

Nigeria - [419 Coalition](#) 2011 News on Nigerian Scam / 419 Operations

9 DEC 2011

From MediterraneanNews.com, sent in by Ultrascan AGI:

Greek police arrests gang of Nigerians for email scam

It is indeed a major success for the Greek police and the Department of Financial and Cyber Crime, as today five people have been arrested, accused of running an "advance-fee" Internet scam based in Athens, worth tens of thousands of euros.

The official press release of the Greek police, mentions that the suspects are from Nigeria and Cameroon, all arrested in Athens. The alleged scam was being investigated by money-laundering and terrorism-funding investigators, in particular. The suspects were arrested on charges of fraud, forgery and violation of immigration laws.

After searching the suspects apartment homes, police seized Euro 1,700 in cash, mobile phones and computer equipment, as well as counterfeit euro banknotes and forged identity documents from Greece and Belgium.

The scam typically involves fraudulent effort to find an investor to help transfer a large sum of money from an African country to Europe in the promise of a future pay-off.

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:

<http://www.mediterraneanews.com/index/2011/12/greek-police-arrests-gang-of-nigerians-for-email-scam/>

1 DEC 2011

From the Sydney Morning Herald (AFP), Australia, sent in by Ultrascan AGI:

Nigerian scams profit from terror fears

Nigerian authorities have arrested members of criminal gangs that profited from fears of Islamist attacks through scams that involved sending threatening text messages, secret police say.

Authorities said they had arrested members of four different gangs involved in the scams, which included SMS messages sent to victims informing them they would be assassinated unless they transferred money to a certain bank account.

Other messages said money must be donated "for the propagation of Islam" or the victims "risk being bombed", secret police spokeswoman Marilyn Ogar said in a statement that named seven suspects.

The arrests come amid a wave of bomb blasts and shootings blamed on the Nigerian Islamist sect Boko Haram, including the August suicide bombing of UN headquarters in the capital Abuja which killed at least 24 people.

Prominent politicians and community leaders as well as soldiers and police officers in the country's northeast, where most of the violence has occurred, have been targeted in assassinations.

Ogar, describing the activities of one of the gangs, said "their sole intent was to instil fear and cause panic with the aim of defrauding unsuspecting members of the public".

Providing an example of a text message, she said: "Someone wants me to assassinate you, but I will spare your life if you pay a ransom to my Intercontinental Bank account."

"Many highly placed Nigerians have been victims of the syndicate," she said.

Another gang was operated by someone claiming to be the "secretary of Boko Haram", she said. Threats were sent to a range of politicians, including a senator, according to Ogar.

"He threatened them to donate money for the propagation of Islam or risk being bombed," she said.

"He received various sums of money ranging from 30,000 naira (\$A185) to 100,000 naira (\$A603) through a Union Bank account."

She also claimed secret police had arrested the person responsible for threats that led the US embassy to issue a controversial warning in early November of potential attacks on hotels and other locations in Abuja.

But an email message allegedly from the suspect that Ogar quoted from was vague and seemed at odds with the specific and credible threat a US diplomat said had led to the warning.

Here is the URL for as long as it is good:

http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-world/nigerian-scams-profit-from-terror-fears-20111201-1o7lj.html?utm_medium=twitter&utm_source=twitterfeed

28 NOV 2011

From many sources -

Farida Waziri, the Director of the Nigerian Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, who replaced Nuhu Ribadu in that capacity, was herself removed from her post last week. Her number two, Ibrahim Lamorde, who also had served Nuhu Ribadu in that capacity, has taken over as Acting Director of the EFCC.

419 Coalition brief commentary follows:

At 419 Coalition we were never great fans of Mrs. Waziri. We first became aware of her when she was running the Nigeria Police fraud squad in the late 1990's - early 2000's time frame, and working with the now defunct US Secret Service led Joint Task Force on West African Fraud. To be fair, USSS had a higher opinion of her than we did, but we never really did understand why that was, as the arrest, conviction, and repatriation rates for 419 Advance Fee Fraud Crimes in Nigeria were dismal to virtually nonexistent at the time. We suppose the USSS view was that at least under Waziri's auspices there were Occasional 419 arrests and convictions, where before there were virtually nil, so there was improvement on the 'something is better than nothing' plan. However, once again, our view was then, and continues to be, that given the sheer magnitude of 419 AFF operations emanating from Nigeria, Mrs. Waziri's performance in counter-419 matters was dismal back then -- and continued to be dismal during her tenure as Director of the EFCC.

Under Nuhu Ribadu, though there was certainly much room for improvement, the EFCC seemed to be taking counter-419 matters seriously. There were arrests, occasional convictions, occasional repatriations of stolen funds, and Ribadu kept counter-419 in the news as a primary function of the EFCC. In short, it seemed that counter-419 was a "front-burner" issue for the EFCC, a matter of some urgency. This did not seem, to us, to be the case during Mrs. Waziri's tenure as Director of the EFCC.

Also, under Nuhu Ribadu, the EFCC seemed more "open" and willing to work with all organizations - be they governmental or NGO's - interested in counter-419 matters. Under Waziri, that did not seem to be the case to us. Under her leadership, EFCC seemed to sort of 'circle the wagons' as it were.

We are glad that the new Acting Director is Ibrahim Lamorde. It was our view that as Nuhu Ribadu's number two he did a commendable job on counter-419 matters. He was willing to work with anyone or any organization that could help in controlling 419, and communicated well on matters of mutual interest. In fact, when Ribadu was dismissed, we lobbied for his appointment as the new Director of the EFCC, but Mrs. Waziri was brought in instead, and Lamorde was "sent off to the boonies" and assigned to duties other than counter-fraud and counter-419.

Eventually, Lamorde was recalled to duty at the EFCC, where he should have stayed assigned in the first place, and became Mrs. Waziri's number two. As such, he should be well versed in all ongoing cases being handled by the EFCC, plus he is aware of all the cases that were handled under Ribadu's tenure as well, so his "continuity factor" as the new boss of the EFCC is excellent - he is already up to speed.

It is our hope that Mr. Lamorde will reprioritize counter-419 operations at the EFCC, and swiftly resolve such embarrassing matters as the Odiawa case, where the 419er was convicted years ago and restitution ordered to the victim --- who has to date not received a dime of the over one million US\$ restitution ordered by the court.

If we were to give any advice to Mr. Lamorde, it would be to focus the efforts of the EFCC back on to "private sector" crime - 419 Advance Fee Fraud, bank fraud, stock fraud, identity theft, matters like that..... and to move away from "public sector" crimes like graft, corruption, and the like, leaving those matters to the ICPC which is specifically charged to deal with such matters. In short, and to over-simplify, the view here is that the EFCC should deal primarily with counter-crime, and the ICPC should deal with counter-corruption. This does not mean, of course, that the two agencies could not cooperate on matters as needed, but at least the focus of each agency would be more clearly delineated.

Such an emphasis by the EFCC on "private sector" crime would also serve to lessen the often made charge that the EFCC is - both under Ribadu and Waziri - simply a political hatchetman for the persecution of enemies of the administration in power. EFCC should let the ICPC take the lead in all "corruption in high places" matters, it's their raison d'etre after all - so let the ICPC take both the the heat and the "glory" in corruption cases. That's their Job.

