



Department of Justice

**Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy
District of Massachusetts**

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CONTACT: CHRISTINA DiIORIO-STERLING

Phone (617) 748-3356

usama.media@usdoj.gov

 twitter.com/dmanews1

TWO MEN SENTENCED FOR INTERNATIONAL MONEY LAUNDERING AND BANK FRAUD SCHEME

BOSTON – Two Nigerian men were sentenced today in federal court in Boston for their roles in an expansive money laundering and bank fraud scheme that resulted in millions in losses from pandemic fraud, romance scams and other online scams.

Osakpamwan Henry Omoruyi, 37, and Osaretin Godspower Omoruyi, 36, both previously of Canton, were sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Patti B. Saris to 78 months and 72 months, respectively. In June 2023, the defendants were each convicted following an eight-day jury trial of one count of bank fraud, one count of bank fraud conspiracy and one count of money laundering conspiracy.

“This case demonstrates that if you prey on the elderly and the vulnerable through on-line scams, you can rest assured that federal law enforcement will invest the resources to track you down and hold you accountable. These types of romance fraud schemes cause both huge financial and emotional harm,” said Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy.

“What these men did is disgraceful. They cashed in on a public health crisis, stole millions from hard-working Americans who were looking for love online, struggling to feed their families, and keep their businesses afloat, and sent that money to their friends overseas,” said Jodi Cohen, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division. “It is critical that every dollar spent in pandemic relief goes to those who need it, not to greedy con artists trying to cheat the system. Anyone who tries to follow in their footsteps will soon find themselves in federal court to answer for their crimes.”

“Osakpamwan Henry Omoruyi and Osaretin Godspower Omoruyi conspired with others to launder the proceeds of multiple illegal schemes, including the defrauding of multiple state workforce agencies by obtaining Pandemic Unemployment Assistance unemployment benefits using stolen identities. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to safeguard Department of Labor programs designed to help those that struggled during the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Special Agent-in-Charge Jonathan Mellone, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General.

“These scammers strategically targeted and swindled unsuspecting victims,” said Charge Michael J. Krol, Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) New England. “Together, with our law enforcement partners, HSI is dedicated to putting a stop to these criminal acts, which inflict financial ruin on so many. Romance scams are a pervasive threat, and with our partners, HSI special agents will ensure that the transnational criminal organizations responsible for such harm are prosecuted.”

“Today’s sentencing sends a strong message: the Diplomatic Security Service is committed to making sure that those who commit fraud schemes, and use false documents to deceive and defraud their victims, face consequences for their criminal actions,” said Matthew O’Brien, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of State’s Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) Boston Field Office. “Our strong relationship with the U.S. Attorney’s Office and other law enforcement agencies around the world continues to be essential in the pursuit of justice.”

The defendants opened multiple bank accounts in the names of a fake company and fake people using falsified foreign passports. The defendants then used those accounts to receive the proceeds from various frauds perpetrated by their co-conspirators, including pandemic unemployment assistance fraud, romance scams and other online scams.

The majority of the fraud proceeds came from romance scams, which occur when a criminal adopts a fake online identity to gain a victim’s affection and trust. The scammer then uses the illusion of a romantic or close relationship to manipulate and steal from the victim. In total, between 2019 and 2021, the bank accounts involved in the scheme received more than \$2 million in fraud proceeds, most of which was transferred to overseas bank accounts controlled by the defendants and their co-conspirators.

Acting U.S. Attorney Levy, FBI SAC Cohen, DOL-OIG SAC Mellone, HSI SAC Krol, and DSS SAC O’Brien made the announcement. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Christopher J. Markham and Benjamin A. Saltzman of the Securities, Financial & Cyber Fraud Unit prosecuted the case.

On May 17, 2021, the Attorney General established the COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force to marshal the resources of the Department of Justice in partnership with agencies across government to enhance efforts to combat and prevent pandemic-related fraud. The Task Force bolsters efforts to investigate and prosecute the most culpable domestic and international criminal actors and assists agencies tasked with administering relief programs to prevent fraud by, among other methods, augmenting and incorporating existing coordination mechanisms, identifying resources and techniques to uncover fraudulent actors and their schemes, and sharing and harnessing information and insights gained from prior enforcement efforts. For more information on the Department’s response to the pandemic, please visit <https://www.justice.gov/coronavirus>.

Anyone with information about allegations of attempted fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Department of Justice’s National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF)

Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at:
<https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

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