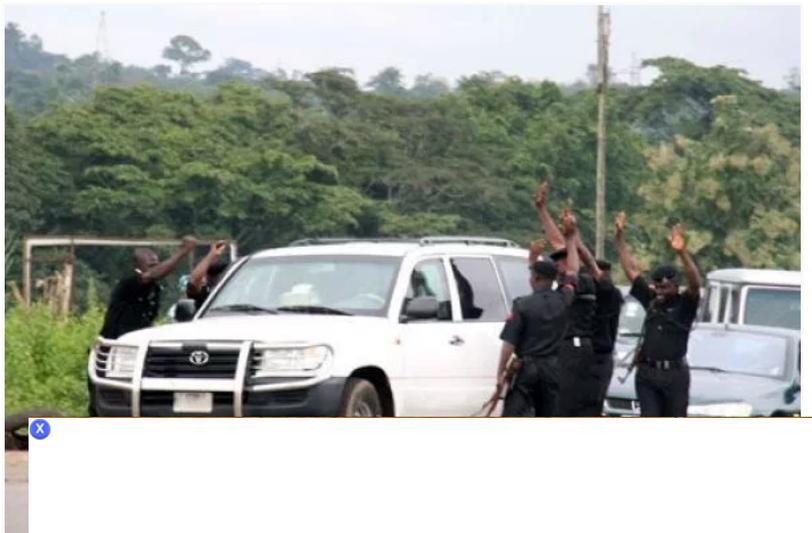




Advertisement for Nigerian Ports Authority with the slogan "...the world within our reach...". It lists various services and contact information.

UPDATED: Nigeria security forces extort N100 billion in Southeast in three years — Report

December 24, 2018 Samuel Ogunjipe



Nigerian police at a checkpoint used to illustrate the story

Related News

- Nige... INV... Shiite courts
- When Killi... conv... Gen... Nige... 40 Turn milit... Boko Ban... police Har... Inside resp... me... the to - mas... Am... Adoke corr... Inte... Febr... in alleg... 24, Nige... Nov... 2014 secu... 2, cont... 2018 May 15, 2018

A report released on Monday has accused Nigerian security and law enforcement agencies of pocketing as much as N100 billion in roadside bribery and extortion in the South-eastern part of the country alone over the last three years.

In a Monday morning statement to PREMIUM TIMES, the International Society for Civil Liberties & the Rule of Law said findings into the report began in August 2015. It accompanied the report with pictures that seemed to show officers receiving bribes at checkpoints.

A breakdown of the questionable operation showed that Nigeria Police Force pocketed N78.02 billion, the military (Army, Navy and Air Force) received N6 billion and paramilitary formations (Customs, Road Safety, NAFDAC and NDLEA) took N16 billion. These totalled N100.02 billion (\$330 million).

The report reinforces fears that the controversial culture has worsened despite decades of condemnation even amongst top security chiefs. Successive police leadership over the last two decades have ordered the removal of checkpoints, but compliance is sparsely enforced and hardly are errant officers punished.

#NigeriaDecides2019

- Bandits kill 50 people in fresh attack — Speaker 4 days ago
- Lawyers condemn plot to depose Kogi State Chief Judge 4 days ago
- 2019 Governorship Elections in APC 15 states, PDP 14 4 days ago
- Kano Election Tribunal petitions 5 days ago
- Gov. Wike wins Rivers 6 days ago

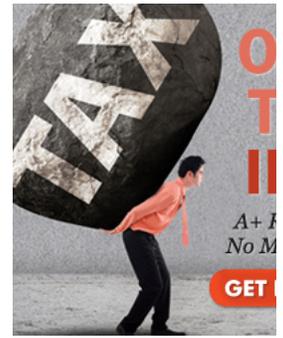
CWPI Coalition of Whistle-blowers Protection and Newsroom Search button with text '>> CLICK TO PARTICIPATE'

Search Our Stories

Search box with the text 'Custom Search' inside.

Kuw... Fuel
pled... Crisis:
\$2 Mar...
billion deny
for recei...
Iraq's pay...
reco... from
Febr... govt,
14, say
2018 strike
cont...
May 1,
2015

Emeka Umeagbalasi, a senior official at Intersociety who coordinated the report, said it was released to coincide with this year's Yuletide, during which bribery and extortion by security agencies are said to be at their peak as millions embark on holiday trips to the Southeast.



Advertisement



"We hope this would help those travelling home to celebrate Christmas be aware of the tactics of security agencies, and the disastrous economic impact on the region," Mr Umeagbalasi said.

The Nigerian Army and the Federal Road Safety Corps immediately dismissed the report, telling PREMIUM TIMES their respective personnel operate with strict ethical standards and those identified for misconduct are usually promptly disciplined.

