

What Drives My Passion - Magu



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EFCCALERT!

A photograph of a man with a mustache, wearing a black cap, black-rimmed glasses, and a black zip-up shirt. He is sitting in a black leather chair and gesturing with his right hand, showing three fingers. He is wearing a silver watch on his left wrist.

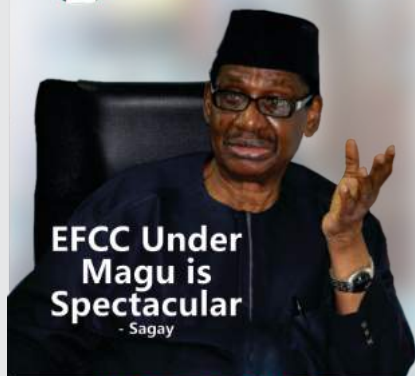
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Magu is
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- Sagay

Mission to Guinea

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Contents



Cover story

EFCC Under Magu is Spectacular -Sagay

3

What Drives My Passion -Magu

6

Mission to Guinea

9

Mega Scammers

10

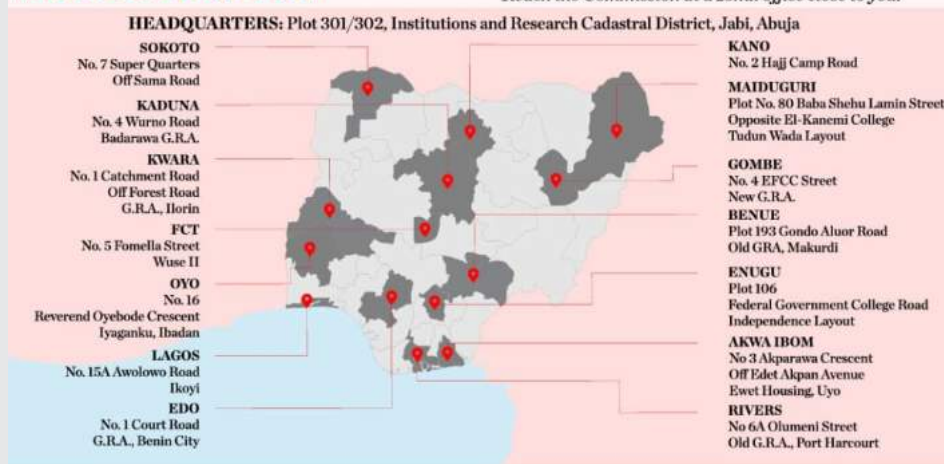
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EFCC Under Magu is Spectacular

Prof. Itse Sagay, Chairman, Presidential Advisory Committee Against Corruption, PACAC, in this interview with **Segun Adeoye** speaks on the war against corruption in the last four years spearheaded by the **Ibrahim Magu**-led Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, describes the results achieved as spectacular

Excerpts:

As Chairman, Presidential Advisory Committee Against Corruption, PACAC, what for you has changed in the fight against corruption, if at all anything has changed?

Two things [have changed] - commitment and political will. Political will from the top, that is from the Presidency, and commitment and determination by the present EFCC leadership. Those are the two things [that have changed]. And the results have been spectacular. That is the only word to use. We have seen an onslaught on corruption that is unprecedented in the history of this country. And [yet], there is no rest [on the part of the EFCC]. You know, it is not a question of saying, 'oh, I want to rest on my oars'; No, everyday, I open the newspapers, [there is a] fresh onslaught [by the EFCC]. So, you find it goes on every day. And you see that the psychological impact of that is tremendous. It means that those who either illegally acquired money, looted

"This is an EFCC that does not sleep. It does one and then before you know it, it does the other, and then the other, and then the other, and it goes on indefinitely."

state money and laundered it into buildings and other things, or are keeping the money, must be very uncomfortable. They will be saying, 'when are they [the EFCC] going to get to me'. This is an EFCC that does not sleep. It does one and then before you know, it does the other, and then the

other, and then the other, and it goes on indefinitely. So that is why I say the EFCC's achievements in the last four years have been spectacular - that is the only word I can use. And for me, when you have a good thing like that, you hold on to it. And my hope is that the leadership of the EFCC will remain the same in the next four years.

