

IN THE HIGH COURT OF THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY ABUJA  
IN THE ABUJA JUDICIAL DIVISION  
HOLDEN AT ABUJA

SUIT NO. 24/2913/19

BETWEEN

Maryam Uwais, MFR.

CLAIMANT

AND

1. Leadership Group Limited
2. Sam Nda-Isaiah
3. Olajide Omojologoju

DEFENDANTS

WRIT OF SUMMONS

TO

The Defendants of No. 27 Ibrahim Tahir Lane, Utako, Abuja - FCT.

You are hereby commanded that not later than fourteen (14) days before the date fixed for the hearing of this suit inclusive of the day of such service, you do cause an appearance to be entered for you at the Abuja Judicial Division of the High Court of the Federal Capital Territory in an action of the Suit of the CLAIMANT and take notice that in default of your doing so the CLAIMANT may proceed therein and judgment may be given in your absence.

Dated this 15th day of Sept 2019

BY ORDER OF THE COURT

HIGH COURT OF THE FCT  
REGISTRAR  
Monica Ajeh Oje  
Registrar  
Sign [Signature] Date 15/9/19

NB: This Writ is to be served within twelve calendar months from the date of the last renewal including the day of such date and not afterwards.

The Defendants may enter appearance personally or by a Legal Practitioner either by handing in appropriate forms, duly completed at the Registry of the High Court of the Judicial Division in which this action is brought or by sending them to the Registrar or by registered post.

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26,000  
29/13/19



## ENDORSEMENT ON THE WRIT

The Claimant claims against the Defendants jointly and severally as follows:

1. A Declaration that the Defendants' publication on the July 23, 2019 at Page 33 of the Leadership Newspaper and also available online at <https://leadership.ng/2019/07/23/aisha-buhari-right-on-nsip/> under the banner headline; "Aisha Buhari Right on NSIP" about the Claimant was defamatory of the Claimant.
2. A Declaration that the Defendants had a duty to investigate the accuracy or veracity of the publication which they knew would wreak irreparable damage to the reputation and goodwill of the Claimant before publishing same.
3. A Declaration that the Defendants are in breach of the minimum standards of responsible journalism/reporting by rushing to publish reports which they know would cause damage to the reputation of the Plaintiff without reaching out to the Claimant to hear her side of the matter nor causing proper investigation to verify the reports.
4. An Order of Court directing the Defendants to publish a full page retraction of the said false reports together with a public apology to the Claimant on the front page of its Newspaper.
5. An Order of Court directing the Defendants to make a full page public apology to the Claimant for the embarrassment and public ridicule suffered by the Claimant as a result of their publication of July 23, 2019 same to be published in three other national newspapers viz: The Thisday Newspapers, Daily Trust Newspapers and the Punch Newspapers.
6. An Order of Court compelling the Defendants to pay the sum of N2,000,000,000.00 (Two Billion Naira only) to the Claimant as punitive, aggravated and exemplary damages for the public ridicule, loss to reputation and emotional anguish suffered by the Claimant due to the Defendants false and reckless publication of July 23, 2019.
7. An Order of Court compelling the Defendants to pay the sum of N500,000,000.00 (Five Hundred Million Naira only) to the Claimant as

general damages for the defamatory report against the Claimant in the Defendants publication of July 23, 2019.

8. The sum of N2,000,000.00 (Two Million Naira only) as costs of this suit.
9. Interest on the entire judgment sum at 15% per annum from the date of judgment till same is liquidated.
10. SUCH FURTHER ORDER(S) as this Honourable Court may deem fit to make in the circumstances.



Olufemi Olooluwa Fabunmi Esq.  
Olawale Olaniji Abiola Esq.  
Mu'awiya Yinusa Esq.  
Victor Forgho Esq.  
(Claimant's Counsel)  
Primera Africa Legal  
50, Aguiyi Ironsi Street,  
Maitama  
Abuja



This Writ was issued by Abiola Olawole of Primera Africa Legal, whose address for service is 50 Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama, Abuja, Legal Practitioner for the said Claimant.

