

## CHAPTER SIX

# INSTITUTIONAL CORRUPTION AND ANTI-CORRUPTION CRUSADE IN NIGERIA

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### **Abstract**

The Nigerian nation state has become notorious for issues related to the diversion of public funds for private use by public office holders and bribery in exchange for services that people are employed to provide. Following Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999 after a prolonged stay of the military in power, there was a renewed hope for fighting corruption and rebranding Nigeria to take her rightful place of pride in the comity of nations. Thus, special anticorruption prosecuting bodies such as the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Offences Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) were established. However, the level of corruption in Nigeria tends to have become more complex and more deeply entrenched in both the private and the public sectors of the economy such that even anticorruption agencies have been accused of corruption. By reviewing the available literature and data on cases of corruption in Nigeria, this chapter examines the anticorruption crusade in Nigeria in the last 25 years and concludes that the anticorruption war in Nigeria is full of noise with little or no tangible evidence to show that there is a political will to fight corruption in the country. The study recommends that the political leadership in Nigeria must be truly committed to fighting corruption, including members of the ruling political party, while people who seek to hold public offices must be evaluated properly on their past records before being offered the opportunity to hold offices.

**Keywords:** Anti-corruption Crusade, Corruption, Institutional Corruption,

## **1. Introduction**

It is almost a settled matter in development discourse that the quality of institutions of any country determines the extent to which social, political and economic development can be achieved. However, corruption has the potential to destroy even the noblest intentions of organizations and governments around the world. Ardit (2009) noted that corruption is a major obstacle to development. Similarly, many economists view corruption as a breeder of low income that generates poverty traps (Blackburn et al., 2008). The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNOC; 2015) is already worried that "a better and more sustainable future for all" is usually attacked by acts of corruption of the few who feel their interest is at risk. This has often undermined even the capacity of states to eradicate poverty and hunger, provide high-quality education and good health, reduce inequality, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. The UNOC is particularly worried that Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which is tagged "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions", aims to "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels". Given the strong causal link between corruption and institutions that are ineffective, unaccountable and exclusive, three targets of SDG 16 specifically call for reducing all forms of corruption, strengthening the recovery and return of stolen assets, and developing transparent institutions. At the same time, corruption limits the realization of all SDGs in many respects, as the vast sums that are lost to corruption could have been used to improve living standards by increasing access to housing, health, education and water. There is also a broad consensus that perceptions and experiences of corruption erode citizens' confidence in public institutions and political processes, undermine social trust and the legitimacy of state institutions, and ultimately have a corrosive impact on the rule of law and democratic processes (Andreev 2008).

The Doha Declaration, launched in 2016 and meant to run through 2021, had the prime aim of fighting the pervasive nature of corruption and its attendant negative consequences for humanity. Despite these efforts, corruption appears not to have been tamed completely, as cases of corruption and corrupt practices abound in many societies across the globe. In Europe, the European Court of Auditors (2019) reported very large cases of corruption in European countries, including even Denmark, which is often judged to be the most corrupt free country by Transparency International (TI). Some €200 billion in payments flowed through the nonresident portfolio of Danske Bank's Estonian branch between 2007 and 2015. Another, €700 million suspicious money, flowed from Russia and former Soviet states into Nordea Bank from 2005--2017. In 2014, in Portugal, Banco Espirito Santo (BES) collapsed, and millions of customers were left stranded due to international corruption involving top Portuguese and Brazilian government officials, where more than €5 million were drained. An attempt by investigators to follow the money took them to several European, Latin American and African countries. This clearly shows that corruption is a global phenomenon where cases of corruption in a single country may be linked to corrupt partners in different parts of the world.

In Africa, the African Union estimates that 25% of Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) is lost to corruption (UNOC, 2015). This means that corruption may have accounted substantially for the slow pace of economic growth and development in Africa. It remains a wonder that the continent is so blessed with humans and a near abundance of mineral resources of all sorts yet remains one of the least developed continents on earth.

