



# NDLEA today

● VOL. 1 NO. 3 JANUARY 2022



## ONE YEAR OF IMPACT

**12306** Arrests  
**1367** Convictions  
**7761** Counselling & Rehabilitated  
**3.4M KG** Drugs Seized  
**N130B** Cash/Drugs Recovered  
**5000** New Officers

**20-PAGE  
OUTLOOK**

• Postmortem  
• Prognosis  
• Plans



Smart ● Proactive ● Efficient

**THE NEW NDLEA**



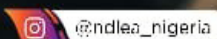
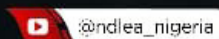
NATIONAL DRUG LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY



# D.E.A.D.

**Drugs** End All **Dreams**

#SayNoToDrugAbuse







'My Dream NDLEA'

▶ P.16



Good Ambassador

▶ P.19



Awards and Commendations

▶ P.28



**Young, smart and sophisticated workforce:** The new NDLEA.  
Photo by **PHILEMON AKWU**

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## NDLEA RANKS (IN THIS EDITION)

- DCGN** Deputy Commander General of Narcotics
- ACGN** Assistant Commander General of Narcotics
- CN** Commander of Narcotics
- DCN** Deputy Commander of Narcotics
- ACN** Assistant Commander of Narcotics
- CSN** Chief Superintendent of Narcotics
- SN** Superintendent of Narcotics
- DSN** Deputy Superintendent of Narcotics
- ASN - I** Assistant Superintendent of Narcotics I
- ASN II** Assistant Superintendent of Narcotics II
- CNA** Chief Narcotics Agent

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# Making History the NDLEA Way



**N**DLEA ended the year 2021 on a good note. On a high. To a standing ovation. It gladdens everyone's heart that the Agency is back in the limelight, for good reasons. I am happy to be part of this history. Satisfaction. Joy. Hopes. Great expectations. These are the shared feelings of everyone connected to the Agency. Who doesn't want to be on the winning team? Presently, NDLEA is the winning team in town.

I revel in this good development with a sense of déjà vu that takes me back in time 26 years ago when a much younger Colonel MB Marwa was in Government House, Alausa, Lagos, making waves as an acclaimed "action military administrator" and the toast of the media world. I witnessed firsthand his mana-

gement acumen and I was won over by his dynamic leadership. Since then, I have been his fan, following his trajectory, even after he retired from the Military.

Hence, when the opportunity came for me to work in his team, I took it with both hands. One year after, I have no misgivings about the decision. In



one year, history repeats itself, and history has been rewritten for NDLEA. What a bravura of performance! For its feats, the Agency won accolades, and to the bargain, Government Agency of the Year (*Leadership Newspaper*) and Man of the Year awards for the Chairman/CEO (*Champion Newspaper*).

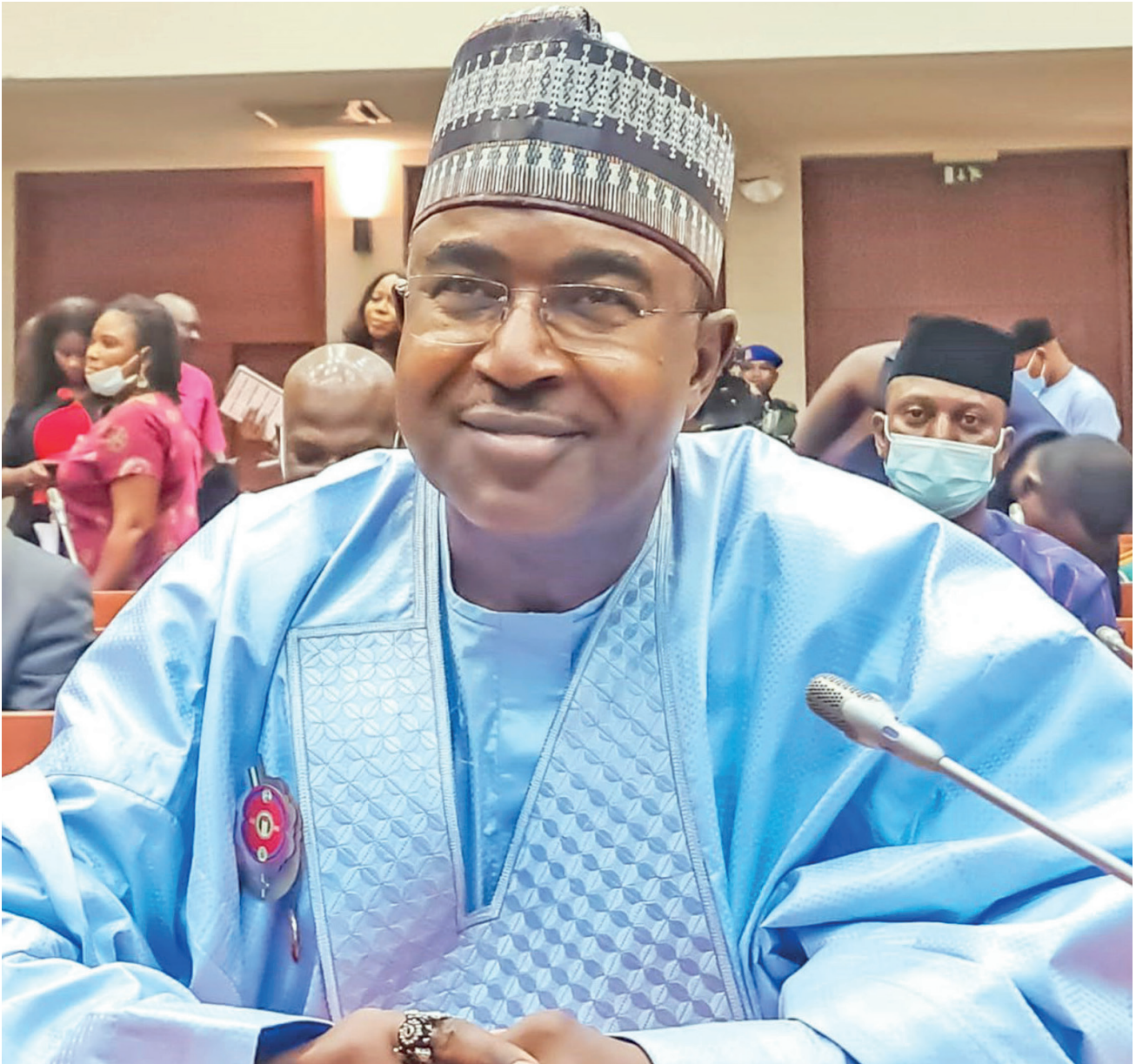
Now, we are joyful in January, the special month for the Agency. Yes, NDLEA is 32 years old this month. And it is one year, this month since the resurgence was started by Gen. Marwa and his management team. That makes this NDLEA Today an anniversary edition.

The publication is a wide aperture on the NEW NDLEA and its driving force, the vision and mission as redefined and being prosecuted by the Marwa-led management.

If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there. The truth is that you may never get there. That was the journey of the Agency for 30 years. Until 18th January 2021. The present NDLEA has a destination, and there is a roadmap that leads to that Nirvana. This is the message from management as members divulge their thoughts and plans in the Outlook section of the magazine. By the time you reach the last page, you will agree with the men and minds of the Agency that the achievements of 2021 were not due to any abracadabra, but are products of management masterstrokes, innovative thinking, goal-oriented strategies and gritty determination to turn around the fortunes of an institution.

**FEMI BABAFEMI,**  
EDITOR,  
NDLEA TODAY





# MARWA DEFENDS NDLEA'S 2022 BUDGET

*November 10, 2021, National Assembly, Abuja*

The Chairman/ Chief Executive Officer of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA, Brig. Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (Retd), OFR, on this day appeared before the Senate Committee on Drugs and Narcotics for the presentation of the Agency's proposed 2022 budget of N38 billion.

The budget estimate included Recurrent Personnel Cost of N10,499,961,097 and Recurrent Overhead of N998,973,302, while Capital Expenditure was N26,662,354,452, totalling N38,152,288,851.

Gen. Marwa had earlier on November 3 appeared before the House Committee on Narcotic Drugs for the same purpose where he referred to the proposed 2022 budget as a great improvement compared to previous budgets.



# NDLEA today

**BRIG. GEN. M.B. MARWA (RETD), OFR**  
*Chairman/Chief Executive Officer*

**SHADRACH HARUNA**  
*Agency Secretary*

**FEMI BABAFEMI**  
*Editor*

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## One year of impact at NDLEA

**A**fter 30 years of relative passivity, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) reached a watershed in 2021. Propelled by new leadership and galvanised by a new aggressive philosophy, NDLEA in 2021 gained sinew, clout and respectability. With sweeping reforms and innovative, go-getting strategies, the Agency flexed its muscle and posted a superlative performance that earned it the proverbial “pat on the back” from strategic partners, government and appreciative public.

The accolades that came its way translated to quantifiable gains that included donations of equipment, firm commitment from international partners, greater responsiveness from government, and, above all, attainment of the status of a regional drug law enforcement colossus.

While the developments are belated, they are nonetheless welcome and indicative of the spirited effort to build a virile anti-narcotic institution, a mission being executed by the Agency’s workforce with a Carpe Diem conviction.

In retrospect, NDLEA wasn’t an indolent government apparatus; its problem, ab initio, neglect, starved of government’s care, cut-off from the largesse that sustains other organs of state security.

The appointment of Brig. Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (Retd) on January 15, 2021, broke the jinx and brought to an end the years of stagnation. Marwa, formerly Chairman of Presidential Advisory Committee for the Elimination of Drug Abuse (PACEDA), assumed duty with a blueprint of how to revamp the Agency and thus hit the ground running with purpose-driven dynamism that changed the fate and fortune of NDLEA such that by the end of the year, the NDLEA hierarchy had orchestrated several landmarks wins: settlement of burial entitlements (last paid in 2014) to families of officers who died in the line of duty; promotion of 3,506 officers and men, some of who were stuck in a rank for almost 20 years; recruitment and training of 5,000 new officers; Federal Government’s approval of the building of barracks (over four years) starting in the 2022 fiscal year etc.

For NDLEA, 2021 was a magical year. For example, poor funding was the biggest reason NDLEA was a lilliput for 30 years, condemned to survive on a shoestring of N8 billion budget for decades. But its 2022 budget took a quantum leap to N36 billion.

The Agency was overhauled and restructured to meet the challenges of modern drug law enforcement by creating five new directorates of Research, Planning & Statistics, Media & Advocacy, Airport Operations and Special Duties & Strikeforce, as well as Forensics & Chemical Examination and 14 zonal commands.

Operationally, the Agency pulled off a tour de force: 12,306 arrests; 1,400 convictions; 3.4 million kilograms of assorted drugs seized; over N130 billion worth of drugs and cash recovered. Evidently, for 30 years, NDLEA was punching below its weight.

2021 would go down as the turning point in the NDLEA narrative; a consequential year that may perhaps become the onset of the NDLEA Golden Age.

Appreciation is due to His Excellency, Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, who saw the need for a drug-free Nigeria and provided the necessary inducement, resources and willpower that catalysed the NDLEA comeback and kick-started the strongest campaign ever against drug abuse and trafficking in the country. Also, the House Committee on Narcotic Drugs and Senate Committee on Drugs & Narcotics are to be commended, for playing decisive roles in the transformation.

The NDLEA management—Chairman, Secretary and directors—in one year brought the Agency to high tides, leading the officers and men who wholeheartedly give the commitment, loyalty and sacrifice required of them in the task of repositioning the Agency.

Now, NDLEA has a new lease of life.

Bravo, to everyone who played a part.



he secret behind the transformation of NDLEA into a fearsome anti-drug juggernaut is the prudent application of the principles of motivation.

S. MUSA IBRAHIM, PETER ENAMIN-O & BAMIDELE FADAHUNSI

FOR MONTHS ON END, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has been in a rich vein of form, its blistering performance drawing accolades from the government and the citizenry, and also from foreign governments and international bodies. Aside from winning the confidence of critical stakeholders who are seeking partnership, there have been numerous and commendable pledges from strategic partners. Even the Federal Government, enmeshed of the agency's extraordinary achievements, is promised to provide everything necessary to revamp the Agency.

Anywhere you go now, you hear about the NDLEA. Previously, who cared about NDLEA? One of its directors gushes with pride at one of its events in July.

Indeed, the newfound dynamism is a stark contrast to the Agency's dismal, backseat status of eight months ago. In all the third week of January 2021, NDLEA was another non-merit government apparatus. A dejected narcotic regulator wallowing in obscurity. An agency stuck in a rut, much so that the newly appointed chairman, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Brig Gen. Mohammed Abu Marwa described his appointment as a colossal task.

I met an Agency that was a shadow of itself. Our image was shabby. Our visibility was poor. The morale of the officers and men was very low. The consequences of failing loomed large," he had reflected.

The immediate task before the chairman was how to push the Agency out of its inertia occasioned by a myriad of problems which, by and large, nursed down to the demoralisation of the workforce.

## Power of Motivation



### Re: Power of Motivation

I have been keenly following the positive developments in NDLEA and I am delighted that the transformation of this very important institution is not only because of a government that is favourably disposed to tackling the Nigerian drug issues, but largely due to the effective leadership of the Agency at this point. The NDLEA leaders have demonstrated an understanding of the role of motivation in galvanising the workforce of an organisation to perform to its strength.

Gen. Marwa and his management team deserve commendations for the turnaround of NDLEA from a near-moribund state to the vibrant anti-narcotic organisation that it is now.

**Eseosa Iyase,**  
BENIN CITY, EDO

### Re: Nigeria's Cannabis Tussle

The fact that not less than 10 million Nigerians abuse cannabis should worry any well-meaning citizen of this country. On the street, an average Nigerian knows about the consequences of smoking cannabis. It is a substance that is most abused by criminals and social miscreants. With what the public knows about the effect of the psychoactive plant, there is no argument that can sway society to support the legalisation of cannabis cultivation. Any effort by cannabis activists in that direction will be dead on arrival.

It is heartwarming to see NDLEA maintaining its opposition to the pro-cannabis movement.

**Eustace Maduabuchukwu**  
GARKI, ABUJA

### No Place to Hide

I came across a copy of *NDLEA Today* by chance and I was immediately captivated by the article on the Strike Force unit of the organisation. I quite agree that it was expedient for an organisation fighting drug traffickers and barons to have an enforcement arm capable of providing covering fire when needed. The Strike Force unit has made NDLEA formidable for the opposition, no matter how strong they are. Kudos.

**Kayode Adeyemi**  
ILESHE, OSUN

### Engage Communities in the War Against Drugs

Without any doubt, NDLEA has pulled off a significant feat in just one year of Gen Marwa's leadership at the helm of the agency. I believe more can be done to stamp out the nefarious activities of drug barons if the Agency involves communities in its campaign against the abuse of illicit drugs. We saw how communities in the five Southeast states came together on their own to ban the trade or intake of Mkpuru miri (crystal meth).

In Umudioka, a community in Dunukofia LGA, and Nsugbe, in Oyi LGA, both in Anambra State, and Ekwe Isu, LGA of Imo State, youths came all out, arrested dealers of Mkpuru miri, and handed them over to the police. I believe such community efforts should be applauded and encouraged in other states of the federation. Imagine the landmark victory we'll all have as a nation if residents in areas like the Akala area of Mushin or Oyingbo, Lagos State, come together to say 'No' to the drug dealings going on in their communities.

NDLEA should devote more time to sensitizing and arousing the public in this war on drugs. We all need to get together in order to win and save the lives of Nigerians, especially our youths.

