

Kleptocracy and Asset Recovery: The Role of Destination Countries

19/20 January 2022

Online Conference - Introduction

Cross-border corruption is a multi-billion dollar a year challenge to democratic norms and to transparent and accountable governance. Corruption cements the power base of authoritarian regimes, using financial jurisdictions in regions such as the UK, US and Switzerland to store ill-gotten wealth. This syphons off badly needed revenues from jurisdictions facing extreme poverty challenges and associated forms of insecurity.

Over the past ten years, there has been an explosion of cross-border asset recovery cases, including the post-Arab Spring and post-Ukraine revolution cases, the Malaysian 1MDB case, Moldova's Billion Dollar Bank Fraud, the Odebrecht cases across Latin America, the ongoing Abacha returns to Nigeria, the Karimova case in Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan I and II.

Additionally, and largely in response, there have also been a multitude of changes in how states act to prevent cross-border corruption and recover stolen assets. These include changes in beneficial ownership transparency, the targeting of enablers, the introduction of reconciliation agreements and unexplained wealth orders, the expansion of anti-corruption sanctions, and many others. They also include several new models for returning stolen assets.

These measures – largely in or driven by countries of the Global North under growing international pressure – have been diverse and not without criticism, and in some cases have been experimental in form. Whether and how they work, their application on a broader scale, and who they work for, are all important questions. Equally as interesting are whether new methods and new ideas can be developed to overcome challenges that still exist or have been further created by these new methods.

This online conference will bring together a global community of academics, civil society actors, researchers, journalists and policymakers to discuss trends in policy around cross-border corruption prevention and asset recovery, with a focus in this instance on the role of the Global North.

Day 1 - Responsible Asset Return

Session 1 – Models of Asset Return

19 January, 13:30-15:00 GMT

A Human Rights Perspective on Asset Recovery
Dr Cecily Rose, Leiden University.

Towards a French Model of Asset Return?
Sara Brimbeuf & Rahima Zitoumbi, TI France

A Case for a New Model for Repatriating Recovered Assets to Original Owners
Dr. Simeon. A. Igbiniedion, University of Lagos

Session 2 – Democratizing Asset Return

19 January, 15:30-17:00 GMT

Recasting 'Accountability': Responsible Asset Restitution by Empowering Non-State Actors
Katherine D Wilkins, Hertie School Berlin

The Role of Civil Society Organisations in Asset Recovery in Zimbabwe and Beyond
Dr Prosper S. Maguchu, Frei University

Rights of Crime Victims to Recovered Property in the Polish legal order - Present State and Challenges for the Future
Dr Ariadna H. Ochnio, Polish Academy of Science

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Day 2 – Anti-Money Laundering and Asset Recovery

Session 3 - Winning or a Broken System? Global AML Regimes and Asset Recovery

20 January, 14:00-16:00 GMT

The Rise of Emerging Destination Countries and What it Means for Global Asset Recovery Advocacy
Vaclav Prusa and Samuel Asimi, CISLAC Nigeria

Tracking Beneficial Ownership and the Proceeds of Corruption: Nigerian-Owned Assets in the UK
Professors Jackie Harvey, Sue Turner and Tony Ward, Northumbria University.

Snowballs in Hell: The Challenge of Identifying, Seizing and Returning a Kleptocrat's Loot
Professor Kristian Lasslett, Ulster University

Criminality Notwithstanding: The Use of Unexplained Wealth Orders in Anti-Corruption Cases
Tom Mayne, Exeter University

Register for the Online Conference

To register for the online conference please sign up through this Eventbrite link

<https://www.eventbrite.de/e/kleptocracy-and-asset-recovery-the-role-of-destination-countries-tickets-223955044567>

Conference Organisers

