

Maina: Tale of a Chronic Fugitive

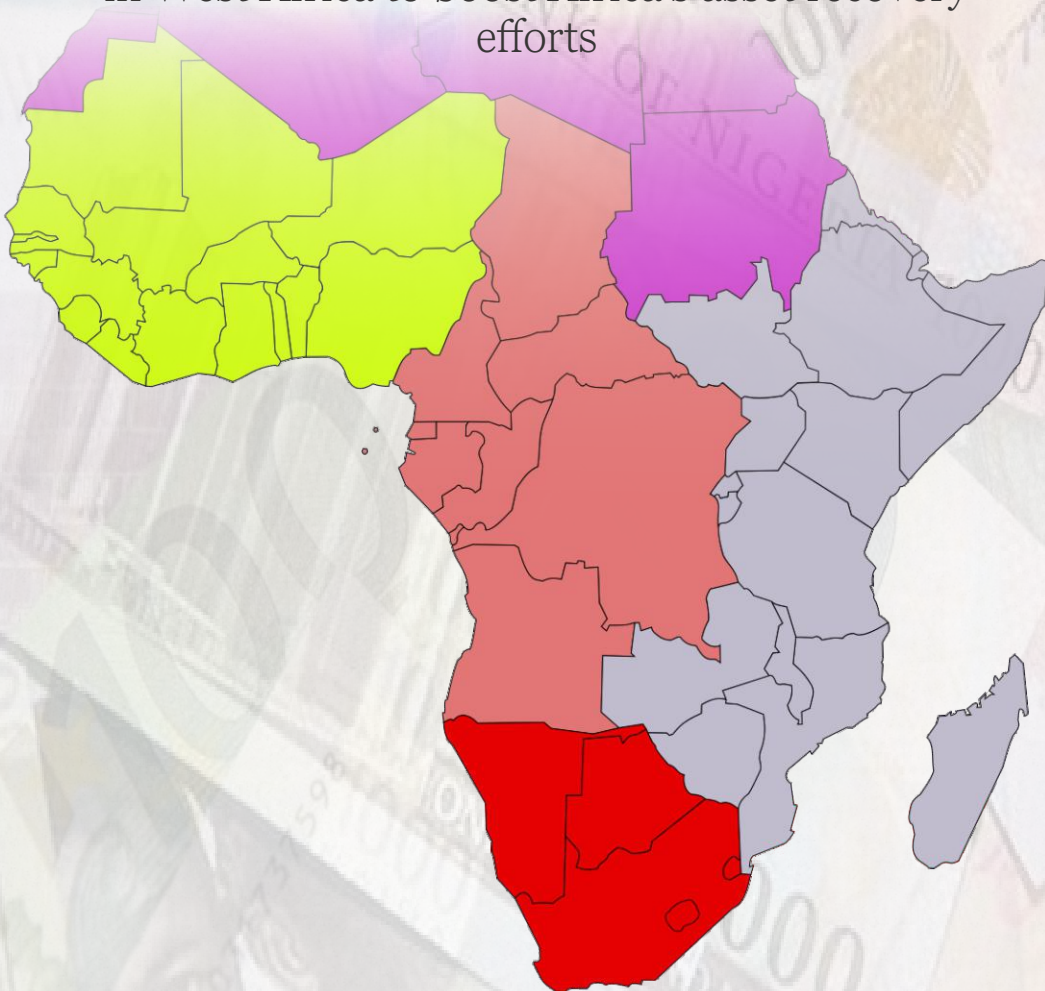


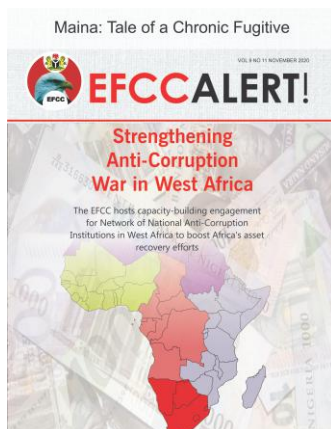
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EFCC ALERT!

