

Media Statement



Tel: +27 12 845 6000

Email:
media@npa.gov.za

Victoria & Griffiths
Mxenge Building
123 Westlake Avenue
Weavind Park
Silverton
Pretoria

www.npa.gov.za

TO: ALL MEDIA

DATE: 04 MARCH 2020

RE: 15 YEAR SENTENCE FOR 419 SCAM SYNDICATE

The Pretoria Commercial Crimes Court sentenced Olutosin Gbenga Lekam to 15 years imprisonment on 03 March 2020.

Lekam was arrested whilst on his way to Dubai in 2017 after a warrant of arrest was successfully effected by the police at the OR Tambo International Airport.

The accused and his company O G Nkateko Trading CC were charged with fraud alternatively theft and money laundering. The state alleged that Lekam pretended to be Ian J Mackay, a representative of HSBC PLC Bank in London that deals with tracing missing beneficiaries and/or their identity and locates heirs to the Estate.

The complainants, David Currie and his wife, received scam emails from a company called Finders International Probate Genealogists in London wherein Lekam claimed that his company was assigned to deal with their inheritance. The email further stated that the company was conducting investigations involving a deceased client that shares the same surname with them and the circumstances surrounding investments made by the client at HSBC Bank to which they were nominated as beneficiaries.

The accused's modus operandi *inter alia* were to use fictitious names, induced and sent fraudulent documents by email to the complainants and would later appeal to the complainants to furnish him with their passports and ask them to deposit monies to a certain bank account.

The accused was linked to the commission of the offences through the company registration documents from Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC), his First National Bank number and the banking details he gave to the complainants to

deposit amounts of money. The court heard evidence that the accused was the only authorised signatory to this banking account.

In aggravation of sentence, Senior State Advocate Patrick Nkuna argued that the accused was operating the scam with other individuals from his native country in Nigeria, that he was a guest in the country but abused the country's hospitality instead of abiding by the laws of the country. The court was asked to consider that the accused targeted victims who are vulnerable pensioners living in old age homes. He further led oral evidence of David Currie's who told the court about the impact the crime had on both herself and her husband, stating that her husband's health was adversely affected as a result of this crime.

The Acting Director of Public Prosecutions in Pretoria, Advocate George Baloyi applauds the dedication shown by the prosecutor and the investigating team in bringing justice for the elderly couple.

Hurbetin Phindi Mjonondwane
Regional Spokesperson: Gauteng
011 220 4245/ 062 690 6505
hlouw@npa.gov.za