



# Drug Trafficking in Nigeria: Its Causes and Effects on the Citizens

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## 1. PREAMBLE

In certain countries illegal importing, exporting, sale, or possession of drugs constitute capital offences that may result in the death penalty. According to a 2011 article by the Lawyers Collective, an NGO in India, "32 countries impose capital punishment for offences involving narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances," (<http://www.lawyerscollective.org/newsarchived-news-a-articles/119-bombay-high-court-overturns-mandatory-death-penalty-for-drug-offences-first-in-the-world-to-do-so.html>, accessed March 12, 2022). Also stresses is a 2012 report by Harm Reduction International "documents the 33 countries and territories that retain death penalty for drug offences, including 13 in which the sentence is mandatory," (<http://www.ihra.net/contents/1290>, accessed March 12, 2022). The following are list of countries in the world that applied capital punishment whenever anybody is arrested on drug trafficking; Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Brunei, China, Cuba, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Laos, Malaysia, Morocco, North-Korea, Oman, Qatar, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Syria, Sudan, Taiwan, United Arab Emirates, Thailand, United States, Vietnam, Yemen, and Zimbabwe, (<http://www.nst.com.my/latest/moroccan-man-gets-death-for-drug-trafficking-1.290600>, accessed March 12, 2022). According to McDowell and Hostetler (1996:401);

Many among these nations have signed boards to inform foreigners of the dangers of carrying or importing hard drugs into their countries. For example, The Singapore embarkation card contains a warning to visitors about the death penalty for drug trafficking under the Misuse of Drugs Act. Warning signs can also be found at the Johor-Singapore Causeway and other border entries. A sign at the Taiwan Taiyuan International Airport warns arriving travelers that drug trafficking is a capital offense in Taiwan. The unfortunate experience today is that, drugs generally have become increasingly available and visible among youth.

## 2. DEFINITION OF TERMS

### 2.1. Drug

According to Watkins and Morris(1992:1992)"The word 'drug' is a substance used in medicines. It is a substance one takes for pleasure or excitement, especially one causing addiction such as Tobacco, alcohol, and cocaine. They are all considered dangerous drugs."Ndakwe (2005:5-6) added, drug is "Any chemical substance, whether of natural or synthetic origin, which can be used to alter perception, mood or other psychological states." Kunhiyop (2008"360-361) agree with Ndakwe that drug is "any chemical substance used in medicine, in the treatment of a disease, either alone or in a mixture, which is capable of changing the state or functions of cells, organs or organisms. It could be any substance in a pharmaceutical product that is used to modify or explore physiological systems or pathological states for the benefit of the recipient. This makes it clear that not all drugs are bad."

### 2.2. Trafficker

The term “trafficker” according to Fatokun (2013:262) refers to “all those who are involved in the criminal activity of drug trafficking. Mostly, traffickers are strangers, friends, relatives, family members or ‘admirable’ individuals of the victim’s community. Trafficker’s mode of operation is syndicated through well-organized and coordinated networks running through both the receiving, transit and destination countries.” The syndicate relies heavily on the assistance and cooperation of other members or allies spread across Nigeria, Libya, Morocco, Mali, other West African countries, and Europe. They engaged the services of trolleys (smugglers who help to cross illegal drugs across borders). These syndicates also exist nationally in the case of internal trafficking. Therefore, “the most common definition of drug traffic means the sale and distribution of illegal drugs, (<http://www.city-data.com/forum/politics-other-controversies/11743>, accessed March 15, 2022). More detail explanation is given as to the nature of drug trafficking as seen below;

Drug trafficking is the term used to describe the production, distribution and sale of illegal drugs. In the United States, such drugs include cocaine, heroin, PCP, LSD, methamphetamines and marijuana. Penalties for trafficking may vary, but in most places penalties are intended to be severe enough to discourage individuals from engaging in selling drugs. Therefore, drug trafficking is the moving of illegal drugs from one place to another. This occurs when a foreign country imports drugs via a person smuggling the contents...

