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EFCC Arraigns Ex-bayelsa Governor's Aide, Two Others, for Alleged N864m Procurement Fraud

A former Senior Special Assistant on Millennium Development Goals to the immediate past Governor of Bayelsa State, Henry Seriake Dickson, Embelekpo Apere,...



...was on Thursday, January 28, 2021 arraigned by the Port Harcourt Zonal Office of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC.

Apere, was arraigned alongside Rollins Allison Amacree, Clever Loveday and a company: Oriazy Global Link Limited before Justice Jane E. Inyang of the Federal High Court sitting in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State...

...on 10-count charges bordering on alleged conspiracy and procurement fraud to the tune of N864,104,000. 00(Eight Hundred and Sixty Four Million, One Hundred and Four Thousand Naira only).

Count 2 of the charges read: "That you, Embelekpo Apere and Rollins Allision Amacree, on or about 2015 and 2016 in Bayelsa State within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court,...

...did without soliciting for expression of interest by publishing a notice to that effect in Two National Newspapers and in your Journal, awarded and paid contract worth N352,104,000.00 (Three Hundred and Fifty-two Million, One Hundred and Four Thousand Naira only)...

...to Dekams World Global Nigeria Ltd and thereby committed an offence contrary to Section 44 (a) and 45 (2) of the Public Procurement Act 2007 and punishable under Section 58(1) of the same Act".

Count 3 read:"That you Embelekpo Apere and Rollins Allision Amacree, on or about 2015 and 2016 in Bayelsa State within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court, did without soliciting for expression of interest by publishing a notice to that effect in Two National Newspapers...

...and in your Journal awarded and paid contract worth N182,000,000.00 (One Hundred and Eighty Two Million Naira) only to Ayebomateke & Son's Ltd...

...and thereby committed an offence contrary to Section 44 (a) and 45 (2) of the Public Procurement Act 2007 and punishable under Section 58(1) of the same Act".

They all pleaded "not guilty" to the charges when they were read to them. In view of their pleas, prosecution counsel, M.T Iko asked for a date for the commencement of trial.

However, counsels to the 1st and 2nd defendants, Oyebiyi O. and P. J. Fawei and counsel to the 3rd and 4th defendants, W. Ogberipou informed the judge of bail applications already placed before the court.

This prayer was contested by Iko who expressed fears that the defendants may interfere with the prosecution of the case “by threatening witnesses and the prosecution". He prayed the court to for an order for accelerated hearing of the matter.

Justice Inyang, however, granted the defendants bail in the sum of Twenty Million Naira (N20, 000,000.00) each and one surety in like sum, who must be residents within the jurisdiction of the court.

All the sureties should depose to an affidavit of means and deposit their original Certificates of Occupancy with the Deputy Court Registrar.

The Judge also ordered that international passports of defendants be handed over to the Registrar of the Court while sureties should be verified by the Investigating Officers.

The matter was adjourned till February 17, 22 and 24, 2021 for hearing.

The defendants got into trouble by awarding contracts without following due processes. They allegedly made payments to third parties exceeding N50million without passing through a financial institution, in violating of provisions of the Money Laundering Act.