Strengthening Anti-Corruption War in West Africa

The EFCC hosts capacity-building engagement for Network of National Anti-Corruption Institutions in West Africa to boost Africa's asset recovery efforts





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Strengthening Anti-Corruption War in West Africa 3 & 4

The EFCC hosts capacity-building engagement for Network of National Anti-Corruption Institutions in West Africa to boost Africa's asset recovery efforts

An illustration 5

Maina: Tale of a Chronic Fugitive 6

Setting Sight at Defaulting Revenue
Generating Agencies 7

Building Viral Workforce 8

Crimes 9 & 11

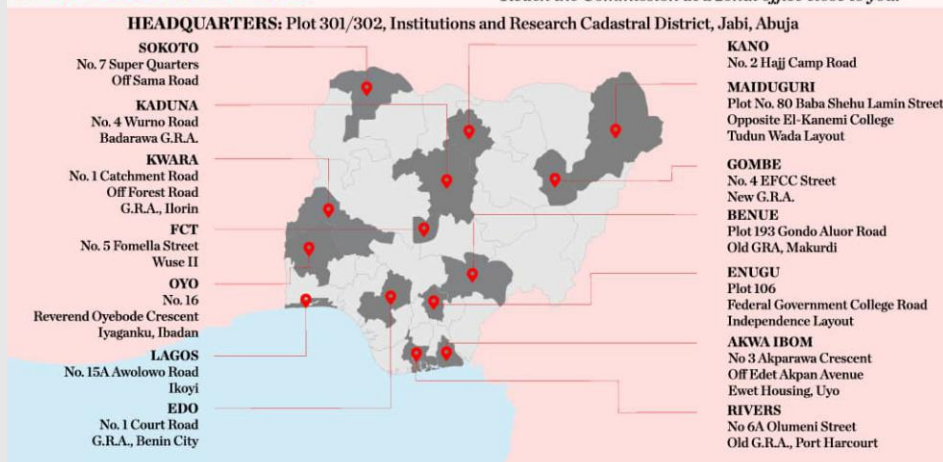
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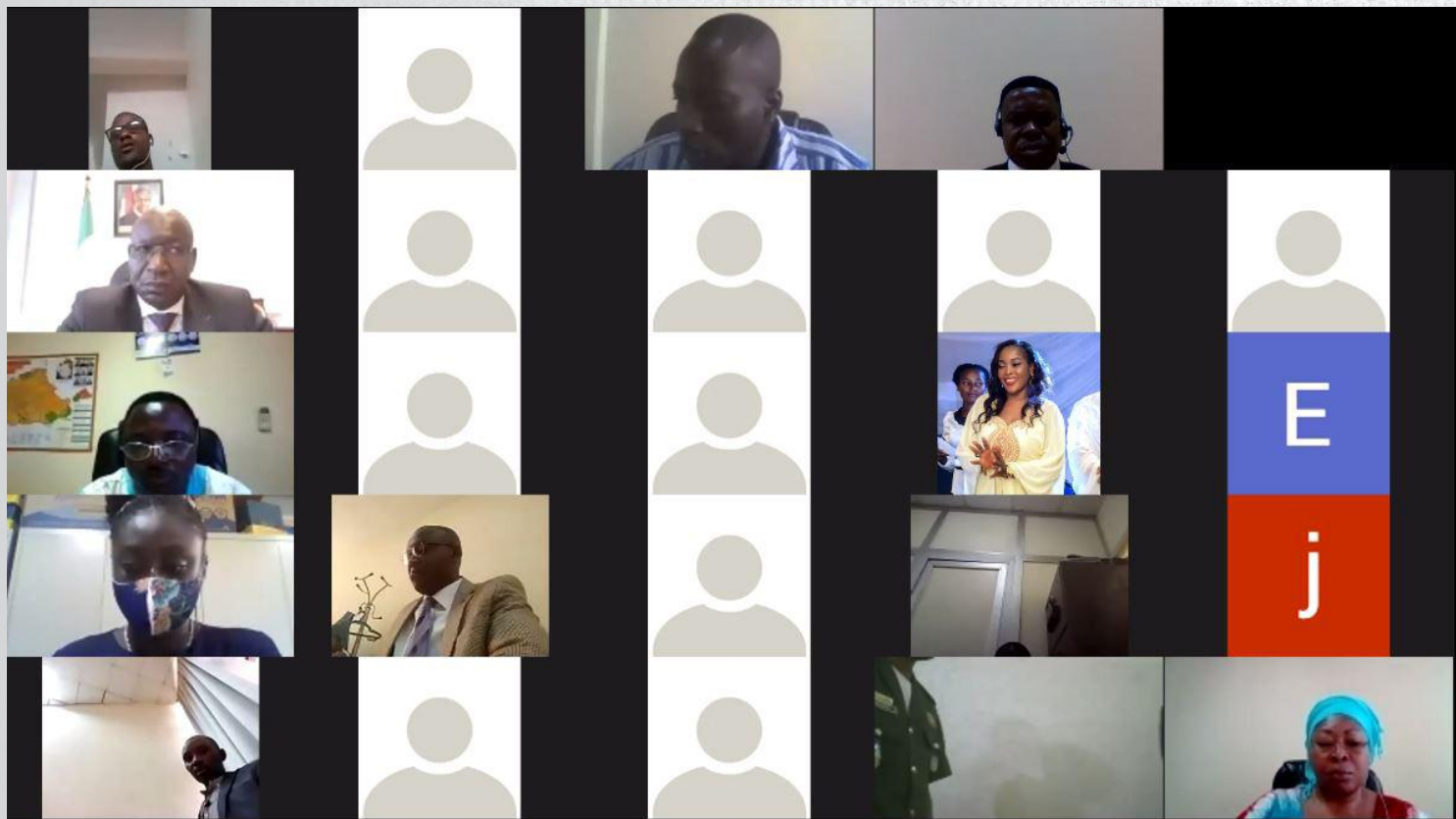
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Strengthening Anti-Corruption War in West Africa

