

UK printing company and two men found guilty in corruption trial

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Smith and Ouzman Ltd and two employees were convicted today at Southwark Crown Court as a result of a Serious Fraud Office investigation into corrupt payments made for the award of business contracts to the company.

The corrupt payments totalling £395,074 were made to public officials for business contracts in Kenya and Mauritania.

The company, Smith and Ouzman Ltd, a printing firm based in Eastbourne which specialises in security documents such as ballot papers and certificates, was convicted of three counts of corruptly agreeing to make payments, contrary to section 1(1) of the Prevention of Corruption Act 1906.

Christopher John Smith, chairman of Smith and Ouzman, age 71, from East Sussex, was convicted of two counts of corruptly agreeing to make payments.

Nicholas Charles Smith, sales and marketing director of Smith and Ouzman, age 43, from East Sussex was convicted of three counts of corruptly agreeing to make payments.

Timothy Hamilton Forrester, international sales manager of Smith and Ouzman, age 57, from East Sussex was acquitted of all three counts of corruptly agreeing to make payments.

Mr Abdirahman Mohamed Omar, a sales agent for Smith and Ouzman, age 38, from London, was acquitted of one count of corruptly agreeing to make payments in relation to a contract in Somaliland.

Director of the SFO, David Green CB QC commented:

"This is the SFO's first conviction, after trial, of a corporate for offences involving bribery of foreign public officials. Such criminality, whether involving companies large or small severely damages the UK's commercial reputation and feeds corrupt governance in the developing world. We are very grateful to the Kenyan authorities for their assistance in this case."

Sentencing is due to take place on 12 February 2015.

Notes for editors:

1. The SFO is thankful for assistance provided by authorities in Kenya, Ghana and Switzerland.
2. All of those agreeing to make the payments named but not charged were Smith and Ouzman Ltd agents for Kenya, Ghana, or Mauritania and officials employed by organisations in those countries and Somaliland.
3. The recently published UK Anti-Corruption Plan states “corruption threatens our national security, economic prosperity and international reputation. It is often the root cause of international instability and conflict.”
4. The case was accepted for investigation in October 2010.
5. The four men were charged on 30 August 2013 and attended their first court appearance at Westminster Magistrates Court on 23 October 2013. Details of the charge and first hearing issued on 23 October 2010 are available [here](#).
6. The trial before HHJ Higgins began on 10 November 2014 and the jury were sent out to consider their verdict on 17 December 2014.
7. The period during which the offences occurred is between 1 November 2006 and 31 December 2010.
8. Counsel for the prosecution were Mark Bryant-Heron QC and Trevor Archer.
9. Counsel for the defence were:
 1. Smith and Ouzman Ltd, Miranda Hill
 2. Christopher Smith, Duncan Penny QC
 3. Nicholas Smith, Peter Doyle QC and Jane Gow
 4. Timothy Forrester, David Spens QC
 5. Abdirahman Mohamed Omar. Marquerite Russell