Drug trafficking is well known as “a major source of crime worldwide. Not only is there physical danger inherent in the use of illegal drugs, but drug smuggling is also frequently accompanied by other crimes such as murder, kidnapping, prostitution and assault,” (<http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-kidnapping.htm>, accessed April 5, 2022). This is also proven through research how that;

Authorities work full time all over the world to prevent the use and sale of illegal drugs, as both represent enormous dangers to society. While laws vary according to jurisdiction, individuals charged with drug possession usually face stiff penalties, which include property forfeiture, hefty fines and time in prison. In some countries, such as China, drug sales may be punishable by death. In certain jurisdictions, when people are caught smuggling or selling drugs, individuals will sometimes hire a drug lawyer who specializes in defending individuals accused of such crimes. Even with legal counsel, however, drug trafficking laws designed to deter people from producing and selling drugs are strictly applied. In the United States, a special government agency exists for the sole purpose of monitoring and discouraging drug trafficking. The Drug Enforcement Administration, also known as the DEA, is a federal agency which exists to enforce American drug laws by thoroughly investigating people suspected of the production, distribution, smuggling and sale of illegal drugs. The DEA functions with the help and cooperation of private citizens and lawmakers, as well as other local, state and international law enforcement agencies, (<http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-drug-trafficking.htm>, accessed April 5, 2022).

A few of the other American agencies that specifically work to reduce instances of drug trafficking include the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), as well as various immigration, customs and border patrol agencies, which work to stop illegal substances from crossing national borders. The International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) also regularly coordinates with each of these agencies, and similar agencies in other countries, to discourage illegal drug sales internationally. Globally, drug trafficking is a multibillion dollar industry. As a profitable industry, illegal drug sales also fund the purchase of illegal weapons often used to fund organized crime and civil wars in developing countries. Even with stringent law enforcement efforts and penalties, authorities worldwide engage in a constant struggle to stop the illicit drug trade, (<http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-drug-trafficking.htm>, accessed April 5, 2022).

### 3. THE HISTORY OF DRUG TRAFFICKING

This article aims at presenting a brief history on how drug trafficking has been around for centuries in one form or another, drug trafficking as it is recognized today became prominent starting in the 1960s to the present. “During the 1960s and 1970s, Nigerian drug crime focused on cannabis, which remains its most heavily trafficked substance, according to a United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime report. By the 1980s, the need for a central transportation hub from Asia and Latin America sucked Nigeria into the traffickers' orbit, the report says. Further pressure built up during the 1990s, following

the addition of overland smuggling routes to Brazil and South Africa. Nigeria's drug industry began with the routine cultivation of cannabis," (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/778299.stm>, accessed March 25, 2022).

Exporting to other countries is imperative for Nigerian traffickers, since most have taken to drugs as the only means for their livelihood and cannabis remains the country's only domestically-grown drug. This means compromising air and shipping networks to accomplish their goals. For example, 20 percent of British hard drug cases involved the National Nigerian Shipping Line, according to [globalsecurity.org](http://globalsecurity.org). Sixty-five percent of seizures involving 50 or more grams of heroin hit British airports hard, as well. Gangs are also turning to cargo, courier and express mail routes, ([http://www.giaba.org/media/spech/09-8-4-EFFECTS-OF-DRUGS-TRAFFICKING-FOR-PARLIAMENTARIANS,\\_09-Comrs.pdf](http://www.giaba.org/media/spech/09-8-4-EFFECTS-OF-DRUGS-TRAFFICKING-FOR-PARLIAMENTARIANS,_09-Comrs.pdf) , accessed March 25, 2022).

#### 4. FACTS ON DRUG TRAFFICKING

- 1.) 1969-In response to high amounts of marijuana entering the United States through Mexico, the U.S. Customs Department begins Operation Intercept. For two weeks, every single vehicle at the U.S./Mexican border is searched. The first major drug interdiction operation does little to slow the flow of marijuana across the border.
- 2.) 1973-Richard Nixon establishes the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA).
- 3.) 1979-Carlos Lehder and George Jung use small planes and a small Bahamian island (Norman's Cay) to transport cocaine between Colombia and the U.S.
- 4.) 1983-1985-After the collapse of Lehder's Colombian operation, cocaine transportation routes shift to Mexico.
- 5.) 1993-Pablo Escobar, leader of the most powerful drug cartel in the world (based in Medellin, Colombia) is killed by Colombian police with the help of U.S. Special Forces
- 6.) 2000-President Bill Clinton's \$1.3 contribution to Colombia's drug enforcement efforts sets the tone for the United States' next decade of drug interdiction efforts, (<http://www.globethics.net/library>, accessed March 15, 2022). It is further stated as follows;