The EFCC hosts capacity-building engagement for Network of National Anti-Corruption Institutions in West Africa to boost Africa's asset recovery efforts

By Segun Adeoye



For members of the anti-corruption community in the West African sub-region, the event of November 17, 2020 was a historic one in many respects. While it brought back the fond and mementos events of September 28, 2015 when the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC Academy in Karu, Abuja hosted the first-ever training programme of the newly established Network of National Anti-Corruption Institutions in West Africa, NACIWA (a body tasked with increasing capacity to combat corruption within national anti-corruption institutions in the region), it also afforded the EFCC to again reassert its role in leading and

Indeed, the EFCC Academy had in 2015 been formally declared the training institute for all anti-corruption agencies in West Africa, opening a new vista in the efforts of the anti-graft agency to be a resource tank for other anti-corruption agencies.

coordinating the anti-corruption efforts in this side of sub-Saharan Africa, while hosting a two-day capacity building training for participants across Republic of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Republic of Niger, Senegal, Togo, Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria.

Indeed, the EFCC Academy had in 2015 been formally declared the training institute for all anti-corruption agencies in West Africa, opening a new vista in the efforts of the anti-graft agency to be a resource tank for other anti-corruption agencies.

Due to the effects of the Coronavirus Disease, COVID-19, which had resulted in

the need to limit physical contacts, the two-day capacity training, hosted by the EFCC Academy was coordinated as a virtual capacity-building intervention, with focus on corruption risk assessment, asset seizure, forfeiture and recovery and borderless investigation for NACIWA member countries. Declaring the virtual training event open, Mohammed Umar Abba, the acting EFCC Chairman, emphasized the importance of collaboration and need to strengthen capacity of anti-corruption agencies in the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS.

He said: “On behalf of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria His Excellency Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR and the Government and people of Nigeria, I will like to express my gratitude to the executive committee of this great Network of Anti-Corruption Institutions in West Africa, for granting this collaboration between the Institutions and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission EFCC in capacity building and information exchange.”

Stressing the need for member states to reinforce investigation of trans-border crimes through collaborations in order to curb the prevalence of corruption in the sub-region, he noted that the capacity-building was “designed to address key issues on asset recovery, asset identification, tracing, seizure, forfeiture and return”.

While commending the commitment of the EFCC, particularly the Commission's Academy to facilitate the course in spite of the challenges imposed by the COVID-19, Dr. Remi Ajibewa, Director, Political Affairs, ECOWAS Commission, described the programme as a right step in the right direction.

He said: “Today's capacity building programme is a good step forward to have operational staff of anti-corruption institutions in West Africa train together



Itam Nnaghe

Declaring the virtual training event open, Mohammed Umar Abba, the acting EFCC Chairman, emphasized the importance of collaboration and need to strengthen capacity of anti-corruption agencies in the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS.

to allow themselves internalize common orientation, common practice, gain knowledge on the subject of borderless investigation and

asset recovery”.