**Henry Okonkwo**  
MUSHIN, LAGOS

### TALK TO US

### FOLLOW US:

    @ndlea01

   @ndlea\_nigeria

Letters to the editor should be sent to [ndleatoday@gmail.com](mailto:ndleatoday@gmail.com) and must include the writer's full name and address and may be edited for clarity, space and style.

**DRUG DATA  
FACTS • FIGURES • VOICES**

“There is no doubt that his (Marwa) approach and manner of operations to the fight against drug trafficking and abuse on our shores extraordinary.”

– SENATOR HEZEKIAH DIMKA,  
CHAIRMAN, SENATE  
COMMITTEE ON DRUGS AND NARCOTICS



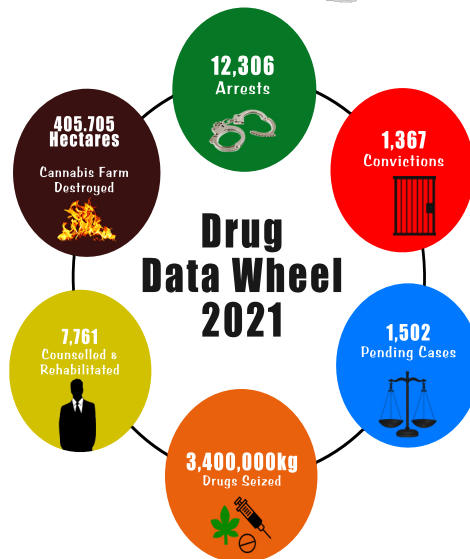
**N130 billion**  
– DRUGS & CASH SEIZED  
2021

“Let it be known that the joint committee of the National Assembly is not in support of the bill targeted at legalizing Cannabis.”

– HON FRANCIS OTTAH-AGBO,  
CHAIRMAN, HOUSE COMMITTEE  
ON NARCOTIC DRUGS

“It is unfortunate that women now hold drug parties where each one brings her own illicit drug and from the collection, they produce a cocktail of illicit substances to get high.”

– DR GLORIA LARABA  
SHODA, NATIONAL  
PRESIDENT, NATIONAL  
COUNCIL OF WOMEN  
SOCIETIES, NCWS



“Those who heed this warning will thank themselves for taking the wise decision to quit the drug trade in the days ahead. Those who think and act otherwise can be assured of a tough year in 2022. It is a year where the option of a fine upon prosecution will be expunged from the NDLEA Act.”

– BRIG. GEN. MB MARWA  
(RETD)'S NEW YEAR MESSAGE  
TO DRUG CARTELS

“Kano has the highest number of federal lawmakers in the national assembly. I want to assure you that none of them will support any attempt to legalise cannabis.”

– ABDULLAHI GANDUJE,  
GOVERNOR OF KANO STATE.



469,246.00kg	Cannabis
326.057kg	Cocaine
68,199.00kg	Codeine
1,814.53kg	Diazepam
122.551kg	Heroin
32,709.4kg	Tramadol

Some illicit psychoactive substances and psychotropic drugs seized in 2021





## GOOD AMBASSADOR

**Dateline: November 30, 2021, State House Conference Centre, Presidential Villa, Abuja**

ACN Muhammad Ahmad was honoured, alongside two other Nigerians, with the 2021 Public Service Integrity Award at the ICPC 3rd National Summit on Diminishing Corruption in Nigeria.

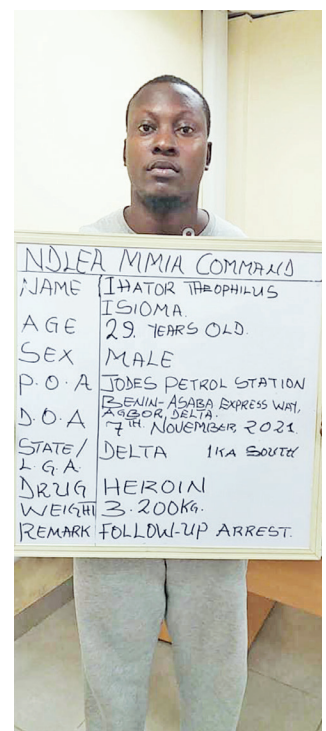
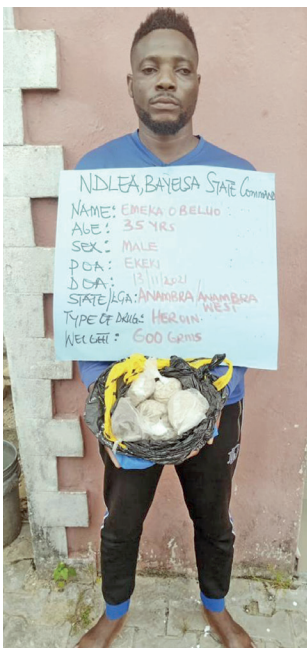
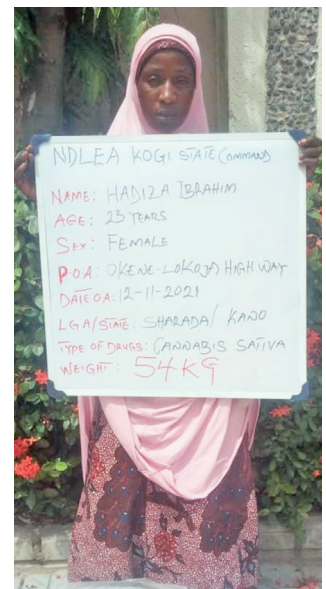
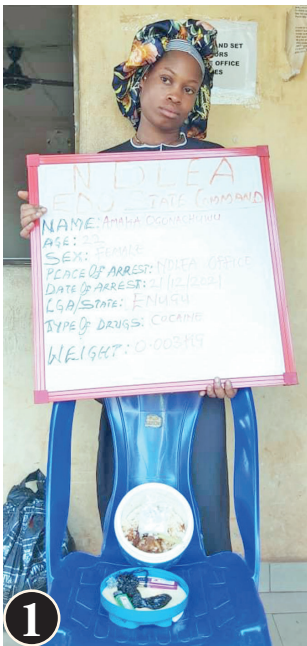
ACN Ahmad, recognised for demonstrating the highest ideals and standards of public service in the discharge of his duties, was also a recipient of the Chairman/Chief Executive Award for Outstanding Performance and Integrity.

He demonstrated the Agency's core values of ethics, integrity and patriotism by rejecting a bribe of \$24,500 offered to him by a drug baron to compromise an investigation of 27.950kg of cocaine worth billions of naira intercepted by NDLEA operatives at the Murtala Mohammed International Airport, MMIA, Ikeja, Lagos.

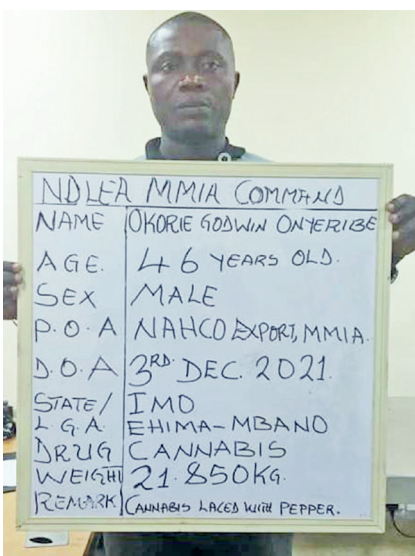
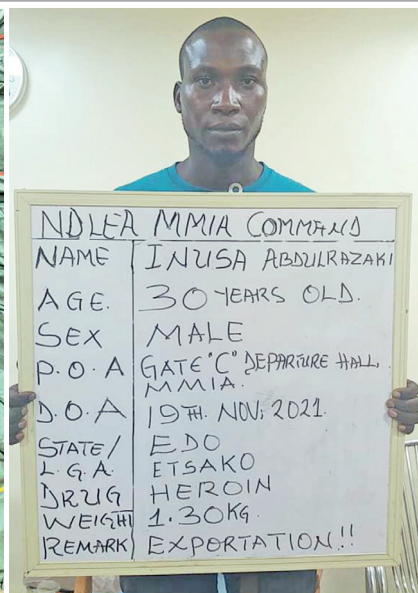


# MUGSHOTS

## ROGUES' GALLERY OF DRUG TRAFFICKERS







**1** Amaka Ogonachukwu, 22, was caught attempting to smuggle wraps of Cocaine concealed in cooked white rice for her boyfriend, Monday Imagbebenikaro, 40, who was in the custody of the Edo State Command of NDLEA following his arrest in Benin City, Oredo LGA, for dealing in crack Cocaine, Cannabis sativa and Danabel (anabolic steroids).

**2** Adisa Afusat Olayinka, 46, a businesswoman heading to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia for Umrah (Lesser Hajji) was arrested on Nov 28 at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, NAIA, Abuja for ingesting 80 pellets of Cocaine. She was arrested at the boarding screening area of the airport during an outward clearance of Qatar Airways Flight 1418 and taken into custody where she subsequently excreted 80 pellets of the illicit drug over four days from Wednesday, Nov 24 to Saturday, Nov 27.

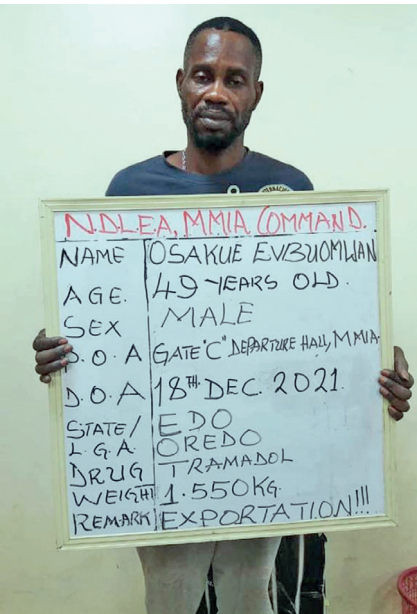
**3** Adam Salaudeen, arrested at Ogori Magongo area of Kogi State with 214.7kg of Cannabis sativa.

**4** Gabriel Patrick Anthony, 44, arrested at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, NAIA, Abuja for ingesting 96 pellets of cocaine, which he excreted in the custody of the Agency. He was arrested on Nov 26, during an outward clearance of Turkish Airline at the boarding screening area of the airport en route Abuja-Istanbul-Madrid.

**5** Lucky James, intercepted Dec 8 on Onitsha head bridge with his Delta-bound truck loaded with assorted illicit drugs.

**6** Drug kingpin, Ezekiel Ibe was arrested with over five tons of high milligrams Tramadol (225mg and 100mg) recovered from his warehouse. Respectively, 7,991,600 tablets and 390,000 capsules of Tramadol (5,468.894 kg) were recovered from him.





**7** Maduabuchi Chinedu, 32, arrested at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, NAIA, Abuja 9.3kg of Cocaine worth over N2.7 billion in street value. Chinedu who lived and worked in Liberia as a miner was arrested during an inward search of Ethiopian Airlines Flight 911 on Nov 24. Each pellet of the 9.3kg cocaine was wrapped in candy wrap and concealed in his luggage.

**8** Obinna Obinwa, a truck driver, was intercepted on Dec 3 at the Onitsha head bridge heading to Delta State with various quantities of Codeine, Tramadol, Diazepam, and Rohypnol recovered from his vehicle.

**9** John Kadja, 25, who was travelling to Doha to work as a labourer was arrested on Dec 3, 2021, with 2kg of Methamphetamine during an outward clearance of Qatar Airways from Abuja to Doha at the departure screening area of Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport. The drug was concealed in a false bottom of his checked-in luggage.

**10** Beatrice Aigbedion, 70, arrested on Nov 24 in Irrua, Esan Central LGA, Edo State with different quantities of Codeine cough syrup, Swinol and Rohypnol.

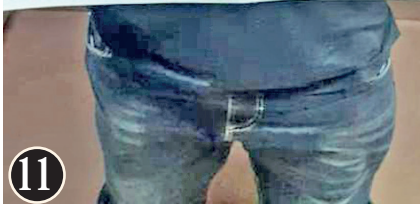
**11** Uzoh Ndubuisi Johnson, arrested on December 8, 2021, during an inward screening of Ethiopian Airlines passengers at the Arrival Hall of Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja, arrived from Brazil via Addis Ababa, Ethiopia with clothes padded with 6.7kg of Cocaine.

**12** Owire Cyril, an outbound passenger to Italy on Turkish Airline, was arrested with 114 wraps of Heroin weighing 1.80kg at the Murtala Mohammed International Airport, MMIA, Ikeja, Lagos. The drugs were concealed inside the pockets of four jean trousers, packed in a black suitcase.





NDLEA, A IIA COMMAN. ENI  
 NAME: UZOH NDUBUISI JOR  
 AGE: 31 YEARS  
 SEX: MALE  
 PLACE OF ARREST: ARRIVAL WING  
 DATE OF ARREST: 8TH DEC' 2021  
 STATE OF ORIGIN: ANAMBRA  
 L.G.A: AWKA NORTH  
 DRUG: COCAINE  
 GROSS WEIGHT: 6.7 KGS



11



NDLEA, MMIA COMMAND.  
 NAME: OVIRE CYRIL  
 AGE: 36 YEARS OLD.  
 SEX: MALE  
 P.O.A: GATE 'C' DEPARTURE HALL, MM  
 DATE OF ARREST: 18TH DEC. 2021.  
 STATE / L.G.A: DELTA / UGELLI  
 DRUG: HEROIN  
 WEIGHT: 1.8 KG  
 REMARK: EXPORTATION!



12



**NDLEA**  
 LAGOS STATE COMMAND  
 NAME: SURAJO MOHAMMED  
 P.O.A: ALABA RAGO  
 D.O.A: 20-12-2021  
 L.G.A/STATE: OJO L.G.A/LAGOS  
 TYPE OF DRUGS: CANNABIS SATIVA  
 WEIGHT: 94.15 KG



**NDLEA**  
 RIVERS STATE COMMAND  
 NAME: SHEDRACK UDECHUKWU  
 AGE: 33 yrs  
 SEX: male  
 P.O.A: OBIBOR EXPRESS  
 DATE OF ARREST: 18-12-2021  
 LGA / STATE: IHIALA / ANAMBRA  
 TYPE OF DRUGS: (A) HEROIN (B) COCAINE (C) METH (D) CANNABIS  
 (E) TRAMMOL (F) EXOL-5 (G) SWINOL (H) DIAZEPAM  
 WEIGHT: (A) 21.7 Gram (B) 5.8 Gram (C) 6.39 Gram (D) 323 Gram  
 (E) 377.1 Gram (F) 187.7 Gram (G) 15.1 Gram (H) 13.7 Gram TOTAL = 950.4





# DAREDEVIL DRUG GANG

*Smuggled 12,385kg of Loud weed from West African country into Lagos through waterways*

If everything had gone as planned, the trio of Abdulkadri Zakari, 24, Ka'abu Sausu, 45 and Lawrence Adie, 27, would have had a big laugh at the expense of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA.

They had attempted the unimaginable: importing a whopping 12,385 kilograms of Loud—a heady, cerebral, high quality and potent cannabis strains—from a neighbouring country and smuggled into Lagos through the waterways, via the ocean and then ferried with boats to the Eko Atlantic Beach, Victoria Island, from where they would be distributed to drug hotspots such as Lagos Island, Peti Alagba and others across Lagos and neighbouring states.

In retrospect, the gang realised it was grave a mistake



to dare the Agency. Acting on credible intelligence, 50 narcotic officers stormed the beach on Saturday, November 27, 2021,

recovered the consignments along with two long trucks and a Toyota Sienna bus and arrested the three suspects.

The duo of Matthew Donuwe and Friday Nborgwu chose an ingenious modus operandi. A motorised concrete mixer truck. They took their time, journeying for a month, from Ogbese, Ondo State (where they loaded the consignment) to Mubi, Adamawa, in the North East. Nothing could have gone wrong. Except that they had to contend with a new NDLEA whose operatives are one step ahead of drug traffickers.

