

DAY XX OF THE "HIDDEN DEBTS" SCANDAL TRIAL

Zulficar Ahmad received USD100,000 from the Privinvest group at the request of a friend who is now deceased

- Zulficar Ali Esmail Ahmad, 49 years old, a trader, was the first defendant to be heard by the court on the 20th day of the "hidden debts" financial scandal trial. The Prosecutor indicts him of having received, on 29 May 2013, USD100,000 from Privinvest, without ever having provided a service to that Abu Dhabi-based business group. The money was transferred directly from the Privinvest group account to the defendant's BCI account, domiciled.



Zulficar Ahmad

As a way to disguise the use of the USD100,000, Zulficar Ahmad withdrew the money in a fractional manner, in the maximum amount of five (5) thousand dollars. "He issued several cheques in his favour and in favour of his wife Nadia Hanif Mahomed Bhikha, and his friends and partners at EPS – ZON company, Osman Mahomed and Nordin Issufo Amade Aboobacar." Also as a way of concealing the real purpose of the use of the money, in all withdrawals made, the defendant communicated to the bank that the money was intended for travel and tourism.

Faced with the indictment, the defendant said he received the money at the request of his friend Marcos Calafiori, a Brazilian of Lebanese origin, who met him years ago at a mosque in Komatipoort, South Africa, where he lived. "Honestly, I wanted to do a favour for a long-time friend. One day he asked me if I had a dollar bank account and if I could receive an amount of his. I agreed to help and days later I saw the USD100,000 in my account. I informed him that I already had the amount and he directed me to make withdrawals to deliver it to him." He confirmed that he wrote cheques up to USD 5,000 and made the withdrawal. His wife and friends and business associates Osman Mahomed and Nordin Aboobacar also made withdrawals and then passed the amounts on to the defendant Zulficar Ahmad. He said he earned two (2) thousand dollars and never thought that the amount of 100 thousand dollars was from dubious provenance.

Asked on the whereabouts of his friend, he said that Marcos Calafiori passed away in 2015 or 2016. He is not sure what he did for his living, but said he sold cars. Despite stating that he was a trusted friend, Zulficar Ahmad does not know if Calafiori lived with anyone, nor does he know his residence address. "He was the one who came to Maputo the most, every fortnight. I rarely went to Komatipoort".

To the Prosecution's question about what trust he had to provide his account to a person he did not know who he lived with, did not have his home address and did not know what he did for his living, the defendant said that he had known him for quite some time and repeated that his friend always travelled to Maputo. However, he told the court that he could not remember the hotels in which his friend stayed when he travelled to Maputo City, but he has an idea that he once stayed at Cardoso Hotel.

Zulficar Ahmad said he did not know

"Honestly, I wanted to do a favour for a long-time friend. One day he asked me if I had a dollar bank account and if I could receive an amount of his. I agreed to help and days later I saw the USD100,000 in my account. I informed him that I already had the amount and he directed me to make withdrawals to deliver it to him."

"I knew that you had relations with Imran Ahmad, so I asked if you were cousins. And you said here that Imran was your lawyer in the present case, very well. And Imran Ahmad was a lawyer for Ângela Leão, a defendant in the present proceedings, in a house-selling deal"

Jean Boustani or the Privinvest group, the company that transferred the USD 100,000 to his account. Asked by the Public Prosecutor whether he knew António Carlos do Rosário and Txopela Investments company, the defendant replied in the negative. Faced with the insistence of the Public Prosecution, he said that he never had any relationship either with António Carlos do Rosário or with Txopela Investments. However, Txopela Investments and Zulficar Ahmad's company, EPS - ZON, have the same physical address at Mao Tse Tung Avenue, No. 622, 1st floor. About this fact, the defendant said that only his partners can explain, as he travelled to South Africa for medical purpose soon after setting up the company.

The defendant also said that he does

not know Domingos Xavier de Sousa and Manuel Filipe Guiliche, but it is stated in the proceedings that the two have allegedly cashed cheques in dollars written by Zulficar Ahmad. Asked how he communicated with his friend Marcos Calafiori, the defendant said that it was through WhatsApp. He said he was in a position to attach Marcos Calafiori's contact details to the proceedings, but he does not know if it is registered in his name. He does not remember how he justified to the BCI bank about receiving the USD 100,000 and said he never sought to know why he could not receive the money in South Africa, let alone about the amount that would be transferred to his account.

Since the defendant claimed that he withdrew the money and passed it on in cash to Marcos Calafiori, he was asked if he had any way of proving that fact, and replied that his friends and associates Osman Mahomed and Nordin Aboobacar witnessed an act of handing over money. The prosecutor confronted the defendant with Osman Mahomed's statements made on 26 July 2018, in which he stated that he used the USD 15,000 he withdrew through cheques written by Zulficar Ahmad for his daughter's medical treatment and bought a car, he said that he does not know why his friend may have said that. In other words, at no time did his friend and business partner say that he passed on the money he withdrew to Zulficar Ahmad, much less that he witnessed an act of handing over money to Marcos Calafiori.

Before the receipt of the USD 100,000 from the Privinvest group, there was no transactions in his dollar account domiciled at the BCI. This fact leads the Prosecutor to conclude that the account was opened exclusively to receive money from the Privinvest group. Judge Efigénio Baptista asked Zulficar Ahmad if he was Imran Ahmad Adam Issa's cousin, to which he answered negatively, but admitted that there was a familiar relationship by affinity, since Imran married his wife's cousin. He further said that he has always known Imran Ahmad as their parents are from Buzi and the two grew up in Beira City. "Imran Ahmad was even my lawyer in this case," He said. The judge immediately found the connections strange: "I knew that you had relations with Imran Ahmad, so I asked if you were cousins. And you said here that Imran was your lawyer in the present case, very well. And Imran Ahmad was a lawyer for Ângela Leão, a defendant in the present proceedings, in a house-selling deal".

