



L-R: Prof. Tahir Mamman, OON, SAN; the representative of the Chief Justice of Nigeria and Chairperson of the J-K Gadzama LLP 10th Annual Public Lecture, Hon. Justice Mary Peter-Odili, JSC; Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN; Chief (Mrs.) Folake Solanke, SAN, CON; Hon. Justice Rosaline Bozimo and Hon. Justice Ibrahim Auta, OFR (Rtd.) cutting the cake at the J-K Gadzama 10th Annual Public Lecture held on Tuesday, 28th November, 2017 at J-K Gadzama Court, Abuja.

EDITORIAL

We are pleased to welcome you to the new year. The previous year was an auspicious one for the firm and 2018 promises to be even better.

In this edition, we bring you an in-depth analysis of the Federal Government's whistleblower policy presented by the first female Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Chief Mrs. 'Folake Solanke, SAN, CON.

As a pleasant diversion, you will also be regaled with sights from a number of events, including the reception held in honour of John N. Egwuonwu, SAN, former Managing Partner at the firm, who was conferred with the coveted rank of Senior Advocate of Nigeria in September 2017.

We hope that, as always, you will find this edition informative and entertaining.

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WHISTLE-BLOWING POLICY: PEOPLES' POWER AND CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

PRESENTED BY
CHIEF 'FOLAKE SOLANKE, SAN, CON
AT THE J-K GADZAMA LLP 10th ANNUAL LECTURE IN ABUJA, NIGERIA
ON TUESDAY, 28TH NOVEMBER, 2017



INTRODUCTION

My departure point is to thank the Almighty God for bringing all of us here today. Praise be to His Holy name.

I express my deep gratitude to my learned friend of the Silk – Chief J. K. Gadzama SAN and his law firm for the gracious invitation extended to me to deliver the lecture at this auspicious 10th anniversary of the annual lecture series. Chief Gadzama SAN is one of the most outstanding members of our one and only learned profession. A successful decade of any project is worthy of celebration. I congratulate the celebrants and wish you more laurels. I also appreciate all the arrangements made to ensure my comfort before, and since my arrival in Abuja.

I salute all the former brilliant speakers. I am honoured to join the formidable group. I extend high commendation to Chief Gadzama, SAN for his leadership role, as a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, in establishing the annual lecture. Such an annual intellectual discourse is bound to stimulate legal scholarship and elevate professional standards. It will also promote public interest in, and correct orientation towards national development.

I applaud the fundamental objective underscoring the annual lecture: id est: to give something back to the

society within which your law firm has flourished. Every successful professional or business person should be conscious of the need to give back to the society. I recall that in 1995, as president of Zonta International, I led the Zonta delegation to Beijing, China for the UN 4th World Conference on women. One of the take-aways from that historic global event was that every delegate should go and give something back to the society. No one can succeed without the participation of the society.

Now, to the topic of the event to wit:

WHISTLE-BLOWING POLICY: PEOPLES' POWER AND CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

Again, I extend high commendation to my learned friend of the Silk, for the formulation of the title. It is germane and impactful with respect to our Nigerian situation. Recently, a newspaper featured a cartoon in which a politician was mercilessly flogging a whistleblower. The wife of the politician who was watching this brutal assault, was urging her husband to: “beat am well, he should leave the whistle-blowing to football referees!” If there are some politicians here, I engage in self-defence because I am neither the author of the cartoon, nor the owner of the newspaper!

DEFINITION OF WHISTLE-BLOWING

On a serious note, whistle-blowing has been defined as:

The disclosure by a person, usually an employee in a government agency or private enterprise, to the public or to those in authority, of mismanagement, corruption, illegality, or some other wrongdoing.⁽¹⁾

This definition has correctly described it as a policy. I hasten to add that the whistle blower could be a former employee. Since the policy was introduced into our political and economic landscape by the honourable minister for finance, Mrs Kemi Adeosun, about two

years ago, enormous amounts of stolen money have been recovered.

LACK OF LEGAL BACKING

However, that notwithstanding, I have a serious concern that the policy has no statutory backing, and is simply being implemented as a ministerial policy. I am aware that other countries have statutory provisions, while others do not, and only implement the policy. However, it is my humble opinion that, in our beloved country, with the type of egregious misconduct and the staggering sums which have been stolen from our national treasuries, we need a specific statute to deal with the complexities of the policy which is being misused already.

LOOT DISCOVERED IN OSBORNE ROAD, IKOYI, LAGOS

For instance, there is more than one claimant on the stupendous loot recovered in an apartment in Osborne Road, Ikoyi, Lagos this year. The recovery was reported to be \$43m, ₦230m and £27,000 amounting to ₦13bn. Other residents on Osborne Road must be quite disturbed by such infamy. Is there anyone here from Osborne Road, Ikoyi, Lagos?

MEDIA CONTROVERSY

Now, from the reports from the media, it would appear that there was a controversy about the payment of ₦325m – the 2½%, reward of the loot. Now, the whistle-blower is demanding 5% estimated by him to be ₦860m. Obviously, the amount of the recovered loot, according to the whistle-blower, is greater than the amount published by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). The acting chairman of the EFCC, Mr Ibrahim Magu, while speaking at the 7th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption held in Vienna, Austria was quoted in the media, as having said, inter alia: “that the whistle-blower was a young man who had never seen ₦1m in his life.” Heavens above! That was a partial identification of the young man (not a woman). This was a calamitous mistake. He also alleged that the EFCC was advising the young man on how to handle the money which was estimated at N325m. I digress; why was EFCC giving gratuitous advice to the whistle-blower? Only the commission can answer that question. I wonder if a representative of the EFCC is here!