On December 2, 2021, after being on the road for a month and with their destinations a few

## SMOOTH CRIMINALS

*Gang of two transported 2, 000kg of cannabis in mixer truck across the country*

kilometres away, the traffickers came to the end of the road at Girei in Girei LGA of Adamawa when NDLEA operatives intercepted their motorised concrete mixer truck and insisted on a thorough check. Lo and behold, 2000.6kg of cannabis was discovered in the truck. The rest is history.



## NATURAL CRIMINAL

*Nursing mother arrested twice in nine days for drug offences*

Mariam Dirisu, 35, did the unthinkable on October 21, 2021, by trying to smuggle 13g of Loud (a variant of cannabis) inside Fufu to her relation, who was detained for a drug trafficking offence at NDLEA cell.



However, eagle-eyed operatives of the Edo State Command of the NDLEA searched the food and discovered the illicit substance. Thus, Dirisu—a nursing mother who claimed to be a part-time 400 level student studying International Studies and Diplomacy at the University of Benin—of her own volition, walked into trouble.

A week after her bail, she was arrested again by the Delta State Command of NDLEA on October 30 when she was caught with 5kg of skunk and 8g of Molly.



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## PROLOGUE

**F**or 30 years, NDLEA was stuck in the quicksand of time. Stagnant. Stranded. Stunted. And in public's opinion, inept.

But in just one year—of 12 calendar months—the narrative changed. The Agency experienced a magnificent turnaround, a transformation so profound. In the assemblage of government's MDAs, NDLEA was easily the Star Performer for the year 2021, according to Leadership Media Group.

The transmutation of the Agency from a dormant anti-narcotic apparatus to a turbo-charged organisation bodes well for Nigeria, given the country's high drug use prevalence. Nonetheless, not a few Nigerians are bothered by the extraordinary performance posted by the Agency after years of laxity. Can the Agency sustain the high-octane performance? That is the big question.

In this anniversary edition of NDLEA Today, the Chairman/Chief Executive Officer, Brig. Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (Retd) along with his management team, debunks any iota of misconception of the feats of 2021 as a fluke by offering a 360-degree insight into the alchemy of the change process that lifted the Agency out of the doldrums.

The conversations—including reminiscences and reflections of the past, present and future of the Agency—showed the unity of purpose, shared vision and iron-cast resolution by the management in the quest to take NDLEA to an Olympian height and reclaim its lost glory.

# OUTLOOK 2022

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**Words by MUSA JIBRIL & FRANCIS OKOGUN**  
**Photographs by John HARUNA & Philemon AKWU**

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# 'MY DREAM NDLEA'



**BRIG.** *Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (Retd) has a history of salvaging bad situations, no matter how difficult. When the news broke of his appointment as the new helmsman of NDLEA, there was an expectation that he would bring his magic wand to reverse the downhill situation at the Agency. After all, he is no newcomer to such situations, some observers noted. Well, he proved them right. One year later, history has repeated itself. The Agency, almost moribund is now vibrant.*

*Nonetheless, there is still a long mileage ahead, many rivers to cross, to bring the Agency to its full strength. But the Chairman says, “the eagles have landed” and the mission is on course. He radiates confidence as he shares his thoughts on the following pages. Excerpts:*

### Autopsy of the first year

What we did in the past year was not a trial-and-error experiment. It was the first phase of a well-thought-out plan to transform NDLEA.

Recall that I had, for months, been the Chairman of the Presidential Advisory Committee for the Elimination of Drug Abuse, PACEDA, a body charged with the specific task of coming up with recommendations on how to rid Nigeria of abuse and trafficking of drugs. In other words, the terms of reference of PACEDA was to work out a blueprint on how best to tackle the drug menace in Nigeria. And so, in the process, the Agency was thoroughly examined, dissected and diagnosed, to know the various challenges that held it back from reaching its potential. And while working out the solutions to those impediments, I had borrowed a leaf from other similar organisations across the world, taking the very best and working out how NDLEA can be upgraded to match them. At the end, the committee’s report was submitted in December 2020. The report outlined in detail how NDLEA can be salvaged, restructured and empowered to become an efficient anti-narcotic institution.

But His Excellency, Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, felt that I should be the one to implement the recommendations. And so on January 15, 2021, I

was appointed the Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of NDLEA. Thus I came into the Agency with a clear mind of how to transform NDLEA, knowing the internal problems and challenges as well as the extraneous factors that had hindered its progress.

As I have said several times in the past, I don’t go about seeking public offices and appointments. I also do not shy away from a call to duty. I believe in making an impact in whatever position I find myself in. It is part of the discipline of the military. So when President Buhari handed me this assignment, I took it with mixed feelings—because I had seen the rot that NDLEA had fallen into—but with strong conviction that the situation can be turned around, especially if the government is fully committed to it. Without support from government, it will be difficult to reform NDLEA, after all, its problem essentially stemmed from institutional neglect, abandoned by successive governments in the past decades.

There is an African saying that when you give a man a job, you give him the tools to do the job. President Muhammadu Buhari fully lived up to the adage. We have the good fortune of the backing of the executive and the legislative arm of the government. And here we are today, our performance in 2021 justified the faith reposed in us by Nigerians. Those results were not accidental; they were end products of carefully laid plans. I am satisfied with the performance of NDLEA in my first year of being in charge. The developments further strengthen my conviction that we are on course and that a drug-free Nigeria is possible and achievable.

### The 2022 Outlook

This year, we will raise our performance. Like I said earlier, we are working according to a plan. The foundation was laid in 2021. Now we begin to build upon it. We shall be implementing the second phase of the transformation plan for NDLEA.

Operationally, we will turn on the heat. Offensive Action will continue unabated. We are looking forward to the removal of the fine option from the NDLEA Act, once

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There are a handful of anti-drug organisations to emulate, but at the end of 2022, we want to be the model for Africa and indeed the world.



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the amendment bill sails through at the National Assembly, traffickers and barons can expect tougher penalties. This year, there will be no breathing space for those dealing in illicit substances. I made that clear in my New Year message where I called on traders and traffickers of illicit drugs to turn over a new leaf. In 2021, we recorded 1,369 convictions. We expect more this year. The global drug networking should have by now gotten the message that Nigeria is a forbidden territory for the drug trade.

Our drug demand reduction effort will reach a peak this year. We have undertaken some advocacy campaigns and we expect the results to manifest in due course. At the same time, there will be intense WADA campaigns. The strategic drug demand reduction policies we advocated, such as the drug integrity test, will be implemented this year. Our integrated rehabilitation centres will take off and that will enable us to ramp up drug demand reduction activities. We expect 2022 to be a Year of Heightened Awareness of Drug Abuse in Nigeria.

Internally, for our workforce, the outlook is bright. There is prospect of a new salary. The barrack project takes off. The workforce swells by 5,000. Other efforts being made by legislators will improve our fortune. Generally, 2022 is going to be a good year for everyone—except for drug traffickers and barons.

### My dream for NDLEA

I have a dream of a narcotic

agency that is the reference point globally. There are a handful of anti-drug organisations to emulate, but at the end of 2022, we want to be the model for Africa and indeed the world. Our activities in 2021 are indications of such possibilities.

In one year, we have been able to turn around the situation in NDLEA and we came out of obscurity to become the cynosure of global attention. Now everyone is associating with us, associating with our success. And success, as they say, has a hundred fathers but failure is always an orphan. We will not forget that.

Our eyes are focused on getting to that Olympian height where NDLEA can rub shoulders with the very best of global narcotics organisations. That is why we are working to remove all the obstacles. Financial, institutional, legislative, operational, structural obstacles.

We are confident that the government will do everything possible to get us to that utopia where we become an anti-narcotic agency capable of ensuring a drug-free society. I do not doubt that we will achieve our vision.

Our vision, that we will not compromise. This is the reason we have made strenuous efforts to take care of issues that could affect performance. We designed a motivation package, namely quarterly awards and commendation, which recognise industry and diligence; promotion and life insurance package. We have worked to restore dignity and respectability for our officers and men. We have reclaimed the elitist status lost long ago. So, there is no reason for any officer to go rogue or try to sabotage organisational goals. And to the last man, I believe we are all working towards a common goal.

### Last words

I am a man who doesn't do things by half measure. I don't go on wild goose chases either. I don't court failings. That is why I am particularly delighted with our achievements in one year. I am happy that I have with me officers and men who also believe in the dream of a better NDLEA and a drug-free Nigeria.

We will give our best shots.



# Now, we have vision

—Shadrach Haruna, Agency Secretary



“

We will take the drug test programme to universities, civil service and law enforcement agencies, to test and identify those who are already on drugs.

**H**e deplaned in August 2019 at the Abuja airport, in high spirit as he looked forward to beginning his new work as the Secretary of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA. For him, it was an exciting homecoming, having spent more than a decade abroad as a criminal justice expert, first at UNODC, Vienna and later in London, as a legal adviser at the Commonwealth Secretariat.

His optimism, however, quickly fizzled out. Right there at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, he was confronted with the grim reality of the organisation where he was heading.

The officers he saw at the airports were a poor contrast to the smart, efficient NDLEA of-

ficers he used to know back in the 1990s.

“I was surprised to see that vibrant agency that I had known all my life had gone down the drain to the extent that even officers were ashamed to wear uniform,” he recalled.

As far as first impressions go, he was disappointed.

Overwhelmed by angst, he pulled aside one of the officers and asked: “What is happening to NDLEA?”

Without mincing words, the officer dropped a bombshell: *NDLEA is a dead organization. I’m looking for a way to get out of this place.*

That was the state of the organisation Shadrach Haruna walked into in 2019. From that moment, he knew his job was cut out for him and it was going to be an uphill task. But here was a world-class technocrat, with a rich curriculum vitae of global work experience, and a burning passion to bring home his vast experience. Besides, Haruna had a strong—if not sentimental—attachment to NDLEA. Back in the late 1980s, as the federal prosecutor in charge of Narcotics, he was handling drug cases that at the time were within the purview of Customs, before the creation of NDLEA.

“Back then in the Ministry of Justice I was also involved in the policy-making process affecting NDLEA,” he recalled. “At that time, the vision of the government was to see a very vibrant agency, fighting drug issues. Indeed at the time, that was everyone’s vision, to see NDLEA grow into such an agency that there will even be no illicit drug use in the country.”

He could recall that the Agency started on a very good footing, recruiting a crop of officers that were of the highest grade. “Because of the elitist nature of the agency they had hoped to build, the officers were people who had gone to school and graduated with very high grades of certificates,” he recounted.

Shortly afterwards, he left



the country. And some 16 years later, life turned full cycle, and he found him at the helm of the NDLEA. Unfortunately, it was NDLEA at its nadir.

AN AGENCY LEFT TO DECAY. This was how he described the NDLEA he met in 2019: “When I looked back into history, five or 16 years backward, nothing actually happened. Officers were so demoralized nobody was prepared to do anything. There was just nothing to work with. The workforce was grossly demotivated, disenchanted, angry and unhappy. They believed they were not working for government—because government had not even been there. That was the state in which I met the Agency in August 2019; that was the state we were in until January 2021 when the new chairman came in.”

Two years and five months into his tenure, the sun is shining on NDLEA and Haruna is a happier man. The appointment of Brig Gen Mohamed Buba Marwa (Retd) as the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of NDLEA ushered in a new era that jelled with the vision Haruna had of an ideal NDLEA.

The new chairman, he averred, came in well prepared: “By virtue of his past position as chairman of PACEDA, he knew the failings and the problems of the Agency. Therefore, he arrived well informed of what to do, and therefore hit the ground running immediately by identifying issues that should be resolved for the Agency to start functioning.”

Reawakening the workforce, was one of the riddles that must be solved if NDLEA were to be rejuvenated. It was a Gordian knot. The chairman, Haruna noted, approached it the classic way: direct and decisively. In this case, clearing all unpaid allowances and entitlements, for



Haruna (3rd Left) and the Chairman/CEO, Gen Marwa flanked by top officials and directors after a

postings, burial expenses and DTA for official assignments, followed by harmonization of terms of service and promoting all whom such was due.

“It was an effective way of bringing them (officers) back to life,” Haruna enthused.

From his position as the Secretary to the Agency, Haruna has a helicopter view of NDLEA and could give an accurate account of how the turnaround of the Agency was achieved. The “big bang” for him was the way the chairman innovated the process of how intelligence is to be generated, shared and managed for effective performance.

Indeed, there has been a slew of positive developments at the Agency, Haruna mused. When prompted, he had no difficulty figuring the most important one:

“The focus on issues of drug demand reduction, of which the confidential drug integrity tests is a major component.”

He spent the next few minutes explaining the modalities: “We will take the drug test programme to universities, civil service and law enforcement agencies, to test and identify those who are already on drugs.”

The purpose is not punitive, “not to chase anyone from their job or institution,” he stressed.

“When we identify them, we will ask them to sign into a treatment plan. And during that period, they would not be allowed to handle sensitive positions.”

The idea has been embraced by Immigrations, Fire Service, NSCDC and ICPC. “Indeed,





Press Briefing commemorating the One year anniversary of the turnaround of NDLEA

“ I want to see NDLEA become one of the most formidable agencies of government that will not just convict criminals, but also take away drugs from the streets and forfeit assets of traffickers and barons to show that there’s no profit in crime.

the Minister of Interior had asked us to bring our modalities of doing drug tests for all the staff under him,” he disclosed.

He has no doubt that this is the “Big Idea” that will change drug demand reduction in the country, especially when it is complemented with the rehabilitation homes the Agency plans to build.

Outlining the *modi operandi*, he said: “If for instance a university invites NDLEA to conduct test for its new intakes, and we discover about 100 of them to be positive to drugs, the agency will not tell the institution not to admit them. *Admit them, but let them sign into a confidential treatment plan.* That confidential treatment will be handled by the rehabilitation homes, in conjunction with the

universities. This is something that has never happened before.”

He continued: “We are also working with NYSC to see how we can test corpors before they are mobilized for camp. Anyone who tested positive will not be mobilized but will be asked to go for counselling, and treatment plan first and thereafter return for mobilization. We are also advocating to do the same thing for political officeholders.”

The drug test, as explained by Haruna, will not be limited to the civil service. “It goes to the motor parks for drivers, including truck drivers, those who drive articulated vehicles and those who ferry fuel across the country.”

Of other things to come, Ha-

runa further spoke of plans to expand drug demand reduction activities into hotels and leisure places in general. “That’s where drugs are also prevalent,” he said, stressing that “our recruitment is just to see that we have enough staff strength to go around all these places, and conduct covert operations.”

Today, a happier man, the Secretary to the Agency is desirous of achieving a crucial goal during his tenure.

“I want to see NDLEA become one of the most formidable agencies of government that will not just convict criminals, but also take away drugs from the streets and forfeit assets of traffickers and barons to show that there’s no profit in crime,” he stated.

**F**rom his fifth-floor office, he has a commanding view of the Abuja skyline through an expansive window that offers a stunning perspective of the surrounding area. The wide view is symbolic of the owner of the office. A man with a wide-angle view of the narcotic underworld.

A few years ago, his name put the fear of God in drug syndicates operating in the country. But these days, he is hardly visible—for good reason.

“I decided to lie low because I am supposed to be heard now, not seen,” he explained as we settled for the interview which started with the question: “What motivated you to join the NDLEA?”

He fired back: “I joined NDLEA out of passion. From the moment I heard about the Agency, I developed an unbridled passion to be part of the fight against drug trafficking. I saw a need to rid our society of crime, especially the drug crimes.”

He had no hesitation swapping a fledgling career for the gritty world of drug law enforcement in 1997.