As of 2010, illegal drug trafficking is flourishing due to an increase in wholesale prices, simpler and faster drug-development techniques, and new technology. Drug trafficking is the process of moving finished narcotics from their manufacturing to distribution points. Because of the exorbitant profits involved, distributors take great care to hide and guard their illicit cargos. According to Anthony Coulson of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, illegal drug trafficking is flourishing as of 2010 due to an increase in wholesale prices, simpler and faster drug-development techniques and new technology, (<https://now.ehow.com/legal?accessed> April 12, 2022).

#### 5. CAUSES OF DRUG TRAFFICKING

Drug trafficking occurs because people wish to make money off of the lucrative business of dealing in illegal drugs. The need for money causes some people to want to get into the drug trafficking game. Despite the fact that selling or using drugs is illegal in most parts of the world, people continue to use drugs. Drug traffickers bring drugs into different countries so that they can be sold illegally. Because it is illegal, drug traffickers may make a lot of money from doing this, but they face very high risks, including prison time for trafficking in drugs, ([http://www.fpiif.org/reports/drug\\_trafficking\\_and\\_money\\_laundering](http://www.fpiif.org/reports/drug_trafficking_and_money_laundering), accessed April 16, 2022). Here are additional causes of drug trafficking by some. The causes of drug trafficking are poverty, corruption, lack of money, sovereignty and stupidity, ([http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What\\_are\\_causes\\_and\\_effects](http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_are_causes_and_effects), accessed April 17, 2022). Finally, in *the Billy Graham Christian Workers Handbook* (2002:98) it is stress "Drug users come from all walks of life. It is again discovered that the root of dependency is to be found in insecurity, fear, guilt, disappointments, immorality and deviant sexual behavior, frustration, stress, peer pressures, and intense competition." Add to these the great spiritual vacuum which has resulted in a breakdown of moral standards, the disintegration of the home, and the staggering availability of drugs of every kind to every age group.

## 6. THE EFFECTS OF DRUG TRAFFICKING

The author wish to give a case study of some drug traffickers. Six Nigerians were nabbed for Drug Trafficking at Ghana airport. The Narcotics Control Board (NACOB) confirmed that six Nigerians nationals were arrested within 14 days within the year in connection with drug trafficking at the Kotoka International Airport (KIA), according to a Deputy Executive Secretary in charge of Enforcement of NACOB. This comes as a result of NACOB's latest arrest of another Nigerian, Chika Macillinus Umeugokwe for trafficking narcotic drugs into the country barely a week after the arrest of a Nigerian by one of NACOB's dogs.

The 31years old business man confirmed swallowing 69 pellets of heroine weighing one kilograms with an estimated street value of \$80,000 on his arrival from Pakistan, a well-known area for the cultivation of Opium Poppy, the raw material used in manufacturing heroine. The successful arrest came after the suspect was to go through the formalities but unknown to him, he was being monitored by NACOB officials who followed him outside and subsequently apprehended him. He later expelled the drugs when officials of NACOB took him to their headquarters for interrogations and examination. His arrest came when two of his accomplices, a Nigerian and a Ghanaian fled after sensing danger after close monitoring by officials of NACOB on duty at the airport. In *Daily Trust Monday, January 20, 2014 (ghanaweb.com)*, 41:

A Deputy Executive Secretary in charge of Enforcement at the Narcotics Control Board (NACOB), Richard Nii Lante Blankson revealed that the suspect claimed he swallowed 77 pellets of heroin but vomited some in Pakistan before setting off to Ghana. He indicated that Umeugokwe in his quest to make quick money left the shores of Nigeria late last year, for Ghana by road and left the following day on board Kenya Airways to Nairobi and continued with Ethihad Airlines to Pakistan. In Pakistan, Nii Lante Blankson stressed that Umeugokwe stayed at the Metro Park Hotel in Islamabad in Pakistan for six weeks where he claimed was aided by a fellow Nigerian called Cosmos to purchase the drugs. According to him, the suspect claimed he paid \$3,500 for 50 pellets of the heroin but Cosmos added 27 to what he had swallowed to be given to his brother on suspect's arrival in Nigeria, but the suspect vomited some in Pakistan. He added that the suspect will be arraigned after investigations and further assured the Ghanaian public of NACOB's commitment to fight the drug trade.