You are, perhaps, the only person that has been so consistent in your support for the anti-corruption crusade of the current administration of President Muhammadu Buhari, spearheaded by Mr. Ibrahim Magu, why?

Well, let's look at the two personalities differently. Already, President Buhari has a track record, coming from 1984. So that track record is laid. And so we knew, without any questions that what was truncated in 1985 was going to continue. In fact, some of us even say that it has lost some of the ferocity it had; we want it to be even more ferocious as it used to be. So he has been consistent. So, I had no doubt about that. In the case of the leadership of the EFCC, it

took me some time; I watched; I saw what they were doing, and in a matter of months, I made up my mind that these are people who are indefatigable and totally committed to this struggle against corruption. And you can also know [if they are effective], by determining who their opponents are. When you see the looters and corrupt people, raising all sorts of objections, trying to truncate the tenure, and doing all sorts of things, to run down that leadership, particularly as headed in the person of Magu, then you know that he is doing something positive. And that makes me more determined to see that he remains there.

You were at the commissioning of the new EFCC Head Office Complex, back in May 2018. How significant is that achievement on the part of Magu, and indeed, President Buhari?

His committing funds in it, is because President Buhari believes in what the EFCC is achieving, and so, [there is need] to give them a commanding and very functional [office]. Yes, it's magnificent to look at, but it is also very functional, because, I went in, I saw the laboratories, where a lot of forensic work is going to be done. I saw the new cells, very humanitarian cells, clean, well lit, to show that people (detainees) are not being punished, dehumanized [in any way], they are just being kept there in as comfortable a state as possible, pending the conclusion [of their investigations]. That office building has all the things to support a major state institution like the EFCC. The laboratories were well equipped, but they could be improved upon. And I think EFCC needs help to take it to the sharpest and highest point in that regard. And I hope that the various donors will support the government in ensuring that the equipment are first class, because what EFCC is doing, is not just for Nigerians alone, [but] also for the rest of the world. So, I think the

headquarters is extremely befitting.

Now, some persons argue, that in a country with 200 million plus people, why this consistent support for this one man, Magu, like he is the only one that can fight corruption?

That's a very good issue to raise. It has been raised before, by those who wanted to get rid of him - that can he be the only one! Alright. The point is this, we are sure of him. That is the issue. We are sure of him, and he is there. Why do you now want to remove

“For me, when you have a good thing, you hold on to it. And my hope is that the leadership of the EFCC will remain the same in the next four years.”



him, so that we can see whether we can get somebody else, who is good, then you begin to start another guess work, and you can end up with a disaster. When he has completed his tenure, we can begin to look for that other good man. But why push him out, whilst he still has the capacity and the legal cover to continue for eight years all together. So, that is the issue. If you look at it, the people asking those questions, they are people who are not comfortable with the successes of the fight against corruption. They are people, who either have been affected or are afraid, or feel EFCC is creeping towards them gradually, and they want to avoid it. They want to put somebody they can compromise - a complacent person. They don't want a man who is courageous, who is totally committed and rejects compromise, rejects bribe, rejects everything, risks his life, to ensure that this job is done. Why I am so strong in supporting the EFCC is that I feel that if we can eliminate corruption, the fate of this country will change dramatically. So the people who keep on questioning the government, questioning the leadership of the EFCC, saying there are other people there, we are saying [to them] that we are sure of this one, let us use him fully for the benefit of the country whilst he has tenure, after his tenure is completed, please [you can] go and bring the other good man you are talking about.

There is the allegation that the EFCC in the current dispensation has become an arm of the All Progressives Congress, APC government, going after the opposition.

