing people suffer, they are capable of washing their devilish feet with the blood of the cheated: we therefore need to wipe them out of our communities before they succeeded in wiping us out of existence.

The **Coalition Against Corrupt Leaders (CACOL)** was established in August 2007 to exert pressures on anti-graft agencies to investigate and prosecute known corrupt leaders in Nigeria. CACOL also undertakes to sensitize Nigerians to **Name, Nail, Shame and Shun Corrupt Leaders Anywhere, Everywhere** to serve as deterrent that corruption does not pay. CACOL is primarily funded by member organisations but also seeks support from public-spirited individuals, corporate bodies and donor agencies. This leaflet is supported by **ActionAid Nigeria** through **CHILDREN Project**. For further information contact: Chairman, 610 Lagos-Abeokuta Expressway, Ijaye-Ojokoro, Lagos, Nigeria. E-mail: [cacolc@yahoo.com](mailto:cacolc@yahoo.com) Phone: 01-4736534, 08037194969, 08023226276. 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2008