



VOL 10 NO 10 OCTOBER 2021

# EFCCALERT!



## The Team New EFCC Scribe Resumes

UK's Deepening  
partnership

Rallying Against  
Pension Fraud

Faisal: Poster Boy  
for Pension Fraud



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The Editor, EFCCALERT!,  
Plot 301/302, Institutions and Research Cadastral District, Jabi, Abuja.  
OR 15A, Awolowo Road, Ikoyi, Lagos  
Email: [alert@efccnigeria.org](mailto:alert@efccnigeria.org)  
Tel: +234-8093322644

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**HEADQUARTERS:** Plot 301/302, Institution and Research Cadastral District Jabi. Abuja

**SOKOTO**  
No. 7 Super Quarters  
Off Sama Road

**KADUNA**  
No. 4 Wurmo Road  
Badarawa G.R.A.

**KWARA**  
No. 1 Catchment Road  
Off Forest Road  
G.R.A., Ilorin

**FCT**  
No. 5 Fomella Street  
Wuse II

**OYO**  
No. 16  
Reverend Oyeboode Crescent  
Iyaganku, Ibadan

**LAGOS**  
No. 15A Awolowo Road  
Ikoyi

**EDO**  
No. 1 Court Road  
G.R.A., Benin City

**KANO**  
No. 2 Hajj Camp Road

**MAIDUGURI**  
Plot No. 80  
Baba Shehu Lamin Street  
Opposite El-Kanemi College  
Tudun Wada Layout

**GOMBE**  
No. 4 EFCC Street  
New G.R.A.

**BENUE**  
Plot 193 Gondo Aluor Road  
Old GRA, Makurdi

**ENUGU**  
Plot 106  
Federal Government College Road  
Independence Layout

**AKWA IBOM**  
No 3 Akparawa Crescent  
Off Edet Akpan Avenue  
Ewet Housing, Uyo

**RIVERS**  
No 6A Olumeni Street  
Old G.R.A., Port Harcourt



## MILESTONE

# Ekpungu is New EFCC Secretary

*The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission gets a new secretary as the Nigerian Senate confirms the president's nominee for the post along with other board members*

It was long in coming, since July 2020 the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, ceased to have a secretary.

However, on October 5, 2021, the Senate, acting on a September 17, 2021 letter of President Muhammadu Buhari, confirmed the nomination of George Abang Ekpungu as the new Secretary of the Commission.

The confirmation followed the favourable report presented to the Senate on the nominee, by the Committee on Anti-Corruption and Financial Crimes, chaired by Senator Suleiman Abdu Kwari.

Ekpungu, a seasoned lawyer, who hails from Cross River State, replaces Olanipekun Olukoyede, who served as secretary from November 18, 2018 to July 15, 2020

A graduate of the Ahmadu Bello University, ABU, Zaria, Ekpungu's confirmation is in accordance with Section 2(3) of the EFCC Establishment Act 2004. He begins a five-year tenure, which is renewable at its expiration.

Ekpungu, who also holds a Doctorate degree in Law from ABU, was confirmed by the



***The confirmation followed the favourable report presented to the Senate on the nominee, by the Committee on Anti-Corruption and Financial Crimes, chaired by Senator Suleiman Abdu Kwari.***

Senate along with other nominees for the EFCC board, including, Lugman Muhammed (Edo); Anumba Adaeze (Enugu); Alh. Kola Raheem Adesina (Kwara), and Alh. Yahaya Muhammad (Yobe).

He has solid background in capital market regulation, anti-money laundering and fraud risk - assessment. ■



## MILESTONE

# Rallying Against Pension Fraud

The EFCC rallies stakeholders, calls for concerted action against pension fraudsters, in order to sanitise the pension industry



**C**oncerned about the prevalence of fraud in the pension sector, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, on October 5, 2021, organised a two-day National Summit, tagged "Eradication of Pension Fraud in Nigeria", which was held at the Nigerian Air Force Conference Centre, Kado, Abuja.

The Executive Chairman of the Commission, Abdulrasheed Bawa used the medium, to call for a concerted action by all stakeholders in ensuring an efficient, effective and fraud-free pension system in Nigeria.

The EFCC chairman stated this in his opening address at the commencement of the Summit.