He used the opportunity to also express gratitude to Umar for “the material and financial support for the capacity-building initiative”, stressing the importance and “need for synergy in strengthening and enhancing the operationalising of borderless investigation in assets tracing and seizure”. In an overview of global financial crimes and investigation model, Nnaghe Itam Obono, the acting Commandant EFCC Academy, lamented the adverse effects of money laundering on the economy of the subregion.

He said: “From reports by The Economist, well over 1.5 trillion is laundered each year through the global banking system.

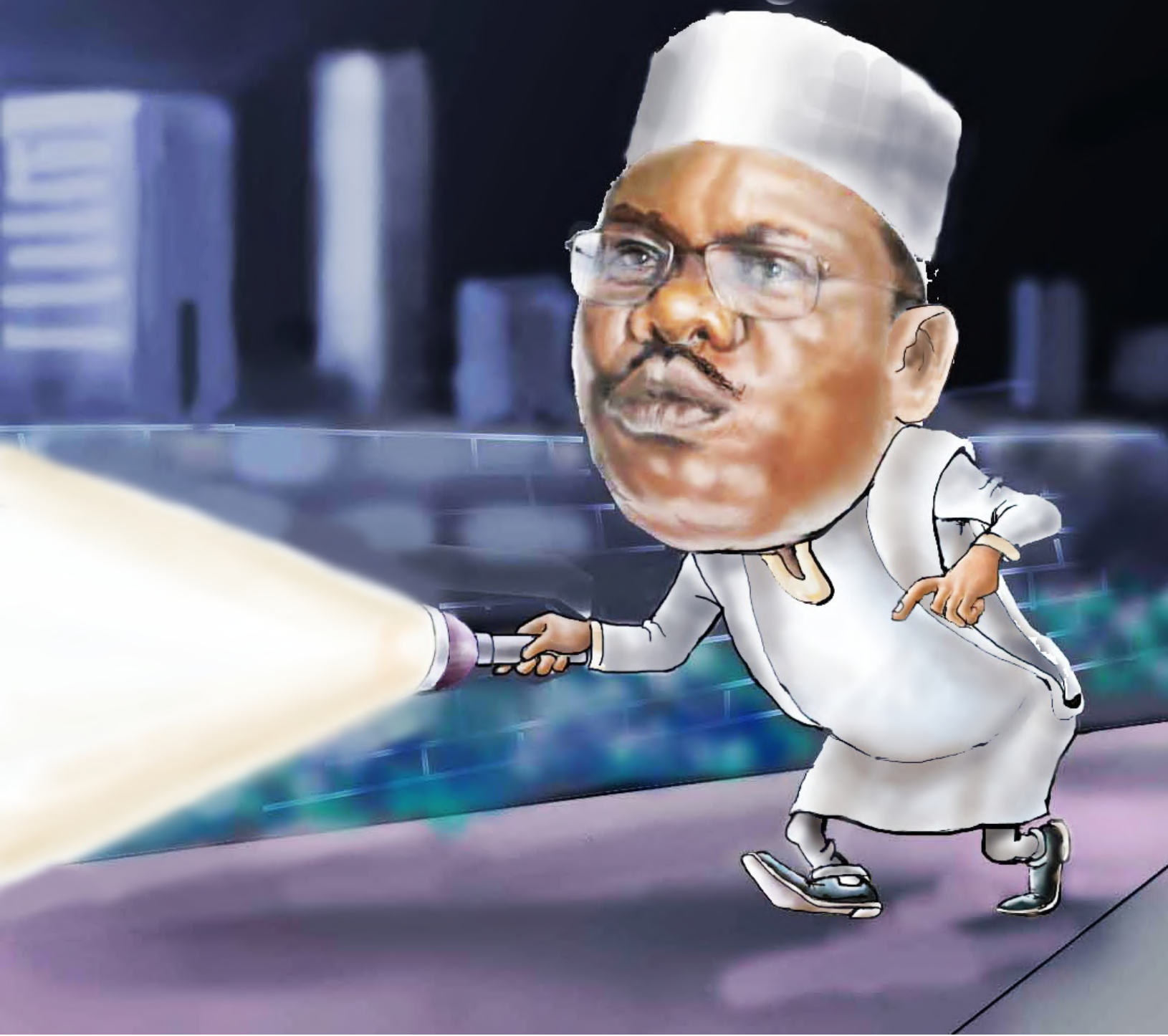
“For us in West Africa we believe we should adopt intelligence-led financial crimes investigation model which is a means of enquiring into the financial affairs both of suspects or entities.”