The Nigerian corruption experience is not different from what is obtainable at the global or continental level. Transparency International (TI) rates Nigeria as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. For more than a decade, Nigeria has consistently maintained a lower point in the CPI scale (TI, 2022). This may be the reason why Onayiekan (2007) insisted that "whether one agrees with their criteria or not, the fact remains that we truly have little to be

proud about as a nation in terms of honesty and integrity in our land”. Thus, upon the realization of the implications of the corruption of the nation, the democratic government at its inception in 1999 developed measures to fight corruption in the country. The President Olusegun Obasanjo-led administration set up the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) in 2000 and the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), which was established in 2003. These agencies were vested with constitutional powers to prevent and address corruption frontally in Nigeria with speed and utmost transparency.

However, with more than twenty years of existence of these agencies and serious anticorruption efforts, the situation of corruption in Nigeria appears to have assumed an institutional status, pervading all facets of public and private spaces. It appears that corruption has increased both in extensity and intensity in where even convictions of corruption are rarely secured. In fact, corruption has continued to grow like flames of fire (Yusuf, 2013). Notably, corruption in Nigeria thrives alongside a largely weakened quality of public institutions, an increased level of insecurity, weakened economic growth, and a worsened state of human rights and rule of law, high demographic pressures, and high unemployment and poverty rates. Against this background, it has become expedient to assess the level of institutional corruption in Nigeria in the face of heightened efforts to fight corruption.

## **2. Review of Related Literature**

### ***Conceptual clarification***

**(a) Corruption:** Transparency International (2020) viewed corruption as ‘the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. Corruption erodes trust, weakens democracy, hampers economic development and further exacerbates inequality, poverty, social division and the environmental crisis’. According to the World Bank (2012), “corruption includes both petty and grand varieties of corruption, as well as elite and commercial interest capture by the state”. It is “the misuse of entrusted power and the use of public office

for personal benefit". The United Nations (UN) (2004) simplified these distinctions by referring to corruption as "abuse of power for personal gain". It occurs in a situation where "a public official takes, demands, or extorts a bribe, he or she is abusing their position". It is typically used when private agents offer bribes in exchange for a competitive advantage or to address government restrictions and processes. Even if there is no bribery, theft of state claims, or abuse of state finances, official positions may be utilized for personal gain.

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Crimes Commission's Act of 2000 defines corruption as "bribery, fraud, and other related offences" (Laws of the Federation of Nigeria (FLN), 2000). Bribery is the most prevalent type of corruption according to this definition, which involves "the giving or receiving of money or other kind of favor in exchange for an unfair advantage over others. Extortion, embezzlement, contract inflation, kickbacks, diversion of funds, falsification or suppression of records, perversion of justice, electoral malpractices, examination malpractices, drug trafficking, money laundering, abuse of selection processes, nepotism, sexual exploitation, gratification, and so on are some of the other types". According to Ngouo (2000), "the lack of a civic spirit at all levels of government employees leads to corruption and misuse of public monies". It is also intended to mean a behavior that deviates from the formal standards that regulate the acts of someone in a position of power (Akindele, 2005).

In this research, corruption is defined as any criminal conduct that deviates from formal norms or regulations controlling someone's actions and/or results in the misallocation of limited available resources. Because corruption is unlawful, measuring it by the amount of money recovered in guilty corruption cases or the number of such instances may seem nonsensical. Furthermore, many of these instances may not have gone through the legal system. As a result, this study considers the "Corruption Perception Index (CPI)", which is suitable as a measure of corrupt practices.

**(b) Institutional Corruption:** Institutional corruption manifests when there is a systemic and strategic influence that is legal, or even

currently ethical, that undermines an institution's effectiveness by diverting it from its purpose or weakening its ability to achieve its purpose, including to the extent relevant to its purpose, weakening either the public's trust in that institution or the institution's inherent trustworthiness (Safra, 2015). This implies that once corruption is so entrenched in a society, it gradually becomes a norm whereby certain loop holes may even be deliberately created in the laws of the land to provide cover for the corrupt.

