



## Federal Ministry of Justice

### **ABACHA LOOT: FG SIGNS MOU WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND OVER \$6.3MILLION FORFEITED ASSETS**

The Federal Republic of Nigeria has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Government of Ireland for the return of \$6.3 million (equivalent of 5.49million Euros), regarding the return, disposition and management of certain forfeited assets. The agreement was reached on Tuesday, 11<sup>th</sup> August, 2020 at the Office of the Honourable Attorney General of the Federation (HAGF) in Abuja.



*Honourable Attorney General of the Federation & Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami, SAN signing Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Ireland, Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> August, 2020 at the Minister's Conference Room*

In his brief remarks after signing the MOU on behalf of Nigeria Government, the HAGF, Abubakar Malami SAN said, the Federal Republic

of Nigeria through its legal representatives went to court to assert its right over the Abacha stolen funds sized in Ireland by the High Court of Ireland in 2015. “On 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2019, the FG sought for an order pursuant to section 3(3) of the 1996 act to discharge or vary the order of 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2015. Following the hearing of the augment from the FG and Government of Ireland, the high court on 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2020 in the exercise of his function, ordered that the stolen assets recovered from the Abacha family should be transferred to the FG for the benefit of Nigerians subject to the execution of a MOU between the two Governments” Malami explained.



*Abubakar Malami (middle), Solicitor General of the Federation /Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Justice, Dayo Apata, SAN (left), (1<sup>st</sup> right) Special Assistance to the President on Justice Reform & International Relations, Barr. Juliet Ibekaku-Nwagwu, Deputy Director, Asset Recovery Management Unit, Ladidi Baratu Mohammed during the signing Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Ireland, Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> August, 2020 at the Minister’s Conference Room*

He expressed his delight over Nigeria and Ireland conclusion on the negotiation of the return of **\$6.3million** (equivalent of **5.49million Euros**). According to him, “this had demonstrated that International cooperation and mutual trust can lead to great benefit for citizens in developing countries, where more than half of the population still live below poverty line”. Malami noted that, “The Federal Ministry of Justice has obtained presidential approval to sign the MOU on behalf of the Government of Nigeria. Therefore, today, I have the privilege to sign this MOU on behalf of FG. The Minister of Justice and equality, Ms Helen McEntee, TD is also signing the counterpart MOU in Ireland”.

However, the Minister maintained that, “the most salient aspect of the MOU is that, the stolen fund that is now being returned to Nigeria will be applied to the infrastructure projects under the supervision of the Nigeria Social Investment Authority (NSIA) to ensure the completion of on-going work of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Niger Bridge, Abuja -Kano Express Way and the Lagos-Ibadan road. Adding that, these projects will benefit millions of Nigeria”. The Honourable Minister assured that the implementation of the MOU will be monitored by the identified Civil Society Organisations (CSO) to be recruited under the project and would also be audited by an independent auditor in line with best practices.

The Minister for Justice and Equality, Ireland, Helen McEntee TD, after the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the return of forfeited assets said “The return of these assets will be the first time that Ireland has taken such action and will be a concrete demonstration of Ireland’s commitment to international cooperation in the fight against corruption and to assisting countries which have been adversely affected by corruption in the past, and is in line with our international obligations as a signatory to the UN Convention Against Corruption.”