In his remark, Ben Kampala, President of NACIWA, expressed gratitude to the cooperating countries.

“We are grateful to Nigeria, the ECOWAS and every country that is committed to the NACIWA dream for us to ensure effective corruption control,” he said.

Additional report by Angel Israel ■

MAINA?



Tale of a Chronic Fugitive

For the umpteenth time, a former chairman of the Pension Reform Task Team goes into hiding, even as his trial is set to continue in his absence

His disappearing act, no doubt, can aptly be described as legendary. It swiftly brings to mind the antics of those magicians who display their trickery using a white handkerchief to make a dove disappear in the presence of the onlooking audience. Indeed, from all indications, Abdurashheed Maina, a former Chairman, Pension Reform Task Team, PRTT, who is being prosecuted by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC for pension fraud, can rightly be described as a “chronic fugitive”.

Since 2015 when the Commission dusted his fraud casefile with the aim of arraigning him in court, Maina simply disappeared into thin air. He had been listed as being at large in some other pension fraud cases being prosecuted by the EFCC.

For years, he was incommunicado (believed to be holed up in Dubai, United Arab Emirates); yet from his hiding, he was dishing out views and suggestions on how to recover stolen pension funds. His return to Nigeria caused a stir, until the officers of the Department of State Services, DSS, arrested him and his son, Faisal, in an Abuja hotel, handing them over to the EFCC for further investigation and prosecution.

First arraigned on October 25, 2019 before Justice Okon Abang of a Federal High Court, Abuja, on a 12-count charge bordering on money laundering, operating fictitious bank accounts and fraud to the tune of N2billion, Maina's trial has witnessed different twists and



Abdurashheed Maina



Ali Ndume

Ali Ndume, a serving Senator, mourning his inability to produce Maina in court, following expiration of a 21-day grace given him by the court.

turns, enough to produce a soap opera.

Perhaps, most intriguing was the proceedings of November 18, 2020 when Maina's persistent absence (for the fourth time) from trial became intolerable for the court, with his surety, Ali Ndume, a serving Senator, mourning his inability to produce Maina in court, following expiration of a 21-day grace given him by the court.

Ndume lamented thus: “The court gave me up to today to produce the defendant.

“I continued searching for him, seeking the assistance of security agencies and anybody that can give me

reasonable intelligence, but I could not locate him.

“I put out a search in Niger Republic, but he was not there.

“I tried to reach out to his mother in Kaduna through his uncle who stood as a surety for him when he was in prison.

“I also reached out to the son, who promised me at the last sitting that his father will be here, but he did not turn up.”

The absence of Maina, prompted the counsel for the EFCC. M.S. Abubakar, to apply that the bail granted him be revoked, and a bench warrant issued against him, and for his trial to continue in his absence.

Ruling on the application, Justice Abang held that: “The fact that this matter has been adjourned at least on four occasions to enable the defendant Abdurashheed Maina turn a new leaf, show compassion and jettison all contemptuous conducts is not borne out of fear; it is not borne out of cowardice; it is borne out of maturity and restraint.

“The law must be followed.

“The defendant is not in court and no reasonable excuse offered for his absence.

“The defendant cannot hold the court to ransom.

“The bail of the defendant, earlier granted on 25 November 2019, varied on 28 January 2020, further varied on 29 June 2020 is hereby revoked.

“Bench Warrant is hereby ordered for the arrest of the defendant anywhere he may be found and brought before this court.”

His trial continues in-absentia. ■



Setting Sight at Defaulting Revenue Generating Agencies

It will no longer be business as usual for revenue generating agencies of the federal government which make delayed or inadequate remittances into the federal purse

By Gbenga Akinwande

The issue of dwindling revenue has constituted a source of endless pain to the federal government. And rather than improve on their efforts, some revenue generating agencies of government have remained lax in their responsibility, resulting in delayed and often inadequate remittances. To change the trajectory, the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) opted to enlist the intervention of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, (EFCC) in the pursuit of prompt and adequate remittances to the Federation Account by revenue generating agencies of the federal government. The request for assistance was conveyed by a delegation of FAAC's Post-mortem Sub-committee, which was led on a working visit to EFCC's corporate headquarters, Abuja by its vice chairman, Dr. Chris A. Akomas. Dr. Akomas disclosed that FAAC as a

result of the declining remittances into the Federation Account, took a decision in its meeting of August, 2020 to take all needful steps to make every revenue generating agency of the federal government, live up to its responsibilities, which he further disclosed, resulted in the decision to liaise with the EFCC to get the job done.