According to him, the EFCC as the coordinating agency for the enforcement of all economic and financial crimes laws, is conversant with

***"We worry about the quality of regulation, the fidelity of pension managers and the inefficiency in the management of pension assets which have grave consequences for the national economy, not to talk of the perception of Nigeria as a country where anything criminal is possible."***

the rot in the pension sector.

He said: "We have investigated and documented hundreds of billions of Naira lost to fraud in the pension industry. However, beyond the money, is also the unquantifiable loss of dignity in the retiree who has to grovel and beg (and even die in some instances) in order to access his contributions. It is the shame of a nation that those who have contributed their most productive years to us in various capacities have to go through hell to live in retirement.

"We worry about the quality of regulation, the fidelity of pension managers and the inefficiency in the management of pension assets which have grave consequences for the national economy, not to talk of the perception of Nigeria as a country where anything criminal is possible."

All of these, he said, provide the impetus





for a national conversation and concerted action from everyone involved in pension management and regulation.

According to him, the Summit offers the stakeholders the opportunity “to introspect and take stock of the measures put in place over the years to improve and sanitize pension administration in Nigeria, as well as seek explanations as to why the pension system seems not to be meeting the needs or living up to the yearnings of pensioners despite the best intentions of industry stakeholders.”

“It is our belief that in pooling our resources and expertise together, we can break the cycle of fraud, inefficiency and mutual distrust in the Nigerian pensions system,” he added.

The EFCC boss said the overarching objective of the Summit was to “have a pension system that is transparent, accountable and responsive to the needs of its most important, most vulnerable and most vulnerable stakeholder - the pensioner”.

He therefore charged the participants, “to reach deep into treasure troves of knowledge and come up with pragmatic programmes and policy recommendations that will ultimately engender significant improvement in service delivery and eliminate the gaps currently being exploited by the negative actors in the pension system. We owe that to the hapless pensioner out there, who we may ourselves become tomorrow”.

Bawa assured that the Commission, “will continue to vigorously enforce all the laws against fraud in Nigeria. I assure you that we are both willing and able to do all that is necessary today to

**“one thing that is incontestable as far as Mr. President is concerned, is that when it comes to the fight against corruption, there is no deficit of political will to take hard and difficult decisions”.**

ensure that tomorrow, when we all cross to the other side of the road in retirement, we will truly live the life of the models in the PFA adverts and commercials!”

He further commended the President Muhammadu Buhari administration for its support to the fight against corruption. In his words, “one thing that is incontestable as far as Mr. President is concerned, is that when it comes to the fight against corruption, there is no deficit of political will to take hard and difficult decisions”.

The keynote speaker and Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Boss Mustapha who described pension fraud as heinous, insensitive and condemnable, commended the synergy among the stakeholders which he said will permit analysis of the causes of pension fraud and the measures to check them.

He said the government was conscious of its responsibility in the pension sector and resolved to deal with criminal acts of pension fraud in all ramifications.

He disclosed that the Muhammadu Buhari administration has

demonstrated a rare commitment to ameliorating the plight of pensioners through various administrative and policy interventions. He listed some of the initiatives of the administration targeted at making life more meaningful for pensioners to include, the release of N55 billion to settle outstanding 33 percent pension arrears, which dates back to 2010 when the minimum wage was increased to N18,000, placement of 3,542 pensioners of the Liquidated Delta Steel Company on the payroll among others.

He commended the EFCC Chairman, Abdulrasheed Bawa for the vigour and vibrancy he has brought to the leadership of the agency.

Goodwill messages were presented by prominent stakeholders including, Sulaiman Abbah, chairman, Police Pension; Professor Sadiq Radda, Executive Secretary, PACAC, who stood in for the Chairman, Professor Itse Sagay; Ayuba Wabba, President, Nigeria Labour Congress, and Clement Akintola, Executive Commissioner, Inspectorate, PPENCOM, who stood in for the Director General, National Pension Commission, PENCOR, Aisha Dahir-Umar.