**(c) Anti-Corruption Crusades:** Anti-corruption crusades can be defined as series of efforts, such as campaigns, legislation, persuasions, and the establishment of specific agencies (to mention but a few) with the aim of curbing or eliminating corruption in society. In Nigeria, for example, anticorruption manifestos have been used by political office seekers; anticorruption jingles such as "change begins with me", the establishment of the ICPC and EFCC, anticorruption clubs in schools and the National Youth Service; and some of the crusades aimed at curbing corruption in the country.

### ***Theoretical Review***

To a very large extent, the quality of institutions in any country has a direct bearing on the quality of life in such a country. However, a number of theories clearly show that corruption could weaken the quality of institutions in an economy such as Nigeria, and it can also be inferred that with pervasive corruption, institutions will become weak and may affect the general development of a country. Some of these theories are explained as follows:

**(a) Institutional Theory:** This is also known as institutionalism. It uses country and government institutional characteristics, such as preexisting rule of law, well-defined anticorruption norms, and independent anticorruption institutions with enforcement powers, to explain corruption in the public sector. According to Scott (2004), institutional theory "examines the processes and mechanisms by which structures, schemas, rules, and routines become established as authoritative guidelines for social behavior". In relation to

understanding corruption, institutional theory brings in the social context and provides a taxonomy for understanding how corruption might become entrenched in organizations, institutions and society, despite the existence of an anticorruption framework (Luo, 2005). Institutional theory considers that corruption influences the character, design and transparency of the political system and its institutions. Moreover, the relationship among corruption, institutions, political systems, culture and gender is highly complex (Debski and others, 2018; Stensöta, Wängnerud and Svensson, 2015). This implies that once corruption is deeply entrenched in institutions such as the judiciary, police, civil service, politics, legislature and even the private sector, it may become very difficult to fight corruption in such an economy.

**(b). Principal-agent theory:** Public office holders are meant to hold positions and take custody of public resources in trust for the general public, thereby exercising their authority as agents on behalf of their principal (the public). Unfortunately, the desire for personal gain by public office holders (the agents) propels them to use the public resources for self at variance with the intentions of the principal. In other words, the principal–agent model assumes that agents (public officials) serve to protect the interests of the principal (whether the public, parliament, or supervisors). However, in reality, the interests of the agents often diverge from the interests of the principal, and while the former can prescribe the pay-off rules in the principal–agent relationship, there is informational asymmetry to the advantage of the agent, which can be used by him or her for personal benefits (Groenendijk, 1997). Thus, an agency problem occurs when the agents choose to engage in corrupt transactions, in furtherance of their own interests and to the detriment of the interests of the principal. To curb this, the principal can design incentives and schemes such as proper remunerations, monitoring, bonding, oversight and appropriate punishments where necessary to curb potential abuse by agents.

**(c). Collective action theory:** Collective action theory is a relatively new theory that explains why corruption may persist and even become

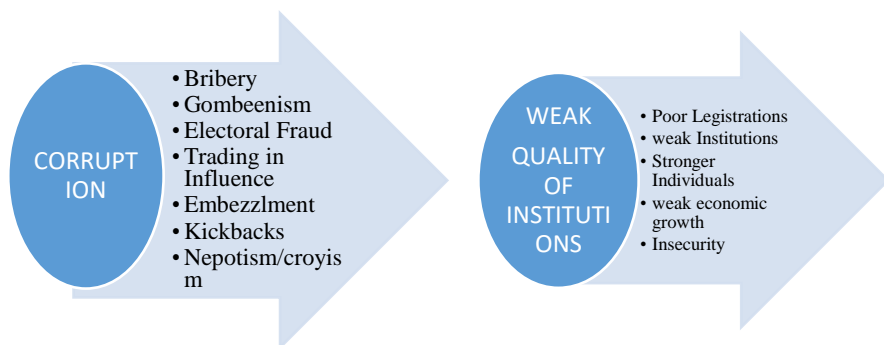
pervasive in a society despite legislation against corruption. According to Persson, Rothstein and Teorell (2013), collective action theory emphasizes the importance of factors such as trust and how individuals perceive the behavior of others. It regards systemic corruption as a collective problem because people rationalize their own behavior on the basis of their perceptions of what others will do in the same situation. When corruption becomes a social norm, everyone starts seeing it simply as the way to get things done. People are aware of the negative consequences of widespread corruption, but they engage in corrupt actions, as they believe that "it does not make sense to be the only honest person in a corrupt system" (Marquette and Peiffer, 2015). In such an environment, anticorruption measures based on the principal-agent model are not effective, as there are no "principled principals" who enforce anticorruption norms (Klitgaard, 2004; Persson, Rothstein and Teorell, 2013). An institutional or organizational culture of corruption leads to the normalization of corrupt practices at the societal and individual levels and to impunity for violating or ignoring formal anticorruption rules (Appolloni and Nshombo, 2014). To combat corruption in these circumstances, there is a need for collective and coordinated approaches, such as reform coalitions or proactive alliances of like-minded organizations.

