



I'm not robot



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Ndlea ceremonial uniform

On 31 March, the tragedy took place under the guise of the Nigerian Drug Enforcement Agency (N.D.L.E.A). I was persuaded by all concerned to sweep it under the rug after my release, but then my conscience and journalistic duty made it impossible, and even if it wasn't in place, those who were also arrested, whether in a manly way or unfairly, and from which money ranging from N30000-N60000 were taken from them in the name of evidence and never returned to their bail need a vote to speak for them against men who think they can use their uniform to distort the law. On the same day, me and my co-author decided to go to the nearby Oluwole neighborhood for a cigarette break after a series of task lectures at the Nigerian Institute of Journalism, Ogba, Ikeja. We barely took two light smokes as we watched four rough looking scar-faced thugs make their way towards us. The closer they were, the more it dawned on me that these people had sinister motives that did not bode well for us. Before we could sort of say Jack Robinson, it's the guys who surrounded us and started pulling our belts as if trying to hold us or worse, as my brain interpreted-steal us the street way. In the absence of any official introduction, I chose the latter and decided to run. I kicked and punched as hard as I could until I escaped their grip, or so I thought. By now my T-shirt had already been torn apart when I ran out into the street and was waiting for the arms of fully equipped armed men of the N.D.L.E.A. Seeing finally sensible people, I tried to explain everything that followed and also present myself as a journalist. I was asked for an ID, but I left it in a bag in my classroom. Without any additional questions being asked, I started getting slapped on all sides, while jibed on-you journalist Wey come smoking 'igbo' Abi? journalist journalist You're going to die for jail. I was in the mood to go down shyly to the apparent abuse of power, especially when I knew I wasn't wrong, I started defending my own: Did you see marijuana on me? I asked. Why you slap me even after I introduced myself as a journalist Do you have something against journalists, I demand to see your boss You can not arrest me without reading in the first reading my crime and rights. My defense went on and on, and as much slaps and punches as they brought my co-author, who was already in the cuffs and apparently beaten to death. We were bundled up waiting for the van and taken away. If we were taken straight to their office, it would have been better, but no, we were taken to many places in Lagos if they were considered black spots and arrests were made. The ride was a nightmare as we missed about fourteen, except for the officers, in that little van. Because of how clogged the van was, at some point I couldn't feel my feet anymore, as if there was blood there Upon arrival at NAHCO NAHCO from the NDLEA (near Murtala Mohammed airport), we were ordered to get out of the van. My attempt to 'jump out' was a pathetic attempt as I fell on drag along my co-author, whose hands were chained to mine. Officials laughed at it for a long time before resuming slapping and beating in order to, they said, ginger them. On the counter, we were instructed to sit on the ground until the evidence was taken, man by man. Please note, however, that this is not due to us writing our statement (which was not made until noon Sunday)! My colleague and I were placed last, while those with evidence were ulavolic. I watched in entertainment as no officer wanted his name to be placed next to ours as there was a feeling that there was nothing to get money from our case! When he got to ours, we were told to clean our pockets on our own, which we did. No form of marijuana was found, until suddenly an officer grafted into a marijuana butt stuck on a stick stating that she was found at the scene of our arrest. The campaign on the part of me and my colleague put pressure on them to exclude it from the evidence. Although we earned a few extra slaps for it, it was worth it! Then we were put in a cell, and that's where it gets really interesting. In the next part of this article we would like to share more of our experience with another government law enforcement agency that has decided on both the abuse and commercialization of its office and power. For all those who read this piece, I beseech you to spread this record to everyone you can reach, so that together, in our own little, we can stop the excesses of these governments. Experts say the fight against drugs in Nigeria is hampered by corruption within the ranks of the National Agency for Drugs and Law Enforcement (NDLEA). There is also growing concern about the rate of domestic use of illicit substances in Nigeria, a country that was once seen primarily as a drug transit point. Founded in early 1990, critics say the NDLEA has failed to comply with its mission statement, which is to completely eradicate drug and psychotropic illicit drugs; suppressing the demand for illicit drugs and other substances that cause abuse, as well as the recovery of drug-related money. NDLEA spokesman Jarikre Ofoyeju said the agency was working to strike a balance between supply and demand cuts. We target middle- and high-level drug traffickers, seize their drugs, pursue them and monitor their illicit proceeds forfeiture. Other priority areas include staff welfare and motivation, public education and