Presenting a paper entitled, “Case Study: Analysis of Fraud in Pension Administration in Nigeria, The EFCC Experience”, Abdulkarim Chukkol, Director of Operations, EFCC, highlighted the gaps in the existing pension arrangements frequently exploited by criminal elements in both the public and private sectors. He noted that the country has lost several billions of naira in the process. He however identified improved staff training, proper internal control, improved reporting system and severe penalty as measures that could help check the incidence of pension fraud. ■



## MILESTONE

# Faisal: Poster Boy for Pension Fraud

*The EFCC continues to bring to justice pension fraudsters, as Faisal, son of a former Chairman, Pension Reform Task Team, bags jail-term*



**The court also ordered that the company through which the fund was laundered, Alhaji Faisal Farm 2, be wound up, with funds in it forfeited to the Federal Government.**

**F**or many elderly men and women who toiled day and night to serve their fatherland in various capacities, but who have been victims of pension fraud, Thursday, October 7, 2021 was, no doubt, a respite. That day, Justice Okon Abang of the Federal High Court sitting in Abuja, convicted and sentenced Faisal, the son of a former Chairman of the defunct Pension Reform Task Team, PRTT, Abdurashheed Maina, to 14 years imprisonment. The Court found Faisal guilty on a three-count charge of money laundering brought against him by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC. One of the charges reads: "That you Faisal Abdurashheed Maina, (alias Alh Faisal Abdullahi Farms), between October 2013 and June 2019, within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court, controlled an aggregate sum of N58,111,585.00 (Fifty-eight Million, One Hundred and Eleven Thousand, Five Hundred and Eighty-five Naira) only, paid through the United Bank for Africa (UBA) account of Alh.

Faisal Abdullahi Farms, when you reasonably ought to have known that the said funds formed part of the proceeds of unlawful activity to wit: corruption of one Abdurashheed Abdullahi Maina, who is facing a separate charge and thereby committed an offence, contrary to Section 15(2) (d) of the Money Laundering Prohibition Act, 2011 (as amended) and punishable under Section 15 (3) and (4) of the same Act".

Justice Abang held that he was satisfied that the EFCC proved all the essential ingredients of the charge, stressing that the defendant ought to have known that inflows into the bank account formed proceeds of an unlawful act of corruption by his father. He sentenced the defendant to five years in count one and three, and 14 years on count two of the charge. The sentences are to run concurrently, starting from the date of conviction. The court ordered that the defendant, who has been at large since June 24, 2020, be arrested anywhere he is found in Nigeria and remanded in any Correctional Service Centre to serve his jail term.

Indeed, in the course of the trial, the EFCC had informed the Court that its investigations revealed that upon being granted bail, Faisal had fled to the United States.

The court further held that in the event that the defendant is traced to anywhere outside the country, the Federal Government should take lawful steps to effect his extradition to serve his jail term.

The court also ordered that the company through which the funds was laundered, Alhaji Faisal Farm 2, be wound up, with funds in it forfeited to the Federal Government.

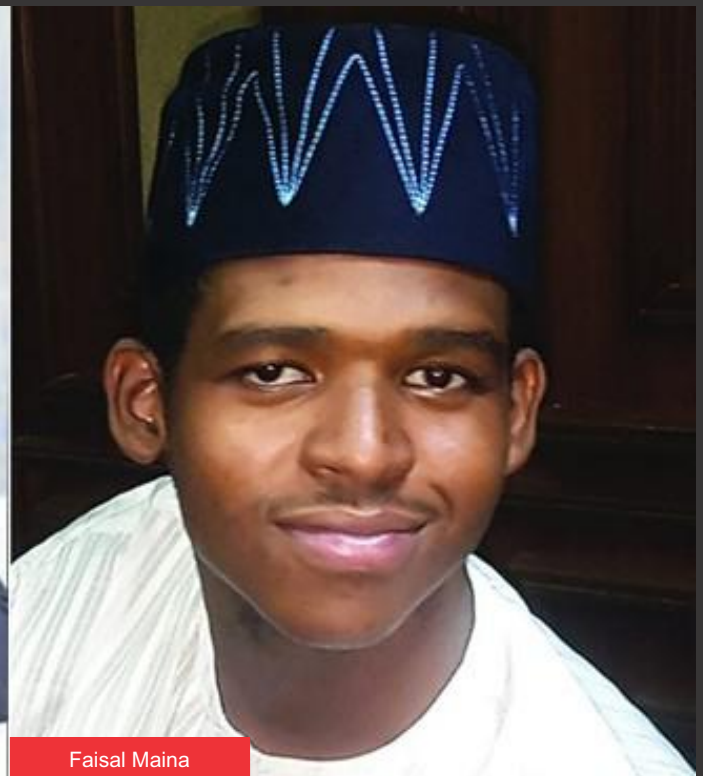
The judgment brings to an end a trial in which the defendant twice jumped bail, forcing the court to revoke his bail and ordered the forfeiture of the bail bond provided by his surety and member of House of Representatives, Sani Dan-Galadima. The EFCC team led by M.S. Abubakar, closed its case against him after it called three witnesses and tendered documents that were admitted in evidence.