“I was working somewhere. Knowing what I wanted, I had to go and do postgraduate studies and two years after my Masters in Guidance and Counselling, I was employed by the agency,” he said.

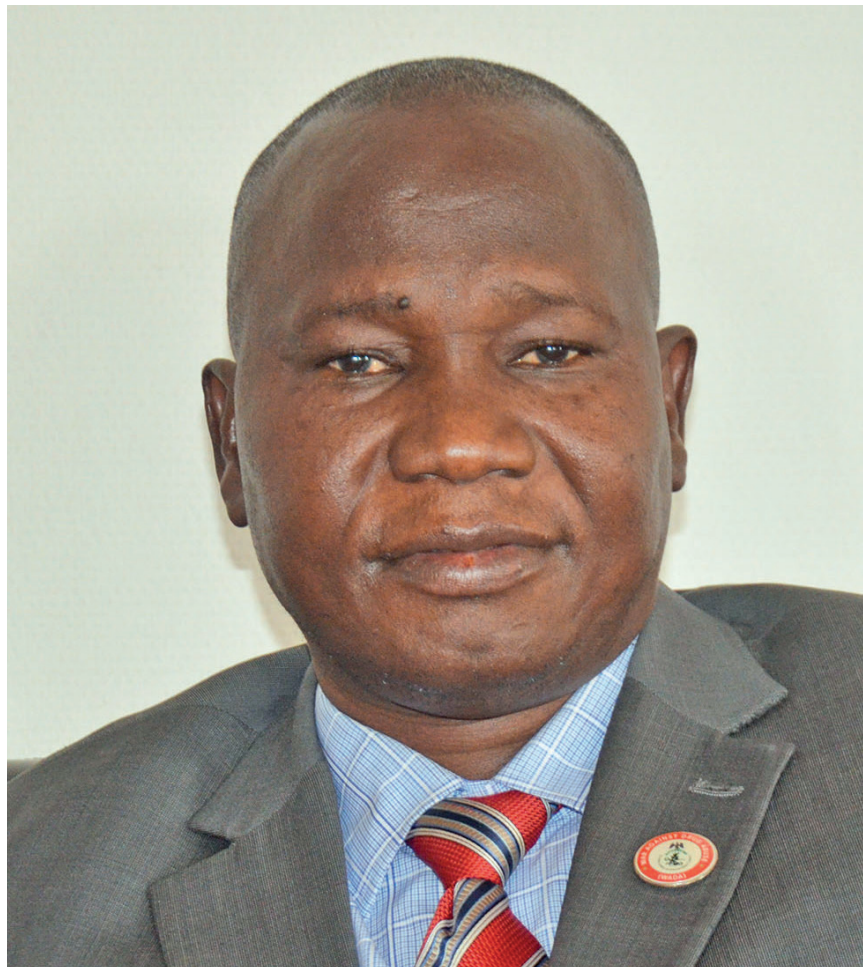
Over the years, he added three more masters—MBA. Criminology. International Law & Diplomacy.

“They are all relevant to what I’m doing today,” he avowed.

Today, DCGN Sunday Zirangey is NDLEA’s Director of Intelligence. As the Agency’s spymaster, intelligence streams in from every nook and cranny of the country straight into his office. Following the paradigm shift in the operating philosophy and process of the Agency, which led to the transformation of NDLEA into an intelligence-led organization, the Directorate of Intelligence became the fulcrum of the Agency and Zirangey a key figure.

# Intelligence gives NDLEA upper hand in drug war

—DCGN Sunday D. Zirangey, Director of Intelligence



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Now we process intelligence and before we embark on any operation, we are sure of what we are going for—arrest the offender and get evidence that can send him to jail.



Zirangey knew the weight of his office. Explaining the significance of intelligence to the new NDLEA, he reflected: “If you compare where we are coming from to where we are today, you would see a big difference and you will agree that a big change has happened in NDLEA.”

Clarifying further, he said: “Previously, we used to operate reactively: We get a tip-off, and without analyzing, without due surveillance, without considering whether the information is reliable, we’d take off, to go and raid the place. At the end of the day, we could be lucky to arrest some drug users or people that were not important. In retrospect, that was being reactive.”

He outlined the new tactics adopted by the Agency: “Now if we hear of any drug activity, we first make our findings. We x-ray the intelligence, analyze and verify the information. It is not enough for the information to be true; there should be evidence. We must be able to seize the drug alongside arresting the suspect.”

This was a far cry from the modus operandi in the past, he maintained. “Back then, when you arrest the owner of a consignment of drugs, for lack of evidence, he walked out of the court a free man, even if he was the biggest drug baron in Nigeria.”

The reliance on intelligence, according to Zirangey, has changed the dynamics of drug law enforcement and is helping NDLEA in “proactive policing.”

“Now we process intelligence and before we embark on any operation, we are sure of what we are going for—arrest the offender and get evidence that can send him to jail,” he said.

For example, the cocaine seizure at Tin Can Port in Oc-

tober 2021, he pointed out, was largely due to intelligence.

“We got intel that a shipment of drugs was coming into the country, and we prepared in earnest. After the crew members were arrested, we were able to zero down to six people out of 24, through an intelligence-driven analysis. We also arrested some Nigerians who retrieved drugs from ships that berth at the port and deliver such to barons who paid them. As a result of intelligent analysis, we got those involved in the retrieval of the drugs, we got the shipment of drugs and we got intel on possible places the drugs are going to. Altogether, 14 persons were arrested.”

In the past according to him: “We would just go and seize the drugs. And that’s the end of it.”

Zirangey explained why such a course of action was bad tactics: “If you seize a consignment of drugs without arresting the people behind it, the trade continues to flourish because for every five drug traffickers arrested today, 10 more will be recruited tomorrow. The job is about money, and some people are ready to collect such money to work for the barons and the cartels.”

The ultimate goal of the Agency, he stressed, is to build an intelligence directorate that can do what is required of it. Part of the process, according to him, includes building a database.

“When a suspect is arrested, or we get information about an individual, we document it, and create a record that can be retrieved at any time.”

Thus far, Zirangey is pleased with the evolution of the intelligence directorate.

“This I can tell you: if I’m not in the Agency today, there are lots of officers who can rise to this challenge. Some of them will even be better than me,” he said.

“

If you compare where we are coming from to where we are today, you would see a big difference and you will agree that a big change has happened in NDLEA.

**T**he Directorate of Planning, Research and Statistics is a natural outgrowth of the process to fast-track the evolution of NDLEA and transform it into a modern, stronger and razor-sharp anti-drug apparatus. Within a year, the strategic importance of this new department and the magnitude of its multidimensional functions have become evident. Figuratively, the directorate is like the hub of a wheel to which all the spokes are connected.

And according to the assurance given by the director in charge, DCGN Victoria Egbase, the Directorate of Planning, Research and Statistics will deliver on its mandate.

Rhetoric aside, how prepared is she to translate stated objectives into concrete results? Ironically, planning is a recurring decimal in Egbase's NDLEA career. Months before the creation of NDLEA, she was involved in the planning that heralded the new organization; now in the twilight of her career, she is handed a similar duty.

"Before the enactment of the NDLEA Act, the founding chairman of the agency, retired DIG Fidelis Oyakhilome conducted seminars to sensitize Nigerians about the coming organization, to be called National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, to fight drug issues," Egbase recounted.

At the time, Egbase, who was called to Bar in 1986 was a young lawyer in Lagos and Mr Oyakhilome, being a family friend, drafted her in as his assistant to help him in the planning and execution of the seminar at the Nigerian Law School, Victoria Island, Lagos.

When NDLEA was born months later, she joined the Agency.

She recalled: "I was among the first crop of lawyers interviewed and recruited by the

# Planning will give NDLEA giant leap

-DCGN Victoria Egbase





pioneer director of prosecution, Michael Ayoade, then a director in the Federal Ministry of Justice. Back then in 1990, our office was in the Federal Ministry of Justice, at No 23, Marina Street, Lagos.”

She rounded this prelude discussion with another reminiscence of the early years: “Afterwards, the Course One officers were interviewed, recruited and trained at the Ikeja Police College. The then director of Investigation, Alhaji Abubakar and myself took the Course One salute at the POP. I was also among those who took the Course 2 salute in Jos. To the best of my knowledge, I am the only one left in the Agency among those lawyers.”

Now the focus of discussion: her present role as director of planning, research and statistics and the huge responsibility of building the new department from scratch.

The responsibility on her table is not a daunting task, she said—because she knew the *raison d’être* for the new department.

“The directorate was created because of the need to rebrand, redesign and redirect the administrative and official focus of NDLEA in line with the drug control master plan and best practices,” she affirmed.

Part of the reason NDLEA was retarded, she noted, was the absence of this all-important component.

“How can an agency grow when for 30 years it existed without planning, without research and with no regard for statistics? Such is not tenable in the present era where everything is evidence-based and data-driven,” she submitted.

With the creation of the directorate, NDLEA cannot afford not to plan before it takes any decision now, she argued.

Her words: “There is an element of planning to everything we do. For instance, we have to

consider the size of the budget needed to drive the vision and the mission of the NDLEA—That is financial planning. In the instance that the sum we budgeted is not appropriated to the Agency, then we will have to prioritize and roll over the deficit to the following year. All of these and more calls for planning.”

According to Egbase, in less than 12 months, the directorate has made its presence felt.

“Before now, NDLEA has never had a strategic plan. We are presently preparing a strategic plan. All the directorates and commands have submitted their strategic plans to us. We will use them to prepare the NDLEA Strategic Plan, for, say, five years. It is from the strategic plan that annual plans are derived. Then, we shall put in place mechanisms for monitoring and reporting to ensure compliance with the annual plans. And for the statistics aspect, for example, the collation of arrests and seizures is now domiciled in this department.”






She does not doubt that the new department, serving as *terra firma* for others, will help NDLEA to get to its peak.

Having served the Agency for 30 years, Egbase expressed satisfaction with the wind of change sweeping through NDLEA. “Before this time, I had often thought I didn’t make the right choice. But now I know better. If I had left the Agency before now I would not be a happy person. I am glad to be part of the change taking place now,” she mused.

“  
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# REPLACE THE HIGHS OR LOWS OF DRUG ADDICTIONS WITH NATURAL HIGHS AND LOWS FROM HEALTHY ACTIVITIES

-  @ndlea\_nigeria
-  @ndlea01
-  @ndlea\_nigeria
-  @ndlea\_nigeria
-  @ndlea01







# 15 HIGHLIGHTS OF 2021

*The Milestone Year is a compendium of historic, momentous and definitive events that will remain reference points in the annals of Nigeria's drug law enforcement efforts*

**-by Francis Okogun**

## 1 New Chairman/ Chief Executive Officer Appointed

**15th January:** Brig. Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (Retd), OFR, was appointed as the new Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of NDLEA.

**18th January:** Marwa resumed duty at the national headquarters of the Agency in Abuja and on **25th January**, held a meeting with all states and Special Area commanders and formally unveiled Offensive Action, the new operating principle of the Agency.

## 2 Expansion of the Agency

**28th January:** Gen. Marwa (Retd) approved the unbundling of the Directorate of Admin and Finance into two separate directorates, namely, (a) Administration & Establishment (b.) Finance & Accounts. Subsequently, two additional directorates, (c.) Media & Advocacy (d.) Research, Planning & Statistics were created. And on 10th May (e.) Strike Force unit was formed.

## 5 Promotions

**16th June:** NDLEA Board approved the promotion of 3, 506 deserving officers, breaking the jinx of years of career stagnation.

**29th July:** Decoration ceremony for officers promoted to the upper hierarchy of ACGN and DCGN ranks.



## 4 Drug Test

**29th March:** Drug Integrity Test was conducted at the Agency's headquarters in Abuja, whereby the Chairman, directors, officers and men submitted themselves to the surprise test.



## Donations of Equipment

**3 16th March:** The UK government's donation of a speedboat was handed over to the Agency at a presentation event in Lagos by British Deputy High Commissioner Llewellyn Jones.

**6th April:** The government of France donated bulletproof jackets, handcuffs, armoured head and body shields. The French government followed it up on 15th April with a further donation of Yamaha motorcycles, helmets and walkie-talkies.

**13th August:** German government reaffirmed commitment to a €2 million Narcotic Detection Dog training facility to be completed in four years.

**8th December:** Detention facility refurbished and equipped by the UK Border Force for NDLEA Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport Abuja (NAIA) Command commissioned.





**6 Awards & Commendations**

A cash reward scheme to motivate staff was instituted as bimonthly Best Performing Command Awards with the inaugural ceremony held on 31st March, which after two editions, metamorphosed into Quarterly Awards with the last one for the year taking place on 21st December.



**8 Launch of WADA**

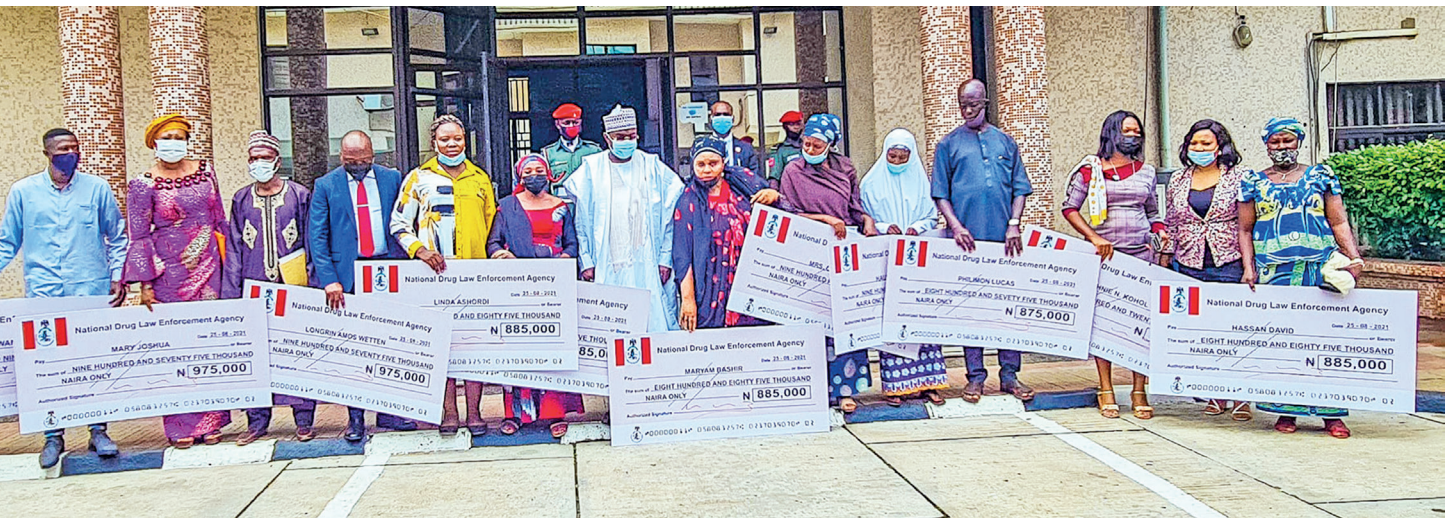
**26th June:** The 2021 UN Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Drug Trafficking was commemorated with the launch of the War Against Drug Abuse (WADA) campaign by President Muhammadu Buhari.



**7 Payment of Bu**  
**25th August:** Ch  
years after the last o







**Funeral Entitlements**

Requests of payment of burial entitlements presented to widows and relatives of 188 NDLEA personnel who died in service, seven of such payments.



**9 Recruitment and Training**

The thrust against drug abuse and trafficking was strengthened with the recruitment and training of 5,000 officers at the NDLEA Academy in Kotton Rikkos, Jos, Plateau State. The first two batches, Narcotic Assistants Course 3 and Assistant Superintendents of Narcotics Course 15, graduated respectively on **25th September** and **19th November** while the third batch commenced training in December.