ENDORSEMENT TO BE MADE ON THE WRIT FORTHWITH AFTER SERVICE.

This Writ was served by me at ..... On the Defendants (insert mode of service) ..... on the ..... day of ..... 2019.

DATED THIS ..... DAY OF ..... 2019

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SUIT NO. \_\_\_\_\_

**BETWEEN**

Maryam Uwais, MFR.

CLAIMANT

**AND**

1. Leadership Group Limited
2. Sam Nda-Isaiah
3. Olajide Omojolomoju

DEFENDANTS

**STATEMENT OF CLAIM**

1. The Claimant is a notable Nigerian resident in Abuja within the jurisdiction of this Honourable court, a renowned Legal Practitioner of over 36 years' experience, a Philanthropist and recipient of several National and International awards including the prestigious Member of the Federal Republic (MFR) in acknowledgement of her untainted, unblemished, unrivalled and unparalleled service to humanity both within Nigeria and the world at large.
2. The 1<sup>st</sup> Defendant is a Company registered under the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, with registered office in Abuja within the jurisdiction of this Honourable court and the publishers of Leadership newspaper, a daily newspaper with national wide coverage and readership in Nigeria which also shares news worldwide online, via its website at [www.leadership.ng](http://www.leadership.ng).
3. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Defendant is the Chairman/Managing Director of the 1<sup>st</sup> Defendant as well as the Editor in Chief of Leadership newspaper.
4. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Defendant is a correspondent in the employ of the 1<sup>st</sup> Defendant and the author of the false and malicious article published by the 1<sup>st</sup> Defendant on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of July, 2019 with the headline "Aisha Buhari Right on NSIP".
5. The Claimant is the Special Adviser to the President on Social Investments and Coordinator of the Federal Government's National Social Investment Programmes (NSIP); an initiative of the current government aimed at tackling the problem of poverty, unemployment and hunger across Nigeria by creating programmes aimed at ensuring an equitable distribution of resources to vulnerable populations including children, youth and women.

6. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of July, 2019 the Claimant received several calls from friends and acquaintances drawing her attention to the false publication of the Leadership Newspaper by the 1<sup>st</sup> Defendant No. 3,304 of 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2019, particularly at page 33 and also online and available to everyone worldwide via the link <https://leadership.ng/2019/07/23/aisha-buhari-right-on-nsip/> under the banner headline; "Aisha Buhari Right on NSIP", the Defendants falsely, maliciously, spitefully, recklessly and unethically wrote, printed and published an article full of falsehoods concerning the Claimant, which diminished her in the way of standing in the society, profession, calling and office as follows:-

*"When the wife of the President, Mrs. Aisha Buhari, in her usual candor alleged that the federal government's National Social Investment Programmes, NSIP, superintended over by the immediate past Special Adviser to the President on Social Investments Programmes, SIP, Maryam Uwais, has failed to justify its annual N500 billion budget, many waved it aside as one of the infightings that have characterized the Muhammadu Buhari administration and her penchant for criticising her husband's appointees.*

*And responding to Mrs Buhari's diatribe, Uwais had countered that the President's wife was perhaps not well informed, but LEADERSHIP investigations have revealed the President's wife may not be far from the truth, as the former SA to the President on SIP has allegedly turned the NSIP, which remains the flagship policy of the incumbent administration, into a cesspool of impunity, injustice and corrupt practices.*

*LEADERSHIP findings revealed that from the day she was appointed SA on SIP to President Buhari, Ms Uwais, through her actions in the NSIP, set out to promote personal interest high and above national interest, as she was alleged to have targeted taking total and absolute control of all the projects under the NSIP platform, especially those with assistance and support from the World Bank.*

Investigations showed that the SA, SIP plotted and succeeded in sending away the former National Coordinator of the National Social Safety Net Coordinating Office, NASSCO, Mr Peter Papka, simply because, according to insider sources, his insistence on following World Bank procurement due process had thwarted the SA's plot to use a commercial bank, where she had substantial interest, for the project."

