POLICE AND RIGHTS OF OFFENDERS IN NIGERIA

OLAKUNLE MICHAEL FOLAMI*; OLUSOLA O. KARIMU**; AFOLABI ARIBIGBOLA***

* DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
ADEKUNLE AJAIN UNIVERSITY
AKUNGBA AKOKO
ONDO STATE, NIGERIA.

** SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICES LEADERSHIP (CRIMINAL JUSTICE)
CAPELLA UNIVERSITY, MN
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

*** DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND PLANNING SCIENCES
ADEKUNLE AJASIN UNIVERSITY
AKUNGBA AKOKO
ONDO STATE, NIGERIA.

ABSTRACT:
The colonial experience and military incursion in politics have stunted the democratization processes in Nigeria. The Nigerian police is experiencing fundamental problems in coping with the ethos and basic principles of rule of law since the dawn of civilian rule in Nigeria. People’s rights are flagrantly abused by the police and decision on criminal justice is taken without recourse to the Constitution. The citizens have been abused socially and politically to the extent that they become disillusioned when their rights were trampled upon. This paper provides an in-depth analysis of arrest, detention, bail, arranging of offenders in the court vis-à-vis the fundamental rights of offenders as enshrined in the Constitution. Secondary data and in-depth interview were employed to collect data from the respondents. The secondary data were obtained from the police’s crime records. In-depth interviews were conducted among sixty-two awaiting-trial suspects in police detentions across the selected States. The paper found out that most of the detainees were not aware of their rights as stipulated in the constitution. The paper recommends the creation of legal-aid units in police stations all over the country. Also, public awareness of rights and how to access these rights need to be created.

KEY WORDS: The Nigerian police, rights, constitution.