

Nigerian survives brutal past for a brighter future

Akin is from Nigeria. He was intelligent and good with numbers. When he finished school, because of his ability with numbers and his reputation for being honest, he secured a job working for a Nigerian oil company.

He discovered that a large amount of petrol was being stolen from the company's petrol tankers and devised a procedure that prevented this happening, but as a result of this he was threatened by the criminal gangs stealing the petrol and his parents lost their house and farm. His mother and father have since died.

The petroleum company helped him by funding a scholarship for him to study accountancy in London. However, the company went bankrupt and his funding stopped after the first year.

He then found himself unable to continue with his course, destitute and afraid to return to Nigeria. He spent the next three years sleeping rough on London buses, using public toilets and relying on charities for food.

After three years a charity worker persuaded him to apply for asylum, but his application for asylum and appeals were rejected by the Home Office. In an attempt to make a further case for his asylum claim, his solicitor asked him for more details of his life in Nigeria. He explained that while he was a school boy he had been caught in a compromising situation with another boy and for this he had been held by four teachers and publicly given 50 lashes in front of the whole school after which he had collapsed and gashed his forehead.

His solicitor then lodged another asylum appeal on the grounds of his sexuality. Homosexuality is illegal in Nigeria and on this basis was granted leave to remain.

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