The following day, another media report categorically contradicted the acting chairman. A lawyer –Yakubu Galadima Esq.– for the whistle-blower alleged that the

EFCC had abandoned the whistle blower, had not paid him a kobo and had detained him in three different places. Further, a spokesperson for the EFCC said it was not for the EFCC to pay the whistle-blower. Now, I ask, who is to pay the whistle blower after the money had been forfeited to the federal government and deposited in the Central Bank of Nigeria? After the media contradictions, the following day, the minister herself said the whistle-blower would be paid this month. I say, Deo Volente. We are waiting for action in this regard.

WHISTLE-BLOWER: 'CRAZY' OR NOT 'CRAZY'

It has also been reported in the media that the EFCC had alleged that the Osborne Road loot whistle-blower was mentally unstable; the he was carted off to the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital where he was kept for one solid month. One wonders who medically diagnosed his mental state. The Department of State Security (DSS) was supposed to protect him. This scenario played out because of the enormity of the first – a reward of N325m. Professor Itse Sagay SAN, my learned friend of the Silk and chairman of the presidential Advisory Committee against Corruption, was also reported to have commented on the whistle-blower's mental state. Of course, his lawyer has vehemently denied that his client was mentally unstable. Now, the staff of the hospital also know him, thus further compromising his identity. Indeed 'crazy'; wonders shall never end! Poor whistle-blower!

That was confusion confounded, which is certainly not the way to encourage potential whistle-blowers. All the elements of disclosure and payment should be clearly articulated in a statute. The partial revelation of the whistle-blower's identity places him in danger. Indeed, the depositors of that humongous loot in the Osborne Road, Ikoyi apartment could not have carried the heavy baggage of cash alone and must have been assisted by some trusted' persons – one of whom must be the “young man who has never seen ₦1m before”. We now await the outcome of this imbroglio! Perhaps, it is pertinent to wonder if the reward of 2½% - 5% is not too much considering the unquantifiable loot that was discovered. Perhaps, there should be a re-examination of the quantum of the reward payable to each whistle-blower to wit:

Should a ceiling be placed on the quantum having regard to the kind of unimaginable gigantic discovery at Osborne Road in Lagos; or should every reward be negotiated with each whistle-blower?

THE WHISTLE-BLOWER PROTECTION BILL 2015

During my preparation for this lecture, I was anxious to have a copy of the Whistle-Blower Protection Bill 2015. I was fortunate to receive a copy of the bill from Professor Itse Sagay for which I thank him again. As far as I know, the draft is still a bill which has not yet been passed into law.

It is quite amazing that a bill of such huge economic and national importance and magnitude could not have been passed into law for the past two years. I ask, "Why?" The answer is blowing in the wind. I wonder how anyone or some people can amass such stupendous amounts of cash of all currencies and hide same in an apartment. It is the height of chicanery which defies comprehension.

Our national interest compels me to appeal to the legislature to pass the bill into law without any further delay. A two-year debate is more than sufficient.

SOME COMMENTS ON THE BILL

I have perused the bill and will identify only four areas inter alia, which need to be reviewed thus:

- (i) There is no definition of 'Whistle-blowing' in the bill.
- (ii) There is no provision in the bill for the huge 2½% - 5% reward to be paid to the whistle-blower. It is incomprehensible why the percentage payable as a reward is not in the bill. Certainly, the reward is at the very core of the policy and the consideration for whistle-blowing.
- (iii) Some of the sub-headings of the bill need to be reviewed e.g., Part III – "Obligations of Person to whom public interest is made" should be recast to read:

"Obligation of the person to whom a disclosure is made",

Public interest is the motivation for disclosure, but it is the disclosure that is reported to the official, not the public interest.

- (iv) Part of the objects of the bill states:
 - (a) Encourage and facilitate

disclosure of wrong doing in the
public sector...
(Underling mine)

The definition provided at the beginning of this discourse includes disclosures in a 'private enterprise'. Corruption is so widespread and is devouring the entire fabric of our nation, thus, it is insufficient to limit the act to the public sector.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS

I am conscious of the fact that the national treasury has been pillaged and plundered. Thus, the legislature must be vigilant to protect the assets of the nation. That notwithstanding, both the public sector and the private sector must be addressed by the act.

Let me give two illustrations to support my propositions that both the public and private sectors be addressed in the bill.

a) August this year, according to a BBC news broadcast, a whistle-blower working for You Tube, in anonymity, informed the BBC that the exploitation and sexual grooming of children by predators on the internet (the home of the good, the bad and the ugly!) were not being addressed by YouTube with seriousness and promptitude! Of course, YouTube quickly issued a denial statement and gave assurance to take immediate and appropriate action. It is presumed that without the whistle-blower, YouTube might not have reacted to the potential danger.

b) In our beloved country, there are expatriate companies which impose slave-labour conditions of exploitation on their Nigerian employees in breach of the Labour Act. A case in point is that of Bedmate Furniture company in Magboro, Ogun State and its employee – William Ekanem – who was crippled by his wicked Chinese boss – Master Wan with a vicious kung fu kick in the back. It was reported in the media that the firm paid the victim N3m. That is scandalously inadequate for a man crippled for life upon the allegation of the theft of two celo-tapes. Oh ye gods! Master Wan should be prosecuted by the police for aggravated assault and battery, jailed and deported after his jail term. William Ekanem should be paid tens of millions of naira by Master Wan for that naked assault before deportation. The police must not compromise Ekanem's case by denying justice to him. The case must not end at the police station. Without an informer, no one would have known about Mr Ekanem.

