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COI QUERY RESPONSE

NIGERIA – INFORMATION ON POLICE CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA. INFORMATION ON THE LACK OF PROSECUTION AND OR CONSEQUENCES FOR POLICE INVOLVED IN CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA.

The *Nation (Nigeria)* in July 2024 mentioned that: “...reports of police corruption stare the public in the face. Some policemen openly ask for bribes on highways. They aid and abet crime, thereby sending their victims into agony.”¹

The *Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)* in June 2024 notes that: “Nigeria faces a variety of significant security concerns, from Kaduna and Borno States in the north to Lagos and Rivers States in the south. In recent years, the security situation has worsened. Threats include attacks by armed opposition groups (AOGs) in the North East zone, kidnapping for ransom and organized crime in the North West, and secessionist agitation and piracy in the South. Civilians report feeling increasingly unsafe across the country. Corruption and abuses by security and defense forces have further worsened these security challenge.”²

The Punch in June 2024 points out that: “The scourge of bribery and extortion among police officers in Nigeria is a well-known issue that has persisted over the years, leading to a deep-seated mistrust between the public and law enforcement. Despite numerous efforts to curb this menace, recent incidents continue to paint a grim picture of the state of corruption within the Nigerian police force. For instance, in January 2023, a viral video surfaced on social media showing a police officer in Lagos State openly demanding bribes from motorists during a stop-and-search operation. The officer, identified later through his badge number, was seen negotiating the amount with drivers and pocketing the cash. The video sparked outrage among Nigerians, with many taking to social media to condemn the act and call for stricter disciplinary measures against corrupt officers. The Lagos State Police Command quickly responded by suspending the officer involved and launching an investigation.

¹ The Nation Nigeria (19 July 2024) Refocusing anti-graft battle

² Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC) (22 June 2024) US Security Assistance to Nigeria: Civilian Protection Gaps and Opportunities, p.4

This incident led to renewed calls for police reform and greater accountability within the force. 'Give me money, money' In December 2023, some policemen were sighted in a video demanding money from a female biker who was on a tour of Nigeria from the Netherlands. The Nigeria Police Force Public Relations Officer, Muyiwa Adejobi, in reaction, said the officers were recorded along Moniya Road in Oyo State. The officers had flagged down the biker, asking her where she was from and where she was heading. The Dutch replied that she was from the Netherlands and she was on her way to Abuja, apparently surprising the two officers. In the one-minute, 26-second video, the officers asked the woman to offer them money or whatever she had in her possession. Interacting with the biker in pidgin, the officers said, "Wetin you bring come? Wetin you won give me. O yah give me something nah." The tourist appeared not to comprehend the officers' message until they clearly said, "Give me money, money," to which she asked, "Why?" Reacting to the video shared by an X user, @Oyoaffairs, the Force PRO, Adejobi called on the Oyo State police command to look into the incident. "Now that is along Moniya in Oyo, @OyoPoliceNG should take necessary steps on that. I have notified the PPRO Oyo of this. They need to be worked upon," Adejobi reacted. Cops arrested, demoted The Nigeria Police Force said it has arrested officers who were filmed demanding money from a Dutch rider in the Ojongbodu area along Iseyin/Ogbomoso Road, Oyo State. In a statement on Friday, Adejobi, said, "The constabularies were arrested by the police authority for their unprofessional, unacceptable, and punishable acts. "The police authority has condemned the act and ordered that the men and their supervising Divisional Police Officer be sanctioned accordingly."³

This document further states that: "In May 2024, a video circulating online captured a police officer clinging to the driver's door of a moving vehicle on a highway in Ughelli, Delta State. The video revealed three individuals in the car, said to be a Mercedes-Benz C300, with the policeman struggling with the driver while hanging onto the opened door. One of the passengers was heard accusing the officer of trying to harm them and questioning if he had children. He said, "Na you wan kill yourself. You dey pursue us. We no carry anything, you wan kill us. You no get pikin?" The cause of the incident is not yet known. Police officer caught on camera collecting bribe demoted."⁴

The *US Department of State* Country Reports on Human Rights Practices in April 2024 reported that: "Although the law provided criminal penalties for corruption by officials, the government did not consistently implement the law. There were numerous reports of government corruption."⁵ The same document mentioned that: "Massive and widespread corruption affected all sectors of government, including the judiciary and security services."⁶

The *US Department of State* International Narcotics Control Strategy Report in March 2024 states that: "NDLEA is in its third year of implementing the National Drug Control Master Plan (NDCMP) for 2021-25, which placed a larger emphasis on recruitment, equipment procurement, and personnel development. Strengthening recruitment and retention efforts from previous years, during this reporting period, the NDLEA hired and trained 5,000 new officers and strengthened performance incentives by clearing promotion backlogs. The NDLEA also constructed new barracks, additional forensic laboratories, and acquired a new aerial view surveillance vehicle. NDLEA has strengthened remuneration and employee welfare, including a new salary structure, insurance benefits to families of deceased officers and to those injured; severance package for officers; and has increased local and

