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# EFCCALERT!



## Change of Baton

*The formal change of leadership at the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, signifies a fundamental shift in its administrative trajectory*





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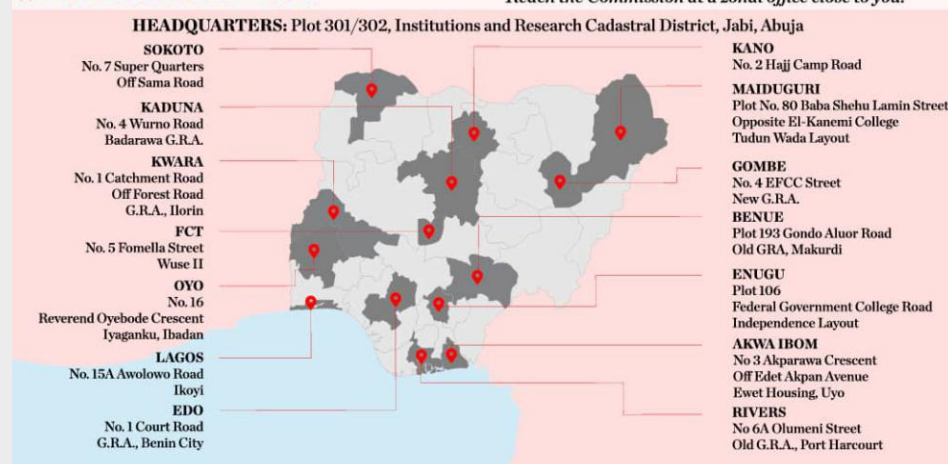
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# Change of Baton

*The formal change of leadership at the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, signifies a fundamental shift in its administrative trajectory*

**F**or the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, Friday, March 5, 2021 will remain indelible in the annals of the anti-corruption agency, as it marked the first time that a core staff of the Commission will take over its leadership.

Indeed, the atmosphere at the conference room of the EFCC's Head Office, Jabi, Abuja, was quite emotional as Abdulrasheed Bawa, 40, making history as the youngest officer to lead the agency, took over the baton of leadership from Mohammed Umar Abba, who had been acting in the capacity since July 2020.

Expressing his resolve to employ modern technology in the operations

*“We are going to digitalize our processes, and we are going to create a new full-pledged directorate of intelligence to enable us to gather intelligence, so that we will be proactive in our fight against economic and financial crimes,” he said.*

of the agency, Bawa promised a paradigm shift in the Commission's approach to the corruption fight.

“We are going to digitalize our processes, and we are going to create a new full-pledged directorate of intelligence to enable us to gather intelligence, so that we will be proactive in our fight against economic and financial crimes,” he said.

He reiterated his remarks before the Senate at his confirmation hearing, to change the focus from “fighting corrupt persons to fighting corruption”.

He used the medium to assure stakeholders in the fight against corruption of the Commission's continued partnership.





Making history: Abba (R ) and Bawa (L) exchange handover notes

"For our strategic partners across the shores of this country, we will continue to work together with you," he said. "We will continue to share intelligence, to see that the stolen wealth of this country is returned for the betterment of us all."

He also pledged to prioritize staff welfare, stressing that he was going to work on it, and also to ask the government for necessary support.

"We know the problems and God willing, we are going to solve these problems," he assured.

Abba congratulated Bawa for "a well-deserved appointment". He described him as "an officer with whom I have enjoyed a close working relationship and who contributed immensely to our collective efforts in the war against economic and financial crimes".

While wishing him well in "his new assignment", Abba urged all officers of

*"The rule says you must be in the office by 8am and close by 5pm if you have no pending work," he said. "But it is unacceptable for you to come in by 9am and close by 3pm and you expect to earn a full salary."*

the Commission to "accord him the same support that I have received over the last seven months".