We are supposed to look after our fellow citizens. We are our brothers' keepers. People must also speak out in defence of the national economy which is being devastated by greedy predators and rogues. We must be courageous enough to speak the truth to power like Mrs Winifred Oyo-lta, the head of service of the federation.

It is not possible for me to do an entire appraisal of the bill. However, with all due respect, I recommend that the Gadzama law firm should study the bill, and forward the amended bill to both houses of the National Assembly. Legal backing is critically needed now. Let the people exert their power to agitate for the passage of the bill into law.

PEOPLES' POWER

I have interpreted 'People' in the context of Section 24 of Chapter II of the Constitution on the "Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy" on duties of the 'Citizen'. People are citizens. 'Duty' implies the power and the right to perform a function. Section 24(d) and (e) provide thus: make positive and useful contributions to the advancement, progress and well being of the community where he resides;

c) render assistance to appropriate and lawful agencies in the maintenance of law and order".⁽²⁾ Having located the people's power in the context of the constitutional provision, a disclosure of wrong-doing, as defined hereinbefore, is part of the duties of the citizen. The peoples' power ensures checks and balances in a democratic society. Further, it reminds government that they hold their position in trust for the people who voted them into government. The vote is one of the peoples' constitutional power which must not be compromised by rigging.

CORRUPT PRACTICES AND ABUSE OF POWER

In addition to Section 24, (d) and (e), Section 15(5) of the Constitution also provides thus:

"The State shall abolish all corrupt practices and abuse of power".

I advocate that the people must employ their power to assist the state to accomplish the challenge to abolish all corrupt practices and abuse of power. What a challenge!

Section 17 of the Constitution contains the social

objectives for the welfare of the citizen. It provides in S1: 7(1) that:

(a) The state social order is founded on ideals of freedom, equality and justice. In Section 1 (2), it provides that in furtherance of the social order, Section 2(a) and (b) provide, "every citizen shall have equality of rights and obligations, the sanctity of the human person shall be recognized, and human dignity shall be maintained and enhanced;"

S17(3) (b) and (c) provide that:

- (b) conditions of work are just and humane; and that there are adequate facilities for leisure and for social, religious and cultural life;
- (c) the health, safety and welfare of employees are safeguarded and not endangered or abused.

TRAGEDY AND CORPSES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

If the lofty ideals enumerated in the Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy were to be implemented, Nigeria would be a paradise on earth; it would not be a place from which people escape and end up as corpses in the Mediterranean Sea in a desperate attempt to reach Europe through Italy. The countries of origin of the migrants named in a recent CNN report are: Niger, Ghana and Nigeria. Corruption has led to stagnation to the point that people are desperate to re-locate to fair havens for a better quality of life.

Regrettably, woe upon woe, the fantastic constitutional ideals articulated in the high-sounding and grandiose language appear to be mere verba, verba, verba (words, words, words) which cannot be enforced in the law courts by virtue of Section 6(6) which has rendered them worthless. The people's power should manifest in law-suits predicated on the cloak of Chapter IV on "Fundamental Rights" in order to enforce the "Fundamental Principles and Objectives" in Chapter II as was done superbly by the Supreme Court in the Nasarawa case¹—a locus classicus⁽³⁾

I was surprised that a government official was calling on Italy to prosecute the human traffickers. Rather than that, the peoples' power should be engaged in

mounting a media (print and electronic) campaign nationwide to warn the public of the horrendous and unspeakable dangers and violence which they will suffer; they may lose their lives or be sold into slavery in Libya as farm labourers with 'big strong arms'!

Indeed, corruption is the root of the economic stagnation in our beloved country because the available money and other resources which should be used to provide for the welfare of the people is being stolen by fellow citizens.

A recent heart-destroying CNN report has featured the horrific and inhumane environment and condition of the economic migrants who end up in warehouses and camps in the most inhospitable conditions in Libya – a failed state. They are treated and called merchandise for sale. Men, women, and children are herded together like cattle. It is simply hell on earth.

The migrants get raped, beaten, kidnapped and auctioned for enslavement. There is no rule of law to protect them in a lawless state. As laudable as it is, promulgation of legislation against human trafficking is not enough. Overt action towards prevention is needed. The African Union and ECOWAS should collaborate and stop this haemorrhage of the African continent which turns Africans into merchandise in Libya in the 21st century. The campaign against human trafficking must be taken to schools, primary and secondary, colleges, universities - churches, mosques, villages, markets, . . . so that the vulnerable young are not misled by the deception of a better life abroad. The government should get a copy of the CNN video and air it all over Nigeria. The dangerous and heartless deception of human traffickers must be exposed and stopped. Our borders must be guarded against illegal migration through the Sahara Desert.