**10 Launch of National Drug Control Master Plan**

**6th December:** The National Drug Control Master Plan (NDCMP) 2021-2025 was officially launched at the NAF International Conference Centre, Abuja.



**11 Partnerships**

**4th August:** NDLEA on behalf of Nigeria and DLEAG, on behalf of The Gambia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for regional cooperation against illicit production, manufacture and trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors.

**16th-17th August:** The Agency and Saudi Arabia's General Directorate of Narcotics Control (GDNC) had tentative discussions on the possibility of a pact between the two bodies.



**12 Strikeforce trained by Nigerian Army**

**25th October:** Passing Out Parade (POP) of the 143-man Strike Force unit of the Agency at the Nigerian Army School of Infantry (NASI) Jaji, Kaduna State.



**13 State House Briefing**

**21st October:** Chairman Chief executive Officer of the NDLEA addressed the media at the 21st Session of the State House Briefing Series at the Presidential Villa, Abuja.

**14 Budget Presentation**

**3rd/10th November:** Gen. Marwa (Retd) presented the Agency's 2022 budget of N38.1 billion before the House Committee on Narcotic Drugs and Senate Committee on Drugs and Narcotics respectively.



**15 Destruction of Seized Drugs**

**30th November:** Public burning of 20 tons of drugs worth billions of naira seized by the FCT Command and the NAIA Special Area Command (SAC). Later on **16th December**, in Osogbo, the Osun State Command of the Agency also destroyed 26 tons of drug exhibits from the court order of 2020.



# INSIDEviews

*Officers and men of NDLEA – who have been in the Agency longer than one year – are over the moon about the present state of affairs. The developments of the past 12 months fill them with joy and have brought them blessings and hope.*

–by Charity DOOGA, Nanzem DANLAMI & Jane OBUTE



**ACN Lucas Sunday, PSD Treasury**

I have been working in finance for 17 years and in the last 13 years, overhead was not released from January to December. But in the first year of Gen Marwa in charge, we got 100 per cent of a mega overhead released. In addition, the heft of the Agency's budget also changed tremendously. We have never had a billion budget—until now. Capital development funds have increased. The new chairman has changed the affairs of NDLEA in every aspect and especially finance.



**CN Audu Steven Okpe, Medical doctor, Clinic**

There has been a great development particularly in our department (hospital) which was more or less nonexistent since the shutdown of our hospital in Lagos. However, since the arrival of the new chairman, things have started to take shape. As we speak, proposals have been written and are undergoing the necessary processes to secure a hospital that will operate 24/7 to take care of the health issues of the officers of the agency and their family members as well as drug suspects awaiting prosecution and drug addicts undergoing rehabilitation.



**ACN Abiola Abimbola, PSD Expenditure**

NDLEA in the past existed like a leper. And it was bankrupt. Not much was heard about the Agency. But in the past year, NDLEA has recorded tremendous achievements and positive developments, including harmonization of staff welfare, recruitment of 5, 000 additional officers amongst others. The harmonization of staff welfare is one of the developments that delighted me the most.



**CN Cyril Okache, Deputy Director, Administration & Establishment**

The past year has been FANTASTIC. A lot of changes recorded boosted the morale of the staff such as the harmonisation exercises and the promotions of staff who had been stagnant for many years. A lot more changes were brought about in the past year, you wonder what has been happening for 30 years. That harmonisation of staff welfare, in my opinion, was one of the masterstrokes. It has brought joy and lifted the spirit of the staff.



**CN Chinyere Kalu, Assistant Director, DDRD Sensitisation**

In the past year, the Agency has done well. Presently, my department is actively engaged in counselling and the War Against Drug Abuse (WADA) initiative has gone down to the grassroots where all the stakeholders are involved. Everywhere, everyone is now aware of NDLEA and its campaign against drug abuse and trafficking. These advocacy activities—going to the grassroots and meeting people—delight me greatly. The situation now is nostalgic of the days of Maj. Gen. Musa Bamaiyi, when at the mere mention of NDLEA, everyone knew what you were talking about. These days, we have been projected back into the limelight, in many ways, and especially through advocacy activities.



**ACN Precious Obiagelie**

I was thrilled the first day the new management addressed the staff at the headquarters. And specifically, I was thrilled by the address of the chairman who had, on that day, asked us to pray for him, which we did and are still doing.

Now things are better. A lot of officers got their long-awaited promotion and right posting. The glory of the NDLEA is coming back. What delighted me most is that the DDR directorate is now a unit to be reckoned with. I pray that our chairman will stay longer in the Agency.



**ACN Rizqah Bunmi Ibrahim-Amoo,**  
PSD II Administration

There has been a lot of development in the past year, from the avalanche of arrests to drug seizures to prosecution and recruitment of additional officers, and of course the internal changes like the harmonisation of staff welfare and promotions. Every one of these developments impacted us positively.

These days, we rarely lose cases and we don't fail in our sting operations. Every situation, it is said, could be better. For us, it is getting better. The staff are happier now.



**SN Diodemise Williams**

A lot of things we do in the Agency now are proper, and documented, unlike before. Before now, most of the arrests made in state offices were not publicized but presently everything is been accounted for. When you look at the media, hardly a day will pass away without mentioning NDLEA in the news. Previously, some people don't know of our existence. But now, we are in the news. We are the news. And that is a good thing. It makes us proud as officers of this great organization. We are really happy working with the Agency as it stands today.



**ACN Ofoyeju Mitchell,**  
PSD Chairman's Office

NDLEA was established in 1989 and commenced operations in 1990. Although, it has had its vicissitudes over the past three decades, it has equally performed creditably in protecting the image of Nigeria and mitigating the effects of drug trafficking and abuse.

Under Brig. Gen. MB Marwa (Retd), we have achieved unprecedented results in drug demand reduction and drug supply reduction campaigns. The debacle, whereby officers stagnated in one rank for many years, was swiftly addressed through a clinical promotion-and-harmonization exercise that has stimulated officers to set new records in various operational areas.

Interestingly, more stakeholders are willing to partner with NDLEA because the operational space has been enlarged. We now enjoy a robust partnership with royal fathers, political office holders and opinion leaders, as well as international collaborators. Under the War Against Drug Abuse (WADA) platform, the agency is reaching out to various groups. Within the last year, NDLEA has become a household name. We have never had it so nice. I do not doubt that this visionary leadership will continue to propel the agency to its peak and to a point where drug barons and cartels will realise they have nowhere to operate in the country.



**SN Grace Bijimi**

In the past, work had been hectic because of a lack of manpower. Secondly, there was also stagnation in promotion. I was not promoted for eight years. But at last, the situation has changed. My promotion delights me. Now, I know that I'm going higher. The commissioning of new officers and improvement in welfare has changed the organisation, too, we have more hands for the job. Everybody is doing his or her best now. I pray for grace and strength for the Chairman and his team to continue to take us to higher levels.



**SN Onasueo Durodola**

Life as an employee of NDLEA, in the past, was challenging. Things were not going well. But the past year has been a blessing, with the coming of the General. He has boosted the morale of staff with the harmonization exercises, promotion of stagnated officers, remodelling of the agency and many more positive developments.





## NDLEA SEEKS GLOBAL ACTION AGAINST ASSETS OF DRUG CARTELS

Back at home, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA, recorded significant results in its asset forfeiture drive against convicted drug traffickers in 2021. At the same time, the Agency took the message to the global stage advocating for the weaponization of assets forfeiture against drug cartels as a strong way of weakening the global drug trafficking network.

Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (Retd), Chairman and Chief executive of NDLEA, was consistent in propounding this ideology at three different forums in 2021.

### 1 64TH Session of UN CND, Vienna

At the 64th Session of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs, held from April 12-16, 2021, in Vienna, where Brig. Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (Retd) unveiled Nigeria's National Drug Control Masterplan at a side event, the Chairman/Chief Executive of NDLEA, among other things, avowed that the Agency is committed to "tracing and recovering drug-related proceeds."

### 2 HONLAF 2021, Virtual Meeting

On September 21, 2021, at the annual (virtual) meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, HONLEA, Africa, Gen. Marwa, again strongly avowed that confiscating assets of members of drug cartels will weaken their operation.

While presenting Nigeria's position during the virtual meeting, he

submitted that assets confiscation is crucial in the fight against criminal narcotic networks on the continent.

"We must continue to weaken criminal drug networks through effective assets tracking and confiscation," Marwa said. "We should, therefore, deepen international cooperation to address the increasing links between transnational organised crime, corruption, illicit financial flows, trafficking in drugs and related crimes. Let us not spare any effort in eliminating barriers to effective collaboration as we demonstrate commitment to our shared responsibilities."

### 3 76TH Session of UN General Assembly, New York

On October 12, in New York, at the 76th Session of UN General Assembly (UNGA), the NDLEA boss reiterated Nigeria's stand at targeted action against drug cartels' assets as a means of deterrence to traffickers. He made the declaration in his presentation at the Third Committee Session.

"Third Committee" is the General Assembly session allocated an omnibus agenda with items relating to a range of social, humanitarian affairs and human rights issues that affect people all over the world.

He declared: "Nigeria will remain undaunted in adopting dynamic strategies to counter new approaches adopted by organized criminals, in order to make drug trafficking unattractive while ensuring forfeiture of the criminally derived assets, a tested and powerful deterrent to the proliferation of drug crimes and criminalities."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 50

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We must continue to weaken criminal drug networks through effective assets tracking and confiscation.





# NDLEA has the best prosecution in Nigeria

-DCGN Sunday Joseph Nbonu



“ NDLEA has the highest prosecution rate in the country among all government agencies, whether federal or state.



**1**,367 convictions. That is one of the impressive records of NDLEA in 2021. A feat achieved by the Directorate of Prosecution and Legal Services. With over 1,500 cases still pending in court and a success rate of over 90% at winning cases, the directorate is, without doubt, one of the reasons NDLEA had a phenomenal 2021.

“After setting the stage in 2021, the public can look forward to more NDLEA convictions because we are going to raise the bar.” That was the assurance given by DCGN Sunday Joseph Nbona, Director, Prosecution and Legal Services,

Composed and soft-spoken, Nbona oozed confidence as he reeled out the success stories of the directorate.

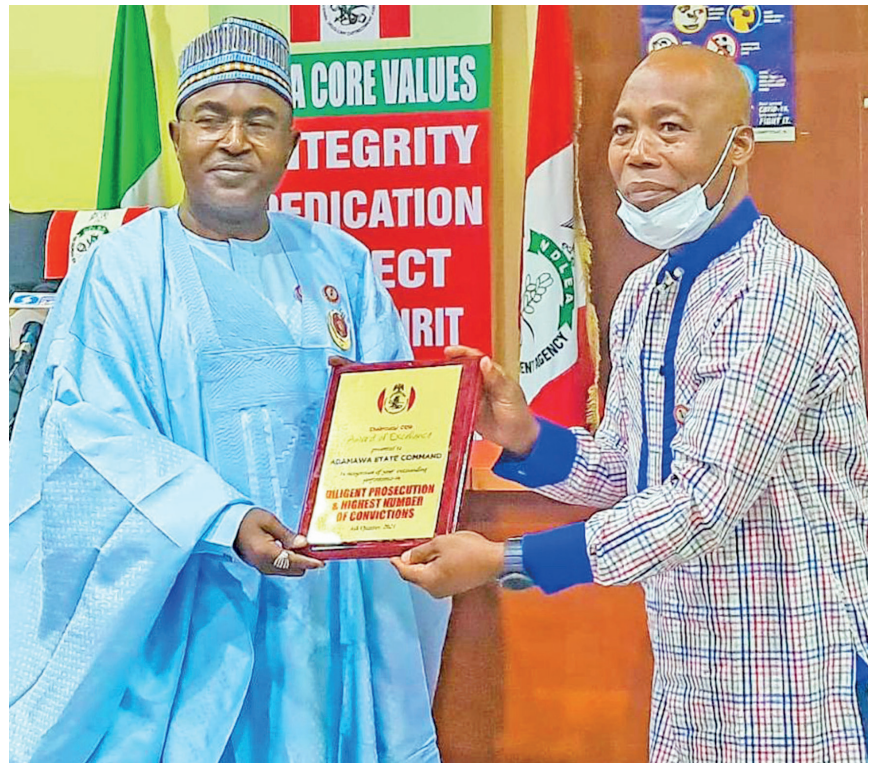
Said he: “There has been a lot of progress in the past one year. In the area of prosecution, the directorate has done very well. As of now, NDLEA has the highest prosecution rate in the country among all government agencies, whether federal or state. Secondly, among all government agencies, NDLEA is the least indebted in terms of awards of damages against agencies. We have not lost many cases. In most of the cases whereby we were sued, we have been very successful, either at the trial court or at the appeal court. So we have the least amount that is outstanding against us in terms of judgement debt.”

He further asserted: “Some of the people we disciplined dragged us to the National Industrial Court, and we have had successes because they had not won.”

Aside from prosecution, the Legal Service department of the directorate has also been busy, especially in preparing MoUs, Nbonu averred.

Of this, the department was involved in at least three landmark MoUs in 2021.

“When the chairman came in, he signed an outstanding



Award for Diligent Prosecution and Highest Number of Conviction won by Adamawa State at the last Quarterly Awards and Commendations in December 2021

MoU with the United States. He was in The Gambia to sign another. We have had another one with Cote D’Ivoire. Now, we are working with Saudi Arabia on another agreement,” he disclosed.

Nbonu is positive the directorate will sustain its performance because of recently introduced innovations.

“What we have done is to attach lawyers to each operational unit. The rationale is to involve the prosecution from the beginning of the case so that the investigation will go in line with legal requirements. Any document that is going to be produced at the investigation stage, a lawyer is there to vet it and ensure that such document is admissible in court. This way, we cut off time in terms of investigation, by eliminating errors in the case file.”

The director also shared the belief of his other colleagues that the success of 2021 was because of the changes introduced by the new leadership. For him, motivation was the key that unlocked the latent poten-

tial of the Agency’s lawyers.

His words: “Some of the fundamental changes that the chairman introduced is basically at the state command level. We have had issues concerning the authority of our lawyers at the state command. Now, they have been elevated to the position of Assistant Commanders, Prosecution and Legal Services. Raising their status at the state command level is a morale booster. Secondly, most of our prosecutors who came into the Agency in the 2010 recruitment exercise were given double promotion and elevated to the position of Deputy Superintendent of Narcotics and Chief Superintendent of Narcotics. That again is revolutionary and a morale booster to the efforts of the lawyers. Even the old lawyers were also beneficiaries of the harmonisation exercise.”

He added: “We have a lawyer who won the Chairman’s Award for achieving the highest convictions. These developments motivate staff and spur them to work hard.”

**I**n 2021, DCGN Ahmed Ningi was handed the dual role of Director, Special Duties and Commander, Strike Force, the newly-created unit that is the “punching arm” of the Agency. Consequently, he was saddled with the responsibility of building the new unit. Within 12 months, the assignment was wrapped up. Before the end of 2021, the tactical Strike Force unit—trained at the Nigerian Army School of Infantry—was action-ready.

“The Strike Force is shaping up gradually and involved in all our major operations. Now, NDLEA does not need to invite outside help. We can provide cover for ourselves,” he said in his opening statement of this interview.

According to him, the Agency is set for confrontation with all identified major cartels.

“We’ll do the job by ourselves without outside intervention—unless extremely necessary. We can provide cover for ourselves anywhere, from the jungle in the Southwest “cannabis forest” to the toughest terrain in the Southeast and all the far-flung regions in northern Nigeria; the Strike Force is capable of providing firepower for smooth operations.”

In his words, “the Strike Force has given NDLEA the sinew to “bark and bite”.”