They know that is not true. Like I have always explained, the PDP [Peoples Democratic Party] was in power for 16 years. It is only when you are in power, you are controlling resources of the State that you have capacity to loot those resources. People who are in APC (though not all), most of them were not in power, so the very first people that will attract attention, are those who have



“We are very lucky that the team that is fighting corruption now is the best team that we have ever had, and I pray that the team stays together for the next four years.”

just left power, who have accumulated so much money in their private accounts. We call it the low hanging fruits, it is obvious. Personally, if I am in the position of an anti-corruption agency, I will go for the obvious ones, first. When you go for the obvious ones, then you can begin to dig deeper. But the EFCC and ICPC are going after APC members, too. I don't want to mention names, but I know a former governor from the East, who has been under prosecution and the matter is coming to judgement very soon; his crossing to APC has not saved him from being prosecuted. I know that some of these past governors, who are opposed to Magu, and who are in the Senate, are under investigation. I know that there are quite a number of APC people, who are either being tried, or who are under investigation. In fact, I understand that the two governors, who have been jailed, were APC members. So, there is no basis for that argument. They should expect that PDP members will be among majority of those being prosecuted, and being investigated, because they are the ones [who were] controlling the resources, which were looted. So, it is not a surprise, but that doesn't mean that APC members have not also been investigated and put under trial. It's a question of proportion, and the proportion is a natural and expected proportion.

“Just as the President is the African Champion, officially, in terms of fighting corruption, I will say Magu is the Champion in Nigeria.”

In democracy, it is said that there is room for lobbying, compromise is allowed. Don't you think that there is a place for lobbying in a democratic setting?

Compromise is the philosophy of the devil. Once you want to sell your soul, you compromise. Nothing is worth compromising for. So, he [Magu] is right to be rigid. The more rigid a person, usually, the more patriotic he is. That is why they used to call [Chief Obafemi] Awolowo a rigid man; but that is why today, his name still rings; those who were not born when he was alive, now see him as an icon, because he was rigid. Buhari is rigid. You need to be rigid, you

need to be uncompromising, otherwise, you can never be a patriot. You can never bring transformative change to a society, once you are inconsistent; then of course, everything you do will be affected by that. You have to stand for something, you have to put your foot down and say come what may, come fire, come water, this is what I stand for and I am not going to change. The president himself, and Magu, are as soul mates in this struggle to eradicate corruption. Just as the President is the African Champion, officially, in terms of fighting corruption, I will say Magu is the Champion in Nigeria. That is what Magu is. So, two of them are going to work together - the President will rely on him. The image that this country is enjoying today is mainly [due] to the achievements of EFCC. That is why, even if he leaves office today, he has made history, and his name will ring a positive bell forever, because, whenever you write about him, you have to write about all these [his achievements at the EFCC]. And that is why the president himself, will go down in history as one of the greatest anti-corruption advocates in Africa, and maybe in the world. So I think these two people [Buhari and Magu], form a fantastic team, and including Vice President Yemi Osinbajo. We are very lucky that the team that is fighting corruption now is the best team that we have ever had, and I pray that the team stays together for the next four years. ■



What Drives My Passion – Magu

Four years ago when Ibrahim Magu took over the helms at the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, November 11, 2015, no one was in doubt about the revolution, which the consummate detective, fondly referred to as “The General”, would bring to bear in the fight against corruption.

His pedigree as a “no-nonsense investigator” earned him the appellation of “The General”. Indeed, his appointment to the office by President Muhammadu Buhari on November 9, 2015 was an acknowledgement of his key role in the successful investigation and prosecution of a number of high profile cases in the history of the EFCC and the belief that Magu was undoubtedly, the right man to give verve, impetus and energy to the anti-corruption efforts of the Buhari administration. More recently, has been the investigation Magu spearheaded in unraveling the persons involved in the \$9.6billion judgement debt awarded against the Nigerian government in favour of a British Virgin Island based two-man company, Process and Industrial Development, P&ID Company, over a botched oil and gas contract. Two persons have already been convicted, with many heads set to roll for

“The struggle to enthrone a just and equitable society has been and will continue to be my life.”

their complicit roles in the scam, which has now won the Nigerian government some respite in the enforcement of the awarded judgment.