Most pathetically, early in November this year, the bodies of twenty-six African teenage girls were found on the coastal shore of Italy, the unfortunate girls having drowned at sea. On the 17th day of this same month, the Italian authorities put the bodies in twenty-six wooden coffins and gave them a decent burial after a ceremony. Autopsies showed that the girls were between 14 - 16 years old; two were pregnant. After their burial in Parlemo, Italy, President Mohammed Buhari ordered a probe into the tragedy of the twenty-six precious girls. The probe should be directed towards the prevention of immigration from our shores.

NATIONAL MULTIPLE TRAGEDY

By way of a digression, the government and entrepreneurs must create a conducive working environment for the people of Nigeria so that they do not become economic migrants exposed to all its attendant horrors, suffering and exploitation. Currently, these are issues which we must tackle. We apply our precious resources to educate our children in Nigeria and abroad. When they qualify they relocate to other countries or stay in their foreign lands of study, thus depriving our nation of the benefits of their expertise acquired with our resources. It is a multiple gigantic jeopardy because:

- (b) we spent our own money to train our children;
- (b) we do not benefit from their expertise; and
- (c) family life is disrupted because children and grand-children are oceans away.

Enough of the digression.

DUTY OF THE CITIZEN

Whistle-blowing is a citizen's duty to tackle the endemic corruption which is ravaging our beloved country. By the way, let me re-affirm that stealing is definitely an act of corruption in law, regardless of any statement to the contrary by anyone.

The Constitution has placed certain duties upon all of us as citizens. Thus, we owe such duties to one another as we are all neighbours. We do not have to try to justify ourselves like the Biblical lawyer who tried to justify himself and asked our Lord, "Who is my neighbour?" Without the information provided by a citizen the mind-boggling discovery of an avalanche of cash at Osborne Road, Ikoyi could not have been made. It staggers the imagination that such colossal amounts of money of different currencies could be found in an apartment or anywhere else. Of course, looted cash of all currencies and denominations have been found buried in sewers, locked up in a safe in an air-conditioned room in a village which has no roads, no electricity, no pipe-borne water and the villagers are as poor as church mice. If greed can drive anyone to such bizarre and unimaginable behaviour, definitely, Nigeria is sick. May God heal Nigeria. Amen. If citizens had not informed the authorities, none of these would have been discovered.

The war against corruption can only be won when offenders are prosecuted and convicted. Whistle-blowers are needed to disclose acts of corruption so

that these felons can face the wrath of the law.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE

Indeed, there is a sharp division among the people/citizens concerning the efficacy of the whistle-blowing policy. Some applaud it, some condemn it. Some regard whistle-blowers as heroes and saints while others regard them as traitors. Certainly, disclosure is a very dangerous occupation for which the whistle-blower needs adequate protection against retaliation.

It is postulated that although public interest and morality demand disclosure, fear of retaliation against the whistle-blower is not to be ignored. No doubt, people should be concerned about morality, but a whistle-blower has to take a personal decision to whistle-blow or not.

In the interest of the public, the need to whistle-blow is also extended to the products of manufacturers. Thus, if a whistle-blower succeeds in stopping the release of potentially dangerous product to the market, and still keeps his job, then he made the right decision, he will be celebrated. "Everyone wants to be a hero and not a martyr".

PROTECTION OF THE WHISTLE-BLOWER

The protection of the whistle-blower is critical because of serious acts of reprisal and retaliation if the identity is disclosed. Consequently, some may choose to remain silent even if they know of serious wrongdoing. Further, the wrong-doer may be a relative, or a friend or a benefactor of the reluctant whistle-blower. A whistle-blower if found out, may be made redundant or sacked or attacked. Even if a whistle-blower is reinstated after being sacked, the work environment may be so toxic and hostile that he might be forced to leave. Some may even profit from the crime and so, remain silent. The consequences of being found out as a whistle-blower are potentially life-threatening.

A whistle-blower may flee his country and seek asylum in another country out of fear. A new identity may be created for a whistle-blower and transported to another country for a new life. What a price to pay for disclosing corruption.

PLEA BARGAIN

Plea bargain was first surreptitiously introduced into our criminal legal system in the EFCC Act, 2004. Thereafter, Lagos State introduced it in S.75 of the High

Court Administration of Criminal Justice Law (2007). However, plea bargaining has now been injected into our criminal legal system by the Administration of Criminal Justice Act 2015. We all know that stupendous amounts of money have been stolen and are still being stolen. Last year, to my consternation, I saw a newspaper picture of tons and tons of bundles and bundles of naira displayed as exhibits before a tribunal. It was an overwhelming sight. There is no way anyone can count such a dizzying spectacle of bundles of naira – I pity the poor naira, so flagrantly abused! Undoubtedly, during the transportation of the mountain of naira from point A to point B, and during the investigation, some self-help from the humongous loot is inevitable because of non-accountability.

ABUSE OF THE WHISTLE-BLOWING POLICY

Now, it is being rumoured that plea bargain is being abused by an agreement allowing thieves to return part of the money and keep the rest! That would be catastrophic corruption which will be contrary to commonsense and sound reasoning. It would be compounding and condoning theft. Plea bargain should be the return of the entire loot, but with a lighter sentence in prison for the felonious thief. Furthermore, you cannot plea bargain to surreptitiously return stolen money without prosecution, as some highly placed people are reported to be advocating. If you have stolen money, you should be prosecuted and jailed! The entire loot, not part of it must be returned, to do less would amount to corruption upon corruption.