### ***Theoretical Link between Corruption and Institutional Quality***

It can be inferred from the review of theories and concepts that once it persists, it becomes intractably linked with institutions and hence weakens the quality of institutions in an economy. In most cases, it breeds very strongly corrupt individuals who appear to be even above the law. Once that happens, even the fight against corruption becomes very stiff and difficult, as institutions with the mandate to tackle corruption may even become enmeshed in very jaw-dropping corrupt practices.

Thus, corruption can manifest in various forms that may weaken the quality of institutions. Figure 1 illustrates how corruption impacts institutional quality.





**Figure 1:** A schema showing how corruption manifests and impacts institutional quality

Figure 1 shows that corruption manifests in the form of bribery, *gombeenism*, electoral fraud, trading in influence, embezzlements, kickbacks, and nepotism, whereas it weakens the quality of institutions, resulting in poor legislative quality, stronger institutions, insecurity, poverty and declining economic growth.

According to the Anti-Corruption internet Database-ICID (2016), corruption also has the following consequences, especially in Nigeria. It tarnishes the country's image. A corrupt economy smells in the eyes of the rest of the world, and serious investments and developmental cooperation cannot be made since most Nigerians are seen as corrupt and doubtful on the outside. For example, TI has repeatedly classified Nigeria as the country with the highest level of corruption perception index in the world. Moreover, corruption jeopardizes a nation's very life by preventing citizens from receiving fundamental social services. Money intended for development is frequently siphoned off by a few people, making effective governance difficult. It has had an impact on our health care systems, not to mention our educational institutions. None of Nigeria's universities are currently mentioned among the first 200 universities in the world, while none is among Africa's best. Moreover, corruption exacerbates underdevelopment and unemployment. It causes widespread poverty and thwarts efforts to alleviate it.

Similarly, corruption may be connected directly or indirectly to most types of infrastructure degradation and an inadequate supply of facilities. Because of prior presidents' corrupt attitudes, the country's electricity and road networks have completely collapsed. It weakens society's ethical foundation by discouraging diligence, excellence, honesty, merit, and integrity. It fosters a wide range of criminal activity and damage, including armed robbery, abduction, and adolescent unrest. It causes tremendous brain drain. Many of Nigeria's greatest minds had no choice but to migrate to other parts of the world, where they are presently spearheading innovations and scientific frontiers.

### **3. Methodology**

This study is based on content analysis. The study draws inferences on already established facts in the literature and published sources of information from the World Bank, peer reviewed journals and even newspaper publications with facts and figures about allegations of corruption in Nigeria.

Accordingly, some development indicators spanning the period from 2007--2021 were analyzed alongside the corruption perception index to paint a picture of how hard the corruption factor with a combination of other factors may have hit the country. Again, a tabular presentation of some allegations of corruption-related cases was shown just to drive home some facts that will bring out inferences on how far the anticorruption crusades in Nigeria may have fared.

### **4. An X-ray of Anticorruption Crusade-Related Activities in Nigeria**

The fight against corruption and various forms of crime against corruption in Nigeria started as far back as Nigeria's independence. One of the reasons the military adduced for their takeover of government in 1966 was that politicians were corrupt and that there was an apparent need to take over from them and cleanse the system. Since then, there have been counter coups among the military, prompting frequent changes in military government, and one prominent reason for this change was accusations of "corruption

among military leaders”. This confirmed that the military was equally very corrupt and that they perpetuated themselves in power until they eventually handed over powers to civilians in 1979. Approximately five years down the line, the military interrupted the civilian government again on the same excuse of corruption, and after four different military administrations, the military handed over power to a democratically elected government on May 29, 1999.

