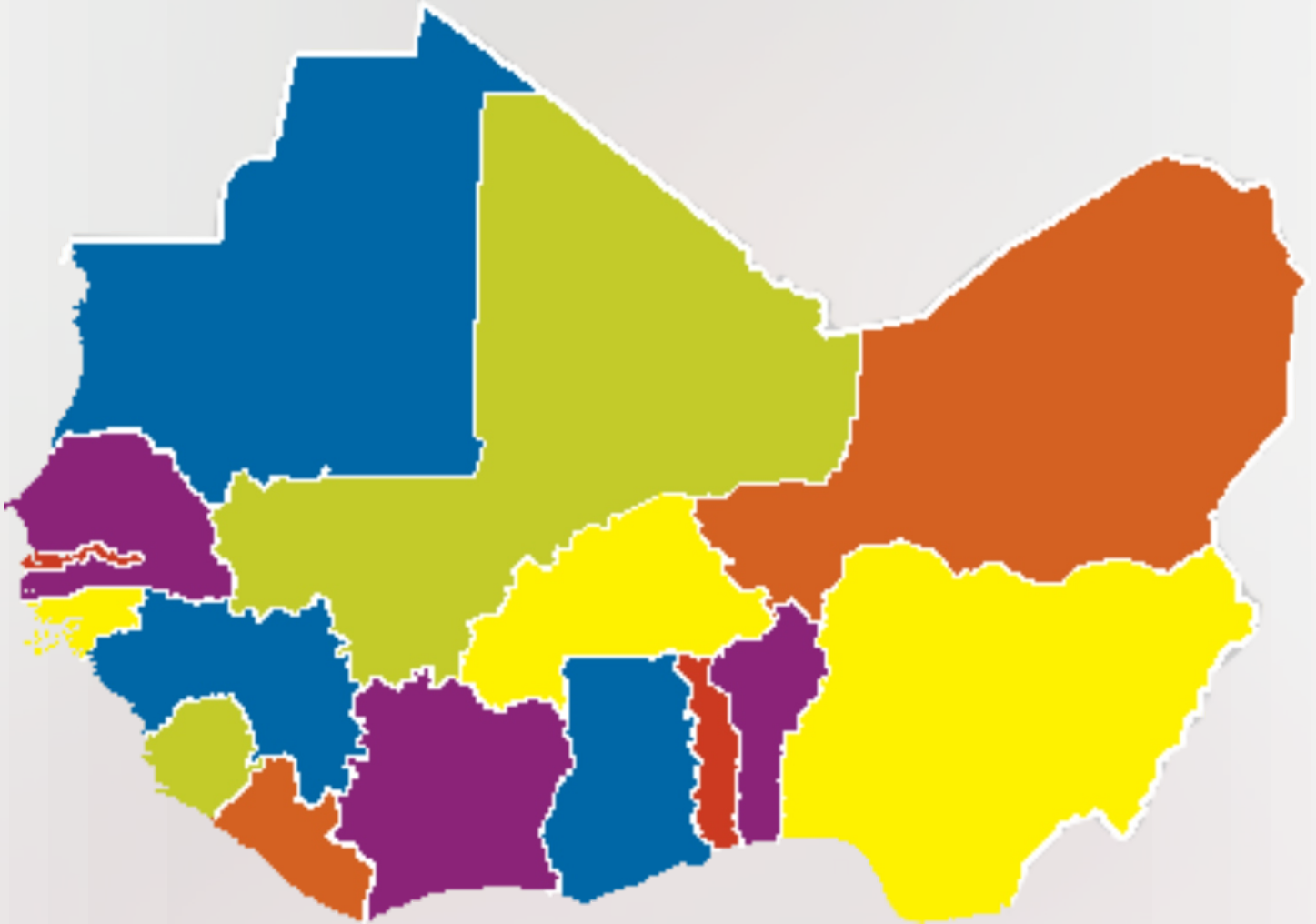


# War On Cyber Criminals



VOL 8 NO 2 FEBRUARY 2019

## EFCC **ALERT!**



### Money Laundering

## **EFCC Takes War Beyond Borders**

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# Money Laundering: Taking the War Beyond Nigeria

**The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, takes its war against money laundering, beyond the shores of Nigeria, as it engages with law enforcement agencies in Republic of Niger, Ghana**

