

TO BE EQUAL Youth and Juvenile Crime

By Hugh B. Price, President,
National Urban League

The National Center for Juvenile Justice recently issued a report entitled "Juvenile Offenders and Victims: A

National Report." The Center presented three startling findings that should give all thoughtful Americans serious pause. They are:
- Over the past decade,

arrests of 10 to 17 year-olds for violent crimes soared by 100 percent.

- The homicide rate alone among 14 to 17 year-olds jumped by 165 percent during this period.

- The teen population is expected to increase by 20 percent over the next decade.

- If these trendlines continue, arrests of juveniles for violent crimes will double again in the next decade.

During the 1980s, spending on prison construction soared by 612 percent.

Meanwhile, society disinvested in the very programs — settlement houses, after-school activities and park-rec facilities — that keep young people off the streets, out of the clutches of gangs, and in the hands of adults who genuinely care that they do well.

Do you realize that the money



HUGH B. PRICE

Washington seems intent on spending to add 100,000 police to city streets could instead pay the salaries of 300,000 part-time youth workers?

If each one of them worked intensely with a half dozen or so youngsters, they could reach some 2 million youngsters every day.

Now does anyone think that 100,000 officers will detect more crime than 2 million teenagers won't commit if they're with caring adults every day?

Suppose we made certain that every preteen and teenager had a safe space, an academically and developmentally supportive program, and a caring adult to connect to after school and over the summer?

Point of View

Suppose we helped youngsters who've opted out of school, and hooked them up with a highly structured program like the National Guard Youth Challenge Corps, which still costs less than police and prisons, and which puts aimless teens back on the right track in the bargain?

We could begin turning things around.

When I was a kid, my junior high and high schools stayed open almost until dinner time, brimful of clubs, team sports and other extra curricular activities.

The city's park-rec department operated teams headed by coaches who expected you to show up, and gave you grief if you didn't.

Politicians back then didn't call these kinds of programs "pork."

Everyone, be they parents, taxpayers or politicians, considered these after-school

and summer programs to be a basic feature of a balanced, well functioning community.

Working parents knew that they and their children needed these programs.

And so did neighbors and merchants, who were delighted to have the youngsters off the streets, out of harm's way, out of mischief, and in the hands of caring adults who were committed to our success.

And one of the principal payoffs was community safety.

If ever there's a cause that should unite all Americans, it's the realization that Our

Children = Our Destiny, and thus that we must all, individually and collectively, attend to their development.

Let us commit to lead the children out of darkness and, in the words of the distinguished historian Charles Wesley, help them "March Onward and Upward Toward the Light."

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL Nigeria's Day of Infamy

By Bernice Powell Jackson

Not that South Africa is free, it seems that Nigeria is fast becoming the African nation with the dubious honor of being "the most repressive regime." With the Nigerian government's execution of nine human rights campaigners, including writer Ken Saro-Wiwa, Nigeria has now become a nation condemned by the world.



Bernice Powell Jackson

Despite warnings from the international community, Nigeria's military ruler, General Sani Abacha proceeded with the execution of the leaders of the Ogoni people, who had been protesting the government's action in their land. Earlier this year Human Rights Watch, the international human rights organization, released a report showing that Nigeria's military had carried out a two year war against the Ogoni people, who live in an oil-rich section of the country. The report detailed attacks on civilians, including shooting of unarmed villagers, gang rapes of women and the burning of homes.

The human rights activists executed by the government had been imprisoned for over a year, ostensibly for the charges by the Nigerian military of inciting riots which led to the murders of four Nigerian traditional leaders. However, few actually believe that the soft-spoken and professorial Mr. Saro-Wiwa was guilty of those charges. He did lead a movement which demanded that the government protect their homeland's environment from misuse by U.S. oil companies and that the federal government share oil revenues with the Ogoni people. Shell Oil in particular had been a target for Mr. Saro-Wiwa's movement.

Many believe that it was the demand for the sharing of oil revenues that ultimately led to the executions. By controlling Nigeria's oil, which provides 80 percent of the country's foreign exchange earnings. General Abacha and many senior military officers are said to have become multi-millionaires.

This has occurred while the rest of the nation has become poorer, with per capita income dropping to \$250 in 1993. With an inflation rate of more than 100 percent annually, Nigeria's currency is virtually worthless. Last year a government panel found that the government could not account for \$12.2 billion in oil sales made during the Persian Gulf War. A nation once known for its excellent higher education system now has seen that crumble, and repression has replaced free expression. Nigeria is falling quickly into total economic and social decay.

While nine of the Ogoni human rights activists were executed, others remain in prison. Other Nigerians, including former military president Olusegun Obasanjo, who had been accused of plotting against the government but had his death sentence commuted, are still in danger. In reality, the whole nation is being held hostage to the Nigerian military dictatorship.