Ningi, a good conversationalist, readily offered his views on the general climate presently in the Agency. The raft of positive developments, as he shared with us, is a cause for sober reflection: “These developments should have been at the very beginning of NDLEA; if it were so, by now the Agency would have reached its peak. The past years were characterised by trial and error. We were not focused. You need to see the new chairman’s agenda. If we had started this way, we would have been among the best organisations, not only in Nigeria but in Africa and the world. We’ll be very competitive.”

He mused further: “Some of us wish these things could be a rewind to the beginning. But it is not too late, anyway.”

He revelled in the new res-

# Strike Force has strengthened NDLEA to take on cartels

—DCGN Ahmed Ningi



pect now accorded officers of NDLEA.

“These days, the moment you introduce yourself as an NDLEA officer, you hear Nigerians say: “You guys are magicians. How are you guys doing it?” The answer we always give them is that our performance is a function of focused leadership. It wasn’t as if a new set of people were brought into the Agency. We are still the same officers the chairman met, but he changed the situation he met on ground. We are now focused. You can see the result coming.”

Ningi also spoke about NDLEA’s partnership trend, arguing that the path to rapid evolution cannot preclude collaboration with other countries.

He explained: “The drug problem is an international problem. No matter how good or best our policies are within Nigeria, if

we don’t work with outsiders, we cannot succeed because these drugs—such as cocaine, heroin and the chemical meth—are produced abroad, and brought into our country through the land borders, air and sea. With collaborations, source countries give us information of who and what is coming. That is why cooperation is necessary. And if we don’t collaborate with the smaller countries around us, they’d become a weak link and detrimental to our operations.”

He illustrated further: “For instance, if Benin Republic does not cooperate with us, the cartels will want to push in drugs through Benin. But if we are operating on the same page, then we can have a seamless operation and effectively checkmate drug organisations.”



**A**CGN Joyce Titus-Awogbuyi was about to return to Lagos after the launch of the new ND-CMP when she was “ambushed” for the interview, a less than 10 minutes interaction which she maximised with blunt and direct responses.

With a first degree in Sociology and a master’s in Guidance and Counselling, both from the University of Ibadan, she had joined the Agency in 1990 “to practice, to assist young people out of drug use.” Thirty-one years later, she has worked across the length and breadth of the drug law enforcement field and reached the acme of her profession when she was appointed Director, Airport Operations in 2021.

Her sphere of assignment, the airports, have been the epicentre of some of the spectacular seizures of 2021, but according to Titus-Awogbuyi, “It is not that much has changed physically.” The change according to her is psychological.

Her viewpoint: “When your morale is boosted, you would want to give whatever you are doing your best. With the morale-boosting programmes that are going on presently, officers are ready to work.

For instance, in Enugu where we don’t have body scanners and where the luggage scanners are down, we arrested, in November, a man that ingested many wraps of cocaine. After he excreted 71 wraps, our officers still waited for him to excrete the remaining ones, all without scanners. When you have a motivational leader, and you know you have “home support”, then you can go all out to do anything that you ought to do.”

With the record of 2021, Titus-Awogbuyi is certain the Agency has sent a strong signal to cartels, barons and traffickers that they are personae non gratas at Nigerian airports.

“The Agency is working hard to equip and reinforce all our airports. Very soon the airport will become very unbearable for drug dealers,” she affirmed.

As the pioneer director, she is

# Drug traffickers now know airport is out of bound

–ACGN Joyce Oluwatoyin Titus-Awogbuyi



working towards an optimised Airport Ops.

“Before now, there has not been a Directorate of Airport Operations and all airports, especially domestic wings, have been under state commanders. Now, I envisioned a situation whereby all airports, international and domestic, came under the Directorate, Airport Ops, such that all information about any traveller, whether by domestic or international flight, can be assessed at the click of a button,” she outlined.

Reflecting on the wind of change that is sweeping through the Agency, Titus-Awogbuyi submitted: “This past year should have come earlier than now. If it had been here before now, NDLEA would have become a force to reckon with. Comparing what has gone with what is now, I am convinced of an imminent better future for NDLEA.”

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With the morale-boosting programmes that are going on presently, officers are ready to work.



**D**CGN Omolade Faboyede has been NDLEA's Director of Seaport Operations since 2019, but it was in 2021 that her directorate hummed to life.

This much she summarised in her opening statement of this snap interview: "From 2019 to 2021, we didn't have any arrest. Then the new Chairman came in and that same month, we had arrests and a seizure of 43.1kg of cocaine. The drug was seized from a vessel. It was the first time in the history of NDLEA. Not one vessel, but three vessels by the end of the year. There was also the seizure of Colorado in containers. All in this one year, under the new regime."

She continued: "Containers had been passed at the seaport all these while, but what we have been bothering ourselves with had been Tramadol. Past seizures were due to intelligence from partners. But the discovery of the 43.1 kg cocaine was without intelligence. Our officers did the job."

Asked about her assessment of the past year, an enthused Faboyede declared: "I feel great because we, the pioneer officers, have always wanted NDLEA to go places, to get to its zenith. That is why the transformation that we have had in the past year is like godsent for us. I was announced director of Seaport Operations in 2018 and resumed in 2019, but nothing was happening in my directorate until a game changer came on the scene."

Precisely, what changed? Everything about the agency insisted Faboyede.

"Now everybody is on his toes. Everybody, all of us have to do our job. In the past, people were doing other people's jobs. This time around, you have to do your job," she stated.

The biggest improvement in her sphere of operation was the synergy and improved relations with other stakeholders working in seaports.

"As pioneer director of the Seaport directorate, it hasn't been easy working with other stakeholders. But the present chairman

## Seaport Directorate is in a state of expansion

—DCGN Omolade Faboyede



has worked to smoothen our relationship with them. You will notice that in the past year, we have had a lot of transfers of exhibits from Customs and Navy. The relationship with Customs is improving. Similarly, the relationship with NAFDAC is also getting better. NAFDAC is in charge of Tramadol from one to 100 milligrams; above that it becomes illicit and NDLEA takes charge. But NAFDAC grants licence to importers and therefore there is a need for both agencies to have MoU. Very soon that will happen. And that is because of the new chairman, again. If you look at the turnout at the NDCMP launch, you would notice that the heads of all relevant agencies were there and those who couldn't be there in person sent their representatives. That is a signal that we have a beautiful synergy now with other security agencies and that helps at the port operation."

“As pioneer director of the Seaport directorate, it hasn't been easy working with other stakeholders. But the present chairman has worked to smoothen our relationship with them.”



“The key to the resurgence of our seaport operation,” she reiterated, came from this administration’s effort at achieving synergy with other security agencies.

And the magic is “courtesy visits by the NDLEA Chairman and Chief Executive Officer.”

The coming months, according to her, will record remarkable improvements by the directorate.

She said: “We are expanding. We successfully got a space with NIMASA. After the Chairman wrote to the Director-General of NIMASA, NDLEA officers were included in the Deep Blue project and very soon we will join other security officers in the project. The essence of the project is to secure the Nigerian waters, by different agencies coming together under the tutelage of NIMASA and working with foreign collaborators to checkmate transnational crime on water including piracy and drugs.”

There has also been an expansion within the directorate, Faboyede confirmed. “We used to have the Marine Unit under the command in Apapa, but now we have Commander, Marine, and all experienced marine officers are going to be incorporated into the unit. We are going to have expansion in that area.”

Generally, she affirmed, the directorate will be expanding in the area of global maritime.

“We are going to have a standard seaport operation that can meet the test of time and match that of other countries,” she declared.

Overall, Faboyede, who had been commander in several states, including Nasarawa, Benue, Bauchi and Oyo, is more than happy with the new developments in the Agency.

“These are what we have always hoped for. We have been wobbling all along. But the present regime has seen into the future and is already building a vision for NDLEA. I see a great future ahead of NDLEA,” she stated.

# There will be lots of assets confiscation this year

—ACGN Ibrahim Abdul



**O**nly the barons currently in NDLEA stranglehold can attest to how dangerous the Agency has become to those who trade and traffic in illicit drugs. Even while their trials are still going on, they already knew the big loss waiting for them. Not the loss of years behind bars, but the loss of the wealth they amassed. In the past, barons took the rap and came out years later into peaceful retirement to enjoy the stashed wealth. But since 2021, NDLEA has changed its strategy from arrest and seizure as its ultimate objective to jail and forfeiture of assets. In this way, the Agency’s Directorate of Asset and Financial Investigation (DAFI) is an unrelenting nemesis.

These days, the DAFI director, ACGN Abdul is a happy man.

“Initially, I was very pessimistic about this Agency, due to its decadent state. Little did I know that someone was on the way who would transform the Agency within the shortest possible time to the extent that we will become the envy of sister organisations,” he reflected.

By his admission, the Agency has, in just one year, recorded many confiscations that are unprecedented in the history of NDLEA. That is why he is a happier man.

On what the new regime did different to enhance the result from DAFI, he pointed out: “There is a linkage between this directorate and many MDAs (including DSS and Immigration) that are capable of giving us useful information. Fortunately General Marwa had paid courtesy calls and thus linked DAFI and DI with them.”

He explained the dynamics of the new change: “If we



want any information about any fugitive, we will flag him, and Immigration will subsequently red-flag and arrest him; in terms of financial record, we can link up with any bank for financial information, including statements of account, and all the people that deposit money in the account. In addition, the Corporate Affairs Commission has given us access to their database and we can access information on the status of any company linked to a suspect. We also have a linkage with NFIU which enables us to know if someone has assets abroad or has collaborators abroad regarding his assets or finances. These are the new developments of Marwa's time."

Those courtesy visits by the Chairman, he emphasized, are of strategic importance "and are helping me to do my work."

This year, DAFI will intensify asset seizure, he confirmed.

His words: "We are changing our paradigm completely now trying to locate and trace more assets than before. Gen. Marwa has decentralised the directorate so that we have representatives in all the state commands. Every command now has assets officers who would be taking custody of these assets as soon as a suspect is arrested. The Assets Officers give suspects Assets Declaration Forms. They also assist during investigations into financial records recovered from the homes of persons under investigation. So we should look forward to a year where there will be a lot of asset seizures."

Abdul also briefly talked about the recoveries and confiscations of 2021.

According to him: "Final forfeitures led to the confiscation of 211 different assets all over the country. We have had spectacular cases including the seizure of N31 million belonging to a suspect arrested with cocaine at MMIA; interim forfeiture of N159, 460, 000 belonging to another suspect arrested at MMIA and standing trial on the charge of exportation of

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Now, we have many high profile cases about people who cannot justify their spending.

6.5kg of cocaine alongside the baron, Asekun Kehinde, former vice chairman of Lagos Island, LCDA. From Asekun, we have recovered millions of naira. There was also confiscation of 102, 000 euros, which a suspect concealed in detergent packs and another CFA11, 000, 000 recovered at Seme border."

As confirmed by the DAFI director, those confiscations are the tip of the iceberg.

"There are many other Mutual Legal Assistance cases we are pursuing which we hope to get confiscations from at the end of the day. Among others, we have a case of many Politically Exposed Persons and Financially Exposed Persons undergoing investigation. We have made headway and even identified some of the people behind the money now," he disclosed.

The directorate, according to him, is opening a new frontier in another area of its operation. "Now, we have many high profile cases about people who cannot justify their spending. Previously, we did not attempt to explore Section 4 which gave us the power to apprehend someone who cannot account for his spending or whose spending is not commensurate with his income. We have started testing the cases now during General Marwa's time."

**T**here is nothing as fulfilling as finding yourself in a career you envisioned. This is the state of mind of DCGN Adeyemi Adeofe. Despite the vicissitudes of the Agency, he derived fulfilment from his work.

Before joining the NDLEA in 1990 as Course One Officer, the alumnus of the University of Ife (now OAU) where he earned his Bachelor in Sociology had an ambition to work in law enforcement, having read so much about crime and law from the thriller paperbacks of James Hadley Chase. Luckily for him, as he was rounding off his National Youth Service, NDLEA came calling.

Now, 31 years after, Adeofe has found the lifelong convictions he has been seeking.

Said he: "These past 12 months, the slogan has been "Offensive Action," and we have been doing that meritoriously when you look at the spate of arrests and seizures from all the commands. All the commanders are up and doing. No one sits in his office. Our officers go deep into the forest to locate and destroy cannabis farms. They are at checkpoints. They raid black spots. These translate into arrests and seizures."

While the process is driven by motivation, innovation also plays a big part.

He explained: "We have shifted to intelligence-based operations. Previously, we had only the information given by the suspect during interrogation. But now, when we arrest, we analyze mobile phones, which yield more information and intelligence. From the analysis of the extraction from mobile phones, we get information suspects refuse to divulge, such as names of accomplices and bank accounts. Based on the analysis, we can kill two birds





## Our target is sources of drugs

—DCGN Adeyemi Adeofe

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Our work does not stop with arrest; following arrests, we debrief suspects and try to get to the source of their drugs.

or more with one stone: make multiple arrests, jail the offenders and as well take away from them their ill-gotten wealth following investigation of their bank accounts or any financial instrument recovered and turned over to DAFI. So, our work does not stop with arrests; following arrests, we debrief suspects and try to get to the source of their drugs. That is our target, the sources.”

He also attributed the success of DOGI to greater synergy. “We have synergy with the Strike Force as we combine to do a general raid, especially most of the operations we do in Lagos. We coordinate with them. Anytime we have a major operation, we mobilise manpower across the units in Lagos,” he explained.

Going forward, the DOGI director believed the directorate will further maximise its capabilities with training. “I have been speaking with the director of Training and Manpower Development on training to improve our investigation activities because that is the most important aspect of our work. Consequently, part of our operational plan is more training for DOGI officers. Training is part of our strategic plan submitted to DPRS.”

He explained his rationale for craving more training: “What you don’t have, you don’t give; it is when an officer is well trained that he can deliver top-class performance.”

Adeofe who was previously Zonal Commander Yola, and state commandant of Bauchi, Enugu, Onitsha, Akwa Ibom, Nasarawa, Ekiti and Cross River, stated the readiness of the directorate to achieve organisational goals.

“We have officers who are ready to work. What DOGI needs is enhanced logistics. We need operational vehicles,” he said.

Speaking on behalf of the directorate, he concluded thus: “We want to reduce drug issues to the barest minimum so that it will be on record that we tried our best.”



**T**he new *National Drug Control Master Plan, NDCMP, 2021-2025*, launched on December 6, 2021, emphasized prevention and treatment as the pivots of effective drug policy and control.

In this wise, drug demand reduction is crucial to the attainment of the noble goals of the master plan. But long before then, ACGN Madubuike, NDLEA's director of Drug Demand Reduction, has prepared ahead for the big responsibility. And these days, she is upbeat about the Agency's drug demand reduction activities. For instance, NDLEA's plan and effort to build its model rehabilitation centres is music to her ear.

"One of the responsibilities of this directorate is to ensure that people who are using drugs are treated, rehabilitated and reintegrated back to their families and society," she stated, "and over the years we have been clamouring for a model rehabilitation centre for the agency."

According to her: "If by this year we are able to establish our model rehab centre and admit people, that means we have been able to carry out our responsibility dutifully by reaching out to the three groups that we are supposed to reach—those who have not started using drugs, those who have started using drugs but have not been manifesting physical symptoms and those who are using drugs and are having problems and need to go for treatment and rehabilitation."

The Agency having a modern rehab centre including all the personnel and facilities needed "means that we have been able to target the third group of those who are using drugs and are having serious problems and require treatment and rehabilitation," she stated.