By TONY EGBULEFU



Magu in a meeting with Mme Aliyu Mamane (right), Deputee, Republic Du Niger Assemblée Nationale and Liman Mohamadu, Chairman, Anti-corruption Committee and 2nd Vice president, Republic Du Niger Assemblée Nationale

Over the years, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC has been unrelenting in its drive to expand the frontiers of its anti-money laundering crusade beyond the borders of the country. This became necessary given the fact that looters of the Nigerian treasury are continuously discovering overseas safe havens to launder their ill-gotten wealth. Aside countries of the West and the United Arab Emirates, African jurisdictions have in recent times held

attraction to Nigerian money launderers. This has seen an astronomical surge in Nigerians' investments and property acquisitions in countries such as Ghana, Egypt, Cameroun, South Africa, Equatorial Guinea, Niger Republic, Morocco, Seychelles and others. Speaking in Niger Republic recently, the Acting Chairman of the Commission, Ibrahim Magu observed that corrupt Nigerians "even go to the extent of changing their names and acquiring the destination countries' international passports in collusion with corrupt public officers in their countries of residence in order to hide their identities and

evade detection."

Magu was in the neighbouring West African country in the light of his enterprise to strengthen inter-agency ties and collaborations in the African sub-region and in the continent as a whole in his renewed fight towards elimination of safe havens for slush funds, money laundering and terrorism financing in African jurisdictions. During the visit, the EFCC boss met some key players and institutions in the country's anti-corruption establishments. They included the president, High Authority Against Corruption and Related Crimes,





Signing of the MoU between the EFCC and HALCIA, in Niamey, Niger Republic

HALCIA, Abdourmane Gousmane, Mme Aliyu Halima Mamane, Deputee, Republic Du Niger Assemblee Nationale and Chairman, Anti-corruption Committee; Liman Ali Mohamadou, and 2nd Vice President, Republic Du Niger Assemblee Nationale.

Magu explained that though there existed a protocol between Nigeria and Niger Republic in the fight against corruption and terrorism financing, there was the need to further strengthen the ties. It was against this background that an MoU was signed by the EFCC and its Nigerien counterpart, the High Authority Against Corruption and Relating Crimes, HALCIA in Niamey. The MoU is geared towards the strengthening of collaborative efforts between the Nigerian front row anti-corruption agency and its Nigerien equivalent and specially to help eliminate any obstacle and impediment in information and intelligence exchange in both countries' fight against corruption.

Section Seven of the MoU captures how the parties will exchange information, including those which are necessary to achieve the objectives of the MoU.

According to the section, "the parties will exchange information in accordance with this Memorandum of Understanding in conformity to the relevant laws of Niger and Nigeria relating to the protection of

## Magu's Five-Point Appeal to President, HALCIA, Niger Republic

- (i) Identifying huge cash in the financial system owned by Nigerians to enable the Commission find out if they are looted funds/proceeds of crime.
- (ii) Identifying the numerous properties owned by Nigerians, including the details of the owners in order to enable the Commission ascertain if such Nigerians acquired the properties from looted funds/proceeds of crime.
- (iii) Stopping moves by persons who plan to move funds at this period

through the usual medium to destabilise the political stage in Nigeria.

(iv) Increasing a clampdown on Nigerians who are involved in cyber crime and handing over their details to the EFCC for further necessary action.

(v) Assisting the EFCC in the arrest of persons on the wanted list of the Commission who absconded to Niger Republic due to the free movement, granted to citizens of the ECOWAS states.

privacy and confidentiality."

At the brief MoU signing event, Magu noted that in the course of EFCC's fight against corruption, it has discovered that "corrupt public officials loot Nigerian treasury and stash their illicit gains abroad, denying Nigerians of viable resources that could develop the nation."

He further observed that the traditionally

preferred destinations of Nigerian looters which have been the United Kingdom, United States, Switzerland, Luxembourg, UAE have fast expanded to consist many African countries, thus, leading to a sharp rise in the number of Nigerians who buy properties and own investments in African countries.

"It is my conviction that our collaborative





Exchange of the MoU document between Magu and Gousmane

**We need measures to strengthen the legal framework to make it difficult for looters to transfer illicit funds to Niger Republic.**

**- Magu**

corruption icon, we have no choice than to leverage on Nigeria for capacity building in taming the corruption monster," Gousmane said.

