

'We Want Our Money Back'

The EFCC uses the 2019 African Union Anti-Corruption Day to rally Nigerians from all walks of life against corruption, and campaigns for the return of Africa's stolen wealth



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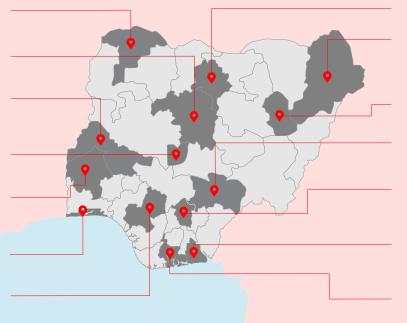
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"We Want Our Money Back"

The EFCC uses the 2019 African Union Anti-Corruption Day to rally Nigerians from all walks of life against corruption, and campaigns for the return of Africa's stolen wealth

BY SEGUN ADEOYE

RETURN OUR

STOLEN ASSETS!

he messages were unmistakable: "Return Our Stolen Assets", "Don't Stash Our Commonwealth Abroad", "Africa is Richer with Returned Stolen Wealth", "Walk Towards Asset Recovery and Return", "Corruption is a Monster", "Let's Stand Against Corruption", "Corruption Kills the Core Values of Our Dear Country", "Say No to Corruption, Support the Fight", among others.

It was Thursday, July 11, 2019 the day designated by the African Union, AU for Africans to mark the AU Anti-Corruption Day. In an apparent effort to draw attention to the urgent need for the repatriation of Africa's wealth, stashed in Europe, the United States, the United Arab Emirates, and other havens where wealth stolen from Africa are being kept, the AU designated this year's theme as: "Towards a Common African Position on Asset Recovery."

To drive home the message, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, rallied Nigerians from all walks of life, using a Road Walk and a Roundtable on Asset Recovery and Return to mark the 3rd AU Anti-Corruption Day.

At the Roundtable, which held at the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Centre, Abuja, participants in line with the theme, expressed one voice in calling for the return of Africa's wealth stashed abroad.

Special Guest of Honour, at the event, Boss Mustapha, Secretary to the Government of the Federation, SGF, commended the EFCC for "its unrelenting efforts to trace and recover stolen assets, and where they are located abroad, to repatriate them to their rightful owners." "The government is committed to this cause," he said.



Prof. Ibarhim Gambari, who also spoke at the event, noted that all efforts should be on the deck to prevent the "fraudulent transfer of our resources".

"The efforts to locate and repatriate stolen money require aggressive push, as well as collaboration with foreign countries," he said.

Mele Kyari, Group Managing Director, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, NNPC, stressed the need for transparency and accountability.

"We'll work with the EFCC wherever anybody has stolen anything from our commonwealth," he said.

Guest speaker, Dr. Tayo Oke, from the Afe Babalola University, Ekiti State, opined that seizure of stolen asset was key to the fight against corruption, and noted that, "the typical political exposed person, values his property far more than he does his liberty or being jailed".

On his part, acting EFCC Chairman, Ibrahim Magu, noted that since the adoption of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption on July 11, 2003 in Maputo, Mozambique, tremendous progress has been made across the continent in the area of sensitizing the citizenry against corruption.





He lamented the adverse effect of illicit financial flows out of Nigeria, and called for unity in combating the unfortunate trend.

He said: "Africa needs all assets back, while unity among nations in the African continent is critical in demanding for the recovery and return of all stolen money and assets, we also need accountability and transparency in the utilization of returned assets."

As part of this year's event, the EFCC also held a road walk from the Commission's Zonal Office at Wuse 2 to the Yar'Adua Centre, which was climaxed with the burning of a mock corruption coffin at the Eagles Square, to mark the symbolic end of corruption in Nigeria. Similar walk against corruption was also held across the zonal offices of the EFCC in the country, including Benin, Enugu, Ibadan, Lagos, Port Harcourt, Kaduna, Kano, Gombe, Maiduguri, Makurdi, Ilorin, Sokoto and Uyo.









