

When Will Justice Rein?

A neighbour share her experience with me last month about her son being arrested by the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) for what he knows nothing about. The most sad part of the story was that after the boy was severely tortured unjustly without investigation and was found innocent, they demanded N200, 000 (Two Hundred Thousand Naira) for bail and approximately N300,000 (Three Hundred Thousand Naira), an equivalent amount for two of the stolen goods he was accused of purchased even after the culprit (thief) has confessed his innocent.

According to the boy, he knew the guy (thief) within the community and what he can recalled was that, while he was going back to school, the boy (in a masquerade) that day asked money from him during their egungun festival which he refused, the occurrence that led to some rancour on that day before he left the scene.

Few days after in the middle of the night, the Special Anti-Robbery Squad with the thief in chain both hands and legs came to their house for arrest, since the boy was not around (in school) they have to take along his father.

Cases like this are so common in a recent time. A similar one was that of a poor security guard without ammunition who was tied down during a robbery operation in his place of work. Eventually the case was reported to Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). Even after finding the guy innocent, they are still asking for N100,000 (One Hundred Thousand Naira) bail until Civil Liberties Organization (CLO) a human right organization step in.

It is worrisome to see those with the responsibility to protect using the authority and resources entrusted on them to victimize and extort the masses. At this junction, you will be wondering if there is a way out of the corruption in the land without divine intervention couple with the question, "When will justice rein?"

Let me share my personal experience of how the Nigeria Police use the authority entrusted on them to victimize the masses. December 2016, a cousin of my called me to rescue him from The Nigerian Police on patrol within our community who seized his fuel (petrol) he bought to use at home. On getting to the patrol spot, I was told the fuel has being taking to their station. Getting to the station, I met no one, I wasn't surprise, it's a police post in a community. I

knew there will be someone in mufti washing, so I left there back to the patrol spot to show my grievance on why he has to waste my time going to the station when he knew there is nobody to attend to me.

To cut the story short, we can back to the station and I was baffled to hear that the fuel has been taking to the nearest division controlling the post. What is the way out? I was directed to discuss with an elderly man who happen to be the Officer heading the police post and as a well-trained Yoruba citizen, I have to change my attitude of asking from my right to seeking assistance speaking to the man humbly, unfortunately, I was disappointed when the man open his mouth to talk, still I try all I could to maintain my humility. Although before the discussion I have called the D.P.O of the nearest police station controlling the post but unable to speak with him because he failed to peak call so I have to call the secretary of CLO Ojo Unit to inform him of what is going on.

The most disappointing aspect was that, instead of the Officer to use his position and age to iron out the case, he worsens it by making a distress call to the nearest station that just because they seized fuel from me, I came with crowd to burn down the police post. Not surprise, I have being hearing cases of a police officer's trying to frame people up and I have prepare for such. Instead of panicking I remake my called informing CLO of the latest development and sat down peacefully until their arrival to pick me and my cousin up. Fortunately all necessary contact has being made and on getting to the division we went straight to the DPO and our fuel was released.

If not for the right connection, the end will not be sweet. It has now being glaring to me that freedom is never free and I doubt if it will be free from whichever perspective you view it. Not only that, it is very hard for an individual to fight for his right alone. This is the reason why in any case, I can never regret time spent in being a member of Civil Liberty Organization (CLO).

To be continue....