



# CORRUPTION WATCH

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

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

## THE MISAPPROPRIATION OF FUNDS TO LEGISLATORS IN OSUN STATE

**The recent catalogue of alarming, disgraceful revelations of blatant and reckless misapplication of Nigeria's treasure prevalent during the eight-year presidency of Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo that is being carried over and perpetuated by some adherents of the civilian dictator's philosophy of impunity calls for worry and immediate intervention of all right-thinking and well-meaning Nigerians.**

**Of particular interest** to CACOL is the allegation that the Osun State government paid five million naira each into the accounts of the twenty six members of the Osun State House of Assembly purportedly to execute *constituency projects*. This practice is totally unconstitutional and alien to any legal provision in Nigeria. It is borne out of the *lootocratic* mentality - the attitude of using public funds as a means of personal enrichment or for political patronage. It is the mentality of an average Nigerian politician who sees political power as avenue for self enrichment in material and influence at the expense of the tax-paying citizens on whose behalf the politicians are expected to hold the instruments of governing in trust. This is glaringly a corrupt practice that is a negation of democratic ethos that presumes that governance is a function of separation of powers where different arms of government engage in checks and balances over one another.

**It is an indisputable fact** that once functions of different arms of government are deliberate made to overlap for pecuniary reasons the control mechanism embedded in governance would have been compromised and what would result is lack of consideration for common good of the governed which literally translates to tyranny. Constituency project fund for legislators is alien commonsense as well as to all known statute books in Nigeria. Legislators have no business executing projects for their government. They are only meant to supervise, verify or propose projects as part of their oversight functions. It is clear by what has been exposed in the Osun state saga that state resources have been deliberately misappropriated and commandeered for private use in order to compromise checks and balances in governance

hence a culture of impunity follows. This is a culture that 'sees no evil and talks no evil' among arms of government leaving the citizens on their own as they have no governmental structure to cry to when their political rights to good governance are violated. The implication of this is that the state can easily be turned into a police state where only the might is right while the people matter not.

**Osun State is one of the states in Nigeria** that is almost totally dependent on federal allocation to survive. In this circumstance, one would have expected the state government to put to proper use the scarce resources accruing to the state for developmental purposes rather than for ego massage. It is however commendable that some truly honourable members of the House deemed it necessary to return their unsolicited 'Greek Gift' for integrity purposes. This is akin to those who honourably returned the unspent budget from their agencies at the federal level before it became an embarrassment to them. We in the same vein commend the EFCC for taking the petition of the eleven legislators who returned the illegal funds with all seriousness it demands by commencing immediate investigation into the illegal act.

**We would like to solicit for the intervention** of all well-meaning Nigerians to salvage and protect these truly honourable members from vindictive attacks and harassments by *lootocratic* elements in the state. We urge the EFCC to also act with dispatch as they did in the case of Federal Ministry of Health and apprehend everyone that has participated in the illegal offer and acceptance of the *loot*. And if it is found out that this illegal practice has been going on for a long time we recommend that all culprits be apprehended and prosecuted without delay. CACOL therefore not only calls for the prosecution of those involved in the latest corruption episode but also a full recovery of all similarly looted public funds in Osun state. Equally if it is true that the state governor is in the know, and aided or abetted this unconstitutional act, then he has committed an impeachable offence and nothing must be spared to make him answer for his gross indiscretion in this respect. The law should not be a respecter of anyone no matter how powerful, influential or crafty.

**Against this backdrop**, CACOL strongly recommends that a deliberate effort must be made by concerned citizens of Osun State to deliver the state from the spirit of corruption that has seemingly taken the state hostage. Osun state is becoming stigmatized with corrupt practices due to the unholy activities of some of its prominent citizens. From the scandals of a late Minister of Internal Affairs on the national ID card issue, to an erstwhile police Inspector General of Police, and an impeached former Speaker of the House of Representatives, the corruption dent is becoming an embarrassing spectacle for that state.

## POWER

**To start with**, various awe-inspiring contradictory figures are bandied around as wasted on the ill-fated electricity project of the Obasanjo years. The Power Probe Panel of the House of Representatives settled for 16bn dollars, ex-president Olusegun Obasanjo countered by saying it was only 6bn dollars; while House of Representatives Speaker, Hon. Dimeji Bankole claimed it to be above 13.5bn dollars. Any of these figures is as intimidating enough as they are scandalous.

**Our concern here** is that nothing, absolutely nothing, of substance was achieved in the power sector in relation to the magnitude of the financial resources allocated to it. It is no longer news that the power situation in this country worsens by the day, as it has graduated from epileptic to paralytic. It is in this respect that CACOL considers it an unpardonable insult to the psyche of Nigerians the recent appointment of

former power and steel ministers who have been accused of clandestine award of power project contracts to dubious companies that never delivered – as members of the Committee established to monitor further investment of a whopping N569.8bn in that same comatose sector. Why going this vicious cycle again? This is an incorrigible continuation of the corrupt legacies of the past.