Now, I understand from the reports of the media, that some people also abuse the policy, e.g., people conspiring together to whistle-blow so that they can share the 5%. I understand that some abusers of the policy are being prosecuted in Nigeria. In the USA, in the on-going probe by the special counsel, Robert S. Mueller, into the Trump Campaign /Russia relationship, one of the three men charged is President Trump's former foreign policy adviser, George Papadopoulos, who has admitted the offence of making a false statement to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) which is a felony. He has entered into a plea agreement and is helping the investigators and will eventually get a lesser sentence.

THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE OF THE FEDERATION

In S. 150 of the Constitution, the office of attorney - general and minister of justice is elevated above all other ministries, being the only ministerial

appointment with constitutional favour. Thus, an onerous responsibility lies with the legal profession to be in the forefront of employing that awesome constitutional power in the war against corruption. Now, how are lawyers faring in this professional duty?

MISCONDUCT BY SOME MEMBERS OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION

Of course, people as citizens include lawyers! Regrettably, some members of the Bar and the Bench are facing accusations of corruption. I confess that I am heartbroken by accusations of wrong-doings by my constituency because when I entered the profession fifty-four years ago, with immense joy and excitement, there was no rumour or whisper or suggestion, not to talk of, allegation of judicial corruption. Thus, it grieves the soul and boggles the mind that judicial corruption is being bandied around and discussed with impunity anytime and everywhere. Infandum— “unspeakable”. Of course, the third arm to wit, the judiciary is the chief enforcer of the checks and balances and must be above board. Any wrong-doing by any judge or lawyer is a breach of trust of the one and only learned profession. Thus, with the greatest respect, I ask judges and lawyers, to engage in soul-searching and self-examination in order to use our potent constitutional and professional power to tackle the hydra-headed monster of corruption. We have both a personal and professional duty as we have been empowered by God to attain the prestigious status of judges and lawyers. Thus, we must apply the law to honour God and help humanity. It is an enormous privilege for us to represent other people in the pursuit of their rights.

However, even in the midst of allegations against some of us, I always enter a caveat in all my lectures, that there are judges and lawyers who are above board and practice law according to the tenets of the profession and their oaths of office. Thus, no person official or non-official, has the effrontery and the temerity to label all lawyers as rogues. Well, I am NOT a rogue! And I have practised law for 54 years, 36 of them as the first female Silk. It is outrageous that anyone, for whatever reasons, should cast such a scandalous aspersion on the entire learned profession of which I am so enamoured! I say to the abuser of lawyers that those who live in glass houses, should not throw stones. As our Lord said in the gospel according to John 8:7 about the woman caught in adultery: “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.” Discretion prevents me from saying more and this comment is without prejudice to my principle that lawyers must lead the crusade against corruption.

BANKS

Of course, we need banks for the deposit and safe-keeping of our honest income. However, it has to be acknowledged that some banks are head and neck involved in the laundering of looted funds. The Bank Verification Number (BVN) is an attempt by the government to detect the owners of the trafficked enormous stolen loot lodged in the banks by the predators of our economy. A recent bizarre judicial order which threatens to forfeit funds not compliant with the BVN policy is causing an earthquake and mayhem in banks throwing them into a frenzy as to how to vacate the temporary judicial order. Regrettably, banks all over the world have lost the confidence of the people and they must embark on remedial actions to reform the banking system in order to reduce fraud.

SOME LEGISLATIONS WHICH HAVE PROVISIONS FOR INFORMERS, I.E., WHISTLE-BLOWERS

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences (ICPC) Act and the Economic Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Act 2004 have a mandate to receive information about crimes and to prosecute the offenders. However, there is no provision for a reward.

The Freedom of Information Act 2011, was promulgated to focus the limelight on government activities and to ensure transparency. This act further strengthens the peoples' power to know what is going on in the corridors of power. It is also in the interest of the government to openly involve the people in the war against corruption and not engage in clandestine activities.

As already stated, the Whistle-blower Protection Bill 2015 is yet to be passed into law. However, it would appear that another bill has been placed before the legislature to wit: “The Public Interest Disclosure and Witness Protection Bill 2017”. It is voluminous. I am mystified that without passing the 2015, another Bill dealing with disclosures of public interest and witness protection is before the National Assembly. The title of the bill reminds me of the content of the 2015 bill. However, as I have not had the opportunity to read its 120 sections, I say no more, except to urge the National Assembly to review the 2015 bill and pass it into law before the new 2017 bill.

PUBLIC DISCOURSES

In a recent round-table discussion, eminent stakeholders like learned Professor Itse Sagay SAN, learned Professor Akinseye-George, learned AGF Abubakar Malami SAN and others expressed concern about the trial of corruption cases. The meeting was titled “Strategies and approaches for successful completion and effective prosecution of abandoned or unresolved high profile cases of corruption in Nigeria”. It was organized by a human rights advocacy group, Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project, in collaboration with Trust Africa. Professor Akinseye George presented the lead paper in which he advocated inter alia for the participation of the people. This admonition is in harmony with S.24 and S.15(5) of the Constitution herein before articulated”. As I said earlier, we are our brothers' keepers and neighbours. We will not ask like Cain, “Am I my brother's keeper?” (Gen. 4:9)

Professor Akinseye George strongly advocated for the participation of the people in the war against corruption. He is quoted as having said:

“Why the public must buy in . . .

Corruption has become endemic and the jobs of investigators and prosecutors have become more difficult due to toleration and celebration of corrupt people by the people.

