CBN special investigator debunks sexual assault, corruption allegations

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CBN special investigator debunks sexual assault, corruption allegations  
  
The special investigator the Federal Government commissioned to probe the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and related entities, Mr. Jim Obazee, has debunked sexual assault and corruption allegations leveled against him by some publications.  
  
He described the claims by some online media as “false in their entirety”.  
  
The former Chief Executive Officer of the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria (FRCN) said the publications were contrived to defame him and discredit his suitably for the job.  
  
According to him, the offending articles were published “with an evil and malicious campaign to abuse the minds of the people so that Obazee can be viewed by members of the public as corrupt and fraudulent while he was in public service”.  
  
The special investigator threatened to sue the publishers, saying: “They shall face the wrath of the law in due course.”  
  
In a statement in Lagos by his lawyer, Mr. Anayo Mbah, the special investigator stressed that the negative attacks on him followed his appointment by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on July 28.  
  
By the appointment, President Tinubu directed Obazee to also immediately take steps to block leakages in CBN and related government business entities (GBEs) and provide a comprehensive report on public wealth currently “in the hands of corrupt individuals and establishments (whether private or public)”.  
  
The special investigator recalled that one of the articles claimed that he was ordered by the Senate Committee on Public Account to refund N94 million to the Federation Account, while another also claimed that he was convicted of sexual assault as well as linked to corruption and siphoning of public funds.  
  
“We will not want to waste energy on the news peddled by these people as the initial publication of same is already the subject matter of several suits against three frontline newspapers in the country, pending before the High Court of Edo State, Benin City, since 2021, for their libelous publication against the person of Mr. Obazee as what was then published and then repeated by these present publishers are false in its entirety. The said civil suits are currently at trial stage,” the statement said.  
  
Obazee expressed confidence that he would be vindicated in court.  
  
He added: “On the issue of conviction for sexual assault, we state that till date, there is no criminal investigation commenced or criminal charge filed in any court in Nigeria by anybody against Mr. Jim Obazee.  
  
“The news was maliciously concocted and captioned to tarnish Mr. Obazee’s hard-earned image. We challenge the peddlers of the false and malicious statements to produce the Petition(s) and Criminal Charge(s) filed against Mr. Obazee as well as the judgment(s) of court convicting or sentencing him for any such criminal offences.  
  
“We state categorically that what Mr. Obazee is aware of is a purely employment-related civil suit filed at the National Industrial Court by one of the employees of FRCN for wrongful termination and other claims against FRCN and wherein Mr. Obazee was joined as a party as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).  
  
“Judgment was given in the case and FRCN and Mr. Obazee have since appealed against the decision of the National Industrial Court. There was never a criminal charge or conviction of Mr. Obazee in any court in Nigeria. The news is totally malicious and false.”  
  
He added that his accusers also stated in their publication that he took bribes to recommend federal takeover of banks and removal of Lamido Sanusi as CBN governor and that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) was closely monitoring him over legion of petitions.  
  
“No mention was made of any particular petition or petitioner or case file relating to all these spurious allegations of corruption. We are still waiting for further details from the news peddlers, but there is not yet a single piece of evidence to support their publications,” Obazee said.