In any case, we are "rooting for" the new Acting Director of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Mr. Ibrahim Lamorde. Please arrest and convict 419ers; strip them of their assets; and repatriate the stolen monies to their victims in a timely fashion. We love reporting positive stories on EFCC performance in counter-419 matters here in our News section :)

22 AUG 2011

From the Ghanaian newspaper Daily Guide:

419 Fraudster Dupes Chinese Bank

By Henrietta Abayie

A Nigerian 419 fraudster, Anselem Cashile, who claims to be a Ghanaian from Kumasi, has been charged with stealing by an Accra Circuit Court.

Cashile, despite claiming to be from Kumasi, could not pronounce the name of city properly.

His inability to correctly pronounce 'Kumasi' did not only force the audience in the courtroom to call him a liar, but also influenced the presiding judge, Patience Mills Tetteh, to tell him in the face that he was not a Ghanaian.

When asked which part of Kumasi he came from, the 419 man said he was from Ashanti, a suburb of Kumasi. He also mentioned his mother's name as Naadiya and immediately added that "my mother said I am from Kumasi but I live in Nigeria."

Even though the judge sensed the accused person was lying, she granted him a GH¢60,000 bail with three sureties, who must be Ghanaians.

The accused person, who pleaded not guilty, has been charged to report to the police every Monday.

Court will sit on the case on September 9, 2011.

Prosecutor ASP Margaret Ayidaana Awuni, in her submissions, said the accused person, who had been operating an HFC bank account at the Ridge branch in Accra since 2007, on July 13, 2011 received \$59,976 from the Bank of China, which he withdrew periodically.

According to Stephen Ofori Darkwah, the Operations Manager of the bank and also the complainant, on August 3, 2011 the bank received a message that the \$59,976.00 was mistakenly sent to Cashile's account and that it need to be returned.

According to the complainant, the message was apparently received after the accused had withdrawn a larger portion of the money, adding that only \$281.55 remained.

The accused person, sensing danger, was said to have resurfaced at the bank and requested that his account be closed and a new one opened for him, an action which led to his arrest by the bank, after which he was handed over to the Adabraka Police Station.

According to the prosecutor, during police investigations, the accused maintained that he was innocent but only used his account to receive the money for one Appiah Uchey, who is at large.

The accused person is yet to assist the police to apprehend the alleged suspect for questioning.

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:

<http://www.dailyguideghana.com/?p=24007>

13 AUG 2011

From The Guardian, a Nigerian newspaper:

EFCC Hands Over Indicted Nigerian Fraudster To U.S. Authorities

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), yesterday announced that it had handed an alleged Nigerian scammer, Emmanuel Ekhaton, over to United States (US) authorities over a \$32 million Internet collections scam.

The agency's Chairman, Mrs. Farida Waziri, did the handing over, according to EFCC spokesman, Femi Babafemi.

The suspect was arrested in Benin City, Edo State, in August last year by EFCC operatives, following top level exchange of information between US law enforcement agents and the EFCC over the activities of a trans-border ring of Internet scammers, allegedly headed by Ekhaton.

Babafemi disclosed that the extradition process was filed through the office of the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice and was eventually approved by a Federal High Court in Lagos on July 26, this year.

According to him, the suspect has been flown to the US and handed over to a District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania on Thursday by an officer of the EFCC.

Speaking on the extradition yesterday, Waziri tasked operatives working on other pending similar cases to intensify their efforts.

She said: "With the latest extradition in addition to the two earlier done, and the two others pending, the message should be clear to anyone who travels abroad to commit crime and run back home to hide that Nigeria is no longer safe for them because, we will get them and hand them over to face the law."

She vowed that Nigeria will no longer be a safe place for Nigerian fugitive criminals fleeing from law enforcement agents in other countries

Ekhaton is the third Nigerian fugitive to be handed over to the US authorities by the EFCC, while two others are presently awaiting extradition to the US.

George Ubeozor was extradited in 2008 and Sunday Adebisi Adegbesan was handed over in 2009, both to the authorities in New York.

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:

http://www.guardiannewsngr.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=57677:efcc-hands-over-indicted-nigerian-fraudster-to-us-authorities&catid=1:na

Other Nigerian media also covered this story - here is the URL from the Daily Sun coverage:
<http://www.sunnewsonline.com/webpages/news/national/2011/aug/13/national-13-08-2011-03.html>

See 419 Coalition 27 JUL 2011 News for previous coverage of this matter.

2 AUG 2011

From the Carthage Press, Carthage Missouri:

Nigerian scam ensnares Carthage woman

A complicated scam involving people in Nigeria and Spokane, Wash., ensnared a Carthage woman who thought she had been paid for a bracelet she put on Craigslist.

Carthage Police Detective Jeff Steffen said local investigators are in the process of recovering the bracelet for the Carthage victim who was not identified.

"This was a very creative scam, one of the most creative I've ever seen," Steffen said. "These people created an email, that looked like it came from PayPal, that said the Carthage victim had been paid when she had not. She went ahead and sent the bracelet to Spokane, then later found out she had not been paid."

Steffen said the woman in Spokane, who pawned the bracelet, was also apparently a victim, losing approximately \$70,000 of her own money to a scammer who said he was in Nigeria.

"People are still falling for those scams from Nigeria," Steffen said. "I don't know why Nigeria is the place where these are happening, but people need to stop answering emails from there unless they know the person emailing them."

A Spokane television station's website featured the story from July 25 of a woman from that city who said she fell victim to what she called a "Nigerian boyfriend scam," and lost \$70,000.

The woman, who was too embarrassed to share her identity with television station KXLY TV, said it was a combination of loneliness and a very generous heart that led her to have to apologize to her five children for leaving the family in debt and even helping the scammer victimize others, including a Carthage woman.

The Spokane woman told the television station she had just gone through a divorce and was flattered by the attention from a stranger.

The television station reported that the man, named "Elias," soon claimed he had been robbed and his son was shot in the holdup and that he needed money to pay the doctors to treat his son.

The Spokane woman said she sent Elias money through Western Union and pawned her television when Elias said his son would die in the hospital without her help.

The television station said Elias had the woman pawn jewelry, sent to her by FedEx, and send that money to him to help him escape from Nigeria. Steffen said one of the pieces of jewelry was a bracelet sent to the Spokane woman by a woman from Carthage who was trying to sell the bracelet on Craigslist.

Steffen said there are two messages to come from this story. One is do not pay attention to random contacts from Nigeria.

Steffen said people should not rely on emails from PayPal to tell them a payment has been made. Always check your account to be sure a payment has been posted before sending an item.

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:

<http://www.carthagepress.com/news/x1800181900/Nigerian-scam-ensnares-Carthage-woman>

For the Spokane, Washington part of the story, a friend of 419 Coalition sent in an article from KXLY 920 radio, Spokane. Here is the URL:

<http://www.kxly.com/news/28663620/detail.html>

27 JUL 2011

From The Nation, a Nigerian newspaper:

Court okays extradition of Nigerian accused of defrauding 70 US law firms

By Eric Ikhilae

A Federal High Court in Lagos yesterday granted an application by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federation, Mohammed Adoke, for the extradition of a Canada-based Nigerian, Emmanuel Ekhatator, who is wanted in the United States for alleged criminal conducts.

Ekhatator is wanted in the US over his alleged link with a group that defrauded some US law firms of about \$29 million.

Justice Fatimat Nyako held that with the evidence provided by the prosecution, the court was convinced that Ekhaton should be extradited to the US to stand trial on charges against him at the US District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania.

