

FEATURE

Two weeks ago, the world watched as two Chinese citizens zhang Yujun and Geng Jinping walked to the gallows on their way to hell. They were found guilty of being brains behind the adulterated milk scandal which consumed just six children around the world. In the same vein the Chinese government sentenced another batch of six criminals for exporting fake anti-malaria drugs. The case for this column is not just a matter for China but a test for the duty of a nation to citizens.

The milk was tainted in China but was consumed all over the world. The offence was local but the injury was global. It therefore required local action for global pacification. It tested the soul of China's industrial remediation sense of justice, calling up its fasted wing of the criminal justice administration (CJA). The theory of retributive justice and the law deterrence demand that some form of pain be inflicted on whoever caused pain for others, and that the state should avenge for a citizen who suffered criminal harm in the hands of others.

In this era of internationalism, the same theory still subsists; and this makes the State anywhere that subscribes to the international charter to punish any of its citizens who caused criminal harm to a citizen of any country, if such harm is brought under the purview of the law. This is a major plank of modern civilization that countries who aspire to be among the best twenty strive to achieve.

About two years ago, the world woke up to the rude shock and realization that babies

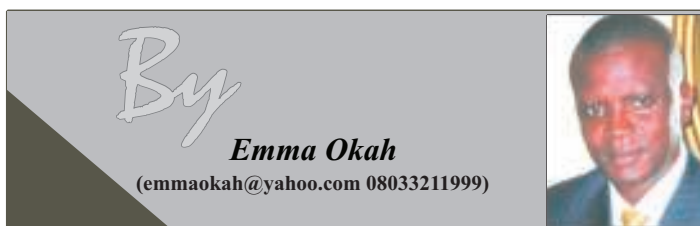
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were getting strangely ill and some were actually dying. A little observation revealed that a brand of milk was behind the serial deaths around the world, and that this milk was coming from China.

The mention of China instantly evoked revulsion, especially in the West. Industrial civilization began in modern times in Great Britain and moved to Germany, France, Italy Portugal, etc. Later the US took over and has remained up there as a leader. Now, Japan staged resurgence and their products initially began as inferior but have become leaders. Taiwan also showed glimpses.

China has launched an industrial and global leadership influence that the world can no longer ignore. Still running at least a partially closed political system that allows it to determine its path and pace of development and total control of its people, China's industrial revolution is hinged on a cultural revolution that makes the country distinct, for good or for bad.

It has achieved self sufficiency and has taken the world by storm, posting huge surpluses and lending even to developed economies. It competes favourably with biggest economies in the world and has made itself a threat in all spheres,



'MY PIKIN' AND OUR JUSTICE SYSTEM

sometimes taking over where the defunct Soviet Union (USSR) stopped.

With a wide range of usables and other personal products, China has affected homes around the world, using a price regime that forces attention to Chinese products. It is also marching forward and matching the West with advanced technology in space prowess, satellite systems, cars, etc. This, in fact, is irking the West.

The sore is more to the West because of the Africa market which China seems determined to wrest from them. China has set aside huge funds to bring development to countries in Africa. This is expected to complement a robust trade bid whereby African countries that open up to China get the aids. The West applied this method in their entry and partitioning of Africa and now they seem to worry that they are being outdone by China. They now warn

demonstration of the seriousness with which a country ought to treat important legal matters. Were it to be in Nigeria, China as a state would have foot-dragged and all silly arguments ranging from ethnic sentiments to political affiliation etc would fill the airwaves in the face of this crisis. Some will even argue that the State had a lot of things to gain from: taxes paid by the offending company, encouraging local production, seven points agenda, GDP by its contribution, job creation, export revenue, etc, but the country chose its image and the cause of justice over these.

If it were to be in Nigeria, lobbyists of all classifications would have taken over to avert justice and to protect the offenders. They would have found the right traditional monarch, religious leaders, Army Generals, party lords, etc, to stop the government from carrying on to the last. This would have stalled investigation, arrests and trial.

The best lawyers that ought to illuminate the course of justice would have been brought in to, not win the case but to stall it with technicalities that would keep the world waiting for decades.

There have been many international fraud scandals where other nations moved swiftly and tried their citizens involved, thereby exonerating the innocent and punishing the guilty. Their Nigerian members have remained free to this day, causing huge image damage that the crap called re-branding will never repair.

In Nigeria, the agencies that should have helped to dig out the offenders would have rather worked on the side of evil to stifle the investigations. This is why NAFDAC is rather seen and treated like an enemy by most other agencies of government especially Customs. At the ports, these agencies establish tables for collecting bribes openly and allow all manner of fake products to pass. In doing so, they hold counsel against NAFDAC or anyone that would want a clean-up of the system because it must be 'business as usual'. The Customs are either unskilled or

too corrupt to look well and dictate dangerous products coming into Nigeria. They also do not like NAFDAC that tries to see well.

Today, the man who openly threatened to kill Prof Dora Akunyili then at NAFDAC and actually went ahead to shoot her is still at large. The case against that mafia lord is still dragging, several years after the failed assassination bid. The nation and the authorities keep a face as the police plays yoyo with the matter. If Aso Rock under Baba had said, look, get this man and prove him guilty, all in one year, things would have moved. If a famous woman who has fought for humanity and is a global citizen can suffer such humiliation in the criminal justice circle in Nigeria, this then can show the fate of ordinary Nigerians. This is why any hooligan can openly boast that "look, I will shoot you and nothing will happen". Often, they kill and nothing happens. The recent Human Rights Watch report which indicted the police for serial extra judicial killings clearly shows that the police resort to killing some proven and very dangerous criminals stem from their frustration with the justice system that makes a ridicule of their honest efforts at crime control and prevention

Truth is, Nigerians die by installments on a daily basis by the alarming amount of adulterated foods, drugs and other consumables that stroll into the country from China, India Indonesia, etc without hindrance; from failure of the criminal justice system; from arrest of a suspect through trial in courts and jail term in prisons. The system is rotten and the odour disturbs the world. The FG must take a cue from China which has a harsh image but moves fast to repair it when occasion warrants. The circles through which foreign police units suffer through when they have warrants for Nigerian big men is terrible. The position of the chief law officer of the nation seems combatant on the side of the accused and this rubbishes whatever Akunyili talks about our battered image as a nation. Many months after the "My Pickin" Case that killed eighty four children in Nigeria, our justice system has not moved beyond elementary and scandalous arguments. Nobody has been punished for murdering others.

China has used the case of the failed milk to show what stuff their criminal justice system is made of, and to prove to the world that the citizens may be crooks but the State was not and that the corporations in China can be rotten that Corporate China was not. 'My Pikin may die but our nation must live through a viable and effective criminal justice system.

This is the tip from China.

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