Upon return to democracy in 1999, the Chief Olusegun Obasanjo-led administration promised to address corruption head long. Thus, the ICPC was established in 2000, and the EFCC was established in 2003 to promote cases of corruption with speed. In the same spirit, the Due Process office was also established in the office of the president to monitor and check for corruption in the public procurement process.

However, Nwozor and Afolabi (2022) reported that since 1999, the promise of eliminating corruption from Nigeria’s body politic has been a recurring campaign theme without corresponding credible action against it. Although anticorruption agencies exist in Nigeria, the country’s corruption profile is high, an indication of their ineffectiveness. The persistence of corruption has resulted in poor national image, thereby shaping negative international perceptions about Nigeria. The politicization of Nigeria’s anticorruption crusade has undermined international support and created uncertainty in the country’s quest for the recovery of its looted national funds.

There is also a scenario where the offenders are allowed to go free in what is presently referred to in Nigeria as ‘plea bargain’. The corrupt people are asked to return part of the loot and keep part and walk away as freemen. Thus, many people see corruption, which is a lucrative business in the country (Usman, 2013). This invariably explains why people’s confidence in the ability of leaders and government anticorruption agencies to deal with corruption continues to decrease. In summary, the few privileged individuals who have access to the commonwealth loote to fill their pockets while the country is left to drown in penury and under development (Omilusi, 2013). This has yielded a negative perception of the international community about the commitment of the Nigerian government in

fighting corruption and has negative implications for the strategic partnership necessary for loot recovery across the globe.

To make matters worse, many Nigerians see the fight against corruption as a politically motivated strategy to decrease the number of perceived political enemies. Sometimes, it is used as a tool to force opposition members to join the ruling party. For example, Adams Oshomole, the former national chairperson of the All Progressive Congress (APC), publicly declared at a political rally that those who joined the ruling party would have their "sins" forgiven (Thisday, 2019). Accordingly, former opposition members with corruption-related court cases such as Senator Godswill Akpabio, Senator orji Uzor Kalu, Senator Stella Oduah, Senator Joshua Dariye, Senator Adebayo Alao-Akala and Lt. In general, Azubuike Ihejirika (retd. ); had all decamped to the ruling All Progressive Congress (APC).

There was also a policy of the federal government in 2015 known as the "whistle blower policy". The policy was meant to enable members of the public to leak information regarding corruption in society and then be rewarded with 10 percent of the looter loot. It was received with much enthusiasm from the members of the public, but many whistle blowers experienced short changes, so the policy did not yield much fruit. During the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) lockdown of 2020, much of the food meant to be shared as palliatives with the members of the public was diverted or stored in warehouses until they spoilt. In some cases, the members of the public broke into such warehouses and helped themselves with whatever they could find. This was a clear show of insensitive monumental corruption.

Another controversy about anticorruption crusades in Nigeria can be found in the speed at which low-profile cases of corruption are prosecuted and convicted compared with those involving "big politicians". According to Bawa, the EFCC Chairperson, the commission under his watch has recovered over N6 billion, \$161 million, £13,000, €1,730, 200 Canadian dollars, CFA 373,000, ¥8,430 in four months. He further revealed that, 1,502 internet fraudsters arrested, 185 convictions secured within six months. Table 1 depicts Nigeria's corruption ranking and other anti-development indicators.