Crimildo Manjate says he handed over his brother's bank account to receive 3.750.000 MT because he suspected that his account was inactive

Crimildo Jossias Manjate, 40 years old, is indicted of money laundering, for having received 3.750.000,00 meticaís transferred by the company M Moçambique Construções, as part of the amount received from the Privinvest group. The money is related to the sale of an outbuilding on a 45/90 meters plot of land to the Leão's, who intended to expand the area where their residence is located, in Jonasse, Boane district, Maputo province.

The indicted gave instructions for the amount of 3.750.000,00 meticaís to be transferred from M Moçambique Construções to his brother's account, Naldo Adérito Jossias Manjate, domiciled at Millennium Bim. The Public Prosecutor's understands that, by doing so, he intended to "disguise his connection with the business, as he knew of the illicit source of the money". That is, for the Public Prosecutor, the defendant knew that the money used to pay his outbuilding resulted from the bribe paid by the Privinvest group to the Leão's.

But the defendant denied this indictment. He explained that when he agreed the price's sale of the property with Leopoldo Dinis Buque, known as Pondeca, and brother of Ângela Leão, the buyer expressed interest in paying through a transfer to an account domiciled at Millennium Bim. The defendant explained that he had a bank account at Millennium Bim, but as he spent "a lot of time" without making any transactions, he thought it was inactive. It was in this context that Pondeca would have asked him if he knew someone reliable who had a Millennium Bim account, where the transfer could be made, since they needed the space very urgently. "I handed over my brother's number - Naldo Jossias Manjate to Pondeca as I did not see any problem in that". Since the amount of the sale of space was transferred from the M Moçambique Construções account, the defendant was questioned if he knew how his brother's account arrived in the hands of Fabião Mabunda, having said he did not know.

The Public Prosecutor asked why he did not go to Millennium Bim to certify the situation of his account, to which he replied that it was due to work pressure. The transfer of 3,750,000.00 meticaís to his brother's account was made on 16 May 2014. Three (3) days later, the defendant made a deposit of five (5) thousand me-



Crimildo Manjate

ticaís in his Millennium Bim account, the same one that he suspected to be inactive due to lack of movements. "I made the deposit to regularize my account," he explained.

The land with improvements that he sold for 3.750.000,00 meticaís was acquired from a cousin for 1.450.000,00 meticaís. "When I sold it to Mr. Pondeca It already had a fence wall and an outbuilding still under construction". With the sale amount of the Jonasse property he bought a car in South Africa, paid off the debt related to the purchase of the space from his cousin, and applied another part to the treasury of his company, Dinis Alumínios Lda. He says he did not pass on any of the money to the defendant Ângela Leão or to anyone close to her. In fact, during the negotiations to buy the property, Pondeca only said that the family was very interested, without mentioning Angela Leão as the owner.

To a question from the Public Prosecutor, he said that he met Pondeca in 2013 after he had appreciated his aluminium frames work done in a car wash in Mahlampswe area in Matola. "He liked my work and asked for my contact. He got my manager contact details and the two of them took measurements of the aluminium window frames at Jonasse's outbuilding. We did the quotation and Mr Pondeca arranged a meeting for a final discussion, as he was interested in awarding the work to us. It was a weekend, I went with my manager,

and that was the day I met Mr Pondeca". He also said that at the time he thought Pondeca was the site engineer (the Jonasse's outbuilding), as he didn't know that he was Ângela Leão's brother.

He confirmed having met the defendant Ângela Leão through his brother Pondeca, after having executed the works in the Jonasse's outbuilding. But it was only in 2015 that he began to have contact with her, when they were discussing a job that his company was to execute at a construction site located in the Costa do Sol area. "After Jonasse's work, they awarded me two more works in Triunfo to supply windows and handrails in 2014. It was there where I started seeing Mr Fabião Mabunda, but we did not interact. I knew he was the main contractor for Angela Leão's works, but I didn't know he owned the company M Moçambique Construções. I learned that he was the owner of that company when he invited me to make a proposal on a project he was working on in Maluana, Manhiça District.


Besides Jonasse's outbuilding, the Triunfo's house, and the two ones in Costa do Sol, Crimildo Manjate's company, Dinis Alumínios Lda, carried out works in the project of the 10 houses of defendant Angela Leão, also located in the Costa do Sol area. But in its service sheet, the company Dinis Aluminium has a vast list of works of metallic and aluminium structures executed in banks, companies, residences, educational institutions and courts.



EDITORIAL INFORMATION

Property: CDD – Centro para Democracia e Desenvolvimento
Director: Prof. Adriano Nuvunga
Editor: Emídio Beula
Author: Emídio Beula
Team: Emídio Beula, Ilídio Nhantumbo, Isabel Macamo, Julião Matsinhe, and Ligia Nkavando.
Layout: CDD

Address:
 Rua de Dar-Es-Salaam Nº 279, Bairro da Sommerschild, Cidade de Maputo.
 Telefone: +258 21 085 797

 CDD_moz
E-mail: info@cddmoz.org
Website: http://www.cddmoz.org

PROGRAMMATIC PARTNER



FINANCING PARTNERS