### Father on the edge

Meanwhile, as the manhunt for Faisal continues, even with his sentencing



Abdulrasheed Maina



Faisal Maina

delivered by the Court, his father, Maina, will know his fate on November 8, 2021.

His trial before Justice Abang, has also witnessed several twists and turns, notably his jumping bail, which resulted in the remand of his surety, Ali Ndume, a Senator. He was eventually picked up in the Republic of Niger, and brought back to Nigeria to continue with his trial for an alleged N2 billion fraud.

Before his trial could commence on October 25, 2019, the EFCC had to declare him wanted, putting his name on an international watchlist, as he previously evaded arrests.

At the last sitting on October 10, 2021, three days after the conviction of his son, the prosecution adopted its written address and prayed the Court to convict him of the 12 counts filed against him.

One of the counts against Maina reads: "That you Abdulrasheed Abdullahi Maina (alias Dr Abdullahi Faizal) between 2012 and 2016, within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court, took possession of an aggregate sum of N1,822,074,690.00 (One Billion,

Eight Hundred and Twenty-two Million, Seventy-four Thousand, Six Hundred and Ninety Naira), through your Fidelity Bank account (in the name of Dr Abdullahi A. Faizal), when you reasonably ought to have known that the said funds, formed part of the proceeds of unlawful activity to wit: corruption, and you hereby committed an offence, contrary to Section 15(2)(d) of the Money Laundering Prohibition Act, 2011 (as amended) and punishable under Section 15(3) of the same Act."

#### **Battle against pension fraudsters**

The EFCC's battle against pension fraudsters is one that has been waged for the past decade. It has yielded fruits with several convictions. Recently, Justice Umaru Fadawu of the Borno State High Court sitting Maiduguri, convicted Mohammed Nazir Auwalu and Sani Musa for offences bordering on criminal misappropriation to the tune of N25,780,888.38 contrary to Section 308 and punishable under Section 309 of the Penal Code Cap. 102 Laws of Borno State.

The defendants who have never held any pensionable appointment, received the sum as pension from the Pension Transitional Arrangement Directorate (PTAD) from September 2010 to April 2018. The lid on the scam was blown by Polaris Bank which

**He was eventually picked up in the Republic of Niger, and brought back to Nigeria to continue with his trial for an alleged N2 billion fraud.**

reported the fraud to the Commission. The Sokoto Command of the EFCC also recently arraigned five senior officials of the Sokoto State Primary Education Staff Pension Board before Justice Muhammad Muhammad of the Sokoto State High Court, Sokoto, on a 27-count charge bordering on alleged conspiracy, forgery, criminal breach of trust and misappropriation of the sum of N553,985,624.10.

The defendants include the Director of Finance and Supply, Hassana Moyi; Secretary, Abubakar Aliyu; Deputy director, Halliru Ahmed; Accountant, Kabiru Ahmed and Dahiru Muhammad Isa, Cashier. Their trial is ongoing.

Justice K.I. Okpe of the Enugu State High Court, has also convicted Akpudili Chrisian Anayo for defrauding the state of N13 million pension fund. The state had petitioned the Commission after it uncovered Anayo's misdeed. As an ad-hoc staff engaged for the verification



**The defendants include the Director of Finance and Supply, Hassana Moyi; Secretary, Abubakar Aliyu; Deputy director, Halliru Ahmed; Accountant, Kabiru Ahmed and Dahiru Muhammad Isa, Cashier. Their trial is ongoing.**

exercise of the state's civil servants in charge of computing names of verified civil servants, he cunningly inserted bank accounts of three fake pensioners, Ngene Patrick Somtochukwu, Ani Ifeyinwa and Patience Christian Chimezie, domiciled in Fidelity, Stanbic IBTC and First Bank plc. He used this dubious means to divert the funds meant for the pension and salaries of the civil servants in the 17 local government areas of Enugu State. He was sentenced to six years in prison for the fraud.