BENIN

With posters and banners displaying striking messages such as: "Let's Stand Against Corruption"; "Corruption is a Monster", the Benin Zonal Office of the EFCC, marked the 3rd AU Anti-Corruption Day with a Road Walk from the EFCC office through Sapele Road, Ring Road, Oba Market Road, Plymouth Road, and Ezoti Street, to rally stakeholders including Civil Society Organisations, Trade Unions, members of the National Youth Service Corps and the Nigerian Union of Journalists, against corruption.

"This year's theme was particularly important because of the need to recover and return to the good people of Africa, what has been looted and stolen out of the country by some corrupt officials," said Muhtar Bello, Zonal Head.







"We Want Our Money Back"







ENUGU

The anti-corruption walk in Enugu afforded the EFCC the opportunity to charge the citizenry not to leave the fight against corruption to the EFCC, and should hold public officials accountable for their stewardship.

"Unless and until Nigerians determine to expose and hold public officials accountable for their stewardship and not view the fight against corruption from ethnic, political and religious perspectives, the war might never be won even if battles are won," said Usman Imam, Zonal Head.







GOMBE

The anti-corruption walk in Gombe, afforded the Zonal Head, Michael Wetkas the opportunity to take stock of the achievements of the zone in the past six months, which included securing 55 convictions and recovering N90 million stolen funds, with two properties finally forfeited to the Federal Government.

"As Africans in general and Nigerians in particular, we must take ownership of the anti-corruption fight. When you see something, report it to the Commission, we are always ready to do our job whenever you give us any information," he said.

IBADAN

The ancient city of Ibadan was painted red as Friday Ebelo, Zonal Head, led staff of the zone on the walk displaying messages such as: "Say Not To Corruption, Support the Fight"; "Corruption Kills the Core Values of Our Dear Country", among others.

The walk was organized in partnership with major stakeholders including the Federal Road Safety Corps, National Orientation Agency, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, and members of the media, as they joined forces with the EFCC to drive home this year's message of assets recovery and return.

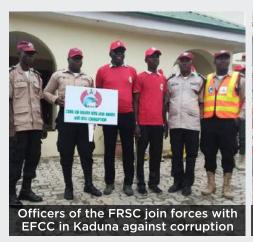


ILORIN

Residents of Ilorin, the Kwara State capital joined the EFCC in large numbers to commemorate the AU Anti-Corruption Day.

The walk started at about 7.45am and had in attendance, members of the National Youth Service Corps, Nigerian Immigration Service, Nigerian Customs Service, Federal Road Safety Corps, National Union of Road Transport Workers, Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria, along with members of Non-Governmental Organisations in the state.

"The high level panel on illicit financial flow shows that African Continent is losing in excess of \$50 billion yearly through illicit financial outflows," said Isyaku Sharu, Zonal Head, who urged participants to join the EFCC in the fight against corruption.







KADUNA

Mailafia Yakubu, Zonal Head, led staff and other stakeholders for the anti-corruption walk, and urged participants to support the efforts of the EFCC in ensuring that monies stolen from Nigeria, and Africa as a whole, stashed in overseas countries, were repatriated.

"All monies stolen from Nigeria and stashed out of the country will be repatriated," he said.



National Youth Service Corps members join in the walk

LAGOS

"The need to strengthen international cooperation amongst the anti-corruption agencies in Africa for purposes of developing an African common position framework on asset recovery and return cannot be overemphasized," said Muhammed Rabo, Zonal Head, who led staff along with anti-corruption crusader, Joe Okei-Odumakin, President, Women Arise for Change Initiative, in the anti-corruption walk.

KANO

"The heads of the anti-corruption agencies persistently sought for the collaboration of the global community in repatriating these stolen assets and there is need to strengthen international cooperation among anticorruption agencies for purposes of developing Africa's common framework on asset recovery," said Akananiyene Ezima, Zonal Head, as he led staff on the anti-corruption walk, stressing the need for support for the EFCC in and out of Nigeria.