The pertinent question is: Does the Agency have the

# NDLEA will be more effective with model rehabs

—ACGN Ngozi Madubuike



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If by this year we are able to establish our model rehab centre and admit people, that means we have been able to carry out our responsibility dutifully by reaching out to the three groups that we are supposed to reach.”



manpower to make the rehabilitation centres function?

She responded in the affirmative: “We have resource persons within, and we could also recruit others to join us if we notice that we do not have enough to run a residential rehab centre.”

Madubuike, a quintessential counsellor, with Masters and PhD in Guidance and Counselling from the University of Ibadan, further noted: “There are certain professions that we may need to recruit to join us, not because we don’t have them, but maybe because we are short of them. If you must have a residential rehab centre you must have a nutritionist, a vocational therapist, a psychiatrist (in case they start manifesting some symptoms that need such handling). We have medical doctors in the Agency, we have nurses, drug counsellors, clinical psychologists. But then if at the end of the day they are not enough to be able to man the rehab centre that means the agency will need to recruit.”

Building on the success of 2021, she has specific goals she wants the directorate, and indeed the Agency, to achieve in 2022 in the area of drug demand reduction.

“We want every Nigerian that has a role to play to get to know their role and what they are supposed to do in the fight against drug; we will also want to equip NGOs working in drug demand reduction activities because they are very close to the grassroots, it is easier for community members to listen to them. We want to build their capacity, train them and be sure that when they go out there, they will be helping us with what we are doing. We are also looking forward to a situation where the prevalence of drug use will be reduced to the barest minimum, reduced by at least 70 per cent,” she outlined.



## We are working on severance package of retiring officers

– CN Abdullahi Shittu

“ Within two years, I want to see this scheme pass all the hurdles and approved; that will be my greatest joy, that NDLEA staff who have served the Agency will not go home empty-handed.

**O**ne thing that defines the career of CN Abdullahi Shittu is professionalism. A trained accountant, he is one of the select few whose professional qualifications have been called into service by the Agency.

Shittu, a Course 5 intake, was on his beat in Tin Can Port in 2001 when the then



Chairman, Alhaji Bello Lafagi took the rare decision to “professionalise” the agency, with the revolution starting from the account department.

“Those of us with accounting backgrounds and in Lagos or in close proximity were selected. I and two of my coursemates were redeployed from the Lagos Command to the headquarters. That was the first time operatives were moved to admin to work in finance,” he recalled.

From his first appointment as PSO Salary, he went on to become PSO Finance and later Assistant Director, Finance, before the restructuring that led to the unbundling of the Directorate of Admin and Finance into two separate entities in 2021, leading to his elevation to the position of substantive Director of Finance.

As a professional accountant, Shittu is yearning to improve the process and personnel of his directorate. “I wanted the department to be expanded in terms of units,” he affirmed.

But presently, he is hamstrung for a number of reasons. “We need additional office space and personnel in order to assign responsibilities. For example, I have cashbooks for payroll, expenditure and capital, presently, the roles are all handled by one person. Ideally, these are functions for different staff. But there is no office space, even if we are given additional staff,” he stated.

That notwithstanding, Shittu believed his department has made progress in the past year. His words: “We brought up the issue of insurance and the chairman bought it; and today, some people have started benefiting from the life insurance. We talked about the burial expense, last paid in 2014 and the chairman took it on, made an appeal and something came out of it. Indeed, the developments of 2021 gave hope to officers and their families.”

According to the Finance and Account director, “we are working on many things.” He decided to share one of the most important of such “things” the directorate is working on: A severance package scheme for retiring officers.

“Within two years, I want to see this scheme pass all the hurdles and approved; that will be my greatest joy, that NDLEA staff who have served the Agency will not go home empty-handed. As it is presently, you will be given a letter to go to PENCOM. Two, three years later, PENCOM has not attended to you. Such a situation can make a serving officer compromise when he knows he was going back home empty-handed and at the whims and caprices of pension fund administrators. We are presently working with Admin and the legal department to perfect the severance package of officers going on retirement,” he related.

# Directorate of Technical Services will expand its services to all commands

—ACGN Ezekiel Epeso

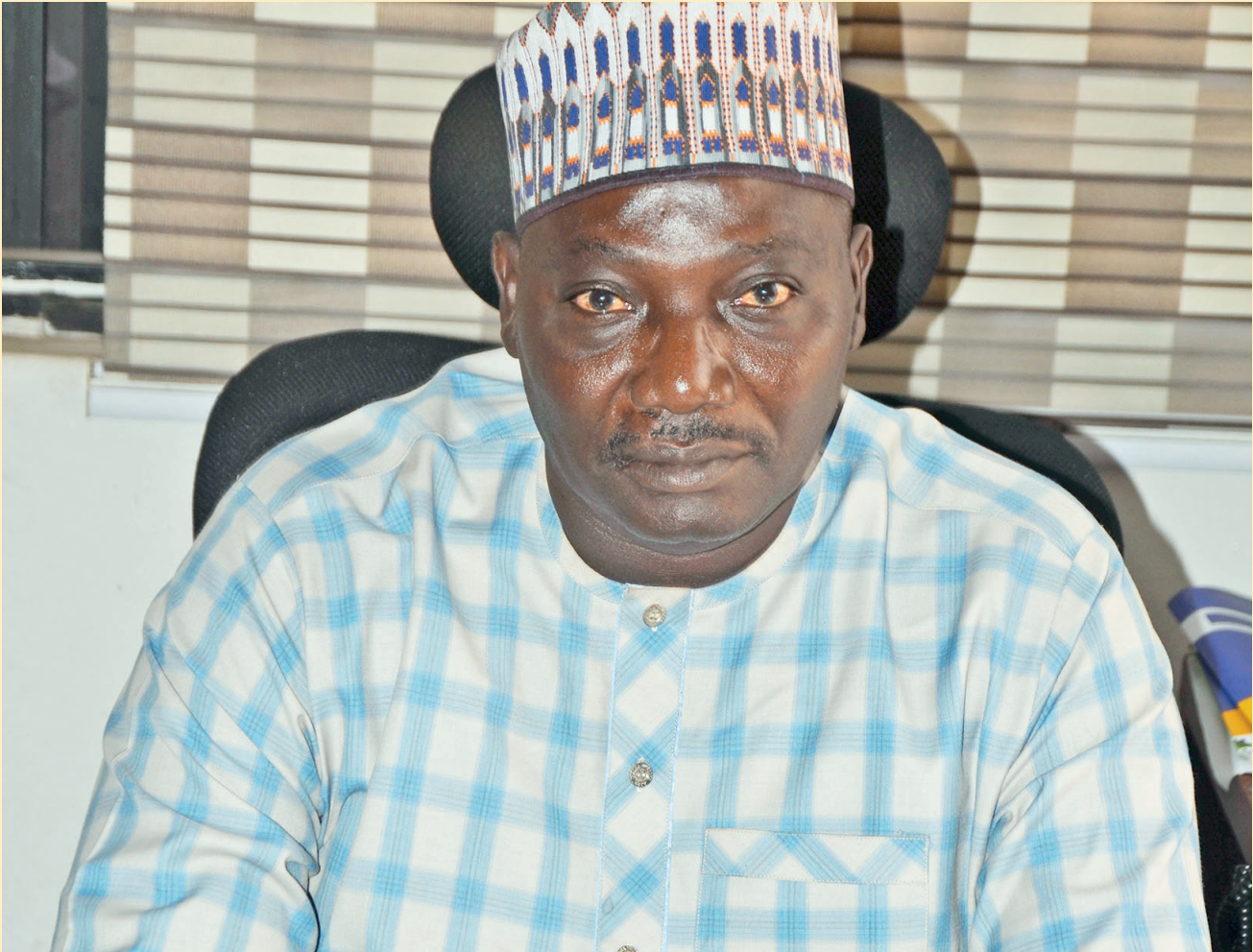
**A**CGN Ezekiel Epeso, a 1988 graduate of Ahmadu Bello University and Course 2 Officer came into NDLEA with a bachelor's degree in Public Administration, but his career transcended different areas of operations. From being a pioneer Area Commander (Ebonyi), he was, among others, commander of Kaduna State, Director, Administration & Finance (until January 2021) and pioneer director, Administration & Establishment where he spent two months before his redeployment to head the Directorate of Technical Services.

Incidentally, he assumed leadership of the directorate in a dispensation when the Agency is caught in a vortex of change and rapid expansion that includes the building of barracks.

How is he going to handle this task?

Epeso unveiled the plan: “This project is coming through an appropriation by the federal government. While we don't have the expertise within to take on the project, to put all the structures on ground, we certainly have a role to play. Contracts have been awarded to companies to execute this project, but the directorate will exert full supervision of the building of the barracks and other projects in the pipeline, like the renovation and the fur-





“I want to expand this directorate beyond the headquarters, to have a presence in all the 36 states by appointing maintenance officers in every command.”

nishing of the new headquarters, and of this, we can supervise, just as we are doing with the renovation and furnishing of the transit accommodation now.”

Meanwhile, he has an idea of how he wants to improve the directorate in the next few years.

His words: “I want to expand this directorate beyond the headquarters, to have a presence in all the 36 states by appointing maintenance officers in every command.”

Of this, he explained further: “Presently, we don’t have a maintenance officer in the commands. We are identifying technical officers such as architects, quantity surveyors and building engineers, especially from among the 5, 000 officers

recently recruited. Those we identified will be appointed as maintenance officers largely for them to communicate directly to us the maintenance needs of their respective commands.”

According to him, some of such personnel have been identified and they will be appropriately posted soon.

In the months ahead, the director will be working to transform his department according to his vision of what the technical department should be. “By the time I move from here, I hope to build a directorate that is very responsive to our maintenance and construction needs, a directorate with a high level of technical ability and efficient workforce that could carry out whatever task is required of us,” he disclosed.



**I**n her over 30-year-old career as a drug law enforcement officer, DCGN Chinyere Obijuru has worked in different beats including as a training instructor and as an investigator in the asset investigation arm of the Agency. She had worked in the airport. At a point, she was a member of the Joint Task Force, Zonal Commander (Kano) and state commander in Ogun, Benue and the FCT.

Presently, she is the Director of Training and Manpower Development, arguably one of the busiest directorates of 2021, having trained 5, 000 newly recruited officers among other core chores.

“I don’t think we have had it this good for such a long time with training, for the opportunities the officers have had to improve their competencies and skill sets,” she affirmed.

According to her: “In all aspects of the Agency, we have had training for people who are doing the job, affording them opportunities to improve themselves. It came as surprise to many who have been in the Agency for upward of 20 years and never for once gone on training.”

To underscore the significance of the developments of 2021, she pointed out: “Our last recruitment was 10 years ago, in 2011. It took us 10 years to conduct another recruitment. That alone will tell you we are already an ageing force, and in need of an injection of new blood into the system which we have gotten now.”

Obijuru further assured of a departure from the trend in the past, affirming that training will now become a continuous process. “Now, we have people who are putting in place the right foundation. We are building a strong foundation that

# Now, training is non-stop

–DCGN Chinyere Obijuru



will sustain the Agency. I see a bright future. We are almost seeing the end of the tunnel with light in it.”

The director of Training and Manpower Development unveiled what to expect from her department in 2022: “Training is continuous and we are hoping to have rank-related courses this year. The idea is this: before an officer move to the next rank, he must have done a few courses to prepare him for that elevation.”

“ Training is continuous and we are hoping to have rank-related courses this year. The idea is this: before an officer move to the next rank, he must have done a few courses to prepare him for that elevation.”



**A**CGN Sani Ibrahim Sani can offhandedly (and comprehensively, too), recount all the events of the past year. And that was what he did in the opening minutes of his interview. And in rounding off, he said: “These are some of the things that the Chairman and Chief Executive achieved within the shortest period, which is unprecedented. Now, we are looking forward to getting a befitting headquarters for the Agency in this budget year. Once that is achieved, it will be an all-around success.”

He couldn't have been less knowledgeable about what happens in the Agency, after all, he is the director of Administration and Establishment. And even then and now, Sani does not give room for lapses.

Speaking of his directorate, he informed: “Some of our operations have been streamlined; with the restructuring of the directorate, more vacancies were created and filled by the required qualified personnel and new initiatives have come into play in some of the operations of this directorate. There is more efficiency now and there is effectiveness in terms of productivity.”

In his words: “Now we operate like bankers.”

He explained: “It means, we finish today's job today, particularly in operation. Those of us in Admin and Estab close late and that is to make sure today's work is taken care of today and we will be ready for tomorrow's work.”

A Course 2 Officer of ASN cadre, Sani who had been Zonal Commander for Zaria, Kano and Onitsha, and State Commander for Ondo, Katsina, Delta, and Edo was until his present appointment head of Internal Affairs. The former schoolteacher—“I am still a teacher,” he insisted—has come a long way from his days as Grade II teacher and NCE holder. Over the years, he had obtained a Bachelor's degree in Educa-

# We restructured for efficiency

– ACGN Sani Ibrahim Sani



tion History, Master's in Political Science (from ABU, Zaria) and Strategic Studies (from the University of Ibadan) and now he has his doctorate in view. Yet, his approach has always been to teach, to instil, to impart to his subordinates. It is in that spirit that he is working to refine the personnel and processes of his directorate. And for him, everything boils down to leadership. *Purposive leadership.* That is what thrills him about the current state of NDLEA.

“Committed leadership is why we have graduated from being reactionary to a proactive agency. In the next five to 10 years, NDLEA is going to be a super agency, based on the standard we have set now and if we continue to have committed leadership, just like the one we have today,” he mused.

“ Those of us in Admin and Estab close late and that is to make sure today's work is taken care of today and we will be ready for tomorrow's work.”



**I**t is an understatement to say that NDLEA is “in the news.” In the past 12 months, NDLEA “is the news.” The media space is saturated with positive news of the agency’s resurgence, characterised by arrests and interdictions on the one hand, and of progressive developments within the Agency, on the other hand.

News of NDLEA not only dominates newspapers’ headlines, radio mentions, and TV discussions, the Agency is constantly trending in the blogosphere, chatrooms and social media. The intense media visibility was a paradigm shift for the once-upon-a-time media-shy agency.

How did the Agency pull it off?—by establishing the Directorate of Media and Advocacy in 2021 and appointing a thoroughbred media professional as the helmsman. The director, Femi Babafemi, a seasoned newspaperman, is an old hand in the art and finesse of media relations. The Saturday Sun editor until January 2021, Babafemi had handled similar media roles at the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, from 2008 to 2011. Hence, he is a man who understands his briefs, as he calmly explained in this interview.

According to him: “When the Chairman came on board on January 18, 2021, he did say that he was going to introduce the maxim of “Offensive Action” into the operation of the Agency in the area of drug supply reduction activities. The ultimate objective was to use our results to create impact and achieve the desired awareness and consciousness within the populace. That cannot be achieved without carrying the media along.”

Explaining further, he said: “Consequently, when we record success in our operations, we try as much as possible to make it public for specific reasons. One, to let the public know that there is a new NDLEA; two, that the new maxim of Offensi-



## Why we open NDLEA to the media

– Femi Babafemi





Thus far, the response has been positive. “The feedback we are getting has been very encouraging, meaning that more people are now getting to know about the depth of the problem, about the dangers inherent in drug abuse and about the fact that they need to play a role in the process,” he said.

Tapping from his contacts in the media world and working on principles of media relations, he has within 12 months forged a strong partnership between the Agency and the Nigerian media complex.

Expressing his pleasure at being assigned the task of pioneering the media directorate, Babafemi noted that his job was made easier by the calibre of people working with him.

“Most importantly, I am glad I am working with the Chairman who understands the importance of the media as a very strong and veritable tool to communicate with the public and to get results. The chairman is media-savvy; he understands the way the media works and that makes our job easy,” he said.