### 6.1. The Effects

#### 1.) It Increased Corruption

Promises of reform have borne little fruit, due to Nigeria's culture of corruption. One example occurred in 1991, when the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency's boss was fired for involvement with a socialite convicted of drug-related offenses, the BBC's website reported. Successive administrations sought to re-impose the death penalty for trafficking, but backed down after an international outcry. Even when traffickers are convicted, the government shows little interest in extraditing them, (<http://www.unodc.org/nigeria/en/trafficking.html>, accessed April 14, 2022).

#### 2.) It brought about the breakdown of Law and Order

Breakdowns in law and order have become common, but not solely because of the country's corruption. Plagued by lack of skill and support, competing security forces have resorted to intercepting suspected traffickers at special checkpoints. Extortion, excessive force and extrajudicial killings are common risks for citizens caught in these situations, states [globalsecurity.org](http://www.globalsecurity.org). There has been no governmental reaction to these incidents, nor any sanctions of police officers involved in them, ([http://www.giaba.org/media/speech/09-8-4EFFECTS\\_OF\\_DRUG\\_TRAFFICKING\\_FOR\\_PARLIAMENTARIANS,\\_09\\_COMRS.PDF](http://www.giaba.org/media/speech/09-8-4EFFECTS_OF_DRUG_TRAFFICKING_FOR_PARLIAMENTARIANS,_09_COMRS.PDF), accessed April 20, 2022).

#### 3.) It Strained International Relations

Complicated flight plans and multiple passports are standard tools for Nigerian traffickers. Strained international relations have often accompanied the increased numbers of traffickers arrested in other countries. Seeking more than mere promises of reform, the United States cut off direct air travel to Nigeria in 1993, and also worked to block economic aid, according to [bbc.com](http://bbc.com). The link returned in

1999, though no progress has been observed. Other nations impose more drastic measures, such as Saudi Arabia, where traffickers are routinely beheaded, ([http://www.giaba.org/media/speech/09-8-4\\_EFFECTS\\_OF\\_DRUG\\_TRAFFICKING\\_FOR\\_PARLIAMENTARIANS,\\_09\\_COMRS.PDF](http://www.giaba.org/media/speech/09-8-4_EFFECTS_OF_DRUG_TRAFFICKING_FOR_PARLIAMENTARIANS,_09_COMRS.PDF), accessed April 20, 2022).

## **7. THE BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON DRUG TRAFFICKING**

America has become a drug dependent nation, not only through illegal drugs, but through prescription drugs as well. Many people would rather "pop a pill" than to deal with life in a Godly fashion. The Bible has something to say about drugs. Interestingly enough, our (two thousand year-old) New Testament addresses the topic mainly in the book that looks to future events--Revelation. Although the English word "drugs" is not found in the Bible, we can see that the subject is mentioned.

- 1.) The Greek word pharmakeia (translated sorceries) is in Revelation 18:23. This word means "medication". The English word "pharmacy" is related to this word. "And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived." Drugs are extremely deceitful. They never treat the problem, only the symptom, (<http://www.holybible.org/articles.php>, accessed April 23, 2022).
- 2.) The Greek word pharmakeus is a "druggist or prisoner". This Greek word translates as sorceries in Revelation 9:21, and sorcerers in Revelation 21:8 & 22:15. "Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts (Reverend 9:21). " But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death (Reverend 21:8). "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie," (Reverend 22:15). This Greek word (pharmakeus) has a root (pharmakon) meaning "a drug, i.e. spell-giving potion", (Reverend 22:15), (<http://www.holybiblesays.org/articles.php>, accessed April 24, 2022).

There is no doubt in my mind that the drug trade of our day can be connected with Satanism which is widespread in these last days. The Bible indicates that drugs will play a major role in man's attitude and response to God in the last days. These are the last days. There is a direct link between drugs and Satanism. No one can take mind-altering drugs without demonic influence upon their lives. This is why people do the unthinkable while under the influence (Rev. 9:13-21). The drug trade of our day, both legal and illegal, will play a role in the response of men to God in the last days, especially in the Tribulation period, (<http://www.holybiblesays.org/articles.php>, accessed April 26, 2022).