In prosecuting the war against pension fraudsters, the EFCC has also investigated the Police Pension fraud, which has resulted in the seizing of assets from Atiku Kigo, Esai Dangabar (now late), Ahmed Inuwa Wada, Veronica Oyegbula, Uzuoma Cyril Attang, Sani Habila Zira, John Yakubu Yusuf and their associated companies and persons.

Investigation of pension fraud in the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, has also resulted in the seizure of assets from Shaibu Teidi, Phina Chidi, Abdul Mohammed, Emmanuel Olanipekun, Aliyu Bello and their associated companies and persons from whom assets were recovered. Their trials are currently ongoing. Yakubu Yusuf, a former Assistant Director in the Federal Civil



John Yusuf



Shaibu Teidi



Mohammed Nazir Auwalu

Service, who has been on the run since 2018 when Court of Appeal, Abuja Division, sentenced him to six years imprisonment and a fine of N22.9billion, for conniving with five other suspects to steal N32.8billion Police Pension Fund was also apprehended by the EFCC to serve his jail-term at the Kuje Correctional Service, Abuja. Justice Abubakar Talba, then of the Federal Capital



**Investigation of pension fraud in the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, has also resulted in the seizure of assets from Shaibu Teidi, Phina Chidi, Abdul Mohammed, Emmanuel Olanipekun, Aliyu Bello and their associated companies as persons from whom assets were recovered. Their trials are currently ongoing.**

Territory, FCT High Court, Gudu, had earlier sentenced him to two years in prison with an option of N750,000 as fine, which was viewed by the EFCC as a robber of justice. Subsequently, the EFCC appealed the ruling, which prompted the Court of Appeal to issue a fresh sentence. ■



## UK's Deepening partnership

*As the EFCC restrategises for efficiency, the anti-graft agency has received pledges of support from the United Kingdom, UK and Japan.*



The UK government, through its High Commissioner to Nigeria, Catriona Laing, while paying a visit to the Commission's Headquarters, Abuja on September 29, 2021, expressed the determination of the UK to ensure the repatriation of ill-gotten wealth stashed away in the country by corrupt Nigerians.

"We remain strong partners and we are here to support you," Laing said, as she expressed admiration for the "young and talented" Chairman of the EFCC, Abdulrasheed Bawa.

She assured that the government of her country was working to put in place measures to prevent the UK being a safe haven for illicit flows from Nigeria. Going down memory lane, Laing recalled past support of the UK government to the EFCC and the fight against corruption in Nigeria through the Combined Inter Agency Task Force. On his part, Bawa stressed the need to sustain and strengthen the "special relationship" between the EFCC and the UK's law enforcement agencies.

"We should continue to work together to achieve our mutual interests," he said. "We must try to strengthen the special relationship we have maintained, especially with the NCA."

He said the Commission was working assiduously to change the narrative as

far as the fight against corruption in Nigeria was concerned, adding that the focus was now to "prevent corruption rather than being reactive".

He also thanked the envoy for the UK Government's support in developing the Commission's forensics capacity through training, adding that the EFCC under his leadership has deployed technology to improve its operations.

The EFCC boss disclosed that his agency recently launched an App, Eagle Eye, which simplifies the process of reporting economic and financial crimes.

The High Commissioner and her team were taken through a demonstration of the working of the App and the new Case Management Application of the EFCC. The envoy expressed her admiration for the App, noting that even the UK does not have such an application. ■



### Love from Japan

During his visit to the EFCC Headquarters, Abuja, the Japanese Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Nigeria, Matsunaga Kazuyoshi, expressed delight and admiration for the professionalism of the EFCC. Particularly, he noted the Commission's efforts in helping a Japanese victim of internet fraud perpetrated by some Nigerians, to recover and repatriate a sum of 370,000 Yen to Japan early this year.

"The response of your organization in resolving the 419 scam case against Japanese victim is highly commendable," he said.

He, therefore, asked for EFCC's continuous cooperation in helping Japanese victims of fraud, noting that many victims were reluctant to come forward because of the difficulties in tracking monies transferred to foreign countries.

