

HOW DARIYE CONVERTED PLATEAU STATE'S BILLIONS INTO PERSONAL MONEY

Written by Administrator
Friday, 05 November 2010



The former Governor of Plateau State, Joshua Dariye is facing a 23 count charge bordering on stealing, misappropriation of public funds and criminal breach of trust, while serving as Governor of Plateau state. Though prosecutors believe he has been delaying trial through frivolous applications, his case would be up for hearing in January, 2011. In his years as Governor, Dariye was alleged to have converted most of Plateau's funds which he thereafter laundered for personal purposes. . For instance, Street Journal gathered that Gov. Joshua Dariye used one Emma Orji, a Nigerian resident in London to launder money. Dariye was alleged to have deposited large sums of money in Barclays bank accounts through Orji. Another front was named as Jolly Cole, to who sum of N118, 000,000 was given for the procurement of foreign exchange. About the same time the Governor made these funds available, he allegedly bought a property in Abuja for the sum of N29, 000,000. According to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, between 1999 and 2004, the former Governor expended the sum of N49.745 million on estacode for his trips to London. Street Journal's investigation also revealed that in December, 1999, the Governor opened an account under the name of Ebenezer Retna Ventures at Allstates Trust Bank. Although the account did not have his name as a signatory, his signature was one of the two authorized signatures. The other signatory was his younger brother. Investigations later revealed that Ebenezer Retna Ventures is not a registered business. Some officers of the AllStates Trust Bank were alleged to have assisted the Governor in his criminal activities. Incidentally, Ebenezer is Dariye's son's name. In July 2000, the then Governor Joshua Dariye reportedly wrote a letter to the office of the Vice-President demanding about three billion naira for ecological purposes. The Vice-President's office approved the sum of N 1.16 billion naira for Plateau State's ecological needs. The said money was paid directly into account number: 001080032 at AllStates Trust Bank. The said account has been alleged to be former Governor Dariye's personal account. Street Journal also gathered that Chief Dariye and heads of Plateau State Government's corporations were involved in schemes to fleece the state. Between June 2000 and January 2001, the Plateau State Investment and Property Company reportedly paid the sum of 6 million naira into the private accounts of the then Governor. The State Water Board also paid the same amount into the former Governor's account. N 32. 7million was later discovered in the account into which the funds were remitted. . Street Journal was informed that an account allegedly belonging to former Governor Joshua Dariye was discovered in another branch of AllStates Trust Bank and the account had N147.5 million. A different personal account belonging to Dariye at the AllStates Trust Bank was allegedly changed to Christabel Bentu's account. The account was managed by Ms. Christabel Bentu and the then Plateau State Accountant-General, Nuhu Madaki. The account contained N204 million It is public knowledge that when Dariye was ruling Plateau State, he was arrested by Police officers in London and that £831,730 was found in his possession. London sources revealed to Street Journal as at the time Dariye was arrested, the money was covered by a substance which tested positive for heroin. The former Governor was also said to be operating two accounts in Barclays Bank. The first account had a balance of £175,000 while the second had £80,000. The sum of £918,000 was discovered in yet another account belonging to Dariye. The Barclays Bank account number where this money was found is: 70197041. A bank account in the name of Valentina, former Governor Dariye's wife her name was also discovered and the account had a balance of more than £100,000. The EFCC however disclosed that Valentina Dariye did not know of the existence of Barclays Bank account number 12500488. It was later revealed to Street Journal that it was one Joyce Oyabanjo, a female acquaintance of the then Governor that deposited the £ 100,000 in Valentina Dariye's Barclays Bank account. It was also public knowledge that the sum of £395,000 was found in Apartment 25, London Regents Plaza which was one of Dariye's residences in the United Kingdom. In the year 2000 alone, monies allegedly transferred electronically from Nigeria into Dariye's bank account in London amounted to £ 92,475. Street Journal gathered that on May 4, 2004, another London property owned by the former Plateau State Governor was searched by the police. In the course of the search, the