The world has the responsibility of condemning what is happening in Nigeria. The Commonwealth nations, of which Nigeria is a part, have suspended Nigeria. And while the U.S. has protested the executions, the Nigerian government has proven that they do not respond to words and warnings. Only action will cause the Nigerian military to respond. Only political and economic isolation will impact that government. Only targeted economic sanctions, particularly related to Nigerian oil, will impact that government. Only the freezing of the assets of the Nigerian military regime, as was done in Haiti, will impact that government.

(Note: Write to Senator Nancy Kassenbaum, Chairperson of the Senate Subcommittee on Africa, U.S. Senate, Washington D.C. 20510 or write to Shell Oil, Phillip Carrol, president, One Shell Plaza, 901 Louisiana Street, Houston, TX 77002 and ask them to take action against further human rights violations in Nigeria.)

THIS WAY FOR BLACK EMPOWERMENT

On the Execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and His Fellow Activists by the Nigerian Government

By Dr. Lenora Fulani

The execution by hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his eight fellow members of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People provides the international community with new evidence of the irredeemable brutality of Nigeria's military government, headed by General Sani Abacha. To symbolize their abhorrence of this crime, many governments around the world, have recalled their ambassadors from Abuja. The World Bank affiliate, the International Finance Corporation, has suspended a \$100 million loan to the Abacha regime, and the Commonwealth of Nations has expelled Nigeria from its ranks. But many feel these actions by the international community have come too little, too late. Tragically, the international community has been equivocating with Nigeria's dictatorship for the last two years. Abacha's brazen act of hanging nine innocent men is the logical outcome of this international complacency.

In the two years since the generals annulled the results of a fair and free election and robbed the Nigerian people of their democratic future, the military junta has imprisoned or killed hundreds of its opponents, dissolved labor unions, muzzled the press and replaced civilian elected officials with military

puppets. General Abacha and the tiny elite who surround him have become billionaires by plundering Nigeria's oil revenues, while the vast majority of Nigeria's 100 million people sink deeper into poverty.

In response to international criticism, Abacha has retorted that the Nigerian people are not ready for democracy, and unfortunately, some of his critics have bought this racist line. An initial, strong Congressional condemnation of the annulment of the June 12, 1993 election, spearheaded by Congressional Black Caucus members such as Rep. Donald Payne (D-NJ) and Rep. William Jefferson (D-LA) was blunted by Nigeria's high-priced lobbyists, who convinced some influential Congressmen that the election was "technically flawed." When the winner of those elections, Moshood Abiola, was imprisoned by the regime, President Clinton sent Rev. Jesse Jackson as his emissary to Abacha, with a letter demanding Abiola's release. However, as a long-time

supporter of former Nigerian dictator Ibrahim Babangida, Jackson was viewed by Nigeria's democracy movement as an unreliable ally who could easily be manipulated by Abacha. Jackson was warmly welcomed by Abacha, while, five African American Congressmen who had been outspokenly supportive of Abiola were denied visas to enter Nigeria.

As an African American leader who has done extensive work on behalf of democracy in sub-Saharan Africa—with the Congressional Black Caucus and with ordinary Americans—I have learned how important it is that there be no compromise with dictatorship. We cannot let ourselves be used to lend legitimacy to governments who deny basic human and



DR. LENORA FULANI

democratic rights to our African brothers and sisters. We must be steadfast in our demand that President Clinton unequivocally isolate the Abacha regime, by having Nigeria put on the list of countries whose oil exports are banned from the United States. The money we Americans spend on fuel should not be lining the pockets of the killers of Ken Saro-Wiwa and hundreds of other Nigerian brothers and sisters.

WE WELCOME LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
SEND ALL LETTERS TO:
LV SENTINEL-VOICE
900 E. CHARLESTON,
LAS VEGAS, NV 89104
All signed letters will be published.

NEVADA'S ONLY AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

LAS VEGAS Sentinel Voice

BROWN PUBLISHING COMPANY'S AWARD WINNING NEWSPAPER

Nevada's only African-American community newspaper.
Published every Thursday by Griot Communications Group, Inc.
900 East Charleston Boulevard • Las Vegas, Nevada 89104
Telephone (702) 380-8100 • Fax (702) 380-8102

Ed & Betty Brown, Founders
Ramon Savoy, Publisher
Lee Brown, Editor
Nichole Davis, Staff Writer
Willis Brown, Production Manager
Don Snook, Graphics

Contributing Writers:
Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams
Ray E. Willis
James S. Tate, Jr., M.D. (NAARPR)
R. K. Brown
Gwen Walker
Diana Aird
Terrence R. Johnson
Loretta A. Hall

Members:
National Newspaper Publishers Assoc.
West Coast Black Publishers Assoc.

Subscriptions payable in advance
Six months \$15.00
Twelve months \$25.00
The rates apply to Continental United States only