Know Your Levy

The research for report, titled: Welcome to Southeast Region: Nigeria's Headquarters of Official Highway Robbery; was conducted in all the South-east states and some parts of Delta State with predominantly residents of Igbo origin.



Intersociety found that the security agencies have designed specific levies for different categories of motorists across the South-east, and enforcement sometimes turns deadly.

"For every shuttle or Mitsubishi L300 bus loaded with passengers (only) in Anambra State, it is N50 at every police roadblock, and extra N200 is paid if loaded with goods and passengers," the report said.

"For every commercial motorcycle or tricycle or Datsun or medium range truck loaded with goods, it is N200 at every police roadblock, and for every private vehicle owner accused of "incomplete" vehicle particulars, the least demanded sum is N4,000 or more, which must be paid randomly or on the spot to avoid being dragged to police station and have his or her vehicle impounded and indented as 'stolen vehicle'," the report said.

Some motorists are detained and bailed with illegal bail fees, ranging from N10,000 and above, the report found.

The questionable conduct, which has continued despite decades of condemnation even amongst top security chiefs, also differs from state to state in the region.

"Police extortions in Enugu and Ebonyi States, and to an extent, Imo State, are not as "lucrative" as those of Anambra and Abia States," it said.

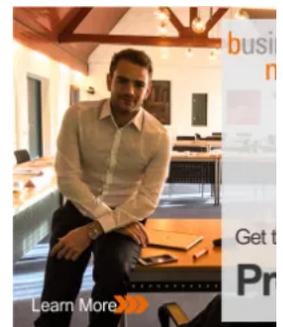
"Such extortions are majorly concentrated on critical federal and state roads as well as few commercial areas of the three states, such as Ogbete, Abakpa, and Nsukka in Enugu State; Abakiliki and Afikpo in Ebonyi State, Orlu and commercial parts of Owerri in Imo State.

"The same non-uniformity applies to many roadblocks in the five Southeast states, as well as those in Agbor, Asaba and their environs, all in Delta State," which has estimated 40 per cent Igbo population, the report found.

Statistical Breakdown

According to the report, there were 250 police roadblocks in Anambra State between August 2015 and August 2016, and each made an estimated N40,000 per day. The 250 police roadblocks on Anambra roads between August 2015 and August 2016 illicitly collected N10 million per day, which translated to N300 million per month and N3.6 billion per year.

According to the report, at N40,000 per day, the 200 police roadblocks in Abia State during the period unlawfully milked the people of the South-east a total of N8 million per day, N240m per month and N2, 88 billion per year.



Also, at N30,000 per day for each of the 150 police roadblocks then in Imo State, a total of N4.5 million was reportedly realised per day, N135 million per month and N1, 62 billion per year.

Saks OFF 5Tt
Saks OFF 5Tt

Also with N25,000 per day for each of 100 police roadblocks in Enugu in the same period, N2.5 million was unlawfully collected per day, N75 million per month and N900 million per year, the report stated/

In Ebonyi, there were 50 police roadblocks, and each earned an average of N25,000 per day, totalling N1.25 million or N37.5 million per month and N450 million per year.

Between August 2016 and August 2017, at N40,000 per day, the 500 police roadblocks on Anambra roads collected N20 million per day, N600 million per month and N7, 2 billion per year.

At N40,000 per day, the 400 police roadblocks in Abia State received N16 million per day, N480 million per month and N5.76 billion per year.

With N30,000 per day for each of the 200 police roadblocks then in Imo State, a total of N6 billion was earned per day, N180 million per month and N2.16 billion per year.

Also with N25,000 per day for each of 200 police roadblocks in Enugu in the same period, N5 million was unlawfully collected per day, N150 million per month and N1.8 billion per year.

The 150 police roadblocks in Ebonyi State allegedly made N25,000 per day, totalling N3.75 million per day, N112.5 million per month and N1.35 billion per year.

Between August 2017 and December 2018, at N40,000 per day, the 800 police roadblocks on Anambra roads must have by the end of December 2018 collected N32 million per day, N960 million per month and N15.36 billion in sixteen months.

At N40,000 per day, the 700 police roadblocks in Abia State must have by the end of December 2018 unlawfully earned N28 million per day, N840 million per month and N13.44b in sixteen months.

In the same period, the 500 police roadblocks in Imo State earned N30,000 per day each, totalling N15 million per day, N450 million per month and N7.2 billion in sixteen months.

At N25, 000 per day for each of 400 police roadblocks in Enugu in the named period, N10 million must have been unlawfully collected per day, N300 million per month and N4.8 billion in sixteen months.

Finally, at N25, 000 for each of the 400 police roadblocks in Ebonyi State, a total of N10 million was illegally collected per day, N300 million per month and N4.8b in sixteen months.

Intersociety estimated 3,000 police roadblocks, including about 200 in different Igbo parts of Delta State (from Agbor to Asaba) as well as those manned by “police-stop-and-move” teams using Hilux or other pick-up vans usually manned by police special anti-robbery squad.

