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The Editor,
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DEFAMATION AND PUBLICATION OF MALICIOUS FALSEHOOD
AGAINST HIS EXCELLENCY DR. DALHATU SARKI TAFIDA, OFR
HIGH COMMISSIONER OF NIGERIA TO THE UK IN
THE PRESS, THURSDAY JUNE 24, 2010

The attention of the Nigeria High Commission, London has been drawn to the publication of a defamatory and malicious falsehood against His Excellency Dr. Dalhatu Sarki Tafida, OFR, High Commissioner of Nigeria to the UK, carried under your news item, "Police mistake leads to raid on diplomat's home" of Thursday June 24th 2010, copy attached.

2. Your publication was not only grossly inaccurate, it was, to say the least, patently mischievous. It was designed to damage the good reputation and personal integrity of His Excellency Dr. Dalhatu Sarki Tafida, who is an accomplished public official and acclaimed politician who has served Nigeria in various capacities, most notably, as Chief Personal Physician to a former Nigerian President, Health Minister and Senate Leader. Without any doubt, no responsible newspaper would come across a deliberate falsehood of this gravity to the effect that the Residence of Nigeria's Principal Envoy to the Court of St James's is being used to grow cannabis and then proceed to publish same and be damned without double checking the full facts of the matter.

3. Whereas the home of a Nigerian diplomat, Mr. Ikechukwu NWOKIKE, a Minister, in Hendon Way, Hendon was violently violated by the Metropolitan Police, contrary to the letters and spirit of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations; this location is not the Residence or the guesthouse of the High Commissioner, Dr. Dalhatu Sarki Tafida,

who does not live in Hendon Way, Hendon. Any one who cares to know would have easily found that the Nigeria High Commissioner's Residence, otherwise called Abuja House, is located in Campden Hill, Kensington, West-London. These are two clearly different locations. There can therefore be no justification for your story, as it was a clear evidence of your newspaper's intent to deliberately defame the good character of the High Commissioner and his exalted office, including the High Commission and its staff, not to mention the good name of Nigeria and its good people. Any good British and professional journalist in your shoes would have considered the ramifications and implications of such a negative and unfounded story on the Principal Representative of another sovereign country before pushing same to press.

4. It will interest you to know that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has since apologised to the High Commission for the illegal raid and violation of the diplomatic immunity of the house of a Nigerian diplomatic staff on Hendon Way. A copy of the Note Verbale from them to this effect is attached. The apology is still being actively considered by the Federal Government of Nigeria.

5. The failure on your part to support your story with the full identities of the Metropolitan Police spokeswoman, as well as the spokesman for the Mission, which handed you this malicious and false story, deprives your story of any credibility.

6. In the light of the foregoing, the High Commission demands the retraction of this sordid story and a written, highly publicised apology from you. This must be carried in the front page of your newspaper, The Press, considering the enormity of the damage your publication had done on the High Commissioner's integrity and image. You are also required to cause this rejoinder to be given the widest dissemination possible, all within the next two (2) days, following the receipt of this rejoinder.

7. Kindly acknowledge receipt.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Damian E. Agwu', with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

**Damian E. Agwu
Minister & Head
Information Section
For: High Commissioner**

Police mistake leads to raid on diplomat's home

RED-FACED detectives have admitted they raided the home of the Nigerian High Commissioner in search of drugs after mistaking the heat given off by a heating system for the tell-tale signs of a cannabis factory.

According to police, officers searched the home of Nigeria's High Commissioner His Excellency Dr Dahiru Sarki Tafida after a police helicopter, using thermal imaging equipment spotted what was described as a higher than normal heat signature in the roof of the property.

Officers mistook the heat plume as a sign that the property had been converted into a cannabis factory.

Drugs farms often use high-powered lights which give off huge amounts of heat to aid the growth of the illegal crop.

Officers obtained a warrant to search the residence in Hendon Way, Hendon, last Thursday but traced the heat source to the building's central heating system.

A police spokeswoman said: "We can confirm a warrant to search for cannabis plants was executed at a home in north London on June 17 by officers acting on information from a Met unit. There were no drugs found

and no arrests made. Further enquiries traced the heat source to the heating system."

A spokesman for the Nigerian High Commission told The Press that although the operation could have been interpreted as a violation of diplomatic conventions, the High Commission would not be taking the matter to the "extreme". He added: "We accept the explanation the helicopter detected something but that these things don't necessarily work with fine precision."

DHC
HPA
DHPA

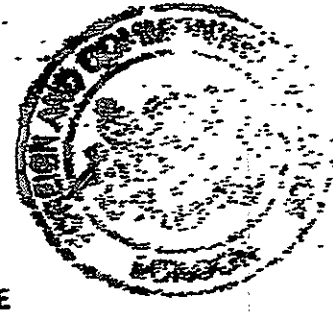


Note No A265/10

Protocol Directorate of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office presents its compliments to the High Commission of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and has the honour to refer to an incident that occurred on 17 June 2010 at 113 Hendon Way, NW2, the home of a diplomatic member of the High Commission's staff.

Protocol Directorate would like to apologise for the fact that UK police officers inadvertently entered the diplomat's home and for the inconvenience and any distress that their entry caused to the diplomat, his family, and others present. We regret that police checks failed to establish in advance that the property was the residence of a diplomat and thus inviolable. Protocol Directorate would like to assure the High Commission that it will seek to ensure that such mistakes do not occur again.

Protocol Directorate of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office avails itself of this opportunity to express to the High Commission of the Federal Republic of Nigeria the assurances of its highest consideration.



FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

LONDON

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18 June 2010