

« Stolen assets' » Case: the Paris Appeal Court validates the international arrest warrant released against Teodoro Nguema Obiang.

Paris, July 2nd 2013 - Sherpa and Transparency International France welcome the Paris Appeal Court decision on June 13th 2013, which rejects Teodoro Nguema Obiang's request to cancel the international arrest warrant aimed at him. This decision also confirms the seizures that took place in the framework of the « stolen assets' » judicial investigation.

Seizures of a private mansion and luxury cars

Since September 2011, several assets and properties belonging to Teodoro Nguema Obiang (son of the President of Equatorial Guinea) have been seized by French magistrates as part of the « stolen assets' » case investigation (luxury cars, a private mansion located at 42, avenue Foch in Paris worth 75 million euros, furniture and rare artworks) for an estimated amount of tens of millions of euros.

Despite attempts by Teodoro Nguema Obiang and Equatorial Guinea to cancel these seizures, the Paris Appeal Court decided that their request was not admissible.

The international arrest warrant is deemed to be valid

The Paris Appeal Court also ruled inadmissible the cancellation inquiry regarding the international warrant aimed at Teodoro Nguema Obiang. The investigative judges in charge of the stolen assets' case had called for this warrant since Teodoro Nguema Obiang refused to appear before the judicial authorities while summoned on March 1st and on July, 11th 2012, in preparation for his indictment.

Let's recall that after the first summons issued by the judges, Teodoro Nguema Obiang had been appointed second Vice-President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea by his father, therefore hoping to get an immunity of convenience that could spare him from appearing before the French judicial authorities.

Further to this decision, Teodoro Nguema Obiang lodged an appeal before the Supreme Court (French Cour de Cassation) on June 17th 2013.

The decision of the Appeal Court of Paris in the “stolen assets” case is a significant improvement regarding at least two aspects:

- **The Appeal Court makes a considerable contribution to the fight against impunity and corruption** by refusing that a ruling political leader could avoid judicial authorities while suspected of illicit enrichment.
- By pointing out that **an immunity granted after a judicial summons can't obstruct an investigation if this person did not have that immunity at the time.**

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