MAIDUGURI

The anti-corruption walk in Maiduguri, was organized in partnership with members of the Nigerian Labour Congress, Trade Union Congress, Nigerian Bar Association, Civil Society Organizations, Hadikubrah for the Less Privileged Foundation, Nigerian Union of Road Transport Workers, National Youth Service Corps. It witnessed a large turnout, with participants displaying banners with messages like: "Walking Against the Evil Called Corruption".

Expressing the resolve of the EFCC to pursue the repatriation of Nigeria's stolen wealth, Lawrence Iwodi, Zonal Head, noted the ills of corruption and the negative consequences of illicit funds stashed in foreign countries. He thus charged participants to support the efforts of the EFCC.







"We Want Our Money Back"







MAKURDI

Johnson Babalola, Zonal Head, who led staff of the EFCC on the anti-corruption walk, urged Nigerians to join hands with the EFCC in the fight against corruption, specifically in recovering Nigeria's stolen wealth.

He pointed out that the every Nigerian has a role to play in the anti-corruption crusade.

"What we are doing is to sensitize Nigerians particularly the people of Benue State that everybody has to key into the anti-corruption crusade," he said.

PORT HARCOURT

The messages were apt: "Say No to Corruption", "Let's Fight Corruption Together."

Abdulrasheed Bawa, Zonal Head, who led the anticorruption walk said: "When the business environment is compromised by fraudulent elements in our midst, even people plying their trades in honest ways would be affected. This is why we are saying that we should shun corruption in all its manifestations."



SOKOTO

In partnership with members of the National Youth Service Corps, Civil Society Organizations and the general public, Abdullah Lawal, Zonal Head, led staff on the anticorruption walk, with the striking message: "Supporting the fight against corruption is a duty to everyone".

He said: "Corruption is the reason our roads are bad, why our hospitals are not functioning, why our educational system is disjointed, why electricity is epileptic and why our social and basic amenities are comatose. We congratulate you for standing up to be counted among patriotic Nigerians who wish this nation well and want the nation to move forward."



UYO

Garba Dugum, Zonal Head, led staff on the anticorruption walk stressing the importance attached to the repatriation of Africa's stolen wealth.

"More than \$50billion is being stolen from the African continent annually," he said, noting that it was the reason the African Union decided to give this year's event the theme.

ADDITIONAL REPORTS BY **NWANYINMA OKEANU, DELE OYEWALE, AYO OYEWOLE, CHRIS OLUKA, WILLIAMS OSEGHALE, BABATUNDE SULAIMAN, THERESA NWOSU, KAMILU GEBI, JIDE JEGEDE, ZAINAB AHMED, BELLO BAJOGA, GBENGA ADEWOYE, MUAZU LIMAN** AND **JAMILU SALE**

ABUJA

Moulding Minds



The acting EFCC Chairman, Ibrahim Magu, hosted students of Star Light Private, Sanusi Dantata Memorial and Excellent Neighbourhood Children's Parliament, July 4, 2019 at the EFCC Head Office, Jabi. "It is imperative to let children know what is right and wrong from their tender age," he said.

He further emphasized the need for them to report any



fraudulent act among themselves to their teachers and parents, adding that "doing so, the country will be rid of corrupt practices".

Recovery Mode

All stakeholders in the anti-corruption fight within and outside Nigeria, have been charged not to relent in ensuring that stolen funds stashed outside of the country are recovered unfailingly.

EFCC's Public Affairs Director, Osita Nwajah, who represented Ibrahim Magu, the acting EFCC Chairman at the "Agenda setting for citizens' interaction with stolen assets recovery: Abacha loot recovery and utilization as case study" conference organized by HEDA at Reiz Intercontinental Hotel, Abuja, July 3, 2019 gave the charge.

"The effort to not only stanch the bleeding of our nation, but also to recover what has been looted is one that must be from within and outside the country," he said. "We at the EFCC will do everything within our mandate and the laws we enforce to not only prevent corruption, but also prosecute the corrupt and when we retrieve the stolen funds we must make sure as leaders and followers that the funds are not re-looted."

