

# Ibori faces UK extradition soon, says Dubai Police

James Onanefe Ibori served as the governor of the oil-rich Delta State from 1999 to 2007.

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Dubai: Former Nigerian state governor James Ibori, wanted by the UK on charges of money laundering and who was arrested in May by Interpol police officers in Dubai, will soon be extradited to London, confirmed a Dubai Police source.

James Onanefe Ibori served as the governor of the oil-rich Delta State from 1999 to 2007. Ibori, who is believed to have entered the UAE a couple of times on visit visas, was planning to start a business here. He was arrested just a couple of months after he entered the country.

## Interpol warrant

Acting upon a red corner arrest warrant issued through Interpol, Dubai Police investigators arrested Ibori at a five star hotel in Palm Jumeirah.

He was initially bailed and later he was detained, said the source.

Based on a media report, Nigeria's anti-corruption police tried to arrest Ibori to question him over allegations that \$290 million (Dh1064 million) was looted from Delta state government coffers while he was governor.

However, hundreds of Ibori's supporters prevented police from arresting him and he is believed to be a powerful presence among Nigerians.

Faridi Waziri, chairwoman of Nigeria's Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), was quoted by media reports as saying that Ibori was detained after an arrest warrant was issued by Interpol.

"The EFCC charged Ibori in 2007 with looting more than \$85 million during his eight-year tenure as governor of Delta, one of the three main oil-producing states in the southern Niger Delta region, but a court dismissed the charges," Waziri said.

Ibori is accused of using state funds to purchase several companies under his name. Commission investigators said Ibori would later launder that money in the UK, in bank

accounts he controlled — a matter which he continuously denied even while arrested in Dubai.

Several of Ibori's associates are facing money laundering charges in Britain, where a court froze \$35 million worth of his assets in August 2007 on suspicion they were the proceeds of corruption.

Ibori was detained by Dubai Police on the sole request by the Metropolitan Police Service, the police source said. When extradited Ibori would become the second person to be sent to Britain for trial under a 2008 treaty.

### **British trial**

According to various media reports, his wife, sister and personal assistant were all the subjects of a money-laundering trial in London that began in 2007.

Anti-corruption officials in Nigeria said they are working with the Metropolitan Police in London to ensure Ibori is extradited there.

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