## Taking Charge with Clear Eyes

*I'm a part of you, but...*

**A**ll staff are important in this fight against corruption from the top to the least. So, I invite everyone to bring ideas and best practices that will help to organize and recalibrate the Commission in order to make it a better place. I am a part of you and I know the challenges."

Those were the words of Bawa stressing his unreserved determination to ensure that under his watch, the EFCC's fight against corruption will be reinvigorated, even as he charged staff of the Commission to be disciplined in the discharge of their duties.

It was Monday, March 8, 2021 at his first interface with staff at the EFCC Head Office Complex, and he appreciated the staff for the delight that his appointment received.

He said though a number of staff are happy to have a chairman who is a friend to many,



he was, however, going to be firm and would not tolerate indiscipline in any form, including lateness to work and indecent or improper dressing.

"The rule says you must be in the office by 8am and close by 5pm if you have no pending work," he said. "But it is unacceptable for you to come in by 9am and close by 3pm and you expect to earn a full salary."

He noted that his mission was not to undo what had been done by his predecessors, but to seek to improve the fortunes of the Commission, going forward.

He called for renewed commitment to the anti-graft campaign by all staff through dedicated service, devoid of sloppiness and other forms of indiscipline.

While giving out his telephone number, he assured that he would operate an open-door policy for easy access by staff.

Bawa also promised to prioritize staff welfare and systems improvement through application of digital technology and intelligence.

He disclosed that a Directorate of Intelligence would be created as the hub of Intel creation to bolster the Commission's investigation activities.

He equally revealed that staff training will receive new fillip, while the prospect of getting Insurance cover for staff would be explored to mitigate the dangers staff are exposed to in the discharge of their duties.

The EFCC chairman used the forum to feel the pulse of the Commission by taking questions from various categories of staff.

He was also at the Abuja Zonal Office, Wuse 2, and the EFCC Academy, Karu, where similar engagements with staff were held.

At Idiagbon House, home of the Abuja Zonal office, Bawa was received by the former Zonal Head, Ahmed Sa'ad Abubakar and other senior officers.

Addressing the staff, he appreciated them for the goodwill messages sent to him on his appointment and enjoined all to brace for the enormous challenges



Bawa and Abba, in group photograph with EFCC management staff



Bawa, addresses EFCC staff

*He said though a number of staff are happy to have a chairman who is a friend to many, he was, however, going to be firm and would not tolerate indiscipline in any form, including lateness to work and indecent or improper dressing.*

ahead.

He encouraged staff to be dedicated to their duties, by upholding the Commission's core values and imbibing good work ethic.

At the Academy, He was received by the Commandant, Ayo Olowonibi, who appreciated the Chairman for the visit only a few days after assuming office. He congratulated Bawa and pledged the loyalty and support of the Academy staff.

Addressing the staff, Bawa promised to reinvigorate the institution by giving it a face-lift, and properly position it as a Centre of Excellence for EFCC staff training.

The Chairman, would later visit Kaduna and Sokoto zonal offices where he preached the message of discipline and professionalism. ■





Bawa (R) at his first official meeting with President Muhammadu Buhari

# A Man of Many Firsts

*The new anti-corruption czar in town comes across as an unassuming achiever, with an impressive track record*

**W**ith his appointment by President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, on February 16, 2021, and Senate confirmation on February 24, 2021, Abdulrasheed Bawa became the fourth substantive Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, as he assumed office on March 5, 2021. His ascent holds much significance. First, he is the youngest person (40 years old) to occupy the office. He is also the first core EFCC officer to be so appointed. Others before him were either serving or retired Police

officers. He was among the first set of cadets recruited into the EFCC in 2004 as a member of the Course One Detective Superintendent Cadre, who trained at the Nigeria Police College Ikeja, Lagos. He is no stranger to the nitty-gritty of the Commission's operations and his career trajectory in the last 17 years has been illustrious. He holds the ace as the first and only officer of the Commission to be head of three different zones, leaving behind enviable track records - Ibadan, Port Harcourt and Lagos zonal offices. Until his

recent appointment as Chairman, he was the Zonal Head of the Lagos zone.