**President Umaru Yar'Adua** need not waste further time in declaring his promise of a state of emergency in the power sector so that for once Nigerians can rekindle their hope of a manageable future and have reasons to believe they have a leader who acts his words.

## **AVIATION**

**Nigerians are all living witnesses** to the many avoidable air disasters of the Obasanjo years with consequent losses of human lives. Corruption was already crippling the aviation industry before Obasanjo's second coming, but the situation was further exacerbated during this civilian misrule to complete the crippling process. Ex-president Obasanjo approved – via Paul Dike's Presidential Committee on the Aviation Sector – a whopping N48bn intervention fund out of which N19.5bn was instantly released for a project that experts testifying before the senate Aviation Probe Committee said couldn't cost more than one billion naira, or two at the most.

**CACOL finds it rather curious** the hastiness with which the senate ordered the arrest of one Mr. George Eider, an Austrian Aviation contractor, who disclosed before the Senate Committee on Aviation that actually the contract sum was grossly inflated. Why hastily arrest the whistle-blowing gentleman leaving out his Nigerian accomplices who are the guiltiest of this whole stinking business? CACOL accuses the senate of protecting their Nigerian friends while humiliating a foreigner who was bold enough to open up on their collective misdeeds. It is gratifying, though belatedly that the EFCC eventually effected a ceremonial arrest of the Dr Babalola Borishade and Chief Femi Fani-Kayode in the hallowed chambers of the Senate where they have gone to give evidence.

**It is curious** why the Senate didn't order the arrest all those mentioned in connection with this huge scam before it became a National embarrassment! We only hope that the next thing to hear will not be that the Austrian whistle-blower has been deported to his country to stifle the truth and protect the home grown corruption magnates who might be granted plea-bargain to save them from the shame they deserve. It is our position that since the negligence and ineptitude of these men of yesteryears in the aviation sector have led to colossal loss of quality lives of Nigerians, including innocent schoolchildren, it is only normal that all the culprits, both Nigerians and expatriates, be made to face the full wrath of the law.

## **RAILWAY**

**According to the current transportation minister**, Mrs. Dieziani Allison-Madueke, testifying before the Senate Ad-Hoc Committee on Transportation, a large sum of \$25.48bn was spent on the railway sector between 1999 and 2007. This sum was a far cry from the figure submitted by Nigerian Railway Corporation officials who claimed that \$40.3bn was expended on nothing. The whole lot has been misappropriated or stolen outrightly. We say this without fear of contradiction because there is nothing on ground to show that even one billion naira was spent on the rail system. The trains are not running and the very few remaining are unfit for human transportation. The rail lines have depreciated so much that any attempt by the train to embark on interstate journey is like embarking on a journey to eternity.

**CACOL demands that a thorough** examination of that sector be carried out and all those who have directly or otherwise contributed to the rot that led to the paralysis of that Corporation should be made to face the music of anomie.

## **EFCC: THE WAZIRI ISSUE**

**For the umpteenth time** we would like to state that CACOL has nothing personal against Mrs. Farida Waziri's appointment as substantive Chairman of the EFCC. This is contrary to arguments in some quarters that we are in the league of those deifying a particular personality as head of the EFCC. But it has been established that the position the Mrs Waziri is occupying at the EFCC is not officially vacant as at the time she was drafted there. AIG Waziri (rtd) is also a surety for former Governor George Akume who is supposed to be under EFCC investigation for huge misappropriation of government funds and reckless corruption during his tenure as Governor of Benue state.

**This is a serious issue of credibility.** It has given substance to the allegation that George Akume, now a Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, tenaciously lobbied his colleagues in the Senate to hurriedly confirm Mrs. Waziri as EFCC's Chair as a mark of reciprocity of gesture. After all, one good turn deserves another. Definitely, the Akume investigation by the EFCC under Madam Waziri, like many others in that category is already compromised. We therefore call for the immediate resignation of Mrs. Farida Waziri as EFCC Chairman or her sack be ordered by President Yar' Adua forthwith.

## **REQUIRED ACTION**

**So far, by the body and vocal language of the current presidency** there is nothing to show that president Yar'Adua is interested in fighting corruption. Rather than do the right thing at the right time, it is vacillating and submitting to the influence of party patronage and personality cult. If the president means his words on corruption as part of his seven-point agenda, CACOL calls on him to arrest and prosecute all past and present corrupt public office holders, starting with the Chief Accounting Officer of each regime, and recover all their loot to the public coffers.

**However, since this government** has not demonstrated that it has the required political will to fight corruption the people should resort to self-help efforts to make corruption unattractive in their land. Nigerians should therefore join hands with CACOL to *name, nail, shame and shun corrupt leaders anywhere, everywhere.* Former president Olusegun Obasanjo in particular must face prosecution for the gross corruption committed under his government by his appointees on his behalf and by himself. He must account for the sources of his enormous wealth after he reluctantly left Aso Rock in 2007.

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> July, 2008