property which is located on Thortland Street yielded a cash sum of £11,560 as well as equipment for the production of counterfeit credit cards. Investigators in London discovered another property allegedly belonging to Dariye in September, 2005 and the worth of the property was put at about £600,000. In the same month, another £93,000 was discovered in another UK bank account belonging to the former Governor. The EFCC currently prosecuting Dariye also claimed that aside from all the money found in his bank accounts in Nigeria and the United Kingdom, more than one billion dollars have been traced to him in other countries. As Governor, Street Journal gathered that Dariye had a firm financial grip on Plateau State. Sources within his cabinet revealed that at times, funds for funding ministries and departments were given to Commissioners in cash from the Governor's personal house.

Comments (2)

LONDON MP FIGHTS NIGERIAN CRIME

by **Nelson Abbey**

It is no secret; London is the resort of choice for corrupt Nigerian officials to launder their ill-gotten gains.

Take former London supermarket cashier turned Nigerian governor turned Dubai prisoner, James Ibori. Ibori is in a Dubai jail awaiting extradition to the UK on money laundering charges in relation to a private jet and a large London property bought in cash. When he was initially arrested in Nigeria he offered the arresting anti-corruption officer Nuhu Ribadu [a cash bribe of \\$15 million](#). In 2005 Diepreye Alamiyeseigha, another Nigerian governor, was arrested in his £1.75 million London home (paid for in cash) with more than £1 million in bank notes found in his possession. Diepreye's London assets (totalling more than £10 million) were frozen and he was granted bail. A mistake. He fled the UK, allegedly [disguised in a burka](#), only to arrive back in Nigeria to receive a slap on the wrist.

[Joshua Dariye](#) was yet another Nigerian governor arrested in London on money laundering charges only to skip bail. One only has to google the word "Abacha" - Nigeria's leader between 1993 and 1998 - for a master class in corruption and money laundering infamy.

Despite the many high profile arrests, London is still viewed as a very soft spot for corrupt Nigerian leaders to legitimise their loot. Much to the disgust of Nigeria's long-suffering, poverty ridden masses.

Graveyards are full of people who have attempted to resolve the Nigerian corruption problem. The country's elite raid the national treasury with more frequency than you'd access your current account. It's their cash cow and if you attempt to kill it then you can expect someone to attempt to kill you.



Step forward Chuka Umunna, above, MP for Streatham who happens to be of Irish, English and Nigerian descent. At a recent event for the London-based Nigerian charity Citizens for Change Chuka backed a call for a who's who of the Nigerian elite to have travel bans and their assets frozen. This including former president Olusegun Obasanjo; former vice-president Alhaji Atiku Abubakar; former dictator (and potential future president) Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida; Nigerian Ambassador to South Africa General Buba Marwa; former attorney general Michael Aondoakaa, speaker of the House of Representatives, honourable Dimeji Bankole and their families.

Guts. Cajones. William Wallace. In short: this is brave.

Given his Nigerian roots and instantly identifiable Nigerian name Chuka's election to the House of Commons makes him potentially a very influential person in Nigerian politics and life. So lending his voice to this call will capture the attention of the people on the list and Nigerians at large. Chuka's comments couldn't have come at a more crucial moment. Nigeria is months away from a general election – always sticky, high-stakes, murderous periods. Big man politics doesn't get bigger than this. And big men don't get bigger than Chuka's new nemesis, presidential candidate General Babangida, the man widely regarded as having institutionalised corruption in Nigeria. Only one of his many, many alleged atrocities.

One can only hope that Chuka's Nigerian crusade is still in its early days because there is a lot of work to be done. Consequentially a lot of that work has to be done in London. Without friends in London and elsewhere abroad a lot of the dirty work of these Nigerian politicians is redundant. They'll struggle to launder their money. Hence holding the London wing of Nigerian Corruption LLP to account is just as important as going after guilty parties in Nigeria.

Let's hope this is something Chuka also intends to embark on.

Nelson Abbey is a London writer and political commentator - and also, occasionally, admits to being employed in the City



Sent by Daddy Odedje Tuesday 23.11.10