“. . . notorious clichés like “ – public money is nobody's money”, “chop make I chop” and “why are they witch-hunting (sic) the opposition?” – have become rife; underscoring public apathy to the anti-graft war. To inspire the people's confidence and get them enlisted in the struggle to beat corruption therefore remains a task for the government.”

Let me add another cliché thus: “It is not my father's business.”

People's attitude to national assets must change, so that there is a correct national approach to protect the national patrimony from thieves.

SPEEDY DISPENSATION OF JUSTICE

People's power was also exercised in another symposium organized by the Initiative for Socio-Cultural Fairness and Equity (F.I.S.E.) in conjunction with the Conference of Western Attorneys-General (CWAG) and Africa Alliance Partnership. The symposium which was chaired by a former Supreme

Court justice, Honourable Justice Adolphus Karibe-Whyte featured an address by the vice president and our learned friend of the Silk, Professor Yemi Osinbajo SAN. The symposium was held to urge the judiciary to engage in speedy trials of criminal cases in their courts. In his address, the vice president referred to the Administration of Criminal Justice Act 2015 which was passed into law for the purpose of avoiding unnecessary delay in the conduct of criminal – particularly corruption – cases. Intellectual discourses such as the round-table discussion and the symposium are efforts in the right direction by the people in support of the war against corruption in Nigeria.²

In his recent book, Nigerian Law on Socio-Economic Rights,⁽⁴⁾ the learned author – my learned friend of the Silk – Femi Falana SAN, in chapter seven on “The Right to an Accountable Government” cogently articulates the duty of the citizen to fight corruption relying inter alia on Sections 24 (d) and (e) and 15(5) of the Constitution and the need to help win the war against corruption by disclosures. It is a duty we all owe.

I recall that in my 85th birthday celebration speech, I urged the government to create a registry where all recovered moneys are deposited and the application of such funds be made public, perhaps every quarter, if not every month. People should exercise their power to get the government to do this. Right now, there are extant court orders directing the government to publish such details. The people are still waiting. Court orders must be obeyed to sustain the rule of law. I re-affirm my statement.

THE FUTURE OF WHISTLE-BLOWING

In considering the future of whistle-blowing in Nigeria, it is pertinent to acknowledge that in the U.S., as one writer states: “Whistle-blower laws have become a prominent part of the American legal landscape as the federal and local authorities have become increasingly reliant on private citizens to help them detect fraud. The government continues to indicate how highly it values the information contributed to it by improving witness protection programmes and increasing the bounties after each successful recovery”. Can we say that in Nigeria? Of course, the implementation of the policy in Nigeria demands that all stakeholders act, with bona fides in the interest of the public. There ought not to be a public controversy over payment of the whistle-blowers reward.

It is interesting to recall that Time Magazine named 2000 the Year of the Whistle-blower with Walkins

Cooper and Rowley as the persons of the year. Their stories fueled the observation that women are more likely to become whistle-blowers not for the fame and financial gain but out from a sense of duty. Although they were each subjected to rather harsh treatment by their employers following their disclosures, they became national celebrities by “speaking up when no one else would”. I say kudos to those brave women—the predecessors of Mrs Winifred Oyo-Ita – who spoke the truth to President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria – no less!

CONCLUSION

It has been said that “whistle-blowing is then seen as essentially self-sacrifice. In a way, whistle-blowers should strive to act like saints, . . . Moreover, there cannot be saints who act on impure motives, so that rewarding whistle-blowing would taint motives and bring the saints down from their pedestals. In essence, the whistle-blower's motivation must be pure.”

In our beloved country, the war against corruption must be waged first against the big fish in the pond of corruption. In Saudi Arabia, there is an ongoing purge of the epidemic of corruption involving “princes, top government officials” et al in order to recover looted funds needed to improve the quality of life of the citizenry.

Certainly, it is in the interest of the public, that offenders should be exposed because they contaminate the society. The effect of corruption in Nigeria is an obstacle to our national progress and development. The sooner peoples' power is manifested through whistle-blowing, the better our assets are protected for the benefit of all of us.

My recommendations are as follows:

J. K. Gadzama firm should study the Whistle-Blower Protection Bill 2015 and make recommendations which should be articulated in an amended bill to be sent to the National Assembly.

A ceiling should be placed on the reward payable because of the gigantic discoveries of stolen loot or the reward be negotiated with each whistleblower.

The African Union, Ecowas and other African institutions should collaborate with the European Union to end illegal migration and crack down on the heartless human traffickers.

In peroration, we the erring people of Nigeria must repent and follow the path of rectitude by stopping the looting of our patrimony so that there will be less discovery of stolen funds for the whistle-blowers to disclose. Let all of us be guided by the Biblical admonition of St Paul, the apostle, in Philippians 4:8, “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, Whatsoever things are honest, Whatsoever things are just, Whatsoever things are pure, Whatsoever things are lovely, Whatsoever things are of good report; If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

I rest.

Chief Folake Solanke, SAN, OON, CON
B.A, Dip.Ed., FNIALS, LL.D (h.c) HLF D.Litt(h.c),
D.Lit.(h.c), D.Litt.(h.c)

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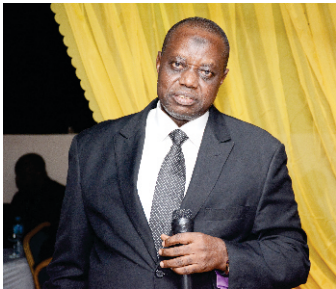
WELCOME DINNER IN HONOUR OF CHIEF 'FOLAKE SOLANKE, SAN, CON MONDAY, 27TH NOVEMBER, 2017 AT THE PENTFLOOR TERRACE, J-K GADZAMA COURT, ABUJA



The Honourable Minister for Information and Culture, Chief Lai Mohammed, with the Guest Lecturer, Chief 'Folake Solanke, SAN.