Magu informed his host that he earlier visited Ghana and Cameroun, noting that the Commission will continue to reach out to other preferred looters' destinations in Africa and beyond.

He revealed that the efforts of the Nigerian government to trace, recover and return assets stolen from Nigeria coupled with increased advocacy of the EFCC to discourage safe havens for proceeds of corruption are yielding good harvests.

Magu, it could also be recalled had mid January, taken along with him some detectives of the Commission to Ghana with the primary aim of blocking the transfers into Nigeria of illicit funds of corrupt Nigerians, salted away in the West African country.

The action was anchored on intelligence reports, which established that Nigerian treasury looters and Politically Exposed Persons, PEPs were in cahoots with Nigerian banks, domiciled in Ghana to funnel slush funds, stacked up in those banks, back to Nigeria, preparatory to this year's electioneering. Having tracked the movements of the stolen funds out of Nigeria, over a period, Magu while in Ghana, signed a MoU on behalf of the Commission with Ghana's Economic and Organized Crime Office (EOCO), as well as with the Ghana Financial Intelligence Centre and Ghana Police Service.

Curious is that within the West African sub-region, a good measure of the trans-border migration of Nigeria's looted funds are carried out by road transportation through Nigerian porous land borders to avoid the eagle eyes of security personnel at the airports.

Aside the blockade of the migration of suspect funds to Nigeria, the MoU with Ghana's anti-corruption infrastructure also targets properties of corrupt Nigerians in Ghana. ■

**- With reports from Tony Orilade and Samin Amaddin, who were in Niamey and Ghana, respectively**

efforts will go a long way in eliminating safe havens. In fact, this is in tandem with renewed global commitment by countries to shut their doors to stolen funds. I also want to call for conscious measures to sanitize and strengthen the legal framework so as to make it difficult for looters to transfer illicit funds to Niger Republic for investment or whatever purpose," Magu stated. In this direction, he urged his Nigerian counterpart to tighten the noose on corrupt Nigerians, resident in the country and make Niger Republic unconducive for all looters from Nigeria. He reiterated that "the fight of the EFCC against looters" safe havens is total. While decorating the Nigerian Ambassador to Niger Republic, Ambassador Haliru and all the embassy staff with the EFCC lapel, the EFCC Acting Chairman urged them to note that the anti-corruption fight was a collective one.

"Whether you are at home in Nigeria or in the Diaspora, you need to make your

contribution. Add your voice to the crusade against corruption. The fight is real. Don't also forget that corruption is fighting back, but together, we shall win", he assured. Ambassador Haliru, who received Magu in the country, praised him for his zeal and passion for the job. "We are hearing and seeing all your achievements in the fight against corruption. We are praying to God Almighty to give you good health and long life to confront the corrupt," he said.

For the President of HALCIA, Gousmane, there was no better time than now for a stronger collaboration between Nigeria and Niger Republic in the fight against corruption.

"We are ready and willing to partner with Nigeria. Nigeria has the experience and the human capacity; and with President Muhammadu Buhari who is a renowned anti-

# War on Cyber Criminals

**On a mission to redeem the image of Nigeria in the international community, the EFCC declares war on cyber criminals, with many already convicted**

BY PAUL IKPOR



Before Justice Senchi delivered his judgement, he cautioned the convicts and commended the EFCC for putting so much work in curbing Internet fraud, which has given the country a bad image in the international community.

He said: "We don't have any other country. What will be the impression of the victim, when you go out there and introduce yourself as a Nigerian? How would you feel if you were in the shoes of the victims?"

The trial judge, thereafter, sentenced Oghuma to 12 months in prison, with an option of fine of N500,000. The court also ordered that the N2 million he fraudulently obtained be forfeited to the Federal Government;

Onokebhagbe was sentenced to three months, without an option of fine, while Ekene was sentenced to six months with an option of fine of N250,000.

Three days later, December 21, 2018, Fabulous Peter and Osahun Aiseosa also faced the same music, as they were also brought before Justice Senchi.

Still based on an intelligence report about their suspicious movements and ostensible lifestyles, they were arrested by the operatives of the Commission.

Aiseosa, who goes by the pseudo-name, Wesley Jackson, was alleged to have sometime in June 2018, in Abuja, defrauded an American, Dian Mary, of the sum of \$15,000 (about N5.4 million), while posing as a company director with Malaysian-based oil rig contractors. He proposed love to Mary via email.

