

PERSONAL TESTIMONY ALHADJI IDIRISI NANI

INTRODUCTION

I am cattle grazier living in Wum in Menchum Division of the North-West Region. I have been persecuted by Baba Ahmadou Danpullo on the pretext that cattle from his Ranch has been found inside my herd but this is absolutely false. The Wum Court of First Instance finally ruled in my favour. Mr. Danpullo appealed the ruling and the Appeal Court confirmed the ruling in my favour but till today Mr. Danpullo has not returned my cattle now estimated at 45.

The beginning of nightmare for me

Trouble started when gendarmes accompanied by Baba Mohammad, manager of ELBA Ranch and Muma Christopher the Veterinary Doctor for the Ranch came to my compound and identified 19 of my cows as the ones missing from the Ranch. Their identification was holes on the ears of the cows which many people also use. I brought my instruments for bursting holes on the ears of my cattle and the ELBA Ranch workers also brought theirs. When the gendarmes tested the instruments on the holes mine fitted and theirs didn't. They collected the instruments and sent their report to the State Prosecutor to decide what to do with the matter. They asked me to keep the cows in question which I did while waiting for the investigation to be completed.

My arrest and detention

While waiting to hear to outcome of the gendarme investigation, police people arrived from Bamenda Judicial Police and arrested on accusation of stealing Baba Ahmadou Danpullo's cattle. I was refused bail by the Attorney general and also by the High Court, whereas the offence for which I am being accused qualifies for bail.

While in detention in Bamenda, the judicial police were only interested in getting hold of my cows. I refused and said the gendarmes had investigated and proven that I owned the cows. They continued to detain saying that this was from instructions from high quarters which is an excuse often used to arbitrarily detain people in Cameroon.

While I was in detention Judicial Police Officers went to my residence in Wum to force my brother Mamuda Nani to surrender my cows to them. He refused to do so in my absence and they arrested and brought him and detained in Bamenda. We were both told by the Judicial Police unless we surrender the cattle we cannot be released on bail. We were both eventually transferred to Bamenda Prison.

On 18th May 2000, 11 armed policemen accompanied by Baba Ahmadou Danpullo's seven agents forcefully took me out of prison in Bamenda to Wum and collected 24 cows from my herd. These were not those identified and inspected by the gendarmes. Baba Ahmadou Danpullo's agents took them away to unknown destination.

My release

After they got what they wanted – my cows, they released me. The Police seized my cattle and gave them Baba Ahmadou Danpullo without a court decision! Meanwhile ELBA Ranch instituted a court case against me. I was charged of theft and they also attached a civil claim of 20 million FCFA.

Court Ruling acquitted me and ordered that my cows to be returned to me

Five years since the matter started, the Court of First Instance in Wum rule that I am not guilty and discharged and acquitted of theft and the civil claim of 20 million FCFA was also dismissed; the court also ordered my cows to be returned me. In a Ruling on Suit No. WM/177C/00-01 of 25th April 2003, his Lordship Justice Ngu Ngwa Augustine rule as follows:

“I find the accused not guilty of both counts of the charge for which he is discharged and acquitted. The Civil Claim is similarly dismissed.”

“Court Orders:

1. The 16 cattle and nine calves brought by the accused are hereby returned to the accused forthwith.
2. The at least 24 cattle ordered to be brought are hereby ordered to be delivered to the accused within forty-five days from the date of this judgement.
3. The Legal Department (Parquet General) shall take steps to see that the said cattle are delivered to the accused in accordance with Order 2 above.”

In 2003, the government set up the Inter-Ministerial Commission (Jani Commission). We gave evidence to the Commission but several years down the line the recommendations of the Commission have not been implemented and we continue to suffer.

CONCLUSION

My family and I have been persecuted and suffered physical and mental torment. If anyone is suspected of stealing they should be taken through the due process of law without abusing their rights and extorting them. My cattle were unlawfully seized by the Police and given to Baba Ahmadou Danpullo without (and against) a Court ruling! It seems to me that some state servants are in the pocket of rich individuals. My brother and I have spent long time in prison away from our families without committing a crime. We have wasted lots of money on defending ourselves against trumped up charges. We have been ridiculed and our dignity and pride seriousness hurt.

I demand the return of my cattle in accordance with the Court rulings, compensation for the abuses I have suffered and the full implementation of the Jani Commission Report.