Acting Chairman, EFCC, Mohammed Umar Abba, while expressing worry over dwindling remittances from revenue generating agencies into the Federation Account, noted that it was a serious national issue that needed concerted efforts from the appropriate authorities to address, adding that not doing so will have dire consequences on the economy and developmental pace of the country.

While assuring the delegation of EFCC's commitment to the cause, Abba disclosed that the EFCC has

already begun work in the direction of the synergy with FAAC. "We already have somebody who is attached to you as a liaison officer. This is in view of the enormity of the problem and the fact that it needs to be addressed. We will assist you, partner with you and ensure that any revenue generating organisation that did not remit revenue or continue to neglect the remittance of the necessary accruals to government is invited and asked questions as to why the expected accruals are not coming as and when due, before launching a full-scale investigation to ensure that the revenues are not lost," Abba said.

The Post-mortem Sub-committee of FAAC was created in 2004 to keep an eye on contributors to the Federation Account. It examines remittances into the account and makes evaluations in respect of submissions and reports by collecting and accounting agencies in the management of the Federation Account. ■

Building Viral Workforce

The Lagos zonal office of the EFCC trains its officers to build capacity in fraud examination

BY SEGUN ADEOYE//LAGOS



Cross section of participants

It was described by AbdulRasheed Bawa, Head of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC Lagos Zonal Office, as a necessary effort to boost capacity in the wake of evolving cybercrime tactics by fraudsters.

As such, the zone in partnership with the Rablowoods Professional Services (the sole Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, ACFE's authorized trainer in Nigeria and West Africa), trained 100 officers of the zone, in order to sharpen their skills in the area of fraud examination.

The three-day training, which commenced on October 9, 2020 featured presentations by certified fraud examiners, from Rablowoods, who shared from their wealth of experiences the basics of fraud case management, legal consideration during investigations, common risks and mitigations, investigative process, interview techniques, and the essentials of report writing.

Yemi Olufidipe, who took the session on the "Basics of Fraud Case Management", highlighted the importance of confidentiality when investigating a fraud case, and stressed the need for documentary evidence. According to him, for every action, there is a reaction, which comes with its attendant risks.

Taking participants through the rudiments of fraud investigation, Olufidipe stressed the importance of planning and preparation, adding that "there must be

"This raised the suspicion of the officers who insisted he should be physically and thoroughly checked after the scan machine had revealed he was carrying parks of noodles."



A.B.C. Ozioko

synergy".

Adesola Osuji, who made presentation

on "Investigative Interviewing", educated participants on the internationally recognised "PEACE Model" of interviewing.

Explaining further, she noted the "P" stood for "Plan and Prepare"; "E" for "Engage and Explain"; "A" for "Account Elicitation"; "C" for "Close", and "E" for "Evaluate".

"Conversations are interviews and interviews are Conversations," she said, noting that the PEACE Model helps in obtaining valuable facts, eliminating the innocent and identifying the guilty.

Head of the Legal and Prosecution Department, A.B.C. Ozioko, made a presentation on "Taking/Recording of Extrajudicial Statement". He noted that such statements can be exculpatory or confessional. He also took participants through the procedures of taking statement.

Bawa also used the opportunity as a Certified Fraud Examiner to share from his wealth of experience as regards interviewing suspects and investigating fraud cases.

Making three presentations on "Deceptive Verbal Evasion - Identifying Lies in Disguise"; "Rapport", and "Ethics Consideration for Interview, Interrogation and Statement Taking", Bawa charged participants to do what is right at all times.

"What is right is right, and what is wrong is wrong," he said.

He further highlighted 16 ways to immediately recognise when a fraud suspect is trying to be deceptive during interrogation. ■

Ruthless Patience

The EFCC nabs serial imposter in an N11million job scam

BY SEGUN ADEOYE//LAGOS



the increasing rate of unemployment in the society to defraud youths desperately seeking for employment.