Midas Touch



The EFCC Football Club, EFCC FC is currently the reigning FCT AITEO Cup Champion after it defeated Setraco FC one goal to nil on April 28, 2019 to emerge winners of this year's competition. The winning goal was scored by the club's captain, Icha Emmanuel.

The EFCC FC had earlier defeated Supreme Court FC one goal to nil at the semifinal, Casmat FC four goals to nil at the quarterfinal and Defense Striker, six goals to nil in the round of 16.

The feat means the EFCC FC represents the Federal Capital Territory, FCT, at the national level.

Digital Intelligence



Twenty officers of the EFCC, got equipped with skills in digital banking, and got exposed to introduction to banking fraud, bank fraud investigation, electronic payment and remittance systems in Nigeria, at a training, which held at the EFCC Academy, Abuja, July 8 to 11, 2019.

The training, according to Suraj Sanusi, programme facilitator, was to improve the capacity of staff with special focus on digital banking, which was as a result of a needassessment exercise conducted by the EFCC Academy.

"Operatives need to be upgraded, and they need to understand the dynamic nature of digital banking operations with regards to giving evidence in court," he said.

KADUNA

Clerical Challenge



Religious leaders across all faith have been challenged by the EFCC to see themselves as critical to the anticorruption fight. The challenge came on the heels of a visit by a delegation from the

Interfaith Mediation Centre, IMC, Kaduna, to the Kaduna Zonal Office of the EFCC, on June 24, 2019. The delegation was led by the Co-executive Directors of the Centre, Imam Mohammad Nurayn and Pastor James Wuyep.

The Zonal Head, Mailafia Yakubu, who commended the initiative, said: "Every religion abhors corruption, that is why we are urging you as religious leaders to preach to your followers on corruption and the danger associated with the crime."

The IMC is a faith based non-governmental organization established in May 1995 to achieve peaceful coexistence and to promote good governance. The centre is being sponsored by MacArthur Foundation Funded Project on "Combating Corruption through Interfaith Platform in Nigeria".

GOMBE

Stern Warning

A stern warning has been issued to banks to ensure that they implement measures to stem the increasing cases of insider abuse and compromise of confidentiality among their staff.

This was the outcome of an interactive session between the Zonal Head, Michael Wetkas, and regional compliance officers of commercial banks in Gombe, on April 30, 2019.

"There are saboteurs in the fight against corruption within the banking industry, and the actions of such saboteur bankers are unacceptable to the Commission, because they are aiding and abetting crime, and obstructing the wheel of justice," he said.

KANO

Whistle Champions

Accountants and Treasury Officers have been urged to take the lead in championing the whistle-blowing policy of the Federal Government in a bid to further champion the anti-corruption crusade.

The charge came from the acting EFCC Chairman, Ibrahim Magu, at a two-day National Treasury Workshop organized by the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation, Kano.

"Accountant Generals, Directors of Finance, Treasury Officers should take the lead in whistle blowing by exposing corrupt practices in their offices," he said.

MAIDUGURI

Disobey! Go to Jail

Non-Governmental Organizations, NGOs, and Civil Society Organizations, CSOs in the North-East, which comprise Borno, Gombe, Adamawa,



Taraba, Yobe, and Bauchi have been warned to play by the rules and to fish out fake ones among them.

The warning came during a visit led by the Zonal Head, Lawrence Iwodi, to the Executive Director of the Civil Society Organizations in Maiduguri, Borno State, on July 4, 2019.

"The EFCC has received various complaints from individuals who were defrauded by fake NGOs," he said, stressing that it was necessary for NGOs to register with the Special Control Unit against Money Laundering, SCUML.

Further addressing the Executive Director, Ambassador Shehu Ahmad, he charged the CSOs to watch out for fraudulent NGOs and report them to the EFCC for investigation and prosecution.

MAKURDI

POS Palaver

Following increasing cases of the fraudulent use of Point Of Sale, POS machines in Makurdi, Benue State, the EFCC has



put in place machineries to ensure that anyone culpable will face the full wrath of the law.

Zonal Head, Johnson Babalola made the disclosure during an interactive session with regional bank managers on June 13, 2019.

