

Saturday, March 01, 2025

PRESS STATEMENT ON FALSE AND MALICIOUS ONLINE PUBLICATION

Our attention has been drawn to a false and malicious online article by one Alpha Aiden of "The Ankole Times", titled "*State House Anti-Corruption Unit Caught in UGX 150M Bribery Web Involving Karago Construction Targeting Judge Douglas Singiza*", intended to malign our Unit by creating an impression that we had declined to investigate a clear case of bribery of a judicial officer.

The article alleges that the Unit refused to receive a complaint of bribery made by Emmaus Foundation Investments Ltd against Karago Construction and Investments Ltd, despite the latter's own Directors written confessions, that they paid UGX 150M to bribe a judge.

This allegation is not true and the article is full of distortions. We wish to clarify as follows;

- a. On 30th January 2025, His lordship, Justice Dr Douglas Singiza Karekoma, brought to the attention of the leadership of the Unit information that he had received alleging that, a bribe of UGX 150M had been received by his research assistant, Her Worship Anne Nanteza and that part of that money would be paid to him to rule in favour of Karago Construction and Investments Ltd in a case they had against Emmaus Foundation Investments Ltd vide *High Court Miscellaneous Cause No. 202 of 2023*. His lordship Singiza requested State House Anti-Corruption Unit to urgently come in and investigate the matter, because no such payment had been made to him.



- b. Upon receipt of this information, an investigation team comprising of a Principal Legal Officer and two detectives was assigned to investigate the allegations vide ACU GEF 030/2025 and take the necessary action.
- c. That afternoon, Her Worship Nanteza was apprehended and interviewed. While she denied receipt of any bribe, investigations unearthed other evidence that pointed to possible payment of the same. She was released on police bond to enable further investigations.
- d. On 24th February 2025, Carol Aparo, a private lawyer, said to have been the conduit of the bribe, who was initially in hiding turned up and was interviewed. She, too, denied but again other evidence was found pointing to her possible knowledge and conduit of the bribe. She was released on police bond as investigations progressed.
- e. On 5th February 2025, after the report by Justice Singiza, a written complaint was received by the Unit from Emmaus Foundation Investments Ltd raising the same issues of the UGX 150M bribe. The complaint was formally received and registered under Complaint Reference 5565/25. On account of investigations having been already initiated into the matter, it was assigned to the same team handling ACU GEF 030/2025. In addition, Mr Barigye Martin, one of the Directors of Emmaus Foundation Investments Ltd, was interviewed and his statement recorded.

On account of the above, it is therefore, not true that our Unit declined to receive and handle the complaint by Emmaus Foundation Investments Ltd.

Upon the publication of the malicious article, our Unit leadership contacted the company officials who disassociated themselves from the article and expressed satisfaction with how the investigations are

progressing, since its leadership is in close contact with the investigation team. In addition, they observed that their company position on the matter was never sought prior to the publication of the article.

It is also not true as alleged by Alpha Aiden in his article that “the Directors of Karago Construction and Investments Ltd, have since opened a case at the State House Anti-Corruption Unit under case number ACU/GEF/030/2025 claiming they were defrauded, that their bribe money never reached the intended recipient and they now want it recovered”.

The said directors have never come to the Unit or lodged any complaint with us. The reference cited, as earlier indicated, relates to the case opened on 30th January 2025, upon receipt of Justice Singiza’s complaint. Our investigation team has not interacted with the said Directors yet, because it awaits the analysis of technical evidence by the relevant sister agencies.

In conclusion, it is clear that the article is not only full of falsehoods and distortions, but a product of an unprofessional journalism by an online tabloid working with detractors who aim at discrediting the Unit in its efforts to fight corruption and fraud in the Country.

State House Anti-Corruption Unit (SH-ACU) commends His lordship Justice Singiza and Emmaus Foundation Investments Ltd for reporting the matter and their cooperation with the investigation team. We reiterate that this investigation, like others we have handled, will continue to its logical conclusion, in line with our culture of adhering to the law, established processes and professionalism in the conduct of our work.



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