**Table 1: Nigeria's Corruption Ranking and other Anti-Development Indices**

Year	CPI	FSI	STI	EDI	UEDI	HRRL	DMP
2007	22	95.6	9.2	5.4	9.1	7.1	8.2
2008	27	95.7	9.2	5.9	9.2	7.5	8.2
2009	25	99.8	9.4	6.6	9.5	8.6	8.5
2010	24	100.2	9.3	6.9	9.3	8.8	8.4
2011	24	99.9	9.1	7.3	9	8.6	8.3
2012	27	101.1	9.2	7.5	8.9	8.6	8.4
2013	25	100.7	9.5	7.5	9.2	8.6	8.5
2014	27	99.7	9.5	7.3	8.9	8.7	8.3
2015	26	102.5	9.9	7.6	8.8	8.8	8.8
2016	28	103.5	9.7	7.7	8.8	9.1	9.1
2017	27	101.6	9.2	8	8.6	8.9	9.1
2018	27	99.9	8.9	8	8.3	8.6	9.1
2019	26	98.5	9	7.8	8.1	8.3	9.2
2020	25	97.3	8.7	7.9	7.8	8.4	9.3
2021	24	98	8.8	8.6	7.7	8.7	9.3

**Source:** The World Bank Development Indicators, 2022.

**Note:**

- CPI = Corruption Perception Index measured in the range of 0 (high) - 100 (low)
- FSI = fragile state index measured in the range of 0 (low) -120 (high)
- STI = Security Threats Index measured in the range of 0 (low) -10 (high)
- EDI = Economic decline index measured in the range of 0 (low) - 10 (high)
- UEDI = Uneven economic development index measured in the range of 0 (low) -10 (high)
- HRRL = Human Rights and Rule of Law Index measured in the range of 0 (high) -10 (low)
- DMP = Demographic pressure index measured in the range of 0 (low) -10 (high)

While it is widely believed that corruption may be largely responsible for the behavior of the variables in Table 1, it is instructive

to believe that factors other than corruption may also be responsible. However, given the vast human and natural resource endowment of Nigeria and the pervasive nature of corruption in Nigeria, one is tempted to believe that corruption may directly or indirectly have a serious impact on the behavior of the aforementioned indices.

Table 1 shows that Nigeria's performance in corruption was best in 2016, with a CPI score of 28%, and was worst in 2007, with a score of 22%. On the whole, higher scores depict better performance in the fight against corruption, and in the score range of 0--100, Nigeria has not reached 30% in the last 15 years. This shows how pervasive corruption has become in the socioeconomic and political space of Nigeria. It can also be observed that the fragile state index (FSI) of Nigeria never decreased below the score of 95.5 in 2007. The score ranges from 0--120, and higher scores indicate a high likelihood of the state breaking down during crises. The country has experienced a high level of fragility in the last 15 years. It is expected that the situation would not have been so bad if the level of corruption in the economy had decreased.

According to the security threats index (STI), Nigeria has consistently scored above 8 on a score range of 0--10, indicating that the country is highly insecure and prone to loss of life and property. The column for the economic decline index (EDI) shows that factors that drive Nigerian economic growth and development backward are on the rise. In the score range of 0--10, the score rose from 5.4 in 2007 to close to 8.6 in 2021. This portends a serious danger for the present and future generations of the country.

However, the uneven development index (UED) appears to have declined over time, with a score ranging from 0--10. It was higher in 2007 at 9.1, but it became lower in 2021 to close at 7.7. However, this is still very high, accounting for 77% of the chances that other regions of the country can develop better and faster than others. This may be partly due to the corrupt use of political power to favor certain regions with government projects and programs as a result of such regions having their sons and daughters occupy key political position holders.

The Human Rights and Rule of Law Index (HRRL) was worst in 2016, with a score of 9.1 on a scale of 0--10, where higher scores depict low HRRL and lower scores connote higher levels of HRRL. The score was 7.1 in 2007 and deteriorated during the period to 8.7 in 2021. This shows that human rights and rule of law in Nigeria are quite low. In the same manner, the demographic pressure (DMP) of the Nigerian nation state is equally very serious, with dampening consequences. The DMP is measured on a score of 0--10, and higher values indicate greater demographic pressure and vice versa. In 2007, while the score was 8.2, it increased steadily to 9.3 in 2021. Owing to the high level of corruption and the consequences of insecurity and low economic growth, population growth has become a serious problem in Nigeria, especially given that millions of people in Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are swelled. Table 2 shows a snapshot of high-profile corruption cases in Nigeria.