## **8. THE BEST WAY TO STOP DRUG TRAFFICKING**

The *Billy Graham Christian Worker's Handbook* (2002:98) allude that in "order to be helped spiritually, the drug dependant person must desire to be helped and must take some initial steps to seek such help. This is where a Christian helper comes in. We should seek his or her commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord." This initial step of faith should lead to new perspective and motivation for the drug user, which will lead, hopefully, to rehabilitation and a life of wholeness. I think that teenagers need to be convinced that "drugs are bad for their lives. Indeed, drugs are bad for every-body's life because drugs are practically poison, a slow killing poison, but yet a poison. More drug prevention programs would help in this. I think if there are no consumers there will not be dealers. That's the equation. No consumers - No drug dealers, (<http://answers.yahoo.com/activity?> accessed April 25, 2022).

It is again stressed here that neighborhoods can reduce drug-related activity through environmental changes that make their communities less vulnerable and hospitable to drug dealers. Drug-related activity can be reduced if a neighborhood or community is physically designed to protect residents. Relevant physical improvements include better outdoor lighting, building of fences, and removal of abandoned vehicles. Legalization and control, while also maintaining or increasing efforts to counsel

against drug use is the way to go. The counseling/education would reduce drug use, while legalizing it would reduce the crime associated with trafficking, (<http://mcgruffstore.org/350tesstratt.html>, accessed April 25, 2022).

### 9. SUMMARY

The writer would like to conclude by observing that, the war on drugs has failed miserably after very heavy expenditure of money and lives. This research has revealed to me and I want to announce to the public that, drug trafficking is an expensive and risky trade. When one become addicted it keeps you from reaching your goal and objective in life, it breaks up families & relationships, it ruins your health, it leads to a bunch of enablers and secondary crime (stealing, etc.). Drug use ruins lives. If there were no dealers, there would be no drugs for the consumers.... hence this is why they go after the big drug cartels. Drug trafficking in Nigeria did not start today; this illegal business has been on for many years. Because it is an illegal trade, a lot of people have gone to prison as a result. Yet, both the young and old that have refused to take correction are still falling into the wrath of the Government.

As I conclude this chapter, I wish to observe the recent happening. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Port Harcourt International Airport Command, has arrested 58 years old man, Mr. Odunayo Ayodele, Owoseni, over alleged ingestion of 115 wraps of substance, suspected to be cocaine. The suspect was apprehended at the screening point, on December 31, 2013, as he was about boarding and an Air France flight to Dublin, through Charles de Gaulle International Airport, Paris.

Briefing newsmen in Port Harcourt, recently, the Airport Commander of the Agency, Olutekunbi Davies, decried the nefarious activities of drug traffickers, who he said, were not only bent on portraying Nigeria as transit drug country also tarnishing her image. Davies revealed that the renovation work, currently going on at the Port Harcourt International Airport, posed a challenge to the operations of the agency, but added that the narcotic agents were on top of the situation. He said the Command had intensified efforts to ensure that the Port Harcourt International Airport did not become a transit point for drug traffickers, (*Daily Sun Tuesday, January 28, 2014 Vol 10 No. 2806*, 33). As a way of recommendation, the writer wishes to advise those that have become addicted to drug trafficking to go back to the Lord for total deliverance and cleansing. As an individual, one needs to pray and be committed to reading the Word of God consistently. Try to avoid friends that are pushing you to get involved in this wicked act.

### 10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.) I would like to advise the church pastors, and elders to take a radical step to organize seminars, conferences and symposiums in order to teach and preach to members of the church for awareness and to also be aware of the danger and consequences involved in drug trafficking
- 2.) NGO's should be deliberate in supporting financially individuals to give awareness in both private and public squares, schools, and market places
- 3.) Youth should be talked to on-one-on-one to discourage them of this drug tracking because if arrested, it will end them in jail term, and their future can be affected negatively
- 4.) Local Churches should develop Bible Study materials that have outlines in connection with how members can be educated and trained so that they will be able to know clearly the effects of the trafficking
- 5.) The youth can be taken to the prison for excursion, probably what they will see there may help to orient their attitudes and behaviors if there are intended drug traffickers among them.

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