treatment of troubled drug users, he said. The NDLEA boasted of some major successes, large shipments of drugs were confiscated at border crossings. In 2015 alone, N3.7 billion (\$11.5 million) worth of drugs were seized from Murtala-Muhammed International Airport (MMIA) in Lagos. This is 172 kg of cannabis, 160 kg of ephedrine, 114 kg of methamphetamine, 96 kg of cocaine, 45 kg of tramadol and 5 kg of heroin. But critics say this is just the tip of the iceberg, and stress that Nigeria remains the center of organized drug crime. According to the 2016 U.N. Drug Report, the third-largest amount of cocaine seized worldwide was from Nigeria, where between 50 and 70 percent of the drugs were smuggled by air. Debo Adeniran is executive chairman of the Coalition Against Corrupt Leaders (CACOL), a civil society group. He stated that he believed that corruption had increased dramatically in the NDLEA and that urgent measures should be taken to clean up its ranks. The organization was unable to cope with its problems, he said, adding, It's been going on for a long time. NDLEA officials are accused of directly colluding with the criminals they are charged with pursuing. In one of the current cases, an NDLEA officer is being investigated for an alleged drug import scheme from Brazil. NDLEA spokesman Ali Bala Adamu was arrested in January along with four alleged accomplices - Ijeoma Ojukw, Victor Umeh, Uche Igvolo and Egbuze Fidelis Osita - on charges of conspiring to import cocaine from Brazil. According to the indictment, the \$20 million (\$60,000) drugs were hidden in luggage dumped in the arrivals hall after the arrival of an Emirates flight on December 28, 2015. Osita arrived at the airport on January 1, 2016, to pick up the bags, leading to the arrest of other suspects. HOW DRUGS ARE TRAFFICKED One high-profile case of human trafficking involved chief Akindele Ikumoluji, popularly known as Il Eru and an influential figure in the West African drug market. He was exposed and sentenced to ten years in prison in 2008 after drug lord Abdul Fatai Olori witnessed the state. Olori told NAIJ.com he met Akindele in 2004 when he needed money to pay for treatment. Akindele agreed, but on condition that Olori go to Brazil and collect a message from one of his business partners. In early 2006, Olori made the journey. When I arrived in Brazil, I was picked up by a man who took me to a house where I was locked up for three weeks, Olori said. I was provided with food, but I was denied free movement. Three weeks later, he returned with two bags of cocaine. The message Akindele wanted me to collect from his business partner finally became clear, Olori continued, who continues to maintain that he had no idea what he would be asked to carry. He said he feared he would be arrested on his return to Nigeria, but assured that a smooth passage through the MIA was guaranteed. However, at Olori airport, he was captured by NDLEA officials and charged with smuggling 10 kilograms of cocaine into Nigeria. He issued a full statement describing the circumstances under which he was sent to Brazil. However, the next Olori said officials had asked him to make another statement that did not involve Akindele. Later I called him. - to come and explain something to the government people, but he did not answer me. He left me and wanted me to rot and die in prison for something I didn't know about, he continued. I was very honest with the people of the NDLEA, especially with the prosecutors' team, said Olori, who was released on bail after months in custody. I told them everything and that I was willing to cooperate with them so that Akindele could be arrested before many people fall into his trap. As a result, Akindele was sentenced to ten years in prison on 18 March 2008. However, Olori said he believed that for every criminal caught by NDLEA, two could be released. If you have money, these people will leave you alone. There are a lot of bad people in this Nigeria, Olori said. He said Ikumoluji had evaded arrest for so long because he had a network of informants. This was confirmed by a senior NDLEA official, who asked to remain anonymous for security reasons. Before the NDLEA managed to catch him (Ikumoluji), he made a commitment and diligence to the select few who were in the team created to nail him. Every time they tried, he would run away because he had informants in his house, he said. There was a day when the task force had reliable information about Akindele's whereabouts and was going to sentence him to arrest; a call was received, and Akindele asked for a mutual agreement between him and Olori. Everyone was surprised and shocked, the NDLEA spokesman continued. SUPPLY ROUTE Nigeria is a key transit point for both heroin and cocaine on its way to Europe, East Asia and North America. But drug use appears to be widespread in Nigeria, too. A visit to the cities of Sokoto, Kano and Port Harok shows that banned substances are readily available. In the ancient city and capital of Kano state in north-western Nigeria, most of the illegal drug activity appears to be taking place on the roads of Aba and Emir. Drug dealers can be seen sending packets of cannabis to customers late at night. In Sokoto, in the far northwest of Nigeria, the market for moms along Adullah Fodio Road is a popular place to take drugs including Tramadol, opioid analgesics and Benylin with codeine, cough mix. The NDLEA official, who asked to remain anonymous as she was not authorized to speak to the