

\$150 million bribery demand allegation: HURIWA asks named legislators to approach a US court

With the Binance's Head of Financial Crime Compliance, Tigran Gambaryan, insistence that his allegations that three Nigerian lawmakers asked for \$150 million bribe to prevent his arrest and prosecution in Nigeria for alleged financial crimes were true, the named legislators have been asked by the HUMAN RIGHTS WRITERS ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA (HURIWA) to approach a court in Nigeria but make themselves available if summoned by any US court.

HURIWA recalled that Mr. Gambaryan made the allegations on his X handle on Friday, naming Ginger Onwusibe, Philip Agbese and Peter Akpanke as the lawmakers. He claimed the legislators asked him to wire the funds to their cryptocurrency wallets just as the accused lawmakers Onwusibe and Agbese had denied the allegation, threatening to seek redress in court.

HURIWA recalled that in a post on X on Saturday, the Binance executive said: "Many requested that I stay on and provide further commentary on the issues I posted about yesterday. Here's the hard truth: what I shared was meant to fill in the gaps left by Wired and NPR's reporting. "The reality is that last year was incredibly painful for me and my family. I dedicated my life to fighting crime as a Special Agent with the United States Department of the Treasury and as a compliance profession. It was an honor to serve my country and it was a blessing that they came to my rescue and mobilized the full force of the U.S. government when I was in need."

Gambaryan recalled the pain his family went through during his incarceration.

"Being dragged through court on outrageous, baseless, and trumped-up charges didn't just hurt me—it also brought immense pain to my family," he wrote.

"I don't want to see my kids cry because I'm not around. I don't want to see videos of my 75-year-old mother on television in tears. I don't want to see my wife crying on TV. I want to put this nightmare behind me and move on. "What I shared was factual, based on my personal experiences and conversations with those who have direct knowledge of the events I discussed. Information that was shared with both Nigerian and U.S law enforcement. So please, allow me to leave this behind and find peace. "I am no longer in law enforcement. The responsibility of seeing this through to a logical conclusion now falls on those still serving in United States and Nigeria."

Reacting, the pro-transparency and Civil Society organization: HUMAN RIGHTS WRITERS

ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA (HURIWA) faulted the approach the federal government has adopted in handling the allegations by simply dismissing it with a mere wave of hand as was done by the minister of information and national orientations but those named as allegedly demanding bribes by the US citizen should Institute a defamation case in Nigeria and must be willing to present themselves in a court in the USA should Mr. Gambaryan files a suit there and they are needed by the US court. "We acknowledge the obvious fact that the legislators named as demanding bribes by Mr. Gambaryan have strenuously denied their involvement in the bribery scam and we don't have a contrary evidence for now to doubt them, but what the federal government should have done is to empanel an independent investigative body within Nigeria to expeditiously probe the disturbing allegations and make their findings known to the public instead of the information and national orientations minister simply addressing a media statement and debunking the allegations".



The Rights group through the National Coordinator Comrade Emmanuel Onwubiko said the heavyweight and the potential extensive damage to Nigeria's global image by the allegations made by Mr. Gambaryan in a social media platform read around the World, these allegations should have been confronted forensically by the Nigerian government instead of adopting the defensive tactics of dismissing those allegations. "Mr. Gambaryan made allegations narrating that his meeting with the legislators was made to look like it was recorded but alleged that it

wasn't recorded. What we expected the federal house of Representatives to do is to debunk the allegations by displaying for the viewing pleasure of Nigerians on both public and private televisions, any sort of video recordings of their meeting with Mr. Gambaryan in Nigeria. That way, such a weighty evidence would totally stop Mr. Gambaryan from insisting on publicizing his allegations against the Nigerian legislators. We are demanding that the federal house of Representatives should counter these allegations using video evidence of the sittings held by the house committee or subcommittee and Mr. Gambaryan."

HURIWA said further: "Now that Mr. Gambaryan has repeated his allegations against these Nigerian officials, we call on President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to order an independent investigation into the allegations. Then the legislators and other officials accused of demanding bribes should immediately sue Mr. Gambaryan in a Nigerian court for defamation but should be willing to appear physically in a court in the USA if invited by the US judiciary."