The envoy further disclosed that the Japanese Government had conducted a training programme on governance in some countries and promised to extend the gesture to the EFCC.

"We would consider expanding our cooperation with the EFCC, including a training programme with a view to supporting anti-corruption measures in Nigeria," he said.

Responding, Bawa briefed the envoy on the mandate of the Commission and its strategic direction under his watch, especially the use of technology.

The EFCC boss described the Commission as the hub of international cooperation in law enforcement in Nigeria adding that, "we can partner to see that economic crime is eradicated around the globe".

He assured of the Commission's willingness to continue to investigate any reported case where Japanese citizens are victims of scams and to ensure that they get their money back. ■



## Clamping Down on Cybercriminals

*The efforts of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, to get rid of the menace of internet fraudsters, has continued to yield fruits, as the Commission continues to receive credible intelligence from members of the public, ending in the fishing out of more and more "bad eggs" among Nigeria's teeming youths engaging in cyber-crime.*

*Below is a cursory look at some of the activities of the EFCC to combat cybercrime in the month of October:*

### Friends in Crime

**U**khuriegbé Glory Irekpitan and Onyekwa Joshua Chinedum, two friends in Benin-City, Edo State pulled a fast one on two British ladies in London, but they are now regretting their inglorious action.

Posing as Anthony Joshua, the British boxer of Nigerian descent, they succeeded in tricking their victims to part with the sums of £10,000 pounds and £5, 491.23 .

They were on October 11, 2021 each arraigned before Justice S.M. Shuaibu of the Federal High Court, sitting in Benin on two counts of impersonation.

One of the counts reads: "That you, Onyekwe Joshua Chinedum (a.k.a Anthony

Joshua) sometime in 2019 did with intent to defraud sent electronic messages which materially misrepresent facts to Samantha Johnson, a lady in London which messages she relied upon and which made her to suffer financial loss in the sum of £10,000 thereby committing an offence punishable under section 14 (2) of the Cybercrime (Prohibition Prevention, Etc) Act 2015".

One of charges against Ukhuriegbé Glory Irekpitan reads: "That you, Ukhuriegbé Glory Irekpitan sometime in 2018 did with intent to defraud sent electronic messages which materially misrepresent facts to Mrs Zahra Bagun, a lady in London which messages she relied on and which caused her to suffer the financial loss in the sum of £5,491.23 Pounds,



equivalent of N2,306,220 and thereby committed an offence punishable under Section 14(2) of the Cybercrime (Prohibition Prevention, Etc) Act 2015."

They pleaded "not guilty" to the charges.

### Even in Kaduna...



**T**he long held belief that cyber-crime is only prevalent in the southern part of Nigeria has over and over again been proved wrong. Recently, the Kaduna Command of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, secured the conviction and sentencing of one Yakubu Abbas before Justice Darius Khobo of the Kaduna State High Court, Kaduna on one count amended charge of

attempt to cheat by impersonation.

The charge reads, "That you, Yakubu M. Abbas, sometime in 2021 at Kaduna within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court, attempted to commit an offence and in such attempt did a certain act towards the Commission of the said offence, to wit; falsely presented yourself as Josh (a Whiteman) to one Dan on Grindr App (an online application) in order to cheat him and you thereby committed cheating contrary to Section 308 of the Kaduna State Penal Code of 2017 and punishable under Section 309 of the same Law".

Yakubu was arrested following his alleged involvement in internet-related fraud.

Upon arrest, he confessed to have registered on the Grindr and A4A App as

Josh, a Caucasian American. His modus operandi is to engage in romantic conversion with Bisexual men who are married with the aim of obtaining their nude pictures which he subsequently use for blackmail, by threatening to expose them to their spouses and families on Facebook. His attempt to blackmail one Mr. Dan was however unsuccessful.

He did not waste the time of the court as he pleaded "guilty" to the amended charge filed against him.

In view of his guilty plea, Justice Khobo convicted and sentenced him to a fine of N200,000.00; and where he cannot pay the said fine, he is to spend five years in prison. He was also ordered to forfeit to the Federal Government of Nigeria one Samsung Galaxy A12 and shall undertake never to engage in any crime again.



## Loverboy Bags Six Months for \$900

Justice Khobo also convicted and sentenced one Abdulquadri Abdulrasheed for offences bordering on cheating by impersonation.