Peter and Aiseosa, who were arraigned separately, pleaded guilty to

It was the end of the road for Emeka Ekene, 27; Anthony Oghuma, 26, and Onokebhagbe Franklin, 25, as a Federal Capital Territory, FCT High Court, Jabi, presided over by Justice D.Z. Senchi, on December 18, 2018 found them guilty of engaging in internet fraud. Ekene, Oghuma and Franklin never thought that their covert and nefarious activities online would be exposed. But, they have now learnt that when the EFCC says, "we will get you, anywhere, anytime, anyhow", it means every word of it. Their journey to prison followed an intelligence report received by the EFCC on November 30, 2018, concerning the activities of some fraudsters, housed by one Alheri E.B. Sajo, at Cluster 4, River Park, in Abuja.

Investigations into the report, revealed that the fraudsters had turned the said property into their "office", equipped with Laptop

computers and sophisticated phones to defraud Nigerians and foreigners alike. They lived large, but their exuberant lifestyle, which was not tied to any visible means of livelihood, made them subject of investigations.

Ekene was arraigned on a four-count charge bordering on cheating. He specialized in using Facebook for fraud. Oghuma, on his part, was arraigned on a one-count charge. He allegedly induced one David, a Canadian to transfer N2 million to him. Onokebhagbe was arraigned on a four-count charge. He defrauded a New York-based divorcee by posing as Peter Mark, a Malaysian-based Contractor.

Onokebhagbe swindled Mary of \$10,000 (about N3.6 million) and lured her to send him several expensive gadgets including, Apple laptop computer, iPhone X, and iPhone 7.

Shocked by the weight of evidence gathered against them, they did not waste the time of the court as they all pleaded guilty.





Eleven internet fraud suspects, arrested in Ilorin on February 4

the charges, and were afterwards convicted and sentenced to 12 months in prison with an option of N1 million fine, each.

The trial judge also ordered that properties recovered from them be forfeited to the Federal Government. Determined to rid the country of cybercriminals, the EFCC has so far revved up its war against cybercrime across the country, with several internet fraudsters arrested in Port Harcourt, Ibadan, Ilorin, Enugu, Edo, and Lagos.

Six members of a syndicate of online fraudsters at an area of Lagos State, which hitherto was not known for such activities – Badagry's rustic community of Iyana Era, were smoked out by the EFCC. When operatives of the EFCC visited the community, acting on intelligence report, they went straight to Iyana Era, where Samuel Ndubisi, Samuel Gaza Tanko, Efe Godwin Okoye, Onyekachi Emanuel, Sari Isaac Felix and Ahmed Quadri, had made home for their nefarious activities. It was the outcome of a sting operation that indeed, got them stung.

Five suspected internet fraudsters were also rounded up by the EFCC following the investigation of a petition filed by a new generation bank, indicating the suspicious

transfer of about N63 million to the account of Paul Duru.

Duru was one of the syndicate, which included, Daniel Effiong, David Gold, Moses Gold and Eke Kelechi. His arrest further led to the apprehension of his "gang members", for whom he worked as a picker, helping to receive money from unsuspecting victims, who Effiong, a catfisher, lures into the trap of romance and dating scams.

Their modus operandi involves working in cahoots with another picker John Benn, in the United States, who receives the money in dollars and then sends to Effiong, who converts to naira and sends to Duru. Other pickers are based in

Korea and Canada. About N31 million was recovered from them.

The EFCC has also recently smoked out internet fraudsters in Ilorin, the capital of Kwara State, and Ibadan, the Oyo State capital, which hitherto were not known for the activities of *yahoo yahoo* boys.

On February 4, 2019 operatives of the EFCC also arrested 11 suspected internet fraudsters, following a tip-off and surveillance carried out around Agric Estate, Ilorin.

The suspects, who were rounded up at about 11 pm include, Oluyomi Kadri, Adeseye Ogundele, Olasoji Alabi, Abdullahi Saliu, Abdullahi Ibrahim and Abolarin Kayode.

Also arrested during the raid, were five ladies, Momoh Aminat, Momoh Nimota, Kelvin Blessing, Sunday Ruth and Oyinlola Awokunle.

Among items recovered from them were land purchase documents, three exotic cars, laptop computers, internet modem, mobile phones and ATM cards.