It's a peak achieved from a humble beginning, after working in various sections of the EFCC's operations department, during which he honed his fraud examination and investigative skills. He trained in a number of world class institutions, including the US Federal Bureau of Investigations, FBI; the UK's National Crime Agency, NCA; the United Nations Office On Drugs and Crime, UNODC; the World Bank, the United States Treasury Department's Financial Crimes Enforcement



Network, FinCEN; KPMG, the State Security Service, SSS, among others. A certified fraud examiner, his investigative skills have come in handy in cracking some of the complex fraud cases ever handled by the Commission. Bawa was the lead investigator of the multi-billion naira oil subsidy fraud between 2012 and 2015,



Practices and Standard Operating Procedures for Investigations and Prosecutions of Economics Crimes, 2017; Committee on Amendment of EFCC (Establishment) Act, 2004; Secretary, Committee on Modification of EFCC Declaration of Assets Form 2012; Presidential Investigation Committee on Crude Oil Theft, 2014 and Special Team



Bawa: Surrounded by Family members at NASS foyer February 24

including the N1.4billion oil subsidy fraud for which Abubakar Ali Peters and his company, Nadabo Energy are being prosecuted at a Lagos State High Court in Ikeja. He equally helped to crack several petroleum sector fraud cases under a former minister of petroleum resources, Diezani Alison-Madueke, which led to the recovery of huge assets for the Federal Government of Nigeria. His expertise has also been brought to bear in a number of committee assignments, including Committee on Authorship of Handbook of Best

*He equally helped to crack several petroleum sector fraud cases under a former minister of petroleum resources, Diezani Alison-Madueke, which led to the recovery of huge assets for the Federal Government of Nigeria.*

on Investigation of Tax Evasion and Other Related Matters (Airlines and Hotel Operators, in which billions of Naira were recovered between 2009 and 2010). A native of Jega, Kebbi State, Bawa is a product of focused academic pursuit, unfettered diligence and prodigious appetite for knowledge. He holds a bachelor's degree Second Class Honours (Upper Division) in Economics from Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto from where he also obtained a Master's degree in International Affairs and Diplomacy. He is married with children. ■



# Tribute to Predecessors

*The new anti-corruption czar in town is expected to build on the structure and achievements of his predecessors.*

**T**he emergence of Abdulrasheed Bawa, a core staff of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, as the substantive Chairman of the anti-corruption agency, is no doubt historic in all ramifications. It is a bold departure from the past in which since its establishment in 2003, the Commission has been headed by personnel of the Nigeria Police Force.

While the appointment of a non-personnel of the Police to lead the Commission has received accolades, the story of the landmark appointment will be incomplete without giving credence to past leaders of the Commission, who played pivotal roles in making the EFCC a formidable agency to reckon with, locally and internationally.

Here's a cursory look at the imprints which past leaders left in the sand of time.

## Ribadu Phenomenon

Nuhu Ribadu assumed the office of the EFCC Chairman at the age of 43, as an Assistant Commissioner of Police, ACP, in 2003 and holds the record as the pioneer Chairman of the anti-corruption agency.

He was the nemesis of advance fee fraudsters. Under Ribadu, the EFCC routed not a few fraudsters in high places, and secured their conviction. Among them was the conviction of Maurice Ibekwe who defrauded a German of \$300,000 in 1992. Ibekwe, who used the proceeds of his illicitly obtained funds to secure a seat in the National Assembly, later lost his life in jail.