The court ordered the US Embassy and the Federal Government to perfect his travel arrangement and ensure his extradition within 15 days.

The three-count charge marked 10-244 was part of documents from the US Department of State exhibited before the court by the prosecuting lawyer, Mr. Islam Hassan of the Federal Ministry of Justice.

Ekhaton, who is said to be a member of a syndicate that specialises in internet fraud, is accused of conspiracy to commit mail fraud, involvement in mail and wire frauds and money laundering. Most of the offences are said to attract a maximum of 20 years imprisonment.

He was said to have evaded arrest in the US last year and escaped to Nigeria. The US' Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was said to have placed him on its watch list.

He was found in Benin, Edo State, where he was arrested earlier this year by operatives of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

EFCC, in a supporting affidavit to the extradition application, said Ekhaton, who holds a Masters degree from the University of Bradford, West Yorkshire, resided in Canada with his wife, Nkechi.

The commission described Ekhaton as the arrowhead of a ring of fraudsters operating between Canada, US and the Asian Peninsular, that had defrauded some law firms of \$29 million.

Ekhaton and his gang were alleged to have, between August 2008 and August 2010 fleeced about 70 US law of over \$29 million.

EFCC said its investigation revealed that Ekhaton and his gang simply contacts law firms through e-mails, posing as potential clients, claiming to be representatives of foreign companies, seeking legal representation to help negotiate and collect, on their behalf, claims and settlement in cases like real estate transaction, divorce or torts.

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:

<http://www.thenationonline.net/2011/index.php/news-update/13758-court-okays-extradition-of-nigerian-accused-of-defrauding-70-us-law-firms.html>

419 Coalition note: While Ekhaton has not been arrested for 419 per se, we have it on good authority that he and his syndicate also ran 419 AFF operations. Hence we have posted the article. Congrats to the EFCC, USPIIS, FBI, US Department of State and others responsible for bringing this fraudster to justice. Reckon it just does not really pay in the long run to piss off 70 law firms..... :) We'd also like to note that it is a Huge thing when Nigeria has extradites a fraudster of this magnitude to the US (or anywhere else)... sends chills through the 419er community, and we are definitely in favor of That.

23 JUL 2011

From the Nigerian newspaper The Daily Sun:

Latest scam in town

Letters from 'dying' rich men, women flying about

By Vincent Ukpog Kalu

Possibly for business scammers in Nigeria the days of writing fluke letters to fleece business partners are over. But it is not yet over with their tricks. They keep inventing new means of getting along.

Another door has been opened to such conmen with the proliferation of the internet. Every email address is inundated with letters for all forms of business proposals, most of them absurd. How the conmen get the email addresses still remain a puzzle but investigation reveals that they hack the net with particular software and download many email addresses.

To show how ridiculous it is, an email was opened for a primary school pupil to teach her what email was all about. After few weeks, the pupil started receiving in her email box proposal for transfer of funds to her account.

The desperation of these cyber criminals has put the banks on their toes as they continuously warn their customers not to update their personal information on any website because of requests by conmen to update their personal information. This message is pasted on banking halls and displayed on the screen of ATM machines.

Samuel Uwem, a businessman opened his mail box early in the month and saw a letter supposedly from a Liberian refugee in Togo. The refugee, a lady explained to him, how life has been hard on her and would need his assistance. The young man was carried away by the story and requested the girl to send her photograph and she did.

The photograph showed a very beautiful girl with a traffic stopping figure. Samuel was hypnotized by the photograph and other thoughts started coming his way. Conversation changed from internet to phone conversation and he started planning to rent an apartment for the lady where he would be visiting him from his matrimonial home. The lady requested that he sent her \$1000 through electronic transfer for shopping and transport fare to Nigeria and that Samuel would come to Seme, the border town between Nigeria and Benin Republic to pick her on an agreed date.

The young man bought the proposal and hurriedly went to the bank and wired the money to her account. On the agreed day, he went to Seme Border to wait for her from morning and they were talking over the phone. When evening was approaching, he called again and a man's voice came from the lady's end and said he was answering from Festac, Lagos and told him that he was stupid and gullible.

Many have accepted such messages hook, line and sinker and have been duped like Samuel. While the telephone conversation was going on, how the phone reflected telephone code of Togo is also another puzzle. From all indication, it was at Festac Samuel was set up.

Every time you open your electronic mail, you are inundated with all sorts of mails about one business proposal or another. The amount of money usually quoted in US dollars is mindboggling. Some of the stories are ridiculous and some sound convincing depending on your mindset. Mostly all the gullible fall for them.

Even though, the letters have foreign addresses most of them emanate from Nigeria. Most of them are captioned, Business proposal, Urgent attention, Confidential, Please read carefully etc.

Take a look at this letter, the writer is supposed to be a woman, who would be going for surgical operation and according to the letter, she believes that she might not survive the surgery and so has decided to will her fortune to an unknown person. "I am Mrs. Mellisa Lewis. I will be going for an operation later today. I decided to will the sum of \$14m to you, quote my personal reference number, LLP/953/900//316US/UK, to my pastor only, Mr. Paul Thomas. email:paulthomas24@xmsn.com."

My reply:

Dear Mrs. Lewis, I pray that you come out from the theatre alive. However, as you suggested I would get in touch with your pastor, Mr. Paul Thomas. Letters written to the said Mr. Thomas were not answered.

Another of such letter dated May 28, from the desk of a manager in one of the banks in Burkina Faso solicited for transfer of money of \$27.2m. The writer of the letter implored that the content of the letter be treated with utmost confidentiality"

"From the desk of Mrs. Mariam Ulah,
Bill and Exchange Manager,
Bank of Africa (B.O.A)
Ouagadougou Burkina-Faso (West Africa)
Remittance of \$27,200,000.00 USA dollars

Confidential

My name is Mrs. Mariam Ulah; I am a banker by profession. I hail from Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, West Africa. My reason for contacting you is to transfer an abandoned \$27,200,000 to your account. The fund has been deposited by late (Mr. Paul Louis from Paris, France) who died along with his entire family on 6th December 2003 in an air crash. Since we got information about his death, we have been expecting his next of kin to come over and claim his money because we cannot release it unless somebody applies for it as next of kin or relation to the deceased as indicated in our banking guidelines but unfortunately we learn that all his supposed next of kin or relations died in the plane crash.

I want to present you to the bank as next of kin/beneficiary of this fund.

It is therefore upon this discovery that I decided to make this business proposal to you and release the money to you as the next of kin or relation to the deceased for safety and subsequent disbursement since nobody is coming for it and we don't want this money to go into the bank treasury as unclaimed bill.

I will not fail to bring to your notice this transaction is hitch-free and that you should not entertain any atom of fear as all required arrangements have been made for the transfer, please treat this business with utmost confidentiality and you should contact me immediately as soon as you receive this letter.

Please make sure you keep this transaction as your top secret and make it confidential till we receive the fund into the account that you will provide to the bank. Don't disclose it to any body, because the secrecy of this transaction is the success of it. Further details of the transaction shall be forwarded to you as soon as I receive your return mail indicating your interest. I am waiting to hear from you urgently.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs. Mariam Ulah"

My reply:

Dear Mrs. Ulah,

Your letter is very interesting, I am equally interested in the proposal only on one condition that it should be treated with absolute confidence because I am a very important person in Nigeria and wouldn't want anything that will drag the reputation that I have built into the mud. Thanks. Mr. Innocent Ben.