Robert was arrested following investigation into a complaint by one of her victims from whom she had obtained N1.5 million in the guise that she would help secure employment for the person's children in the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC. The petitioner further lamented that she also defrauded his younger

brother of N300,000 after promising to secure employment for his children

into the Nigeria Customs Service.

Further investigations revealed that Robert was in fact, a serial fraudster and had severally been arrested by officers of the Nigeria Police, for impersonation and fraud. It was discovered that she had been arraigned at a Magistrate Court in Minna, Niger State for impersonation and obtaining by false pretence. She is also alleged to have defrauded several of victims of about N11 million parading herself as a staff of the EFCC.

Robert, who will soon be arraigned in court, also defrauded a job-seeker in Abuja of the sum of N4.5million, posing as "Director of Civil Intelligence" in EFCC, a position that does not exist in the Commission.

Patience Robert is mean! Or how else will you describe a woman who decidedly set out to exploit

Conman Roasted

Fake contractor adept in using fake documents to secure contracts is caught in EFCC net

BY THERESA NWOSU//UYO

The common saying that many days is for the thief, but one day is for the owner of the farm, has come true in the life of Umoh Archibong, a supposed contractor, who goes about posing as a highly skilled construction engineer.

For years he has escaped being nabbed, while using fake contract documents, which he used to obtain N1.8billion from unsuspecting member of the public.

He would bamboozle his targeted victims with fake contract documents and entice them with promises of huge returns if they agreed to fund the execution of the contracts.

He met his Waterloo when one Okika Ugochukwu petitioned the Commission on July 30, 2019, alleging

that sometime in June 2019, Achibong approached him with the information that he had been awarded two contracts by Hensek Construction Company and VKS Construction Company, both in Uyo, for the supply of laterite and borrow pit sand, and convinced him to invest N39million (in tranches between June 15 to June 25, 2019) with a promise of paying him N18,000 monthly until he receives payment for the contracts.

The petitioner further alleged that, after he received payment from him and some other persons, Archibong became incommunicado. All efforts to get back the invested capital and accrued interest totalling N45 million also proved abortive.

Hensek Construction Company and



VKS Construction Company, denied having any dealings with him.

Since his arrest, a total 38 victims have come forward with claims that they were also defrauded by the suspect under same guise. He was arrested at a hotel in Uyo, on November 6, 2020 and he will soon be arraigned in court.

Executhieve Banker

A former staff of Access Bank is to spend time in jail after defrauding the bank of about N9million

BY DEBORAH MEZEH//PORT HARCOURT



The end, when it came for Onus Amahian, a former staff of Access Bank, in Asaba, Delta State, it came with a bitter taste and a destruction of whatever little reputation he perhaps thought he had.

The former Information Technology, IT officer of Access Bank had developed very hitchy fingers as far back as August 2011 when he started enriching himself by fraudulently inserting names and account numbers of his family members and cronies into the payroll schedule of the Delta State government that was being handled by the bank. It was a fraudulent scheme that went on for a little long while, before the bank

realized that like a rat cunningly scraping off the tip of a tuber of yam kept by its owner in the barn, Amahian had fraudulently enriched himself to the tune of N9,344,013.23. The bank subsequently petitioned the EFCC, which sprinted into action.

Amahian did not waste the time of the court, as he was overwhelmed by the weight of evidence garnered against him as he immediately pleaded "guilty" before Justice T.B. Adegoke of a Federal High Court, Asaba, Delta State, before whom he was arraigned for a 25-count charge.

Subsequently, the trial judge convicted him as charged, but deferred his sentencing.

Double-deal Scammer

A man lands in troubled waters after being nabbed for a N11.3 million double land fraud

BY KASIMU YAHAYA/KADUNA

Abubakar Baba seems to have a special allure for land that he can not help but exhibit unexplainable taste for engaging in land fraud.

The Kaduna Zonal Office of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, on November 17, 2020 arraigned him before two different justices of the state's High Court, for engaging in land scam.

He was arraigned before Justice Darius Khobo on a two-count charge of criminal breach of trust, involving N3.3million scam, to which he pleaded "not guilty."

Justice Khobo granted bail to the defendant in the sum of N2 million with one surety in like sum, who must be resident within Kaduna metropolis and must be a real estate owner with Certificate of Occupancy (CofO) to be verified by the court and the EFCC. He



adjourned the matter till February 18, 2021.