"We are having serious challenges with the banks giving POS machines to individuals with questionable characters and without proper documentation," he said.

He pointed out that there was a need for some of the POS machines to be withdrawn from such individuals.

RTEAN Puzzle



The need for preventive measures in the fight against corruption formed the crux of the visit of the leaders of the Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria, RTEAN, Kwara State Chapter, led by its chairman, Abdulrahman Onikijipa, to the Ilorin Zonal Office of the EFCC, June 28, 2019.

Head of the zone, Isyaku Sharu, who received the visitors, stressed the importance of inclusiveness in the fight against corruption.

"Our duty does not end in arresting and prosecuting people, we are changing lives for good, and we must look at preventive mechanisms," he said.

According to him, fighting corruption requires a collective effort.

ENUGU

Youthful Agenda

Nigerian youths have been urged to shun corrupt practices, kidnapping, armed robbery and drug abuse, and to inculcate in themselves the culture of accountability, service, hard work and national pride.

Zonal Head, Usman Imam, stressed this, during the commemoration of the United Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, organized by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, held in Enugu, on June 26, 2019.

He said: "A sociologist once said that every nation is a generation away from anarchy if it does not take care of her youths and the vulnerable.

"Either we train our youths positively, and reap a better Nigeria, or negatively, and wait for them to unleash problems unto the society."

SOKOTO

Naira Heist

Operatives of the Sokoto Zonal Office nabbed one Murtala Muhammad, said to be a brother to Secretary to the Zamfara State Government, Prof. Abdullahi Shinkafi, with N60 million cash, following intelligence



report of his suspicious money laundering activities.

He was picked up at No.145 Igala Hausing Estate, Off Bypass Road, Gusau, Zamfara State, by the operatives of the Commission.

Items recovered from him at the point of arrest include: one Black Toyota Land Cruiser Prado Jeep with registration number DKA 67 PX Kaduna loaded with four bags of "Ghana must go" bag containing N1,000 notes of N15 million each; one single barrel gun; one locally made revolve pistol, 25 rounds of cartridges and 12 rounds of 12.9mm live ammunitions.

LAGOS

Saintly Visit



Students of Saint Joseph Secondary School, Mangoro, Agege, Lagos, paid a courtesy call on the EFCC Lagos Zonal Office, June 11, 2019.

Receiving them on behalf of the acting EFCC Chairman, Ibrahim Magu, the Deputy Zonal Head, Aminu Ado, urged them to embrace hard-work and to shun the temptation of going into crime.

"It is so disheartening to see that the expected leaders of tomorrow now see internet fraud as a shortcut to success," he said. "It has become so bad that they now see the infamous Yahoo Yahoo crime as an industry." He further advised the students to shun the practice of using the Internet for criminal activities, saying, "You can use the internet to develop yourselves with determination to achieve your dreams. There is no alternative to hardwork."

IBADAN

Scary Currency



The surge in digital currency-related crimes in the country has been described as worrisome, following the increasing cases of victims taking their cry to the EFCC for help.

This was the concern expressed at the 12th annual retreat for Heads of Security of Banks and Other Financial Institutions, organized by the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria, CIBN, with the theme, "Fighting Financial Crimes in a Digital Economy".

A senior official of the EFCC, Hanafi Baba-Ahmed, who represented the acting EFCC Chairman, Ibrahim Magu, at the two-day retreat stressed the need for an in-depth reflection of the potential and inherent contradictory issues between innovative payment system, new technology, including crypto-currency, and the protection of the financial system.

"As professionals in the industry, I urge you to be properly guided by the ethics of your profession including the identification and reporting of suspicious transactions," he said.

BENIN

Okada Accord



The anti-corruption message has once again been taken to Nigeria's youths, particularly the members of the National Youth Service Corps, NYSC who were camped at the NYSC Orientation Camp, Okada, Edo State.

Speaking to the youths, Head, Public Affairs of the Benin Zonal Office, Williams Oseghale, urged them not to stand aloof, stressing that they had a role to play in the fight against corruption.