The correspondence continued after she had convinced me that \$27 million would buy the whole world.

We agreed on a sharing formula of 45 percent of the amount for me, 30 percent for her and 25 percent to defray cost and settling some staff of the bank who are privy to the fate of Paul Louis. Discussion ended when she requested as urgent as possible for a transfer of \$1500 through electronic to facilitate the release of certain documents that would lead to transferring the money to me. The same mail from Mrs. Ulah was sent to some other colleagues.

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:

<http://www.sunnewsonline.com/webpages/features/living/2011/july/23/living-07-23-2011-002.html>

419 Coalition comment: As we have noted for many years, 419ers are, and always have been, equal opportunity thieves...

6 JUL 2011

From WBAL TV Channel 11 Baltimore, MD sent in by a friend of 419 Coalition:

Fake Rentals Ruin Beachgoers' Vacations
Police: Scams Originate Overseas

by Deborah Weiner

OCEAN CITY, Md. -- Some Marylanders saving for a beach vacation have ultimately learned the rental they secured doesn't really exist or was never available to rent.

Getting burned at the ocean has taken on a whole new meaning. Becky Ray, of Parkville, told the WBAL-TV 11 News I-Team that she had her eye on a three-bedroom Ocean City condominium that she found on Craigslist. She said she quickly contacted the individual who posted the ad.

"The price was good. The picture looked beautiful. It was oceanfront, right in the location. It was everything we were looking for," said Becky Ray, of Parkville.

In an email to Ray, a woman identifying herself as Lisa said she was the "agent for the rightful owner of the house," and despite the short notice of just a couple of days, the house was still "available."

Ray said she thought it was a good deal at \$150 a night for the roomy, beach-front condominium.

"I was like, 'How on Earth can this place be cheap?'" she said.

Beware The Warning Signs

Consider the low cost red flag No. 1. Authorities said they found red flag No. 2 in the grammar and spelling of the emails from Lisa, who wrote, "I have been working with them -- the owners -- for good 4years now."

She also wrote, pay a "refundable security fee of \$200 to enable me hold the house for you."

Ray never spoke to Lisa -- she only received emails, often at odd hours.

Then, came red flag No. 3: How to pay.

"The way that they wanted me to pay was through Western Union, which is wiring money, and I knew right then it was a scam because once you wire money, it is gone," Ray said.

Suspicious, Ray began to search property records and said she found the real owner of the house, Susan Hardy, of Virginia. She learned the home wasn't available for rent and no one named Lisa was the real estate agent.

WBAL-TV 11 News I-Team reporter Deborah Weiner spoke by phone with Hardy.

"Somebody downloaded our pictures and was using our pictures on the Craigslist site," Hardy said.

When asked if she felt scammed, too, Hardy said to Weiner, referring to Ray, "Not as much as she did."

One Ocean City property owner who asked not to be identified told the 11 News I-Team that potential renters of his home have been scammed nearly 10 times. The property owner said people have shown up on vacation to check in and are devastated to find out they've been had.

Police: Scams Originate Overseas

Ocean City police investigators said they believe some of the scams are coming from people living in Jamaica and Nigeria. No one has been arrested.

"It's very hard to catch people because a lot of these scammers are overseas. We can trace it and trace it and once it hits overseas, there's not much we can do other than inform the public," Ocean City police spokeswoman Jessica King said.

The vacation rental business has increased by about 30 percent, according to Ocean City's Vantage Realty.

Realtors like Denny Murphy said they find themselves trying to help people who were duped. Murphy said prospective renters should beware if a so-called agent doesn't want to speak by phone. Murphy also said to beware of deals at pricey properties.

"If you find a building that's charging \$4,500 to \$5,000 a week and find someone on Craigslist or VRBO (Vacation Rentals By Owner) or Homeaway that's offering some room for \$1,000, you probably want to double check," Murphy said.

"Technology is incredible and we're all susceptible to a good deal, but sometimes you have to think, is it too good to be true?" Ocean City Mayor Rick Meehan said. "I would encourage people to go the town's website, ococean.com that will take you anywhere you want to go. All individual properties are there. You can get to their website or book right on the website."

Ray and her friends ultimately had their ocean getaway after booking a rental through a friend.

"If you're looking for a good deal and something seems like it's a good deal, before you make that jump, stop to think and do research on your own," Ray said.

If you are suspicious about a rental, police recommend you follow your instincts. Even if you have to pay a fee, police said, you are often safer dealing with a licensed real estate agent.

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:

<http://www.wbaltv.com/news/28465403/detail.html>

23 MAY 2011

From the Norristown and Montgomery County, PA Times Herald,
sent in by a friend of 419 Coalition:

Maryland man arrested for online dating scam trying to swindle Montco man

By CARL HESSLER Jr
Journal Register News Service

Montgomery County District Attorney Risa Vetri Ferman and Hatfield Township Police Chief Mark Toomey announce the arrest of Maxwell Gbogboade for an attempted Theft by Deception from a sixty-four (64) year old male of Hatfield Township, Pennsylvania.

COURTHOUSE: A Maryland man has been charged in connection with an alleged Internet dating scheme during which he attempted to defraud a Hatfield Township man out of more than \$46,000.

Maxwell Gbogboade, 44, of Bel Pre Road, Silver Spring, Md., was arraigned before District Court Judge Kenneth Deatelhauser of Souderton on felony charges of theft by deception in connection with the alleged scheme that targeted a 64-year old Hatfield man. Authorities arrested Gbogboade on Friday at a Philadelphia hotel where he allegedly set up a meeting with the victim to collect the cash.

Gbogboade is being held at the county jail in lieu of \$750,000 cash bail to await his May 26 preliminary hearing.

An investigation by Hatfield police began May 19 when authorities learned that the victim was attempting to withdraw \$46,000 in cash from his bank account to give to a female he met through an online dating service, according to court papers.

The victim told police he had conversed online with a woman named "Mary Douglas," during which the woman sent him what she claimed were her photographs. However, the photographs were later determined to be of several different women from various websites, police alleged.

The woman told the victim that she was traveling to Africa to star in a movie and needed money to cover her expenses, according to court papers.

"The details of this online relationship were determined to be consistent with a 'Nigerian' online dating fraud scheme," alleged Montgomery County District Attorney Risa Vetri Ferman. "(The victim) was led to believe that 'Mary Douglas' would be coming to Hatfield to be with him once she finished her assignment in Nigeria."

Through a series of online communications the victim was referred to the woman's supposed business manager who facilitated all communications regarding the withdrawal of money from the victim's bank account. The victim had previously used wire services to send "Mary Douglas" more than \$24,000 in Lagos, Nigeria, according to the criminal complaint.

During the investigation, the victim told police that he was supposed to withdraw an additional \$46,000 and wait for a money courier to contact him with instructions on where to meet to make the payment, according to the arrest affidavit. The victim, according to court papers, had been told the courier was flying to Philadelphia from New York.

Eventually, the victim was supplied with the name of a courier, "Soloh Batuya," and a code to be used by the courier upon meeting the victim, court documents alleged. "Soloh Batuya" called the victim at about 6:50 p.m. May 19 and directed the victim to meet him in the lobby of a hotel near Philadelphia International Airport, according to the arrest affidavit. The courier also provided the victim with a description of himself.