“While we have been able to work well with the traditional media, we have not also overlooked the importance of the new media because the majority of our target audience is within that space,” Babafemi stressed. “The directorate is doing everything possible to make sure we communicate to the public through various social media platforms.”

For him, the formula has been effective. “We are happy that we are reaching our target audience,” he affirmed.

In 2022, the Directorate of Media and Advocacy will continue to push the activities of the agency into public consciousness and boost their society’s confidence in NDLEA.

“We will deploy more strategies to sustain the momentum. We will be doing quite a lot of work in the social media space, on various platforms. We shall also increase our involvement in in-house publication,” Babafemi assured.

ve Action is working and we are getting results and three, to send a strong message to drug barons and cartels that the new NDLEA is after them.”

The strategic objective of issuing statements on arrest and interdiction efforts of the agency, he articulated, is to mobilise the public.

“So that they will know that there is this problem and we all need to support the activities of NDLEA to salvage the situation. This is why we opened up the Agency to the public. The objective is to mobilise society to take ownership of the fight against illicit drug abuse and trafficking in the country.”

“  
I am working with a Chairman who understands the importance of the media as a very strong and veritable tool to communicate with the public and to get results. The chairman is media-savvy; he understands the way the media works and that makes our job easy.



## BENIN: FIGHTING OFF COCAINE SIEGE

According to UNODC, almost 42 tons of cocaine were transited through or intercepted in West African coastal states between 2019 and 2021. But according to statistics, it is The Republic of Benin, Nigeria's westerly neighbour, that is increasingly becoming a hotspot in the global drug trafficking network.

Since 2010, the country has tried to improve its anti-drug laws and institutional framework. Institutions such as the Inter-ministerial Committee for the Fight against the Abuse of Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances, the Central Office for the Repression of Illicit Traffic in Drugs and Precursors, and the Court for the Repression of Eco-

nommic Offenses and Terrorism (CRIET) were tasked to lead efforts against drug trafficking.

By June 2021, Benin's share of the illicit trade amounted to 1.3 tons which originate from Latin America and the Middle East.

On November 4, Benin's Special Prosecutor of CRIET announced the discovery of 750kg of cocaine in a warehouse in Cotonou. This followed several other large seizures of Cocaine and other drugs by national law enforcement agencies since 2019 including 78 tons of various drugs, with three tons of cocaine shipped from Montevideo in Uruguay to Europe via Benin.

Sources said there was a well-established network of



collaborators in and outside of Benin's police and law enforcement agencies and other people who facilitate this traffic. For example, in the 2021 Sèmè-Kpodji case, drug parcels were offloaded from a vessel on the sea, transported in small packages by boats and stored in a warehouse on land. A well-organised network is needed for such an operation.

Since June 2021, au-

thorities arrested several people, including some law enforcement officers and national and foreign businesspeople. The government has also destroyed large quantities of seized drugs. Between July and December 2021, 4.7 tons of drugs, including 613kg of cocaine were incinerated by Benin officials.

—ISS Today ([www.issafri-ca.org](http://www.issafri-ca.org))

## SOUTH AFRICA PROFILE RISES AS COCAINE TRAFFICKING HUB

South Africa's rapid succession of large cocaine seizures in the second half of 2021 illuminated how the country and region now play a significant role as transit points for Latin American cocaine.

One of the largest of such seizures came in August when police found one ton of cocaine in a shipping container at the port of Durban, sub-Saharan Africa's largest seaport, that had arrived from Brazil's port of Santos.

The confiscation raises to four tons the amount of cocaine seized in the country between March and August 2021—1000kg from a fishing vessel on March 1; 800kg from a towed jet ski on June 2; 541kg from a container depot on June 22 and 715kg from police vehicles on July 9.

All of the drug loads travelled from the Brazilian port of Santos and all but one entered in shipping containers at Durban, according to the South African Police Service (SAPS).

"Most of these drugs would have been destined for other countries whilst at least 20% would have remained behind as payment to the traffickers and consumption in the domestic market," stated a SAPS press release.

South Africa—with a rapidly expanding domestic market, routes to destinations in Europe and emerging connections to nascent cocaine markets like Australia and Hong Kong—is a crucial nexus in the global cocaine trade.

This appears to be almost exclusively supplied—mostly in shipping containers—by

Brazil's strongest criminal group, the First Capital Command (Primeiro Comando da Capital - PCC), which controls the port of Santos. The PCC has made efforts to arrange drug trafficking deals in the region, including in South Africa's neighbour of Mozambique.

Most of the cocaine then transits onwards, however, facilitated by the country's excellent transport infrastructure, high-level police corruption and resource shortages in the area of drug control, according to a 2019 country profile by the ENACT Africa project.

The majority goes to Europe, mostly by shipping container and, to a lesser extent, by air with individual smugglers. This represents the so-called "Southern Route" that has



long exported Afghan heroin to western European seaports.

Some of the shipments head for Hong Kong, a cocaine hotspot where Latin American traffickers are aggressively attempting to grow demand. South Africa is also a primary departure point for cocaine heading to Australia, where a single kilo fetches anywhere between \$90,000 and \$300,000, according to the government's latest Illicit Drugs Data Report.

—Insight Crime ([www.insightcrime.org](http://www.insightcrime.org))

# BEYOND DRUG LAW ENFORCEMENT

NDLEA's interceptions and arrests in 2021 went beyond drug shipments and traffickers – record shows how the Agency is an important cogwheel in the Nigerian security apparatus.



## 1 64,000 pump action gun cartridges recovered

Dec 15, 2021, Onitsha

Operatives of NDLEA intercepted 64,000 pump action gun cartridges and a new pump action gun at a store located at Success Line, Marine modern market, Onitsha, Awka North Local Government Area of Anambra state. The owner of the shop, Donatus Onyemachi Igwebudu, 34, was subsequently arrested.

## 3 Hardware for bandits intercepted

September 30, Gwagwalada

Hayatu Galadima, a Nigerian Army lance corporal in Ibadan and Hamisu Adamu were arrested along Gwagwalada expressway, Abuja. They were in possession of 21 RLA 7.45mm bullets, 16 packs of new two-way radios (walkie talkies), four army coloured head masks, Cannabis sativa and tramadol tablest, among other things. The hardware was for bandits who at the time were excommunicated due to the suspension of telecoms services in Zamfara, Sokoto and Kaduna states.



## 4 3 bandits, 3 AK-47 rifles

August 5, Malumfashi

Adamu Shehu, Tukur Mohammed and Ibrahim Suleiman were on attack mission in Katsina State when arrested by NDLEA operatives in Malumfashi LGA. The trio, from Igabi LGA, Kaduna State were travelling in Kankara LGA, Katsina. Three AK 47 rifles with magazines, different types of charms, rings, cash and other items were recovered from their Toyota Corolla car.



## 5 Heavy weapon seized

August 4, Aliade Checkpoint

Armourer Celestine Chidiebere Christian was arrested with a G3 rifle, 78 rounds of live 7.62mm bullets and five empty shells in Benue State while trying to move the weapon to Jos, Plateau State. The bus he boarded from Onitsha to Jos was flagged down at Aliade checkpoint for search. The suspect accepted ownership of iron box (welded end to end), cut opened with an electric filing machine to reveal the high-calibre gun which he claimed he manufactured.

## 2 34 trafficked children rescued

December 16, 2021. Okene-Lokoja Expressway

NDLEA operatives on patrol along Okene-Lokoja expressway in Kogi state intercepted a Toyota Sienna and a 12-seater Mazda packed full with minors 34, aged 8 to 14 being trafficked from Ijebu Ode, Ogun State to Abuja. These victims of a human trafficking syndicate, on arrival in Abuja, were to be further conveyed by another driver to Riyom, Plateau State, where they were initially trafficked from. Some of the children had served as servants for two years.





# Drug Cookies Alert!

By FRANCIS OKOGUN

**AROMA OR SIGHTS** of freshly baked edibles such as buns, brownies, cupcakes and cookies could leave you salivating and craving for a bite. But these days, you need to caution yourself that not all yummy edibles are good for you. You may have to exercise restraint and delay the gratification of your taste buds until you have ascertained whether or not such victuals are safe for your

consumption.

Why? Because of bakers and confectioners' growing proclivity to lace their bakery with psychoactive ingredients. Not even cupcakes or pastries are spared. Even coffees and chocolate chips are suspects.

As shown by NDLEA's clampdown in 2021, some baked edibles sold in plain sight—on the shelves of supermarkets, at popular bars and clubs and in restaurants—are laced with psychotropic ingredients.

## HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY DRUGGED EDIBLES?

There is no means of knowing if a cookie has psychoactive ingredients without taking a bite.

Nonetheless, you can take the following steps:

- Ask the seller, distributor or hosts of the party if the edible is special. They will get the message. Read the body language.
- Read and digest the content on the packaging. Sometimes, the message is encoded in a subtle quote, motto or ingredients list.
- If in doubt, take samples of your purchased or given edibles to the nearest NDLEA office for preliminary tests.
- If the bakery is popular, it **SHOULD** have NAFDAC number if it is wholesome and without banned substances.

## NARCOBULARY

1. Mkpurumiri (literally, ice water): Local name for crystal meth (Methamphetamine) in South-East Nigeria.



**WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF DRUG EDIBLES?**

The most common psychotropic ingredients for baked edibles is *Cannabis sativa* (and its variants such as Skunk, Arizona, Loud and Colorado) and other drugs like Rohypnol, ground into fine powder and mixed with flour before baking.

The side effects of consuming ‘narco-edibles’ in high quantity include hallucinations, anxiety and displays of negative behaviours. Depending on the quantity of the psychoactive ingredient in the edibles, the side effects start to manifest some 35 minutes after consumption. It can even be immediate, like the case of a child in Abuja who was given a piece of drugged cookie by a neighbour and a few minutes after consuming the treat became incoherent and uncoordinated.

The aftermath sometimes could be extreme, like in the reported case of 23-year-old Caleb Fowler who shot himself five times after consuming a considerable quantity of narco-edibles or the college student who jumped to his death after consuming cannabis cookies.

**TIMELINE OF ARRESTS OF PEDDLERS OF DRUG COOKIES**

- **April 18, 2021:**

Function was a popular cookie brand in Abuja baked by Rhoda Agboje and sold in supermarkets and clubs across the city. A package of 3 cakes was sold for N1,500. “Function right with every bite” was the motto on the package, supported by a quote from Genesis 1: 29.

- **May 7, 2021:**

Sisters Queen and Chika Nvene ran an online business using Instagram to sell their homemade cookies and brownies laced with Loud, Colorado and Arizona.

- **June 19, 2021:**

Jane Chioma Ofoma, 26, a medical doctor, owned Omachi’s Kitchen, an online catering service, that produced homemade cannabis cookies and biscuits popular in Auchi, Edo State.



- **September 10, 2021:**

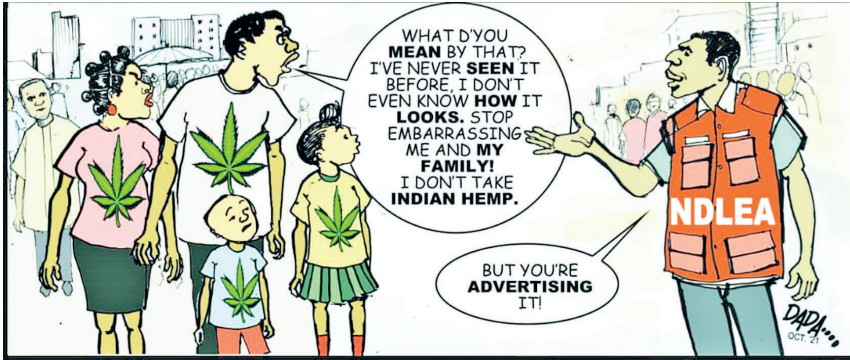
Bee Okoro, 20, worked from her home in Garki, Area 11, producing cookies and brownies that were sold for N1,000. She mixed Arizona and Loud with her baking ingredients. Her cookies and brownies were popular at parties and patronised by young people in Abuja.





# NDLEA in the MEDIA

The agency made a comeback into the media in 2021, dominating headlines and mentions in the traditional media and constantly making the line-up of trending topics on social media. Below is a collection of extracts from some randomly selected editorials and cartoons published by popular newspapers.



## 1 THIS DAY

Monday, September 20, 2021

**The menace of drugs abuse: At last, the NDLEA makes a new start on a crucial task**

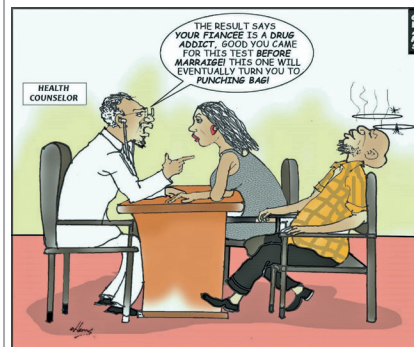
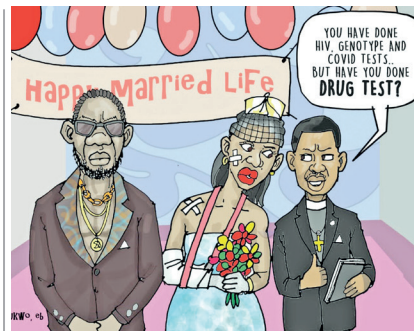
“With all this, the NDLEA is launching widespread operations against drug cartels across the country with large harvests. In the past few months, the agency has arrested over 8, 600 abusers, seized 2,777,000 kilogrammes of drugs worth over N100billion and has secured at least 1, 630 convictions. It is also counselling and rehabilitating others. While it may be too early to sing the victory song, there is no doubt that NDLEA is on the right path. We hope the Agency can sustain the momentum.”

## 2 DAILY Sun

Tuesday, September 7, 2021

**Editorial: Invigorating the anti-drug war**

“Marwa has promoted 3, 506 officers and men of the agency to boost their morale. He has, through the intervention of President Buhari, paid about N200 million burial expenses to the families of 188 fallen officers of the agency. The creation of 14 Zonal Commands of the NDLEA across the country will enhance operational efficiency and career development of officers. While we commend the President and Marwa in their resolve to strengthen the drug war, we urge them to do more.”



## 3 LEADERSHIP

Wednesday, September 8, 2021

**Our Stand: Saving Nigeria from the scourge of drugs**

“In the opinion of this newspaper, reviving and strengthening the agency’s Directorate of Assets and Financial Investigations to go after all assets and funds linked to drug trafficking is an important way of fighting this war that is threatening to consume the youths of this country.”

## 4 Vanguard

Wednesday, September 15, 2021

**Comment: New impetus in NDLEA’s drug war**

“The NDLEA should continue to gear up, more so as we are about to enter 2022/2023 general election seasons. If the agency remains on top of its work, more Nigerians will be safer from violent criminals.”

## 5 TheGuardian

Sunday, September 19, 2021

**Editorial: The escalating drug epidemic**

“The NDLEA must nevertheless take the drug war to the tent of the enemy by going after all assets and funds linked to drug trafficking, in furtherance of its achievement so far. The Agency should involve broad stakeholders in the war against illicit drugs. The establishment of a well-armed and trained strike force to beef up the agency’s enforcement capabilities and the appointment of a Provost Marshall to enthrone discipline and work ethics in the agency are proactive steps.”

## 6 THE NATION

Tuesday, September 14, 2021

**Editorial: Compassionate NDLEA**

“Perhaps the most emotional and profound of these incentives was the settling, last months, of about N200 million burial expenses of the agency’s 188 personnel who died in the line of duty to their widows and next of kin (NOK).”





"be  
**YOURSELF**  
and build the  
**NATION**"

#sayNoToDrugs



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NATIONAL DRUG LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY


# A drug-free society begins with YOU


Stay away from drugs




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