"As young people you cannot afford to be mere spectators, we need your active participation in the anti-corruption campaign," he said, and urged them to "enlist as foot soldiers and to join hands with the Commission in the fight against corruption".

UYO

Lagbaja Partnership



The Commander, 2 Brigade, Nigerian Army, Akwa Ibom State, Brigadier General T.A. Lagbaja has stressed the importance of strengthening partnership with the EFCC in order to achieve economic prosperity for Nigeria.

He made this known when the Deputy Zonal Head, EFCC Uyo Zonal Office, Alex Ebbah, led a team of operatives on a courtesy call to the officers and men of the Brigade on May 30, 2019, at the State Command.

"Oil provides up to 80 per cent of our economic revenue, so it's pivotal and the military is out to protect, and with the amount of sophistication and boldness of criminal elements in the region, the EFCC needs the military and we pledge our support and availability," said Lagbaja.

Ebbah appreciated the Nigerian Army on behalf of the acting EFCC Chairman, Ibrahim Magu, and solicited for the continuous support and backing of the military in tackling illegal oil theft in the region.

PORT HARCOURT

Neutrality Test

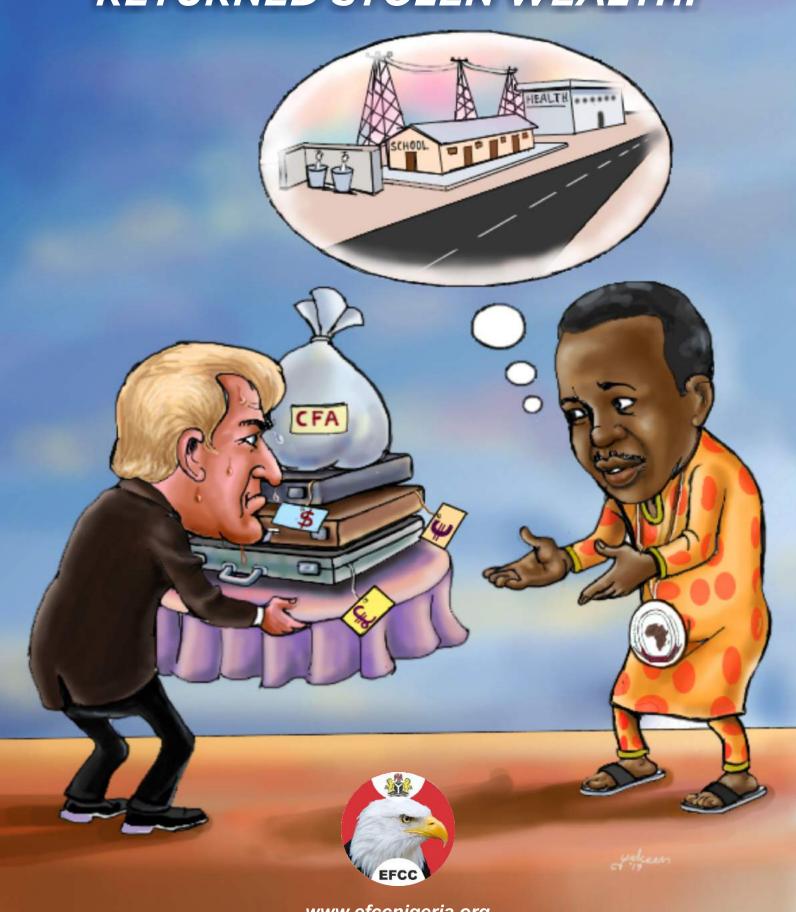


Civil Society Organizations, CSOs, in Nigeria have been charged to ensure neutrality and integrity in their advocacy and civil engagements.

The charge was given by the Deputy Head of the Port Harcourt Zonal Office of the EFCC, Aliyu Naibi, while receiving representatives of the Rivers State Anti-Corruption Network, ACoNet, on a visit.

"Improve your capacity to get credible information on all issues by constantly training your members," he said. "This is the only means of building their resistance to undue influences."

AFRICA IS RICHER WITH RETURNED STOLEN WEALTH!



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