With the assistance of Philadelphia police, authorities placed the hotel lobby under surveillance and determined Gbogboade allegedly was posing as "Soloh Batuya," according to the arrest affidavit. When police confronted Gbogboade he was in possession of two cell phones and information containing the victim's name, address and phone number and the code number the courier was to provide to the victim at the time of the money exchange, according to the arrest affidavit.

If he's convicted of the theft-related charges at trial, Gbogboade faces a possible maximum sentence of seven-to-14 years in prison.

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:

<http://timesherald.com/articles/2011/05/23/news/doc4dda73b9def99352239534.txt>

[This story received considerable additional media coverage as well - 419 Coalition]

16 MAY 2011

From the newspaper Nigerian Tribune, sent in by a concerned Nigerian:

EFCC saved foreign investors from losing \$12bn to fraudsters

Written by Tunde Oyesina, Abuja

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has prevented some foreign investors from losing over \$12 billion to fraudsters in less than two years.

This was achieved through a total of three million advisory mails sent to potential foreign investors by the anti-graft agency.

Chairman of the anti-graft agency, Mrs Farida Waziri, disclosed this over the weekend while addressing a private sector track session at the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries which came to a close in Istanbul, Turkey.

Speaking on "Anti-Corruption And The Challenge Of Increasing Capital Flow To Africa: Reforms, Result And The Road Ahead", the EFCC boss enumerated the various strategic steps that had been taken by the Nigerian government through the anti-graft agency to check corruption and make the country safe for foreign investments and investors alike.

Some of the reforms that had been successfully carried out in Nigeria's anti-graft campaign in the last three years, she said include: creating a Transactions Clearance Platform,(TCP) to interface with offshore investors and entities, sustained sensitisation and public awareness campaigns, capacity building for operatives and judicial officers, partnership with microsoft against internet scam, recovery and return of proceeds of advance fee fraud crimes, intense prosecution and conviction of corrupt public officers as well as sanitisation of the banking sector among others.

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:

<http://tribune.com.ng/index.php/news/22004-efcc-saved-foreign-investors-from-losing-12bn-to-fraudsters>

419 Coalition comment:

While 419 Coalition is not competent to speak to many of the claims made by Mrs. Waziri in this article, we can say that the claims made concerning reforms that have resulted in significant progress on recovery and repatriation of 419ed monies in the last three years are simply not accurate.

Given the magnitude of 419er operations, very little in terms of monies have been recovered, and very little of the recovered monies have been repatriated.

We have challenged the EFCC over and over again here in our News section and elsewhere to make public what amounts from which 419ers have been recovered, where the recovered monies are being kept, and how much of the recovered monies have been repatriated and to whom. But the EFCC refuses to do this and merely continues to blather on about all the large amounts of 419ed monies that have been recovered and repatriated.... with absolutely no way for anyone to confirm anything that they are saying. This is, of course, absurd.

No-one, absolutely no-one, that we know of in the counter-419 community (other than than the EFCC itself) says that the EFCC is doing a good job in recovering and repatriating 419ed monies. The norm is more like the Odiawa case in which the 419er was convicted and ordered to pay over a million dollars in resitution years ago, and to date the victim hasn't seen a dime. That is more par for the course, unfortunately, that the EFCC claims of large scale recoveries and repatriations of 419ed monies....

We wish that the EFCC would quit making the absurd claims they do concerning recovered and repatriated 419ed monies..... don't they think that anyone out here is watching them? All such inflated claims do is simply further lessen the credibility

of the EFCC in such matters....

28 FEB 2011

From the Nigerian newspaper, The Punch:

Wire fraud: Nigerian jailed nine years in US

By Agency reporter

A United States District Court in Charlotte, North Carolina has sentenced a Nigerian, Ugochukwu Enwerem, aka Joseph Smith, to nine years imprisonment on one count of conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud and 14 counts of wire fraud.

The US Justice Department said in a statement posted on its website on Sunday said District Judge Graham Mullen also ordered Enwerem to serve three years of supervised release following his prison term. In addition, Enwerem was ordered to forfeit \$9,453,815 (N1,447,804,538.57) and to pay restitution in the same amount, jointly and severally with fellow Nigerian and co-defendant, Kent Okojie.

Enwerem was found guilty in March 2010 by a federal jury in the Western District of North Carolina on the 15 counts, the statement said. In September 2009, his co-accused pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy and two counts of wire fraud and was sentenced to 72 months in prison in November.

Okojie and Enwerem, who resided in the Netherlands, were originally charged in a June 2007 complaint.

They were subsequently extradited to the US from The Netherlands, where they had been in custody on Dutch charges.

The statement also contained excerpts from court documents.

It said, "Evidence at trial showed that between at least August 25, 2004 and April 23, 2007, Enwerem and his co-conspirators solicited individuals in the United States, Europe and Australia by sending spam e-mails informing potential victims that they had either won a foreign lottery, inherited a large sum of money from a long lost relative, or were eligible to recover outstanding construction contract payments."

"When individuals responded to the e-mails, the defendants, posing as lawyers, bankers and European government officials, solicited fees from victims ostensibly to pay for things such as 'anti-terrorism certificates', 'EU bank clearances', 'anti-money laundering certificates', and legal fees in order to secure their purported lotto winnings, inheritance or contract payments."

The US Justice Department stated that Enwerem and Okojie instructed American victims "to wire funds, using Western Union and other money transfer services, to them and their designees in The Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom."

"According to trial testimony, at least 18 US and international victims were defrauded of more than \$9.5m during the period when Enwerem was a member of the conspiracy."

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:

<http://www.punchng.com/Articl.aspx?theartic=Art2011022825410>

27 FEB 2011

From the Chicago Tribune:

Naperville man sends \$200K to fake online girlfriend

by Associated Press

A 48-year-old west suburban Naperville man never met his online girlfriend, but he didn't mind sending her cash - \$200,000 over about two years.

The Naperville man told police he started the online courtship about two-and-a-half years ago. His name hasn't been released.

Since the relationship began, he's wired about \$200,000 to her at bank accounts in Nigeria, Malaysia, England and the United States.

The Naperville Sun reports that the man had an ID from the woman that was a sample driver's license from Florida.

The jig was up this week when the man contacted police to ask for their help in rescuing the woman, who he said had been kidnapped in London.

Police say the man "was in disbelief" when an officer told him his girlfriend didn't exist.

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/chibrknews-naperville-man-sends-200000-to-fake-online-girlfriend-20110227,0,3229085.story>

25 FEB 2011

From the Nigerian newspaper, The Punch:

EFCC recovers \$6.5bn, pursues

Olamilekan Lartey, Abuja

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission has said that it has recovered over \$6.5bn in the past two a half years in its crusade against corruption.

Chairman of the EFCC, Mrs. Farida Waziri, said the commission had also secured over 150 convictions, while over 1500 cases were still pending in the courts.

Waziri spoke on Wednesday when the World Heavyweight Champion, Mr. Osita Offor, visited the EFCC headquarters in Abuja.

The EFCC boss said the anti-corruption agency could not succeed unless it had the support of the people.

She denied that the EFCC had withdrawn cases against any former public office holder, insisting that the EFCC had not withdrawn its case against the former minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Mallam Nasir El-Rufai.

She said, "El-Rufai's case emanated from the National Assembly. It's the courts that will decide whether he is guilty or not. Once we start a case we never withdraw."

Waziri further claimed that the EFCC was still investigating the allegations against Amos Adamu and his activities, saying that "I'm not aware that we are withdrawing any cases. This commission is a very professional organisation with officers that are well trained locally and internationally."

