

Former governor of Nigeria state to be extradited

Former governor of Nigeria's Delta State, James Onanefe Ibori, is to be extradited to the United Kingdom.

- By Bassam Za'za', Senior Reporter
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Dubai: Dubai's highest court on Monday approved the extradition request lodged by Dubai prosecutors against the former governor of Nigeria's Delta State, James Onanefe Ibori.

He is to be extradited to the United Kingdom. The Dubai Court of Cassation approved the extradition request, which was lodged by the UK authorities through the Dubai Public Prosecution (DPP), against Ibori who was arrested in Dubai after an Interpol warrant was issued.

The presiding judge said in courtroom 22 that Ibori would be extradited after upholding the Appeal Court's decision.

"My client has already been acquitted by a Nigerian court of committing 170 counts of fraud, swindling, deception and unlawful profiting while he was in office [governor of Delta State]. The British authorities do not have the right to ask for his extradition and have him retried for crimes he had already been acquitted of. The UK authorities claimed that new evidence popped up against the suspect and that's why they lodged the extradition request. It is against the UAE's Criminal Procedures Law to put a person to trial after having been acquitted," said Ibori's lawyer Ali Musabbeh, of Pan Globe Advocates.

Dubai prosecutors referred Ibori [who is in custody] in September to the Dubai Appeal Court to look into the extradition request. Prosecutors lodged the extradition request against Ibori as he was wanted by the UK police, based on the cooperation treaty between the UAE and the UK in criminal cases. The Appeal Court ruled that Ibori be extradited to the UK.

Advocate Musabbeh told the Cassation Court: "The UK authorities are trying to take no notice of Nigeria Supreme Court's verdict [Ibori's acquittal] because due to the insufficiency of the investigations and evidence.

Article 268 of the Criminal Procedures Law stipulates that a criminal lawsuit is dropped against any suspect who has already been prosecuted and tried over the same crime.

In its request, DPP mentioned that Ibori was wanted for extradition for the same crimes of which he was acquitted in Delta State."

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