

# HIGH PROFILE CORRUPTION

## EFCC REOPENS 13 EX-GOVERNORS' 772 BILLION NAIRA FRAUD CASES

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission has reopened money laundering cases against 13 former governors and some former ministers, with the amounts involved running into over N853.8bn. *Sunday PUNCH* findings revealed that the amount at stake in the high-profile cases involving the former governors and ex-ministers was not less than N772.2bn, however, the anti-graft agency is currently investigating the N81.6bn that was allegedly looted in the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation.

However, another \$2.2bn was alleged to have gone missing through money laundering, fund diversion and misappropriation in recent times. The \$2.2bn was allegedly diverted by a former National Security Adviser, Sambo Dasuki; late media mogul, Raymond Dokpesi; former governor of Sokoto State, Attahiru Bafarawa; and former Minister of State for Finance, Bashir Yuguda, and others. According to the EFCC, the money was meant for arms procurement in support of the war against terrorists, but it was laundered, diverted, and misappropriated. While Dasuki was in custody of the Department of State Services in 2015, the EFCC arrested Dokpesi, Bafarawa, Yuguda and others. They were all arrested after being indicted by a presidential committee that investigated arms procurement under former President Goodluck Jonathan's administration. The committee said about \$2.2bn was diverted for purposes other than arms procurement. The affected persons include two former Ekiti State governors, Kayode Fayemi and Ayo Fayose; former Zamfara State governor, Bello Matawalle; two former Enugu State governors, Chimaroke Nnamani and Sullivan Chime; former Nasarawa State governor, Abdullahi Adamu; former Kano State governor, Rabiu Kwankwaso.

Others are former Rivers State governor, Peter Odili; former Abia State governor, Theodore Orji; former Gombe State governor, Danjuma Goje; former Sokoto State governor, Aliyu Wamako; former Bayelsa State governor, Timipre Sylva; and former Jigawa State governor, Sule Lamido. Matawalle, who is currently serving as the Minister of Defence in the administration of President Bola Tinubu, is being probed for alleged N70bn money laundering; while Fayemi, who served as Minister of Solid Minerals Development in former President Muhammadu Buhari's cabinet from November 11, 2015 to May 30, 2018, before resigning to contest the governorship election



for his second term, is being investigated for an alleged N4bn fraud, while Fayose, a two-term governor of Ekiti State, is being investigated by the anti-graft agency for an alleged N6.9bn fraud. Nnamani is being probed for an alleged N5.3bn fraud; Chime is being investigated over an alleged N450m campaign fraud as part of the N23bn allegedly shared by a former Minister of Petroleum Resources, Diezani Alison-Madueke, while Adamu is under probe for alleged N15bn fraud.

Kwakwanso is being probed for alleged non-remittance of N10bn pension fund; Orji is being investigated over alleged N551bn money laundering; while Odili is similarly being probed for alleged N100bn fraud. It is not yet clear how the probe of the ex-Rivers State governor will be handled as he obtained an order of perpetual injunction restraining the EFCC and other security agencies from a Federal High Court in March 2008, which has not been vacated to date. Goje is being probed by the commission for an alleged N5bn fraud; Wammako is being investigated for allegedly diverting N15bn; Sylva, a former Minister of State for Petroleum under Buhari, is under probe for alleged N19.2bn money laundering; while Lamido is being investigated over an alleged N1.35bn fraud.

Diezani is being probed over several alleged money laundering cases running into several billions of naira and millions of dollars. Sources privy to the development told our correspondent on Friday that the EFCC Chairman, Ola Olukoyede, was reviewing all the high-profile cases, and had since his assumption of office reappointed investigators to take up the several probes without prejudice to the suspects' social or political status. "The chairman is reviewing all high profile cases, and he has ordered the investigators not to treat anyone differently,

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would not be overlooked or abandoned by the commission. He made the declaration in Abuja through the acting Director of Public Affairs, EFCC, Wilson Uwujaren, who spoke to journalists following a protest by members of the Zamfara Alternative Forum at the commission's headquarters in Jabi, Abuja. Members of the group had urged the anti-graft agency to revisit the probe of the immediate past governor of the state, Matawalle, over alleged N70bn money laundering. Responding to the request of the protesters, Uwujaren revealed that Olukoyede

had reviewed all inherited high-profile cases since he assumed office, adding that the commission would proceed with the probe of every indicted high-profile person. He said, "I want to assure you that, as far as the commission is concerned, nobody is above the law. What the EFCC Chairman, Ola Olukoyede, has done since assuming office is that he has reviewed all the high-profile cases he inherited.

"And the EFCC Chairman has asked me to assure you that this case, like others, will not be an exception. The case will be reviewed, and the chairman assures you that something will be done under the law, and no



one is above the law and no case shall be swept under the carpet. "Rest assured that these cases will be revisited because the EFCC believes that no case should be swept under the carpet. If you have done something wrong and if our investigation is able to establish that you have a case, we will proceed with the matter. On May 18, 2023, the EFCC, through its spokesman, Osita Nwajah, had said Matawalle was being investigated by the commission over allegations of monumental corruption, award of phantom contracts, and diversion of over N70bn. He stated, "The money, which was sourced as a loan from an old-generation bank purportedly for the execution of projects across the local government areas of the state, was allegedly diverted by the governor through proxies and contractors, who received payment for contracts that were not executed. "The commission's investigations revealed that more than 100 companies received payments from the funds, with no evidence of service rendered to the state. "Some of the contractors, who had been invited and quizzed by the commission, made startling revelations on how they were allegedly compelled by the governor to return the funds received from the state coffers back to him through his aides after converting the same to United States dollars."

especially politically exposed persons, such as former governors and ministers, who were indicted for money laundering," an impeccable source told *Sunday PUNCH*. The EFCC had also recently commenced the probe of some former ministers, Olu Agunloye (power, mines and steel) over an alleged \$6bn fraud on the Mambilla Power Project; and Sadiya Umar-Farouk (humanitarian affairs), over an alleged N37.1bn fraud. Agunloye and Umar-Farouq served under former Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo and Muhammadu Buhari, respectively. The EFCC is probing both former ministers and arraigned Agunloye, who was remanded in a custodial centre pending the perfection of his N50m bail. The commission is also probing the suspended Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, Betta Edu, and the embattled Coordinator of the suspended National Social Investment Programme Agency, Halima Shehu, over alleged N81.6bn fraud uncovered in the ministry. *Sunday PUNCH* learnt that the commission was also probing the chief executive officers of several banks, civil servants, and contractors in connection with the humongous fraud uncovered in the ministry. Olukoyede had declared that all high-profile cases would be reviewed and revisited, while noting that indicted former or incumbent public officials' corruption cases