She added that the American Federal Bureau of Investigation was currently training officers of the EFCC on investigation and interrogation techniques.

Waziri said the EFCC needed champions like Offor and Ambassador John Fashanu to launch assaults on corruption.

"Our job here is to wage relentless war against the menace of economic and financial crimes including corruption which has not only given our country a bad image abroad, but had equally been the bane of our economic development," she said.

In his remarks, Offor, who was accompanied by Fashanu, said the belt was for Nigeria.

Offor said he was concerned about the future of young people because they needed direction.

"All the young people need is someone to act as a role model to them. If we cannot embark on this job, nobody can. I'm not holding this title for myself, I'm holding for everyone," he said.

Offor said he defeated the former heavy weight champion, an American, because he was determined.

"Some people fight because of the dollars, but I said to myself that if I can beat the American, I can use the title to speak for Nigeria," he said.

Fashanu in a brief speech, said Offor's rise to the top had been a struggle.

"When we see what the EFCC is doing, it wouldn't be right not to want to collaborate with the commission at every level," he said.

Fashanu said he and Offor would visit six universities in the six geo-political zones of the country.

"We will use the platform of wrestling and football to collaborate with the EFCC in the war against corruption," Fashanu said.

Here is a link to a repost of the article, for as long as it is good:
<http://odili.net/news/source/2011/feb/25/810.html>

419 Coalition comment: Congratulations on Mr. Offor for winning the heavyweight championship! However, on the \$6.5 Billion the EFCC says it has recovered in the last two years in its crusade against corruption, it is unclear from the article how much of that was recovered from "institutional 419" criminals (graft, bribes, embezzlements etc.) and how much from "regular 419" (419 Advance Fee Fraud. 419 Coalition cannot comment on the recoveries in the graft and corruption areas etc., that is not our area of expertise. However, in terms of "regular 419" recoveries and repatriations, we again call for total transparency on the part of the EFCC and ask them to put up on their website a database showing from whom, when, from where, and in what amounts 419 AFF crime monies have been recovered; where exactly these monies are being kept; and to whom, when, to where, and in what amounts the stolen monies have been repatriated to 419 victims - with contact information given on each victim whose stolen funds are repatriated so that the information given in the database can be independently vetted and verified. Once again, in terms of 419 AFF recoveries and repatriations by the EFCC, the last two years included, given the magnitude of the amounts stolen by 419ers, recoveries have been minimal, and repatriations have been miniscule. As an example, take the Odiawa case in which the 419er was convicted several years ago and ordered to pay over a \$1 million in restitution of 419ed monies. As of this date, the victim has not seen a dime or recovered and repatriated funds. Unfortunate, but true.

14 FEB 2011

We were advised today of two reportedly well written German language articles on 419 Advance Fee Fraud. Here are links to each of them:

[Betrug mit Millionerbe](#)

and

[Millionen-Abzocke mit falschem Erbe](#)

10 JAN 2011

From the Daily Sun, a Nigerian newspaper:

Nigeria's anti-money laundering war: Huge recoveries, no impact

By CHIMA NWOKOJI

Corruption has often been described as Nigeria's public enemy No 1. Having stalled much of her economic development initiatives since independence, no one perhaps would still be in doubt as to why the Federal Government has launched an all out war against the monster which also includes money laundering and other forms of economic crimes threatening the growth of the nation.

It was therefore not surprising that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) the nation's leading anti graft agencies have continued to devote more resources toward taming the monster. Although stakeholders are in agreement that their strategies are effective, a major source of worry to many is that corruption still thrives in several sectors of our national lives leaving many with the conclusion that there seems to be no real impact on Nigerians so far.

Statistics of recoveries by the anti graft body made available to Daily Sun show that between 2003 and 2010, an estimated N5.15trillion made up of cash and assets may have been recovered from crime suspects, including political office holders and advance fee fraudsters.

This was made up of \$6.5 billion (N975bn) recovered between 2003 and May 2010, as well as another tranche of about N2 trillion worth of properties confiscated locally and overseas from 46 politicians and influential Nigerians on the orders of the law courts. Among the items recovered from them are 238 bank accounts worth over N500billion, 320 million units of shares in blue-chip companies, 18 limited liability companies and 28 plots of land.

Others assets recovered by the agency include 43 vehicles, three filling stations, four hotels, two warehouses, four shopping complexes, five schools, two bakeries and three estates. In addition over N1.5trillion fresh landed properties and business concerns were said to have been recovered from politicians and chief executives of some Nigerian companies in the last quarter of 2010. The staggering quantum of recoveries however gives a clear indication as to why Nigeria as a country has been struggling to develop let alone meeting the Millennium Development Goals set for it alongside other nations of the world.

Unfortunately, successive political administrations in the country have over the years left the citizens with the impression that they were committed to taming the corruption monster when in absolute terms the numbers are still soaring. Confirming the recoveries at a meeting held December 16, 2010, EFCC Chairman Farida Waziri revealed that within a space of seven years, the commission made "recoveries of over \$11 billion and secured over 400 convictions." This means that additional \$4.5 billion cash was recovered between May and December 2010.

While it may be apparent that these recoveries may be a clear testimony that EFCC was winning the anti-corruption and anti-money laundering war in many fronts, there are still concerns in most quarters that the funds being recovered may not have been put to proper use.

Ever since these recoveries became issues of public debate among most commentators, some observers have been trying to know from both the EFCC and the political authorities the whereabouts of the recovered fund.

Enquiries about the safety of the fund recovered may have borne out of the belief that citizens of this country should feel the economic impact of the recovered loots hitherto stolen from either the public treasuries or from the nation's financial markets.

Many are of the view that it should at least translate to better life for the citizenry, particularly against the backdrop of severe economic hardships facing them. With corruption still dominant in public and private businesses in the system many have been wondering what the citizens have benefited from the efforts of the anti graft agencies in the country since their establishment.

However, in a swift reaction, the executive chairman, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission Mrs. Farida Waziri hits the bull's eye in her frank assessment of the strides made so far stressing that the impact was real. According to her, the achievements of the EFCC in its seven years of existence are quite immense. "In stating these, you need to quickly take a mental excursion into the pre-EFCC Nigeria. Before its establishment, Nigeria had become globally blacklisted as a haven for money laundering and economic crimes. Advance fee fraud, cyber crimes, banking and contract scams and other financial crimes were legion." She recalled how fraudsters were being celebrated with nothing being done by the authorities to arrest the situations. She explained that the coming of the EFCC, brought significant changes in the affairs of the nation to the extent that the Financial Action Task Force's list of Non-Cooperating Countries and Territories with Nigeria was removed from that infamous list.

Corroborating Waziri's position, Ngozi Saromi, the Special Assistant to the former

Executive Chairman of the EFCC Chairman Nuhu Ribadu, said: "Today, Nigeria has been removed from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) list of non-cooperating countries and has been accepted into membership of the Egmont group of Financial Intelligence Units through which she enjoys global cooperation on a broad number of issues that impact on our economic development. Today the national financial corridor has been reconfigured to yield a robust mechanism, vigorous and appropriate to pull our economy to greater, safer heights. Did all these developments just happen? Nigeria's strong commitment to improve governance by vigorously tackling corruption has been serially cited as a pre-eminent factor in this whole process."