media, served as a guide around sokoto Market. She said most of the drug trade started at 5 p.m. and ended at ten o'clock in the evening when the market closed. After that, the business moved to the street. An NDLEA spokeswoman said it had filed complaints about the increase in drug abuse and the apparent impunity with which dealers were operating, but no concrete steps had been taken. Many young women in the market have turned to sex work to fund their One woman from Bauchi state, who said she came to Sokoto to make money, offered full sex in exchange for the N500. Are you interested or not? She asked. I don't charge that much now. I need money. to get high. Even if you're not ready now I can give you my number so we can catch up later behind the gates mom when it's past 10pm. I'll do whatever you want. Just give me the money first,' she said. Trembling and sweating profusely, despite the mild weather, the woman grabbed the reporter's phone and hit her contact details. A number of cafes and shops on the market also appear to be centres for local drug traffickers. They also serve the less privileged and those with low financial power, said Mohammad, a local trader. Young men and women can be seen trooping and get drugs packed in dark brown or green bottles. The oil town of Port Harcourt in the south of the country also has a thriving drug business, with gangs in areas such as Rumula and Rumokwuta specialising in cannabis while dealers in the government's Reserved District (GRA) city control the supply of cocaine. Osas, a port Harcourt resident, gave an overview of how the system works. You can't just stand up and say you want to buy drugs. Even if it's cannabis, you should properly make your introduction, otherwise dealers will say you're a government and they can hurt you or scamper away,' he said. The routine is that you will be introduced by someone who is a regular customer. And an introduction that can be made over the phone depending on the confidence must carry your name, complexion, height, color of clothing to wear and any other things to describe you. Then you'll be given a collection point where someone will come up to you to exchange money for drugs, he said. LOOKING THE OTHER WAY One former NDLEA employee has described how agency employees may be under pressure to turn a blind eye to corruption. SalisUs Usman (not his real name) joined MMIA in 2003, but soon became unpopular with his colleagues. It was eventually located far away in northeastern Nigeria. I have always questioned my colleagues why they let some people go, even if there is irrefutable evidence that this person is a drug dealer, he said. Sometimes they answered me politely and said I had a round peg in a square hole. It was then that I learned that there are some indications from God knows where something should go without explanation, Usman said. When Usman at one point disobeyed one of those directives, he said he was subtly warned to be hit. The official said I should be soft a bit and follow the instructions until the end if I don't want to be fired, posted or framed, Usman said. It didn't look like a threat per se, he said. It was more like advice, but any reasonable person can decipher this is not the usual advice. It was a colleague they sent. I knew it wasn't his idea and that he was directed. Others explained how crime and bribery were covered up out of fear Sam Adurogboye is a former journalist who is now a spokesman for the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority. I made a story about drugs. I was still young and it wasn't published. So I asked my editor why the story wasn't published, and he replied that he knew that I was a little boy and that he wanted me to get married and have children. They know these drug lords and barons. Most of them tend to be highly intelligent personalities, but they cannot be affected because of the power they possess. I'm sure you know that some drug lords or mafias in some countries are the ones that decide who will rule or not. They can be powerful, he said. Adurogboye noted that such pressure should be taken into account when considering what measures should be taken against corrupt officials. On the contrary, instead of going the NDLEA we need to understand the issues and put ourselves in their shoes. We must sympathize with those who have indeed been pressured to assist in the drug trade. Imagine that your family, work or something dear to you are at risk, he continued. An NDLEA spokesman said the agency was committed to enforcing appropriate sanctions in any cases of unprofessional conduct among its officers. NDLEA has a standard operating procedure where it receives reports both inside and outside of employee activity, he said. It is interesting that all reports are properly investigated and any person found guilty is sanctioned accordingly. The certainty of disciplinary action against all who found wishers contributed to optimal performance as well as increased provision of services in the agency. Let me assure you that the agency will continue to respect the rule of law in all cases of unprofessional conduct. Nigerian journalist Olajide Adanini produced this report with the support of PartnersGlobal and the Institute for War and Peace Coverage. This is one of a series of investigative reports produced under the Access Nigeria/Sierra Leone programme, funded by the United States Department of Drug Enforcement and Law Enforcement. Copyright Notice: © Institute for War and Peace Coverage