Some of them have already confessed to their involvement in various forms of internet fraud. ■

- With reports from Segun Adeoye, who was in Lagos

**What will be the impression of the victim, when you go out there and introduce yourself as a Nigerian? How would you feel if you were in the shoes of the victims?**  
- Justice Senchi





## Ibadan, Hub of *Yahoo* Boys?

**Tucked in the heart of the ancient Oyo Empire, Ibadan, the capital and most populous city in Oyo State, Nigeria, now teems with an army of young internet fraudsters**

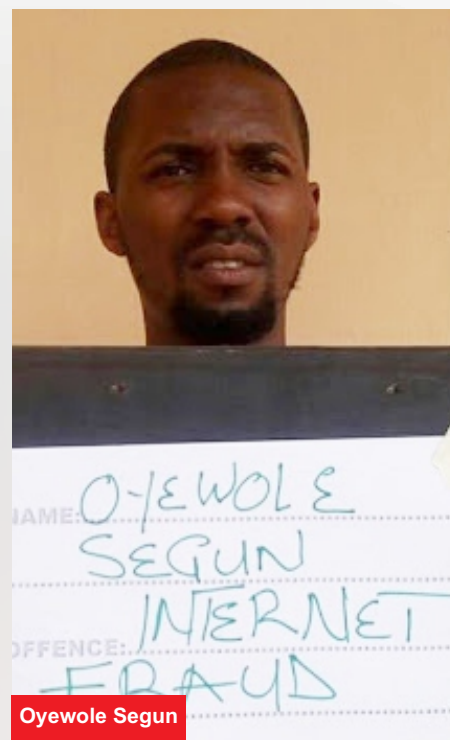
By EMEKA IBEMERE

**W**ith a population of over four million, it is regarded as the third most populous city in Nigeria after Lagos and Kano. In fact, at the time of Nigeria's independence in 1960, Ibadan was the largest and most crowded city in the country, and the second densely inhabited in Africa after Cairo. But behind the few skyscrapers, are some new tenants that have come to rock the soul of the city. The new faces are young boys and girls from different states, especially Lagos, who are emptying themselves in Ibadan, stealing the quietness of the city and hiding under its peace to perpetuate their new acquired tricks of making money through cyber crimes, otherwise known as *yahoo*, *yahoo*.

Many undergraduates in Nigerian universities have relocated to the ancient city with their laptops for internet fraud. What they need is only the smart device and a stable Internet connection. But what is the magic or the attraction of Ibadan to these young Nigerians? According to crime experts, urbanization is increasing the vulnerability of urban dwellers, particularly the urban poor, to everyday hazards and risks. Reports have it that Ibadan residents are vulnerable to different risks, including crime, violence and other vices. Some experts also hint that fear of unemployment, after their efforts to gain admission into the university failed, is the push for many young Nigerians to consider internet fraud

**Ibadan was the largest and most crowded city in the country, and the second most densely inhabited in Africa after Cairo, until the carving out of Osun State.**

as escape route from poverty. Internet crime starts with Web freestyle. Here, 99% of *yahoo boys* started their careers from this fraud. With their private account on any trendy dating website, they fill in



their profile, find an attractive photo, and await somebody to “fall in love with them.” Once cornered, the victim soon begin to send hard currencies to pay the bills of the guyman. From this emotional gambits, desperate fraudsters have taken these acts of gimmickery a few notches up. Investigations have shown that the trend now is called, *yahoo plus* where the fraudster employ fetish means to hypnotize their victims before moving for the kill. A suspected internet fraudster arrested recently (name withheld), said those who are into *yahoo plus* use charm to hypnotize their victims. This trend is visible in the profile of suspects arrested in recent raids in Ibadan. In the last four months, over 50 suspected internet fraudsters, all undergraduates of various universities, were arrested in Ibadan and environs. Twenty-four students of Olabisi Onabanjo University, OOU and