Chief Lai Mohammed with Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN



Hon. Justice Sidi Dauda Bage, Justice of the Supreme Court



Hon. Justice G. O. Kolawole, Judge of the Federal High Court



Chief Lai Mohammed with Prof. Tahir Mamman, OON, SAN Partner, J-K Gadzama LLP



Mrs. Olabisi O. Soyibo, SAN



Chief 'Folake Solanke, SAN with Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN and Mr. Mohammed Mongonu, Managing Partner, J-K Gadzama LLP



Chief 'Folake Solanke, SAN with Mr. Tunde Onamusi, Partner/Head of Chambers, J-K Gadzama LLP



Chief 'Folake Solanke, SAN with Mr. Keffas Gadzama, CP (Ret.) Partner, J-K Gadzama LLP



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN giving opening remarks



The toast



Chief 'Folake Solanke, SAN addressing the guests

PHOTO SPEAK

J-K GADZAMA LLP 10TH ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE
TUESDAY, 28TH NOVEMBER, 2017 AT THE HON. JUSTICE S.M.A BELGORE HALL,
J-K GADZAMA COURT, ABUJA



PHOTO SPEAK

J-K GADZAMA LLP 10TH ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE
TUESDAY, 28TH NOVEMBER, 2017 AT THE HON. JUSTICE S.M.A BELGORE HALL,
J-K GADZAMA COURT, ABUJA



Guest Lecturer - Chief (Mrs.) 'Folake Solanke, SAN, CON



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN presenting a plaque to Chief (Mrs.) 'Folake Solanke, SAN, CON



L-R: The representative of the Chief Justice of Nigeria and Chairperson of the event, Hon. Justice Mary Peter-Odili, JSC, receiving a plaque from Hon. Justice Rosaline Bozimo, Administrator, National Judicial Institute



Hon. Justice Ibrahim Auta, OFR (Retd.) presenting plaques to the discussants: (L-R) Dr. George Uboh, Chief S. T. Hon, SAN; Mr. Akeem Lawal, FSI and Mohammed Monguno, Esq., ACI Arb. (UK)

Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN cutting the cake with Partners and Counsel in Chambers

LEGAL HUMOUR

THE OLDEST PROFESSION

- A physician, an engineer, and an attorney were discussing who among them belonged to the oldest of the three professions represented. The physician said, "Remember, on the sixth day God took a rib from Adam and fashioned Eve, making him the first surgeon. Therefore, medicine is the oldest profession."

The engineer replied, "But, before that, God created the heavens and earth from chaos and confusion, and thus he was the first engineer. Therefore, engineering is an older profession than medicine."

Then, the lawyer spoke up. "Yes," he said, "But who do you think created all of the chaos and confusion?"

THE NEED TO IMPRESS

- A young lawyer, starting up his private practice, was very anxious to impress potential clients. When he saw the first visitor to his office come through the door, he immediately picked up his phone and spoke into it, "I'm sorry, but my caseload is so tremendous that I'm not going to be able to look into your problem for at least a month. I'll have to get back to you then." He then turned to the man who had just walked in, and said, "Now, what can I do for you?"
"Nothing," replied the man. "I'm here to hook up your phone."

Culled from ahajokes.com

PHOTO SPEAK

BARBEQUE PARTY IN HONOUR OF JOHN NNAEMEKA EGWUONWU, SAN
FORMER MANAGING PARTNER, J-K GADZAMA LLP, ON FRIDAY, 13TH OCTOBER, 2017
AT THE PENTFLOOR TERRACE, J-K GADZAMA COURT, ABUJA



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN presenting the congratulatory card to John Egwuonwu, SAN



L-R: Keffas Gadzama, CP (Retd), Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN, John Egwuonwu, SAN, Prof. Tahir Mamman, OON, SAN and Mohammed Mongonu, Esq.



L-R: Chief S. T. Hon, SAN, Prof. Peter Akper, SAN, Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN, John Egwuonwu, SAN, Prof. Tahir Mamman, OON, SAN and Prof. Maxwell Gidado, SAN



John Egwuonwu, SAN with Ifeanyi Iboko, Esq.



John Egwuonwu, SAN cutting the cake with friends

LAW ON MARBLE

Common sense often makes a good law

- William O. Douglas

Laws are a dead letter without courts to expound and
define their true meaning and operation

- Alexander Hamilton

If we desire respect for the law we must first make the law respectable

- Louis D. Brandeis

Law is the embodiment of the moral sentiment of the people

- William Blackstone

It is the spirit and not the form of law that keeps justice alive

- Earl Warren

PHOTO SPEAK

WABANI ABIGAIL KARAGAMA WEDS MADU JOE GADZAMA

SATURDAY, 16TH DECEMBER, 2017



NEWS FROM THE FIRM

- Madu Joe Gadzama tied the nuptial knot with his sweetheart, Wabani Abigail Karagama. The firm wishes them a happy married life.
- Chinenye Iroanachi (400L, Abia State University), Stephanie Dundun (LL.B, University of the Witwatersrand) and Ebenezer Egbudu (Called to the Bar in 2015) completed their internship with the firm. The firm wishes them success in their future endeavours.
- Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN, Principal Partner, J-K Gadzama LLP, was made a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Mediators and Conciliators (ICMC). The firm congratulates him heartily on this achievement.
- Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN, Principal Partner, J-K Gadzama LLP, cinched the Role Model Award presented by ESQ Nigerian Legal Awards. The firm congratulates him on yet another accolade.
- Karyn Ebohon (miss) and Adegbemisoye Olasubomi (miss) joined the firm as counsel. The firm welcomes them.