**Table 2: A snapshot of high-profile corruption cases in Nigeria**

S/No	Name of the Accused	Office Held	Amount Involved	Status
1	Abdulaziz Yari	Executive Governor, Zamfara State (2011-2019)	N300 billion & \$700,000	Not yet decided
2	Theodore Orji	Executive Governor, Abia State (2007-2015)	N521.6 billion	Not yet decided
3	Tanko Al-Makura	Executive Governor, Nasarawa State (2011-2019)	Undisclosed Billions of naira in 55 family accounts	Not yet decided
4	Godswill Akpabio	Executive Governor, Akwa Ibom State (2007-2015)	Over N100 billion	Not yet decided
5	Abdulfatah Ahmed	Executive Governor, Kwara State (2007-2015)	N9 billion	Not yet decided
6	Aliyu Wamakko	Executive Governor, Sokoto State (2007-2015)	N15 billion	Not yet decided

7	Ali Modu Sheriff	Executive Governor, Borno State (2003-2011)	N300 billion & \$200 million	Not yet decided
8	Rabiu Kwankwaso	Executive Governor, Kano State (1999-2003) & (2011-2015)	N10 billion	Not yet decided
9	Willie Obiano	Executive Governor, Anambra State	N42 billion	Not yet decided
10	Olisa Metuh	Former PDP spokesman	N400 million	Not yet decided
11	Doyin Okupe	Former PDP Chieftain	N702 million	Not yet decided
12	Abdulasheed Maina	Former Pension Boss	N100 billion	Not yet decided
13	Mohammed Adoke	Former Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Nigeria	\$1.1 billion & N300 Million	Not yet decided
14	Joshua Dariye	Executive Governor, Plateau State (1999-2007)	N1.126 billion	Convicted in 2018
15	Azubuike Ihejirika	Former Chief of Army Staff	\$2.1 billion	Not yet decided
16	Idris Ahmed	Former Accountant General of the Federation	N80 billion	Not yet decided
17	Ibrahim Lamorde	Former EFCC Boss	N1 trillion	Not yet decided
18.	Godwin Emefiele and Henry Omoile	Former CBN Governor and former Staff of CBN, respectively	\$4.5 billion N2.8 billion	Not yet decided

**Source:** This day, January 18, 2019; & Premium Times, December 29, 2020; June 17, 2021; August 20, 2022; April 12, 2024.



Table 2 shows several high-profile cases of corruption already filed at different courts by the EFCC that have lasted for years. It can be seen that out of the seventeen (17) cases listed in the table, only one case has been fully decided; the rest of the cases are still under investigation, and the courts have not pronounced their verdicts. It must also be noted that since such cases are not yet decided upon, the accused persons are assumed to be innocent until they are otherwise determined by the courts, and as such, they are still legally qualified to hold public offices. Some of the cases have lasted for more than 10 years.

## **5. Conclusion and recommendations**

The anticorruption crusade in Nigeria can be summarized as “a crusade full of noise with a paucity of palpable results”. There appears to be a lack of decisive political will to address corruption frontally in Nigeria. Whereas poor people who engage in corrupt practices witness accelerated hearing of their cases in courts for speedy decisions, rich people appear to be getting away with corruption cases on the basis of prolonged hearing, in some cases, outright dismissal of their cases on technical grounds rather than the merits of the cases against them.

Thus, to curb institutional corruption in Nigeria via the anticorruption crusade, the following steps are necessary.

- (i) The political leadership of Nigeria must demonstrate uncommon political will to fight corruption by not sparing anyone. Political chieftains of the ruling parties must be equally prosecuted in line with the extant laws, and if found, guilty must be made to serve the requisite punishment.
- (ii) The people who are placed in positions of trust with public funds must be evaluated on the basis of their past records of character and made to undergo some psychiatric evaluation to confirm if they are normal. The reason is that no normal human being will even want to steal what he does not need.
- (iii) The anticorruption agencies must be truly independent and free from political interference to allow them to carry out their duties more effectively.

- (iv) The government at all levels in Nigeria and the general public must show genuine commitment to questioning and sanctioning people with dubious wealth to redeem Nigeria's poor international image. In this way, the international community will be more willing to assist Nigeria in fighting corruption and recovering looted funds stashed in foreign bank accounts.

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