Magu has, undoubtedly, shattered the ceilings of restrictions, and raised the bar in areas of investigations, criminal prosecution and recovery of stolen assets, with the demystification of so-called “untouchables” in Nigeria’s lexicon. Flashback to 2015, it is no exaggeration to state that Magu was rightly appointed for the job. He has so far, dumbfounded his critics, and astounded his teeming supporters who feel fulfilled and delighted that he has not disappointed them. The nay-sayers are equally stunned by his achievements, which have seen him taken the fight against corruption to a high

pedestal unprecedented in the history of the country - what with the record breaking convictions secured and the staggering sums of monies recovered for the Federal Government.

Under Magu, hitherto no-go areas like fraud in Nigeria’s electoral process, the Pension Scam, the shady and suspicious consultancy deals in the handling of the Paris Refund Fund, fraud in the military’s arms procurement process, fraudulent contracts in the Oil and Gas Sector, the Malabu Oil Scandal, embezzlement of state funds, and internet fraud have all received intense attention.

Magu, remarkably, changed the narrative in the fight against corruption, raising higher bars in the arena of law enforcement, even as foreign law enforcement agencies (like the Federal Bureau of Investigations, FBI, and the National Crime Agency, NCA), now take the anti-graft agency as a worthy and reliable partner.

In this piece, **Segun Adeoye** takes a cursory look of Magu’s views expressed at a number of local and international fora and engagements as he x-rays the thought-process of a man whose passion for the corruption fight can best be described as legendary.



Confidence: President Muhammadu Buhari shakes Magu at the 74th United Nations General Assembly, New York, United States, September 27, 2019



Soulmates: Magu and his boss, President Mohammadu Buhari

“It is our strong belief that corruption will be killed faster in Nigeria, if everyone owns the fight.”

Corruption in Nigeria

I sometimes tell people, this rubbish called corruption was caused by my generation. It is [therefore] our duty to remove it before the next generation, so that the next generation will have a better life. We are going into massive campaign against corruption. We have seen some good results. People are beginning to change. It is about our people and the future of this country. We should do the right thing and give away our today for the better life of the next generation.

The EFCC has come a long way, from its very humble beginnings in 2003. From a handful of seconded staff, working with no takeoff funds, office or equipment, we are present in all the geo-political zones of the country, with hundreds of ongoing

investigations and prosecutions in courts all over the country. We have also recognized the need for global partnerships in the work that we do and are therefore in mutually beneficial relationships with all the leading law enforcement and regulatory agencies around the world. In the comity of global law enforcement, EFCC is the reference agency.

While we have not, and will not stop our enforcement activities, we are also placing due emphasis on prevention, which is the other leg of our dual mandate. To this end, and in realization of the fact that we do not pretend to have all the answers to the country's corruption problem, we have enlisted the support of Nigerians in all walks of life – from civil society to professional groups, labour, students and

market women to religious leaders. It is our strong belief that corruption will be killed faster in Nigeria, if everyone owns the fight.

Driving force

There is no better time to ginger up the anticorruption campaign than now. Apart from bringing corrupt public officers to justice, we are determined, in line with the stance of the current administration, to send an unmistakable message to everyone, that no Nigerian shall be regarded as being above the law or treated as a sacred cow as far as the fight against corruption is concerned. Apart from the fear of God, we have no other fear, and apart from the interest of Nigeria, we have no other interest. The days of impunity are over. Victory is certain for the common man. It is part of my vision to take the fight against corruption to the grassroots. We shall not betray the trust and confidence reposed in us. We have reached a level where nobody can stop us in the fight against corruption, but we all must realize that we are all stakeholders, and this fight is for the future generation. We are on a fight to retrieve Nigeria from the corrupt, because winning the war is key to our happiness, prosperity, development and dignity as a nation. Officers and men of the EFCC are resolved, focused and remain unperturbed.

