

Press release from Omnia Strategy and Alaco Limited
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Forensic investigation finds allegations against President Khama, Ambassador Motsepe fabricated

London, United Kingdom, 19 August 2020 -- An independent forensic investigation has found that allegations of money laundering against former Botswana president, Seretse Khama Ian Khama, and South African businesswoman and Ambassador to the Pan African Parliament, Bridgette Motsepe, were fabricated.

Today, Omnia Strategy LLP, an international law firm founded by Mrs Cherie Blair CBE, QC, and Alaco Ltd, a leading business intelligence and investigations firm, released the findings of their forensic investigation. The full report, 'Project Monarch: Flies & Lies', is available [here](#).

The Allegations

The allegations of money laundering were contained in an affidavit submitted by Jako Hubona, an investigator with Botswana's Directorate of Economic Crime and Corruption, in support of the State of Botswana's case against Botswana intelligence officer, Welheminah Mphoeng Maswabi, also known as 'Butterfly'.

The affidavit claimed that President Khama, while still in office and with the help of Botswana's former chief of intelligence, Mr Isaac Kgosi, opened a series of bank accounts at the Bank of Botswana, the country's central bank, to funnel in excess of USD10.1 billion (ZAR176 billion) to various international and South African bank accounts, over a number of which, according to the affidavit, Ambassador Motsepe and Ms Maswabi were co-signatories.

The State's case against Ms Maswabi implies that these funds were intended to be used to orchestrate political unrest and fund opposition groups against the current President of Botswana, Mokgweetsi Masisi.

The Omnia / Alaco investigation analysed whether the allegations in the affidavit had a factual basis. It found unequivocally that all allegations concerning money laundering against President Khama and Ambassador Motsepe were without merit, and entirely fabricated.

The findings of the investigation also exonerate both Maswabi and Kgosi of allegations of money laundering.

Key findings of the investigation

Critically, there is no evidence that USD10.1 billion ever left the Bank of Botswana or entered international or South African bank accounts. It has been reported that the Governor of the Bank of Botswana, Mr Moses Dinekere Pelaelo, confirmed to Botswana's Parliamentarians that the money never left the bank and that Botswana never had that amount of money in its accounts in the first place. Botswana's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is estimated at USD18.62 billion, which would mean the USD10.1 billion allegedly stolen would account for 54% of the value of the country's economy. Botswana's annual national budget is between USD4.3 and 5 billion.

Furthermore, in relation to the alleged inflow into South Africa of part of this money in 2019, the South African Reserve Bank (SARB) has confirmed it "could not find any record of the (i) transaction referred to, (ii) the payment having been approved (cleared), either inbound or outbound, or (iii) of any cross-border flow of funds in the amount referred to, inbound or outbound from South Africa".

The investigation by Omnia / Alaco found it was impossible for such funds to have been transferred into the international and South African bank accounts outlined in the affidavit, as the accounts listed either (i) did not exist at the time of the alleged transfer; (ii) never existed at all; (iii) used bank account details that had likely been sourced through data theft; and/or (iv) referenced illegitimate or non-existent banking institutions.

Specifically, Ambassador Motsepe and Ms Maswabi are alleged to be co-signatories to the 17 Blue Flies and Fire Flies bank accounts. Official searches with the Corporate and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) in South Africa confirm that no such South African companies exist. Broader global searches also failed to identify relevant entities bearing these names. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of banks named in the affidavit have confirmed that no such accounts exist, and that Ambassador Motsepe and Ms Maswabi therefore could not be signatories to non-existent bank accounts.

Mrs Cherie Blair, chair of Omnia Strategy says: "The results of our investigations are clear and conclusive: there is no evidence to support any of the allegations against President Khama and Ambassador Motsepe. The claims of financial impropriety originating with accounts at the Bank of Botswana are pure fiction. It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that if Jako Hubona's allegations had been properly investigated, it would have been obvious to any reasonable and fair minded prosecutor or court that the case should be abandoned for lack of credible evidence and doubts over the integrity of the State's witness.

"Instead the Court, and the public at large, have been presented with an affidavit where fake news, spurious allegations, clumsily manufactured evidence and baseless accusations inform a preposterous conspiracy theory riddled with inaccuracies and blatant falsehoods with a fantastical script involving former presidents, spies and billions of Pula, US Dollars and Rands.

“The matter would deserve little more than ridicule if only the State’s case did not have such devastating effects for the people targeted and caught up in the web of lies which traduce South Africa itself. We have seen the allegations cast an unnecessary shadow over the South Africa Reserve Bank and more recently the Department of Justice, National Prosecuting Authority and Department of International Relations and Cooperation. This should never have been allowed to happen. Indeed, the extent of the untruths we have uncovered, without much difficulty, gives rise to serious questions about the motives behind the affidavit. We would hope that the evidence in this report provides the impetus for the Botswana prosecuting authorities to drop this matter,” said Blair.

Professor Thuli Madonsela, former South African Public Protector and Chair of Social Justice Research at Stellenbosch University, who has independently reviewed the evidence and investigative report, says: “This report exonerates President Khama and Ambassador Motsepe of serious allegations. The devastating findings are a stain on the reputation of Botswana, which has always been considered a bastion of democracy and the rule of law. While we know there are many ethical and competent public servants in Botswana, it is a shame that the actions of a few have been allowed to have such a profound and damaging impact on President Khama, Ambassador Motsepe, and the financial institutions of Botswana and South Africa. It is a tragedy that they have had to spend so much time, energy and resources on clearing their names and impugned integrity.

“These allegations have not only tarnished the good names of President Khama and Ambassador Motsepe, who are individuals of unimpeachable integrity, but have also tarnished the good name and reputations of the many financial institutions that have been implicated. This country’s financial services sector, and our Reserve Bank, are globally recognised institutions. This report makes it clear that the allegations, like many of the bank accounts, are bogus. I hope that this matter will be taken up at the highest level of the financial regulatory bodies and law enforcement in both Botswana and South Africa.

While the focus of this report is the money laundering allegations, which have been comprehensively dismantled, serious questions arise over the other charges against Ms Maswabi and Mr Kgosi. If the State’s case concerning the money has been found hopelessly wanting, it follows that all charges and proceedings based on the fictional affidavit must fall. What follows must be compensation for resources used, reputations impaired and the consequent pain and suffering endured by all that have been wrongfully and recklessly maligned,” said Professor Madonsela.

Next steps

Based on the findings of the investigation, and the extremely damaging impact the allegations have had on President Khama and Ambassador Motsepe’s reputations, they have instructed their legal counsel to launch defamation claims in Botswana against the Botswana government.

In addition, it is understood that Mr Kgosi and Ms Maswabi will also launch defamation claims, in Botswana, against the Botswana Government.

ENDS

Note to editors:

- Visuals of all speakers are available, please email a request.
- Link embedded herein leads to the full report, which includes the report (35 pages) and all annexures. It also includes the Jaco Hubona Affidavit.

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