The mind-boggling \$242million fraud heist pulled off by Emmanuel Nwude, Nzeribe Okoli and Amaka Anajemba, which caused the financial collapse of Branco Noroeste, a Brazilian Bank, was also busted. Still on the international



Nuhu Ribadu

*“We started with no money, no office, no personnel and no vehicles. I remember for close to a year, as the Chairman, I was using my own personal vehicle, until we eventually got money and bought these things. The rest of course is history.”*

**- Nuhu Ribadu**

scene, the EFCC helped an 86-year-old Hong Kong citizen, Juliana Ching, to recover \$4.48million stolen from her by Basil Nkenchor, who impersonated Ibrahim Abba, then Group Managing Director of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, in a contract scam.

Harry Odiawa, who defrauded George Blick, an American of over N3billion was also prosecuted and convicted. There was also the sorry case of the then Inspector-General of Police, Tafa Balogun, who at the time was Ribadu's boss. He was convicted for fraud, after a plea bargain. In his shoes, was also the then governor of Bayelsa State, Diepreye Alamieyeseigha, who was also convicted for defrauding his state.

The case of Kingsley Ikpe, a Harvard-



trained investor and managing director, Thomas Kingsley Securities Limited, who in 2005 was involved in a N135million fraud also made headlines. He was arrested and prosecuted by the EFCC, which secured his conviction before a Lagos State High Court. He was sentenced to 151 years in prison.

Nigeria was delisted from the Financial Action Task Force, FATF's List of Non-Cooperative Countries & Territories.

Though he was given a second shot at the Chairmanship of the EFCC in 2007, it was truncated in controversial circumstances later that year.

### Waziri, Humane Cop

The circumstances that heralded the exit of Ribadu, paving way for the appointment of Farida Waziri, would leave her tenure dogged with mudslinging of controversies. Waziri assumed office on June 6, 2008, at the age of 59, effectively taking the baton as the second executive chairman of the EFCC, from Ibrahim Lamorde, who acted as chairman following the exit of Ribadu.

A retired Assistant Inspector General of Police, Waziri mustered all the courage, strength and experience, to build on the legacies of the past administration. Her tenure witnessed the bubble in the banking sector bursting with corrupt

“ *In the fight against corruption, you fight, they fight you back in various ways and intrigues... So it's like holding a tiger by the tail, if you don't take care, the tiger will devour you, it's as serious as that.* ”  
- Farida Waziri



malpractices. Invariably, several bank executives became subjects of investigation and subsequently prosecution. There was the conviction of Cecilia Ibru, then managing director of the defunct Oceanic Bank. A number of fraud cases involving other bank executives are still ongoing.

Under her watch, Waziri implemented the Anti-Corruption Revolution, ANCOR, with the aim of boosting the corruption prevention mandate of the EFCC, as a way of thrusting the fight against corruption into the hands of the citizens.

Perhaps, it is her motherly aura that officers of the Commission will always remember, as she reformed the working environment of staff, particularly the welfare aspect. The first-ever upgrade of salary and allowances of personnel, was achieved by her, resulting in a morale boost.

Facilities of the then Training and Research Institute, TRI, Karu, Abuja, witnessed upgrade. The new Head Office edifice of the EFCC in Jabi, Abuja, was also her dream and vision to bequeath an Office that was comparable in sophistication with the likes of the UK New



Scotland Yard, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation FBI.

## Lamorde Era

A pioneer staff of the Commission, Ibrahim Lamorde had been in the anti-graft agency since the time of Ribadu, and he, it was, who as Director of Operations in January 2008, acted in the absence of Ribadu until the appointment of Waziri in May of that year.

Lamorde assumed office in November 2011 in acting capacity at the age of 49, as an Assistant Commissioner of Police, ACP, taking over from Waziri in a rather fortuitous circumstance. His appointment was later confirmed by the Senate on February 15, 2012.

Under Lamorde, the TRI was elevated to the EFCC Academy,

“ *Even if you are the one who built this place, you will leave here one day. There is nothing permanent in life, other than change. Every day we live, we encounter something new. The day you were born, you prepare for your death. The day you acquire an office, you prepare for your exit from that office. If people don't leave office, people will not get into office.* ”  
- Ibrahim Lamorde



Ibrahim Lamorde

and it played host to the first-ever award ceremony to recognize and appreciate serving and ex staff for their hard-work and diligence. The Academy also hosted the first training of the Network of National Anti-Corruption Institutions in West Africa, NACIWA.