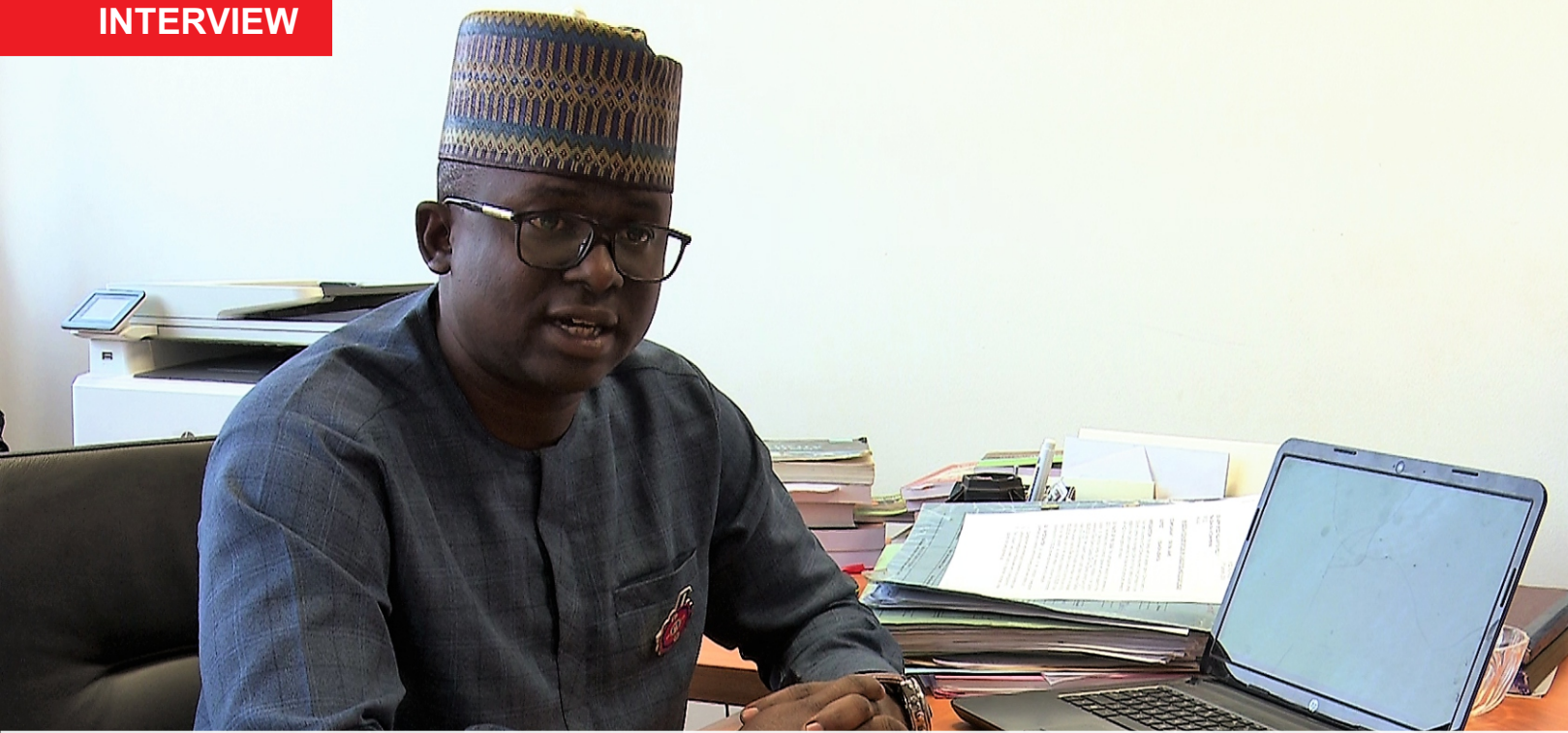
**“I usually pose as a genuine buyer and engage any seller in a bid to purchase a car”  
- Ayomide**

the National Open University of Nigeria, NOUN, were apprehended for alleged involvements in various internet frauds and arraigned in courts by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, in Ibadan. They are charged for obtaining money by false pretences, impersonation and possession of fraudulent documents. Also, in Ibadan, a gang of internet fraudsters comprising the trio of Davies Ayomide Rapheal, Adeyemi Adewumi Segun and Oyewole Segun who engage in phony online purchases from designated auction sites were nabbed.