The Kaduna loverboy professed love to his victims online using the pseudoname, Leo Jin Young, a United Kingdom citizen, on the Hangout App, and was able to use this dubious means to obtain the sum of \$900 USD before he was arrested.

The one count charge reads: "That you, Abdulquadri Abdulrasheed "m" between the months of April and September, 2021 in Kaduna within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court pretended to be one Leo Jin Young, a British citizen residing in United Kingdom (UK) on Hangout App which you created and in such, assumed character, obtained the total sum of

\$900(Nine Hundred United States of America Dollars) from Kira Hendley and others unsuspecting persons and you thereby committed cheating by impersonation, an offence contrary to Section 308 of the Penal Code Law, 2017 of Kaduna State and punishable under Section 309 of the same Law".

The suspect pleaded "guilty" to the charge when it was read to him.

Justice Khobo, consequently sentenced him to six months imprisonment without an option of fine. He is also to sign an undertaking never to engage in any cybercrime offence again. He was ordered to forfeit the sum of \$900 (Nine Hundred United States Dollars) to the Federal Government of Nigeria, being proceeds of the crime.



## Fake American Lottery Agent Jailed



Justice Adenike Akinpelu of the Kwara State High Court, sitting in Ilorin has jailed one Salami Yusuf Adetola, who claimed to be a United States of America Lottery Agent to a term of six months imprisonment for offences bordering on personation and cybercrime.

Adetola was sentenced alongside one Abdulkareem Abdulmojeed Olamilekan, a graphic designer from Ifelodun Local Government Area of Kwara State and one



Nwabudike Emmanuel Lawrence from Ethiopie-East Local Government Area of Delta State for similar offence.

The Ilorin Zonal Command of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, on Tuesday, October 13, 2021 arraigned the trio on separate charges, to which they pleaded guilty.

Following the guilty plea by the defendants, R. A. Alao, counsel to the EFCC, called witnesses who are

operatives of the Commission and tendered evidence which included the devices used in perpetrating the crime and various fraudulent messages printed out of the defendants' phones and laptops, to establish the alleged offences against them. After the review of the facts of the cases, Alao urged the court to convict and sentence the defendants as charged.

In her judgment, Justice Akinpelu held that the prosecution had proved its cases beyond reasonable doubt.

While Adetola was sentenced to six months imprisonment with N200,000 (Two Hundred Thousand Naira) as option of fine, Olamilekan was sentenced to one year imprisonment with N300,000 (Three Hundred Thousand Naira) as option of fine.

On the other hand, Lawrence bagged a prison term of six months on each of the two counts against him, which shall run concurrently with option of fine of N200,000 on each count.

The judge also ordered the forfeiture of the various devices used as instrumentality of the crime by the convicts to the federal government as well as restitution to the victims of the crime.





Economic and Financial Crimes Commission  
announces the launch of



An App specially developed by the EFCC to ease  
the reporting of economic and financial crimes

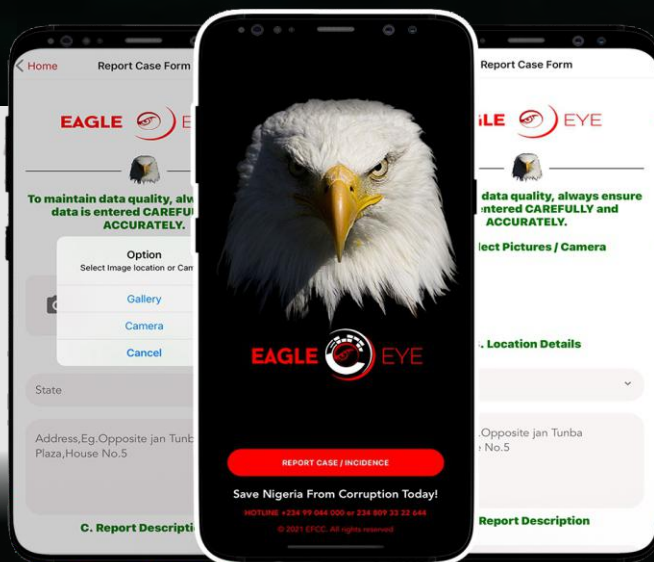


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