The Lamorde-era witnessed the burst in the pension fraud and oil subsidy bubbles. In addition to the cases inherited from his predecessor, the onus was on Lamorde to unravel and bring to justice all those that were involved in defrauding pensioners, as well as the federal government, after collecting subsidy funds for petroleum products not supplied. There was the case of Esai Dangabar (now late), Shuaibu Teidi, Phina Ukamaka Chidi, Aliyu Bello, Stephen Oronsaye, Atiku Abubakar Kigo, Ahmed Inuwa

Wada, Veronica Ulonma Onyegbula, Uzoma Cyril Attang, Sani Habila Zira, John Yakubu Yusufu and Abdulrasheed Maina.

Lamorde stepped up investigation into the oil subsidy regime. So many dirty deals were unearthed in the course of the probe. Jubril Rowaye, an oil marketer, and his company, Brilla Energy Limited, whose trial began under Lamorde, was served justice on April 7, 2017 when a Federal Capital Territory, FCT High Court, Jabi, convicted them for a N1.05billion oil subsidy fraud and sentenced them to seven years in prison. Several governors were also charged for allegedly defrauding their states.

For beaming the searchlight of the Commission on the then Senate President, Bukola Saraki and his wife, Toyin, Lamorde became a



target of a media offensive alleging mismanagement of recovered assets, despite detailed explanation to the contrary, put forward by the EFCC.

On November 11, 2015 following the backlash of the campaign of calumny against Lamorde, he eventually had to give way as he was replaced by Ibrahim Magu.

### Magu Stint

Ibrahim Magu, like Lamorde, was a pioneer staff of the Commission. He took over the affairs of the EFCC in acting capacity on November 11, 2015 at the age of 53 as an ACP. It was in the wake of the probe of the \$2.1billion arms procurement scandal. Like a General at war against corruption, he swung into action, acting on the report of the Investigative Committee on Arms Procurement, set up by the Federal Government on August 31, 2015 to probe the use of funds earmarked for procurement of arms for the military since 2007.

Magu set up a Special Task Force to carry out the mandate of further investigating the allegations of misappropriation of public funds, and to bring to book all those that were fingered in the scandal. Thus began the trial of key players allegedly involved in the scandal, including those accused of diverting funds from the Office of the National Security Adviser, the Nigerian Air Force, the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency, NIMASA among other fraudulent transactions.

*Magu set up a Special Task Force to carry out the mandate of further investigating the allegations of misappropriation of public funds, and to bring to book all those that were fingered in the scandal*



The conviction of two former state governors, and a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, were among the high profile convictions secured under Magu's watch. His administration brought to fruition the dream for the Commission to have a befitting modern office, which was commissioned on May 15, 2018 by President Muhammadu Buhari. Under Magu administration, the EFCC expanded its operations offices to Ibadan, Oyo State; Ilorin, Kwara State; Kaduna, Kaduna State; Makurdi, Benue State; Uyo, Akwa Ibom State; Benin-City, Edo State, and Sokoto, Sokoto State.

Magu also revved up the conviction records of the Commission, to unprecedented levels, but in June 2020, allegations of malfeasance levelled against him by the Attorney General of the Federation, Abubakar Malami, saw the Justice Ayo Salami panel that sat on the report, recommend his replacement. He was replaced by Muhammed

*“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. In fact, my non-confirmation further emboldened me  
Magu”*

Umar Abba, a Deputy Commissioner of Police, and then Director of Operations, who also took over in acting capacity, on July 7, 2020. He later handed over to Bawa, on March 5, 2021. ■








**EFCC will get you,  
anywhere,  
anytime.**



**Economic and Financial Crimes Commission**

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