Why there is no impact:

It was in the light of the above that the Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of New Bussa, Rt. Reverend Israel Amoo, recently argued that Nigerians were yet to feel the impact of the fight against corruption, despite efforts by the anti-corruption agencies. Though there have been a lot of activities by the anti-corruption bodies, most Nigerians believe the effects of the fight are yet to be seen and that until people are sanctioned appropriately the culture of impunity was likely to continue.

Amoo who spoke after the first synod of the diocese, also described as deplorable, the state of public infrastructure in the country which he implied can only exist in a society where public funds are appropriated into private pockets. He lamented "When somebody is accused of corrupt enrichment, he should go and clear his name before he is allowed to hold any public office. Today, there are people who have a question mark on their integrity, yet they are still entrusted with public offices."

Commenting on the issue, a civil servant, Mr. Robert Terngu believes that though the antigraft agencies were making positive impact in checking the menace of corruption in Nigeria, the war was yet to be won. The reason for his contention was that corruption was everywhere, in ministries and parastatals, in schools, from the grassroots to the top because every Nigerian wants to make it and live above the poverty line.

Similarly, former Lagos State Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Professor Yemi Osibanjo (SAN), said there was no impact because corruption has continued to ravage the country like a virulent cancer largely because the relevant authorities have not shown enough willpower to fight the scourge.

"Over the years, people have come to the realization that if you steal a large enough amount of money you can get legal representation and waste everybody's time for years and eventually they will let you go or forget about it. Now, it is difficult to have a criminal trial against someone who has the resources to fight it and part of the reason is the delay in processing criminal justice. Part of it is also the delay in the entire criminal process," Osibanjo submitted. He added that perpetrators are getting away with money laundering and other forms of economic crimes because only few people are charged to court in Nigeria for such offences while only a few get convicted or punished.

An Abuja based businessman, Mr Edward Enonche , [said] there is still massive corruption at federal , state and the local administrations . "They loot and share the country's monies at will and no one says anything about it because it has become a norm." He attributed the leading causes of corruption to poverty, fear of tomorrow, lack of social amenities and lack of fear of God.

Thus, in a statement signed by the Special Assistant on Media to the former governor of Abia state, Mr. Emeka Obasi, it was stated that the EFCC seemed out to truncate the political ambitions of perceived vocal members of the opposition leaving its core mandate of fighting economic crime.

Where recovered monies are domiciled:

Responding to a question on money laundering and where EFCC kept all the recovered funds, Bala Sanga, the principal staff officer to the executive chairman explained that the EFCC abides by its Act which stipulated that all monies recovered by the Commission be returned directly to the victims of the crime, be they individuals, corporate bodies, or foreign entities. "If the victim is the Federal Government, the proceeds go into the Federation Account, and if the victims are State or Local governments, the proceeds go into their respective treasuries. If the victims are from specific public agencies the proceeds go to such specific accounts: thus, if they are from the oil sector, the proceed goes to the NNPC account; if they are from Customs, they go into the Customs account; or to the Inland Revenue account if the victims are the Inland Revenue Board."

"Billions of naira have also been recovered and returned to banks and other private commercial entities. Most Nigerians are aware today that monies have been returned to victims in places like Brazil, the United States, Britain, Hong Kong, and U.K, to mention only a few cases. The cases involved foreign 419 victims and that is typically how similar instances are being treated. Victims get their recovered monies paid directly back to them, wherever they may be in the world, and that is in keeping faith with the law that set up the EFCC," Sanga maintained.

Speaking at a forum organized by the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), Sanga contended that restitution was a central component of the work that EFCC, stressing that it has never kept a kobo of the billions of naira recovered in the last four years.

According to him where there was need to use recovered monies as exhibits in prosecution, they are properly kept, documented and used in court to prove the commission's cases against accused persons following the due process of law. Thereafter, upon

conviction and forfeiture, the monies are processed according to court directive. It is illustrative that till [this] date no complaint has been filed against the commission that a single kobo of such funds has been diverted, he further clarified.

But how can these recoveries be applied to improve the quality of lives of the people:

This question arises following a recent revelation by the National Coordinators of National Agency for Poverty Eradication, Dr Magnus Kpakol that over 80 million Nigerians are living below the poverty line. This shows that an estimated 80 per cent of Nigerian live on less than \$1 (150) a day. The National Project Management Conference (ProMaCon) in September last year quoted a World Bank report as saying that 7.08 percent of Nigeria's population live on the poverty line of less than \$1 a day, while 92.4 live on less than \$2.

ProMaCon a private sector initiative that seeks to promote and institutionalize project management best practices through advocacy tools like conference, seminars and workshops contended that Nigerian anti corruption agencies would need to do more to change the status quo.

It was against this background also that an economist, Mr. Damian Nnanyerugo in an interview with Daily Sun recently argued that if the government can only allocate N1.5 trillion out of funds recovered for the economic welfare of the citizens; it means each citizen out of the population of 150 million Nigerians will get N10, 000 per annum. He believes that as little as this money is, if independent agencies like EFCC or the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), is given the mandate to oversee the utilization of the fund for the common good, a lot would be achieved.

"This amount when factored into job creation, human capital development or infrastructural development, will bring about tremendous multiplier effect on the economy. At least many breadwinners would be made out of several families and many lifted above poverty line."

"Imagine the acceleration in growth and development this will create. The population would become more productive and less dependent on the working few. When this is backed by law and accorded necessary priority, it will make more impact in the life of the people than the profligate fund allocation for constituency projects to representatives that end up in private pockets due to lack of proper accountability. N10,000 per head for a year is nothing compared to N15.18 million per month total salary and allowances of a senator and N10.59 million taken by a member of the House of Representatives," the economist maintained. This is probably in line with the idea of N50 billion set aside by the FG from the 2011 budget for job creation.

Instead, the economist lamented, more than half of the population (80 million) of Nigeria lives below \$2 or N300 a day. This translates to N9,000 a month and N108,000 per annum. Assuming that this amount is not spent on food or anything but saved, it means that in 10 years, the consolidated earnings each, of more than half of the population of Nigeria will save N1.08 million. In other words, 80 million Nigerians each is worth a little above N1million in ten years. This throws up more questions than answers in an economy where colossal sums of money are laundered and purportedly recovered, Less than N300 a day is stunted in an economy where it was alleged last year that 25 per cent of Federal Government overhead is spent on members of the National Assembly.

Only recently, a total sum of \$170.8 million (N25.6billion) was paid as penal fines to the Federal Government of Nigeria by multinational firms indicted in the bribe-for-contract money scandal following allegations that about five persons shared \$182 million (N27.3 billion) being fallout of the scam..

But argument on whether money is being laundered within the country or not, was put to rest by a legal practitioner, Ajibola Dalley of G.R.F. Dalley & Partners Lagos.

Dalley said money laundering involves "a conduct or actions designed to conceal or disguise in whole or in part the location, source, ownership or control of proceeds of crime." Wikipedia online dictionary also describes money laundering as engaging directly or indirectly in a transaction that involves money or property which is proceeds of crime or receiving, processing, conceiving, disguising, transforming, converting, disposing of, removing from, bringing into any territory, money or property that is the proceeds of crime.

It then follows that funds realized from over invoicing, inflation of contract sum, diversion of public funds, bribery and other forms of illegal transactions being carried out today are proceeds of crime. When these monies are reintroduced into the financial system by any form of transaction, it qualifies as money laundering. This raises the question of whether the penal fine paid by Halliburton to the federal government does not qualify as proceed of (bribery) crime which will soon be introduced into the financial system.