On my watch, where hapless Nigerians are defrauded, EFCC will swiftly come to their aid; where powerless Nigerians are short-changed, EFCC will intervene; where there is impunity, EFCC will step in and level the field. The struggle to enthrone a just and equitable society has been and will continue to be my life.

Witch-hunting allegations

We don't chase innocent people, but thieves of state resources. We conduct certain background investigation before we invite a suspect. When we invite you, all we ask you is to corroborate our findings. [So] we don't torture people; far from it. We investigate non-violent crimes and so we have no basis to torture anyone. We specialize in financial crimes investigation, which means we follow the money to the extent of knowing how you utilized the money, how you distributed it, and so we do our own homework before we invite anybody. Apart from bringing corrupt public officials to justice, we are determined, in line with the stance of the current administration, to send an unmistakable message to everyone, that no Nigerian shall be regarded as being above the law or treated as a sacred cow.

Pressure to cave in

Those talking about succumbing to pressure do not know Ibrahim Magu. I have no fear in my DNA. The bigger they are the better for me. I do not fear anybody. The EFCC's motto is 'Nobody is above the Law'. That is what it is supposed to be; equality before the law is the grand norm of our constitution. So, we cannot succumb to pressure. We are not scared. If



Iconic Award for the “Special Anti-Corruption Crusader”

you do the crime, you must do the time. Nobody is above the law; you can report anybody found to be involved in corrupt practices [and we will act on it]. The fight has just started and we will do it to the last. We will get them [corrupt individuals] out, just give me 12 months, you will not see them again.

Indeed, the task of fighting corruption in Nigeria has never been, is not and can never be an easy one. The battle to make our dear country a place where foreign investors will be confident to invest in is, without doubt, one that must be fought by all Nigerians who love this country, if we are



Dr. Myra Gordon, Founder/President, Amazing Africa LLC precepts “Outstanding Leadership Award” to Magu, Oct 3, 2019

to make any appreciable progress. Perhaps, it is fair to describe the task of championing the anti-corruption crusade as one of the most difficult jobs in the world, because corruption always fights back viciously on many fronts. I have

experienced this first-hand. However, I am determined to fight corruption to the end, and I have made the solemn pledge never to give up the fight. Those who dread to be punished for their corrupt deeds should take notice that the EFCC is watching. It would be naïve for anyone to expect the fight against corruption to be smooth; you should expect resistance and opposition which are expressed in various guises. We will continue to fight corruption, whether anybody likes it or not

[because] we are convinced that it is the only way we can bring succour to this country. If you go to the United States or the United Kingdom, they are all awashed with news about our efforts in the fight against corruption, particularly the Malabu Oil scandal. So, we are succeeding, and so it is pertinent for us to forget about personal interest and consider the overall interest of the country. Corruption flourishes when good people fail to confront it. ■

“I am determined to fight corruption to the end, and I have made the solemn pledge never to give up the fight.”



Magu with President Alpha Conde

Mission to Guinea

The Guinean government, like many other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, looks up to the EFCC as a mentor, seeks assistance to improve the capacity of its anti-corruption agency

“Africa needs to rise above corruption to take its place in the world. We can only hope to achieve this if we draw from our collective strengths and imbibe lessons from our individual experiences,”

declared Ibrahim Magu, EFCC Chair in Kampala, capital of Uganda, at the 9th Annual General Meeting and Conference of the Heads of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Commonwealth Africa.



Magu at one of the meeting

It was therefore not surprising, when on November 25, 2019 Magu reached an agreement with President Alpha Conde of Guinea to assist the West African country to help build the capacity of its anti-corruption agency. The agreement was reached in Conakry, the country's capital, following President Conde's invitation to Magu requesting for the EFCC to assist the French-speaking

country to fashion out effective mechanism aimed at improving the capacity of the anti-corruption agency in the country.