In Justice Mohammed Tukur's court, he was arraigned on one-count charge of criminal breach of trust, involving N8

million (Eight Million Naira) land fraud, to which he also pleaded "not guilty."

Justice Tukur admitted him to bail in the sum of N5 million with one surety in like sum, who must have evidence of three years tax payment, and adjourned the matter till February 24, 2021.

Trouble started for him after he sold a land, measuring 524.56cm, situated on Plot No.95 Road 'P,' Millennium Housing Layout, Kaduna that did not belong to him at the cost of N3.3million, and resisted all efforts to refund the money to his victim.

The complainant in the matter, Maui and Tessa Peterx Ndasule alleged that she bought a piece of land, located on Plot 52/54, Egypt Road, Barnawa Kaduna at the sum of N8million from the defendant, sometime in April 2018, and paid in three installments to his corporate account. Again, the defendant turned out not to be the owner of the land; yet he refused to refund the money he collected from his victim.

Klepto Orums

Another banker stands trial for N18million fraud

BY WILLIAM OSEGHAE//BENIN

Philip Orumade was arraigned by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, Benin Zonal Office on November 11, 2020 arraigned on nine counts bordering on stealing before Justice Efe I. Ikponmwonba of the Edo State High Court, Benin City.

Orumade was alleged to have, sometime in November 2019 while working as a banker in charge of Automated Teller Machine, ATM, stole a cumulative sum of N18,903,000 from the ATM at Aduwawa branch of First Bank of Nigeria.

One of the counts reads: "That you, Philip Orumade, on or about the 2nd day of November 2019 at Aduwawa within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court did steal from ATM

machines at Aduwawa branch of First Bank Of Nigeria a cumulative sum of Eighteen Million, Nine Hundred and Three Thousand Naira (N18,903,000) property of First Bank of Nigeria Plc, contrary to Section 383 of Bendel State Criminal Code Law (as applicable to Edo State) and punishable under Section 390(7) of the same Law".

He pleaded "not guilty" to the charges. Justice Ikponmwonba granted the defendant bail in the sum of N500,000 with one surety in like sum and adjourned until January 27, 2021 for commencement of trial.



Burnt Fingers

A former procurement officer at the Ahmadu Bello University bags jail term for procurement fraud

BY ZAINAB AHMED//KADUNA

The conviction of Danjuma Musa was secured by the Kaduna Zonal Office of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC,

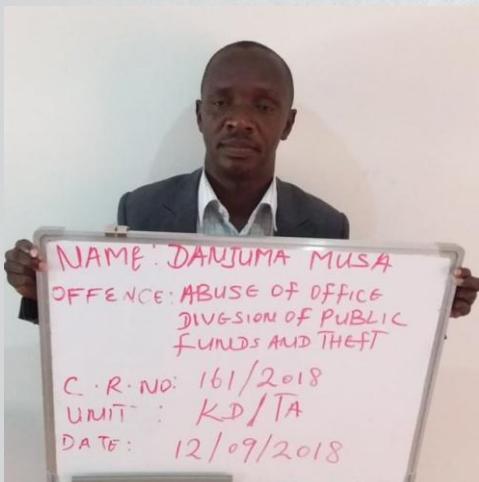
on October 20, 2020 before Justice Peter Mallong of the Federal High Court sitting in Kaduna on a one-count amended charge that bordered on procurement fraud.

The charge reads: "That you, Danjuma Musa (while being a procurement Officer of Ahmadu Bello University) sometime in 2016 at Zaria within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court entered a collusive agreement with Gboye Surgical Equipment to inflate the prices tendered for the supply of drugs and laboratory reagents, contracts awarded by Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria Nigeria which would not have been the case had there not been collusion between you and Gboye Surgical Equipment and thereby

committed an offence contrary to Section 58(4)(a) of the Public Procurement Act, 2007, and punishable under Section 58(6)(a) and (b) of the same Act".

Musa, a former procurement officer at the Ahmadu Bello University, did not waste the time of the court as he pleaded "guilty" to the charge.

Consequently, Justice Mallong convicted and ordered him pay a fine equivalent to 25 per cent of the value of the procurement in issue, amounting to N686,540.43. He was also barred from all public procurement activities for a period not less than five calendar years. The convict had already paid the N1,668,770.00 as restitution to the university.





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