In a chat with Daily Sun, the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Wyoming Capital & Partners Limited Mr. Tajudeen A. Olayinka stated that the effectiveness of EFCC could have tremendous impact and to a large extent stop money laundering and ensure that government business was properly done. He said it will equally ensure that economic wealth was channeled to deserving and proper economic agents.

"The actions and inaction of EFCC determine the extent of civility in the conduct of business in Nigeria by various economic units. Where the EFCC functions optimally, its activities could shape behaviour and engender orderliness in the conduct of business by various economic units, and this will affect the rating of business environment in

Nigeria, thus providing a boost to the most desirous foreign investment in the Country. The reverse will be the case for an ineffective EFCC."

In assessing the effectiveness of EFCC and the impact of its activities, Professor Taiwo Osipitan implied that despite the commission's efforts, people still give bribes and the majority suffers for it. He called on makers of the law to expand the horizon for EFCC, to enable it make meaningful impact in the life of the populace. According to him, "A point ignored by makers of the law is that a private company or individual who offers bribe to a non-public officer is bound to pass the cost to consumers. In the case of private companies, bribes paid out will definitely diminish the profitability of the business and the return on investments of shareholders. It is unthinkable that we can effectively tackle corruption by merely focusing on public sector probity and ignoring the private sector."

More so, it is alleged that EFCC does not keep Nigerians abreast of where the funds recovered from politicians were domiciled. Everything seems like a mirage, existing only on print and electronic media. At least from monies recovered for the government, roads, hospitals, schools and instruments for security of life should be fixed to an extent. People should feel the impact of national wealth. Other economic analysts who argued that the agency is merely scratching the surface as far as war against economic crime is concerned, hinged their belief on a new report from US-based Global Financial Integrity group which claimed that Nigeria sits atop a list of African countries that have suffered a massive outflow of illicit funds in Africa between 1970 through 2008.

The study, titled, "Illicit Financial Flows from Africa: Hidden Resource for Development," reveals that Nigeria lost \$165.697billion, close to 19per cent of the total \$854 billion outflows from Africa to other western countries. Following behind Nigeria are Egypt (\$70.5 billion), Algeria (\$25.7 billion), Morocco (\$25 billion) and South Africa (\$24.9 billion).

Interestingly, this period overlaps with a period of intense anti-corruption campaign within Nigeria through the establishment and empowerment of the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC). They criticized the commission for not achieving much, despite public funds pumped into its activities.

Aside the G-8 demand, war on corruption became inevitable due to its devastating effect on the nation's economy. For instance, it has been estimated that since independence, Nigeria has lost over \$400 billion (about N60trn) to hemorrhage occasioned by the unconscionable activities of its ruling class. A recent World Bank report estimated that about N600 billion worth of contraband goods pass through the customs and ended up in private pockets with several others cases taking place without being noticed.

In 1999, a United Kingdom-based non-Governmental Organization, Jubilee 200 Coalition had alleged that about \$55 billion, corruptly acquired by some Nigerian rulers, their agents and some government officials were lodged in various Banks in the United Kingdom. The result of investigation by the National Assembly regarding about \$16 billion allegedly spent by Obasanjo Administration on the power sector, has remained hazy.

It was not until the exit of Gen. Sani Abacha the former head of state that the nation was regaled with his exploits in transferring incredible sums abroad straight from the Central Bank. In all, he reportedly looted over \$4billion, part of which mercifully has been recovered in the Nigerian state. In this our same country a leader mismanaged \$12.6 billion of public wealth and there is still no accountability till date. The Federal government on the 22nd of November 2010 withdrew a \$17.5 million case of bribery scandal earlier instituted against Siemens brothers after the later agreed to pay a N7 billion fine representing three times the amount of bribes given by the company to its beneficiaries. The implication of this on anti-corruption war can only be explained by the EFCC. The list is inexhaustible.

Within the past 39-year period examined, the US-based report stated that the massive flow of illicit money out of Africa was facilitated by a global shadow financial system comprising tax havens, secrete jurisdictions, disguised corporations, anonymous trust accounts, fake foundations, trade pricing, and money laundering techniques, the GFI director, Raymond Baker said. It was therefore not surprising that the GFI says a continuation of this loss of massive amounts of money to illicit financial outflows means that economic development and prosperity will remain elusive.

"The impact of this structure and the funds it shifts out of Africa is staggering" Mr. Baker said. "It drains hard currency reserves, heightens inflation, reduces tax collection, cancels investment, and undermines free trade. It has its greatest impact on those at the bottom of income scales in their countries, removing resources that could otherwise be used for poverty alleviation and economic growth."

Even as Nigerians are complaining of lack of impact of EFCC's recoveries, US Ambassador to Nigeria, Mr. Terrence McCulley is canvassing for more powers for the commission, to enable it [to] overcome the current challenges of fighting graft in the country. He also lamented on the effects of corruption and money laundering, saying that: "EFCC is at critical point. The issue of public and private corruption is perhaps one of the most pernicious elements in any society and I believe it is one of the most critical areas to a long term economic health and stability of this country."

"Pernicious because public corruption damages any economy and it undermines the entrepreneurs and investors to compete. It is pernicious because public corruption undermines the population's confidence in its leaders and it creates the impression that the leaders are pursuing selfish interests. Therefore it creates a gap between government and the people, who feel that their leaders will not necessarily respond to their concerns. And therefore the work of the EFCC to root out corruption at all

levels is a very significant one and it must be a neutral institution."

Also, in one of his statements to the Press, the former President of the Nigerian Economic Society Professor Sam Olofin lamented the devastating effect of corruption. "One of the major distorting effects of corruption on the economy has been the creation and sustenance of an artificial economy within the larger economy, which promoted rent seeking behaviour over and above production in the real sector. Rather than channeling our earnings from oil into enhancing capacity of the productive real sector to create real wealth and job opportunities most of the misappropriated funds are either funneled out of the economy or laundered into less than productive activities in the financial sector or into overvalued real estate sector."

"These are the two major sectors that are safe havens able to absorb laundered funds to the detriment of the real sector where entrepreneurs like the Dangotes and others in Manufacturers Association of Nigeria need resources to produce goods and services to create wealth and increase gainful employment for Nigerians."

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:

<http://www.sunnewsonline.com/webpages/news/businessnews/2011/jan/10/bussines-10-01-2011-001.htm>

419 Coalition Note: While we are not competent to comment on much of the material covered in this article, we do have a certain expertise in 419 matters. And, in terms of 419, recovery of 419ed funds by the Nigerian authorities is currently and has always been, dismal in relation to the massive amount of monies stolen by Nigerian 419ers over the years. Additionally, the performance of the Nigerian authorities in repatriating even the relative pittance of 419ed monies that are actually recovered is even poorer. In short, given the amounts stolen, very little is recovered, and of those recovered funds, only a small percentage of them is ever repatriated. We wish that the EFCC would not cite 419ed funds recovered and repatriated as some sort of big success story - as in reality quite the reverse is true, and when they do that it merely serves to undermine their credibility. And we do want the EFCC to be credible. **We continue to suggest that the EFCC, in the interest of total transparency on the issue of recovered and repatriated funds, maintain and keep current on their website, a list or spreadsheet showing the amount of 419ed monies recovered, where who they were recovered from, who they were recovered from, where the funds are currently kept, and the amounts repatriated and to whom (with contact info given).**

That, in our view, seems an eminently doable way to address this issue....

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