President Conde noted that the

held meetings with different law enforcement agencies including Col. Camara Tregbore, secretary general of Guinea's High Crimes Commission, along with Namory Camara, managing director of

the country's agency in charge of private investment; Dr. Mohamed L Doumbouya, the ministerial advisor in charge of financial institutions; Mr. Gabriel Courtis, minister of Investment, and Mr. Kouyaté, special adviser to President Conde.



Group photograph with officials of the Guinean government

achievements of the EFCC in the fight against corruption in Nigeria, spurred the decision to tap into the wealth of knowledge of the anti-graft agency and to make the EFCC a mentor organization for Guinea's anti-corruption agency.

Towards achieving the goal, Magu also

“The body language of the president is enough message to the people. It shows that corruption will not be tolerated in Guinea,” Magu said, stressing the need for collaboration and sensitization of Guineans against corruption. He added that language will not be a barrier as there are translators and interpreters at the EFCC Academy where officials from Guinea will be trained. ■

Mega Scammers

A look at the EFCC's war against internet fraud (fondly referred to as yahoo yahoo) in the month of November



Ismaila Mustapha, aka Mompha, leaving court

Ismaila Mustapha, aka Mompha, held sway as a social media sensation displaying wads of different currencies on Instagram to the consternation of not a few. But the bubble burst when on October 18, 2019 operatives of the EFCC arrested him at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja on his way to Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, following series of actionable intelligence reports confirming his involvement in organized transnational cybercrime and money laundering.

He was arrested in possession of five wristwatches valued at over N60million, which were recovered from him.

Investigations further revealed that he operates 51 bank accounts in Nigeria, which he deployed to acquire property in Dubai. He also allegedly laundered about N14billion through a firm known as Ismalob Global Investments Limited. His alleged accomplice, Hamza Koudeih, a Lebanese, was arrested at his \$5million per annum apartment at Eko Atlantic Pearl Tower, Victoria Island, a highbrow location in Lagos State. He is alleged to have used two firms THK Services Limited and CHK Properties Limited to launder as much as N19billion.

Mompha's trial commenced on November 25, 2019 before Justice Muhammad Liman of a Federal High Court on 14

counts of cybercrime and money laundering to the tune of N33billion, to which he pleaded "not guilty".

While his trial continues, his accomplice, Koudeih was arraigned before Justice Muslim Hassan of a Federal High Court, Ikoyi, Lagos on November 28, 2019. He is facing 25 counts bordering on conspiracy and money laundering, along with another accomplice, Kayode Phillip. They are alleged to have been complicit in internet fraud involving the sum of \$7,069,000, £1,000 and €80,000. Their trial continues on December 5, 2019. ■



Koudeih and his spiritual ornaments



Kayode Philips and Koudeih, after arraignment

Hope Aroke

A fraudster without borders, swings mega scam from prison



Fondly referred to as H-Money, the hardened internet fraudster, despite serving a 24-year jail term at the Kirikiri Maximum Prison, Lagos, coordinated a mega cybercrime running to more than \$1million from prison.

A separate internet fraud being investigated had revealed how he used a fictitious name, Akinwunmi Sorinmade, to open two accounts with First Bank Plc and Guaranty Trust Bank Plc. He also bought a property at Fountain Spring Estate, Lekki Lagos in 2018 for N22million and a Lexus RX 350 2018 model registered in his wife's name, Maria Jennifer Aroke. He literally confiscated the token of his wife's bank account, which he used to freely transfer funds.

But how was 28-year-old Aroke able to achieve this while in custody? Investigations by the EFCC revealed that the former Malaysia-based Nigerian undergraduate fraudster, who

was convicted and sentenced to jail by a State High Court in Lagos, on January 25, 2016 was aided principally by two Deputy Controllers of the Nigerian Correctional Service - Emmanuel Oluwaniyi and Hemeson Edwin, who reportedly gave exaggerated medical reports that resulted in the convict being given referral to be treated outside of the Prisons. They were arrested on November 25, 2019 and will soon be charged to court, while further investigations continue. ■





**Big or Small, Nobody is
Above the Law
Say **NO** to Corruption**

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