PHOTO SPEAK



L-R: President, Institute of Chartered Mediators and Conciliators (ICMC), Chief Emeka J. P. Obegolu; Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN; and Chief Alfred Diete-Sptiff during Chief Gadzama's swearing-in as Fellow of the Institute.



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN, (right) receiving the ESQ Role Model Award from Mr. Lere Fashola of Esq Magazine



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN, (middle), Prof. Tahir Mamman, OON, SAN (left) and Mr. Tunde Onamusi (right) celebrating with November-born Counsel in Chambers



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN, (right), Prof. Tahir Mamman, OON, SAN (left), Mr. Mohammed Monguno (2nd right) and Mr. Tunde Onamusi (2nd left) celebrating with December-born Counsel in Chambers

PHOTO SPEAK

STAFF END OF THE YEAR PARTY AND CHRISTMAS CAROL
TUESDAY, 19TH DECEMBER, 2017 AT THE HON. JUSTICE S. M. A. BELGORE HALL,
J-K GADZAMA COURT, ABUJA



PHOTO SPEAK

STAFF END OF THE YEAR PARTY AND CHRISTMAS CAROL TUESDAY, 19TH DECEMBER, 2017 AT THE HON. JUSTICE S. M. A. BELGORE HALL, J-K GADZAMA COURT, ABUJA



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN presenting the J-K Gadzama LLP Long Service Award (Counsel) to David Cephas Medugu, Esq.



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN presenting the J-K Gadzama LLP Merit Award for Overall Outstanding Performance (Counsel) to Darlington Onyekwerekwe, Esq.



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN presenting the J-K Gadzama LLP Award of Recognition for Outstanding Performance (Counsel) to Jalike Ibrahim, Esq.



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN presenting the J-K Gadzama LLP Merit Award for Overall Outstanding Performance (Support Staff) to Miss Rachael Audu



Christopher Okougha, Esq., Winner, J-K Gadzama LLP Staff Table Tennis Tournament (Male Category)



Mr. Tajudeen Ayeni, Runner-Up, J-K Gadzama LLP Staff Table Tennis Tournament (Male Category)



Miss Nwakaego Ukachukwu, Winner, J-K Gadzama LLP Staff Table Tennis Tournament (Female Category)



Miss Olasubomi Adegberisoye, Runner-Up, J-K Gadzama LLP Staff Table Tennis Tournament (Female Category)



L-R: Mr. Tunde Onamusi, Mr. Mohammed Monguno, Chief J-K Gadzama, SAN and Mr. Keffas Gadzama, CP (Ret.) cutting the cake



Chief J-K Gadzama, SAN (middle) cutting the cake with Partners and Counsel in Chambers



Chief J-K Gadzama, SAN (middle) cutting the cake with Partners and Support Staff



Chief J-K Gadzama, SAN (3rd right) cutting the cake with guests



Chief J-K Gadzama, SAN (middle) cutting the cake with friends and family



Fun by the fountain



Getting the groove on

PARTNERS

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We Care, God Heals



Who are we?

The Vox Populi Foundation for Leadership was founded in the year 2010 and was incorporated in the year 2012 by its founder Chief J-K Gadzama OFR, MFR, SAN, FNIALS, FCI Arb. (UK) (of Lincolns Inn, Barrister/Life Bencher/CEDR Accredited Mediator). The Foundation is a Non-Profit making institution formed to deepen the understanding of democracy by carrying out structured programmes that promote positive leadership qualities and ideals in the society. This is because we believe that a society can only evolve when the people have the opportunity to contribute to the process of governance and have a voice in the creation of policies and laws that affect them as a people.

How do we do this?

We sincerely believe the best way to achieve this goal is to pursue initiatives that look at proffering solutions to the issues that interfere with governance. We look at utilizing the immense manpower of youths and able bodied people who are hungry to bring about a change in their society through direct engagement with society in a volunteer signup process, which is one of the mechanisms we intend to employ to secure citizens participation. This process of inclusion we believe will foster and build a common front that will enable people to improve on their understanding of what leadership connotes in their everyday lives and reinforce their commitment towards creating a better society.

Governance

Created with gifts by its founder Chief J-K Gadzama, the foundation is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organization, with its own Board. The trustees of the foundation set policies and delegate authority to the Director General and senior staff for the foundation's operations. Zonal volunteer Heads in the 6 geo-political zones explore opportunities to pursue the foundation's goals and formulate strategies for action.

Location

The Foundation is headquartered in Abuja. It conducts its activities through an increasing pool of volunteers from across the country.



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to promote, protect and safeguard the tenets and ideals of democracy leadership & good governance in our society.

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to encourage citizens to participate in governance & support a platform that will inspire proactive leadership that will drive the free flow of democratic ideals and social justice.

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