The suspects confessed to have accomplices abroad. Ayomide Rapheal, the arrow head of the gang, allegedly prowls on the internet particularly on Craigslist- an online sale and purchase site, where items ranging from cars and furniture are being displayed for sale. “I usually pose as a genuine buyer and engage any seller in a bid to purchase a car. After the seller had agreed to the terms of purchase, I go online to edit any PayPal receipt online to reflect whatever agreement reached which includes cost of purchase and the accrued percentage for shipping”, he disclosed. An indigene of Ipetumodu, Osun State, Raphael, 27, said he had to recruit his co-travelers, Adeyemi and Oyewole into the syndicate in order to raise money to pursue his dream of becoming a music star, having dropped out of school. However, the good news is that fraudsters in Ibadan, are now fleeing the city because the EFCC has turned the heat on them. ■

**Additional report by Mary Orugonya**





## War on Internet Fraudsters is Total - Omar

Head of the EFCC's Advance Fee Fraud Unit, Abuja Head Office, **Sini Omar**, in this interview with **Habu Wayeri**, sheds light on the recent onslaught on internet fraudsters commonly called *yahoo boys*

**W**hy the sudden upsurge in the activities of advance fee fraudsters known as *yahoo boys* in Nigeria, especially in Abuja?

We are currently conducting a research and our preliminary findings suggest that as a result of the heat they received some years ago by our Lagos Zonal Office, it was discovered that quite a number of them fled into some neighbouring countries in the western part of Africa, particularly Accra, Ghana, and the likes of them.

We understand that the Ghanaian police put heat on them and chased them, which was also a reason for them, to relocate to other parts of Nigeria.

Because the activities of EFCC in

Abuja is focused more on Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs), which are called high profile criminals and cases that were ongoing which the courts were bothered with, they capitalized on this as avenue to come.

We believe it was because they understood our focus was on Politically Exposed Persons that made us to lessen our hold on their activities making them come into Abuja to hide, not until now that we are shifting our focus on them.

**What are the challenges in dealing with this recent trend, seeing that some of these fraudsters are going diabolical and having access to information?**

I do not subscribe to rituals, reason being

that for instance a couple of days ago we raided a compound and we recovered something that obviously will be called a ritual substance such as hair, reddish substance in a bottle tied and kept in a place that looked so sacred probably to the user and we just went and picked it up; so if that thing has supernatural powers the suspect should have disappeared before our arrival.

Perhaps, because they believe in it, it probably works for them, there is something about faith, if you believe in something it probably might be an illusion or it may be working for you because of your faith, just like your faith in God.

They do rituals because we have been recovering ritual-related substances, but whether it works or not, I do not subscribe to that but then you will also





believe that oftentimes what is being proposed to these victims are things that will entice you and easily fall into especially if you have some elements of greed.

Some of the victims may fall out of greed, but we do not accuse them of being greedy as we are being paid to fight for victims of such crimes. Usually there are greedy elements on part of the victims.

Someone will receive a phone call, SMS or an email as the case may be that you have won a contract that hitherto you never subscribed, applied or bid for, then suddenly you are made to follow them and you begin to pursue them to the extent that you are supposed to benefit from the contract, then you are made to pay a token of as low as N50,000 up to a million and before you realise it, one is indebted. These and so many others are the things, but I do not subscribe or believe that the rituals actually work for them.

#### **Any challenges so far?**

First of all, we are thankful for the

**Some of the victims may fall out of greed, but we do not accuse them of being greedy as we are being paid to fight for victims of such crimes. Usually there are greed elements on part of the victims.**

enactment of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act 2015 and the Cybercrime Act 2015, which have also captured some loopholes that were in the Penal Code, Criminal Code and the Advance Fee Fraud and other Related Offences Act 2006.

Right now, our main challenges are in the area of technology. These are basically young boys who mostly don't have degrees, but have taken time to develop

themselves [in the area of internet technology]. We are also trying to develop our capacity to meet them as they move a mile, we try to move two miles ahead.

So the challenges are not much. The Acting EFCC Chairman has been very supportive especially in the area of capacity building.

#### **What is your advice to young people that are likely to succumb or get lured into fraudulent activities?**

My advice to the young ones is to embrace hardwork, which pays, and also to bear in mind that nothing good comes easy. Unfortunately the extent of rot that has bedeviled our society is unfortunate.

Back in the days while growing up, our mothers were very strict disciplinarians and I will share a story with you via one case we had where a mother paid someone money to teach her son how to become an internet fraudster, just because she admired the lifestyle of her neighbour's children, knowing fully well that they are living a life of luxury and affluence, which is the consequence of the criminality they are involved in. ■



**Yes! Stealing is Corruption**  
**Shun It**