³ The Punch (8 June 2024) Without shame: Policemen abandon stop-and-search duties, turn roadblocks into begging centres

⁴ ibid

⁵ US Department of State (22 April 2024) 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria

⁶ ibid

international trainings. These efforts have attracted better qualified candidates, retained experience officers, and helped mitigate corruption within the police force.”⁷

This report also notes that: “Nigeria does not, as a matter of government policy, encourage or facilitate illicit drug production or distribution, nor is it involved in laundering the proceeds of the sale of illicit drugs. However, Nigeria does not consistently enforce its laws to investigate corruption allegations. The lack of adequate programs to ensure the welfare of personnel and adequate remuneration induces officers to receive bribes. Nonetheless, NDLEA has shown some willingness to prosecute officers for corruption. This reporting period, at least one NDLEA officer accused of corruption was fired from the agency.”⁸

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in February 2024 reported that: “In Nigeria, actual and perceived impunity for corruption and human rights abuses associated with the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) has, for many decades, adversely affected public confidence and led to a gradual erosion of trust in the police. This has had and continues to have dire consequences for stability in the country. In addition, the weaknesses of existing mechanisms to hold the police accountable lead to public frustration and protests which have at times descended into violence.”⁹

This document also points out that: “Police misconduct, particularly concerning on extortion and bribery continues to negatively affect the relationship between citizens and the Nigerian police. The Second National Corruption Survey conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics and UNODC in 2019, reported that police officers were the top public officials engaging in bribery, with 33% of those who encountered the police paid a bribe over the previous 12 months.”¹⁰

The Conversation in February 2024 notes that: “The 2017 statistics on reported crime incidences in Nigeria by the National Bureau of Statistics shows that Lagos has remained in a class of its own. Lagos State had the highest percentage share of total cases reported with 50,975 (37.9%) cases recorded. I have been researching various aspects of crime and insecurity in Nigeria, particularly in the country's south-west. I currently lead the African Cities Research Consortium safety and security domain research in Lagos. I contributed to a recent paper about residents' experiences and perceptions of safety in six African cities: Nairobi, Bukavu, Freetown, Mogadishu, Lagos and Maiduguri. My research identified various drivers of insecurity in Lagos. They included youth migration and unemployment; inequality and poverty; the visible network of organised youth criminal groups; proliferation of small arms and drugs; inadequate preparedness of the city government; police corruption; the high rate of out-of-school children; and poor urban planning”¹¹

In January 2024 the *US Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC)* under the heading “Concerns involving the Rule of Law, Arbitrary Detention, Official Harassment, Corruption &/or Transparency” states that: “Although the law provides criminal penalties for conviction of official corruption, the government does not consistently implement the law, and government employees frequently engage in corrupt practices with impunity. Massive, widespread, and pervasive corruption affect all levels of government, including the judiciary and security services.”¹²

⁷ US Department of State (4 March 2024) 2024 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report: Volume I Drug and Chemical Control – Nigeria

⁸ *ibid*

⁹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (29 February 2024) Strengthening The Internal Oversight And Accountability Mechanisms Of The Nigerian Police Force (NPF)

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ *The Conversation* (20 February 2024) Lagos: drugs, firearms and youth unemployment are creating a lethal cocktail in Nigeria's commercial capital

¹² US Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) (25 January 2024) Nigeria Country Security Report 2024, p.13

Business Day in January 2024 notes that: “Liberia topped the list of countries where police sought bribes from citizens when contacted as 78 percent of respondents said they were asked for bribes, followed by Nigeria with 75 percent.”¹³

The Cable in January 2024 points out that: “Just for a brief time the videos of two Nigerian police constabularies went viral. In the first video, the two men demanded money from a female European motorcyclist on a world tour through Nigeria. In the second video, the two men were seen being dismissed from the service. In a third video which did not seem to have gone around as frequently as the two previous ones, upon their dismissal, the same two policemen spoke of their hard and meaningless life in the force. They said that they had not been paid for their services for many months. They also said that they merely sought “assistance” from the said motorcyclist who they let go when she did not give anything. Put together, the three videos can serve as models of the approach that Nigeria adopts and uses in its claim of fighting corruption in the public domain. The two videos portray the process of accusation and punishment for corruption. The third video mirrors the views of those caught – either as excuses or explanation of the numerous reasons why the society cannot but be corrupt. Available information shows that the Nigeria Police Force frequently disciplines its officers who are caught for misbehaviour. In 2023, a national newspaper reported that in October, December 2022, and April 2023, the Force dismissed 18 officers for abuse of power, gross indiscipline and extortion, among others. Also at state levels, disciplinary measures are taken often. In Kano State last year, an inspector and two sergeants attached to a popular musician were dismissed for firing their bullets carelessly in the air at a crowded place and thereby guilty of misconduct.”¹⁴

This document also mentioned that: “Despite its low tolerance of corruption and misbehaviour by its officers, the public views the police as widely corrupt or corruptible.”¹⁵

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