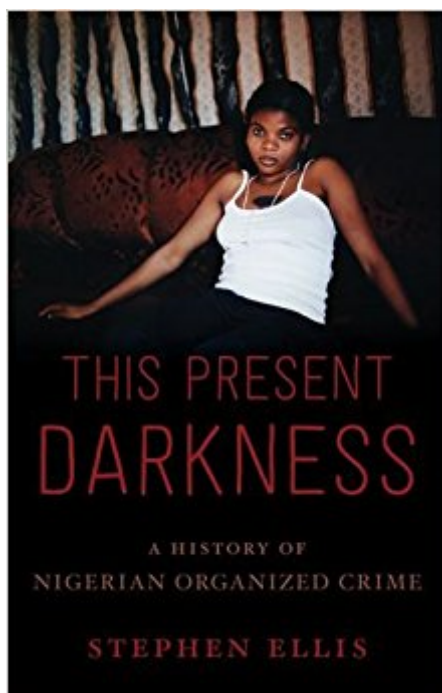


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# This Present Darkness: A History Of Nigerian Organized Crime



## Synopsis

Nigeria and Nigerians have acquired a notorious reputation for involvement in drug-trafficking, fraud, cyber-crime and other types of serious crime. Successful Nigerian criminal networks have a global reach, interacting with their Italian, Latin American and Russian counterparts. Yet in 1944, a British colonial official wrote that 'the number of persistent and professional criminals is not great' in Nigeria and that 'crime as a career has so far made little appeal to the young Nigerian'. This book traces the origins of Nigerian organised crime to the last years of colonial rule, when nationalist politicians acquired power at a regional level. In need of funds for campaigning, they offered government contracts to foreign businesses in return for kickbacks, in a pattern that recurs to this day. Political corruption encouraged a wider disrespect for the law that spread throughout Nigerian society. When the country's oil boom came to an end in the early 1980s, young Nigerian college graduates headed abroad, eager to make money by any means. Nigerian crime went global at the very moment new criminal markets were emerging all over the world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"[A] critical analysis of how various Nigerian social and political institutions have created and sustained opportunities for illegal gain. The book offers fascinating details of political corruption, and a useful distillation of the mechanics of criminal enterprises, but its primary contribution to Nigerian historiography lies in mapping links between the breakdown of longstanding African institutions during the colonial period, the emergence of new arrangements to fill the gaps, and current illegal activity by official and conventional criminals." -- The International Journal of African Historical

Studies "This is quite simply a dynamite book, striking first of all for the sheer depth of research that has gone into it. It is remarkable, too, in the way that it is able to fit this material into a bigger picture, created not only by a thorough familiarity with Nigerian history and politics, but also by an awareness especially of the spiritual dimensions of Nigerian life, and the ways in which these feed through into crime as well as virtually every other aspect of Nigerian affairs." -- Christopher Clapham, University of Cambridge

"Lucid, starkly realistic, and beautifully written, this book calls into sharp focus the nature of corruption in Nigeria. Ellis provides an insightful explanation for why reform programmes almost always end in disappointment. This book is a significant contribution to our understanding of the nature of the state in this most important African country. The richness and clarity of the empirical detail and the overall analysis validates Ellis' position as one of the most consistently imaginative and creative thinkers of our time on the central issues of politics in Africa. More than any other book, this sober analysis of the deep historical social roots of corruption is sure to be controversial in some quarters and is guaranteed to set the terms of debate for years to come." -- Will Reno, Professor of Political Science, Northwestern University, and author of *Warfare in Independent Africa*

"The final work of Stephen Ellis, a brilliant Africanist, *This Present Darkness* is nothing less than an analysis of Nigeria's history from the pre-colonial period to the present time. Based on original, archival research in five countries, its insights draw on expertise in anthropology, religion and history. It provides a depth of understanding of how Nigeria works and why that is unprecedented. His conclusions about crime, the Nigerian state, the pre-colonial, and the colonial past are bound to generate fresh thinking." -- John Campbell, Ralph Bunche Senior Fellow for Africa Policy Studies, Council on Foreign Relations

"With sympathetic insight and sharp wit, Ellis presents an unparalleled analysis of how Nigeria became the notorious epicentre of global illicit trade, engaged in organised crimes as diverse as 419 frauds, trafficking in sex, drugs, and the country's plentiful oil wealth. Cults, mysticism and secret societies that entrenched themselves in Nigeria's post-colonial transition have created a society where becoming rich is a theology, and the importance of juju outweighs that of justice" -- Tuesday Reitano, Global Initiative against Transnational Organised Crime

"It is sad that Stephen Ellis died before his book appeared in print. Its central idea is that Nigeria is corrupt, which by itself is not a new statement. Ellis attributes the prevalence of crime not to culture but to history. If this analysis proves enduring, it unfortunately means that corruption and crime will be part of Nigeria's life until the world itself comes to an end."

--CHOICE

Professor Stephen Ellis, PhD, was Desmond Tutu Professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences at the

VU University, Amsterdam, and author of, inter alia, *The Mask of Anarchy: The Religious Roots of the Liberian Civil War*, *Worlds of Power: Religious Thought and Political Practice in Africa*, *Madagascar: A Short History*, and *Season of Rains: Africa in the World*, all available from Hurst.

An interesting read. It was nice getting a lot of information on this subject together in one place. One may find some information on the issue in local newspapers in Nigeria but definitely not as well researched as in this book.

Good read

Good

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