At an average of N20,000 per “police-stop-and-move” roadblock since August 2015, N4 million was realised per day, N120 million per month and N4.8 billion in 40 months, August 2015 to December 2018.

Military, paramilitary cornered N22 billion

Intersociety, which was established in 2008 as a non-governmental organisation based in Onitsha, also found that military personnel deployed in the region earned N6 billion since 2015, while officers of the Nigerian Customs Service, the Federal Road Safety Corps, the National Drugs Law and Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and others grossed N16 billion in illicit income.

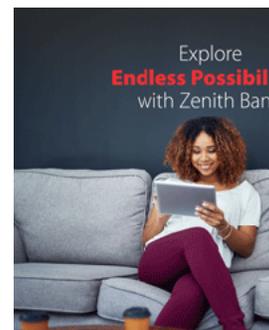
Although the Nigerian Air Force was also mentioned as having been a part of the suspected extortion, its collection was negligent. Mr Umeagbalasi clarified to PREMIUM TIMES that the institution was added because Air Force personnel often collect bribes near their bases around the region, but whatever they received was deemed inconsequential largely due to the limited bases in the region.

The bulk of the N6 billion bribes allegedly went to soldiers, who could be seen in dozens of roadblocks across Southeast.

White-collar, blue-collar

The report further found that some patterns of police roadblock extortion in the South-east bear blue-collar outlook. This involves direct extortion using stationed police personnel. In this case, vehicles bearing goods with passengers are made to “pay” double (i.e., for loaded wares and persons). For instance, each load-carrying L300 bus with passengers is forced to part with at least N250 at each police roadblock.

In the case of drafted soldiers and other military personnel, as well as paramilitary bodies like Road Safety, patterns of their extortion are different; bearing white-collar outlook. This could be categorised



#ShittuGate

#ShittuGate
217 : 09 : 24
DAYS HOURS MINU

Since Minister Shittu was es
skipping NYSC. Buhari fails
ACTION!

Advertisement

as indirect extortion using hired third party or civilian touts or points-men, the report found.

Report sweeping, exaggerated

The police and Customs did not immediately return PREMIUM TIMES' requests for comments Monday morning, but the Nigerian Army and Road Safety strongly denied allegations of fraud amongst their personnel.

"It is a sweeping statement, they need to be specific," FRSC spokesperson Bisi Kazeem said, but added nonetheless that the agency "does not condone corruption or corrupt tendencies."

"Bribery is not institutionalised in the corps. Whoever is caught is dealt with by dismissal after trial by FRSC disciplinary committee," the spokesperson said.

"We have monitoring and surveillance team from unit level to sector level to zonal level ending at the headquarters," he said. "FRSC officers and men have name tags, the vehicle has body codes and registration numbers."

Sani Usman, a spokesperson for the Nigerian Army, also absolved military personnel from all acts of bribery, and slammed Intersociety as propagating falsehood.

"It is not true. The Nigerian Army is very professional and has clearly established rules of engagement and code of conduct," Mr Usman, a brigadier-general, said. "Therefore, it cannot be associated with such tissue of lies."

A worsening menace

The culture of checkpoint corruption has been a recurring feature amongst Nigerian security and law enforcement agencies, even as their respective leaderships continue to speak stridently against the practice with threats of harsh consequences.

The first Intersociety report into the conduct of officers on the road was first published in 2011. Even though the South-east weighed heavily in the report, its elements were gathered across the country at the time, and the final outcome revealed that the controversial practice was milder at the time.

The naira note benchmark used as 'toll fee' then was N20 denomination as against today's N50 and N100 notes. The group found that between 2009 and 2011, police officers earned N53.4 billion in three years from 3,500 roadblocks across the country at the time. The South-east accounted for the lion's share of N32.2 billion, followed by Southwest and South-south with N8.2 billion each.

Motorists in the North-Central coughed out N2.1 billion in bribes to the police. North-east and North-west were N1.2 billion each at the time. That nationwide investigation was built on the report of the Human Rights Watch (HRW) published on August 17, 2010, which looked at corruption and abuses in the police.

The HRW's report, titled: 'Everyone is in on the Game: Corruption & Human Rights Abuses by the Nigeria Police Force,' combined with further findings by Intersociety prompted Mohammed Abubakar, then police inspector-general, to order the urgent dismantling of all roadblocks. But that directive, like several before and after it, saw compliance for only a few days before fizzling out.

WhatsApp Facebook Twitter Email LinkedIn Print Telegram Skype More



Saks OFF 5TH

Saks OFF 5TH

Saks OFF 5TH

Saks OFF 5TH

Saks Style. For Less. Up To 70% Off Women's Dresses and More

Mebane

WEBSITE

Support PREMIUM TIMES' journalism of integrity and credibility