"At Mr Papka's exit, the SA, to complete her total takeover and control of the NASSCO, began a search for a new National Coordinator, and one who would not only be her stooge, but act according to her whims and caprices.

She was alleged to have succeeded, through subtle manipulation and the support of some World Bank staff, and settled for one Mr. Apera Iorwa, who, according to reliable sources who pleaded anonymity, came a distant third in the hierarchy of competence.

They alleged that this was simply because he was the preferred candidate for the hatchet job the SA planned to carry out in the National Social Safety Net Project, NASSNP, supported by the World Bank and the Swiss government, through the Abacha restituted fund."

"LEADERSHIP reliably gathered that against all laid down ground norms, Mr Iorwa, since his assumption of office as National Coordinator of NASSCO and with the support and backing of the SA, SIP, Uwais, has illegally replaced most civil servants on the projects with consultants, who are mostly youth corps members; an action which is in contrast to the project document. The procurement officer seconded from the Bureau of Public Procurement, BPP, LEADERSHIP learnt, has also been rendered ineffectual by Iorwa.

LEADERSHIP gathered that as at the time of this report, he has sent away two project accountants deployed to the project by the

Office of the Accountant General of the Federation, OAGF, through unbridled harassment by the SA.

In fact, LEADERSHIP scooped that the current project accountant deployed by the office of the OAGF, who had faced serious evil machinations from Mr Iorwa and Ms Uwais; remains on the job through the insistence of the AGF."

"One of the civil servants who spoke to LEADERSHIP on condition of anonymity described what is going on as a "a well thought out plot to entrench a system of impunity and fraud. These frauds manifested in procurements of goods and services, which have resulted in loss of several millions to the project; to the benefit of Iorwa and Uwais, his boss."

"Investigations further revealed that the success of the SA and the National Coordinator of NASSCO in replacing career civil servants with consultants provided the conducive environment to carry out fraudulent activities in NASSCO; a development which was said to have further emboldened and encouraged the perpetrators to plot a repeat in the National Cash Transfer Office, NCTO, the office saddled with the responsibility of disbursing the Abacha restituted fund released by the Swiss government."

Claimant pleads and shall rely on Leadership Newspaper No. 3,304 of 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2019, particularly at page 33 and also online version available to everyone worldwide via the link <https://leadership.ng/2019/07/23/aisha-buhari-right-on-nsip/> under the banner headline: "Aisha Buhari Right on NSIP.

7. This publication was also carried by several other online blogs and fora on social media.
8. The Claimant avers that in their natural and ordinary meaning, the above words meant and were understood to mean that the Claimant converted the NSIP which she headed into a cesspool of impunity, injustice and corrupt practices and was also instrumental to the disengagement of the referenced Mr. Peter Papka because of his insistence on following World Bank Procurement due process against the wishes of the Claimant. Also, that the false publication referred to the Claimant.
9. The Claimant avers that in their natural and ordinary meaning the above words also meant and were understood to mean that against tenets of best practices and professionalism, the Claimant ensured that an unqualified and

incompetent candidate on Mr. Apera Iorwa was engaged to replace the said Mr. Peter Papka to further the Claimants agenda of self-aggrandizement and corruption which has been the norm at the NSIP since the appointment of the said Mr. Apera Iorwa.

10. The Claimant contends that the said publication, apart from being false and accentuated by malice, was principally aimed at ridiculing and destroying her image and person. The certified true copy of the Newspaper referred and a print out of the online version from [www.leadership.ng](http://www.leadership.ng) are hereby pleaded and same shall be relied upon at the trial of this suit. Claimant further pleads a certificate of compliance with Section 84 of the Evidence Act 2011 and shall rely on same at the hearing of this case.
11. Apart from specifically mentioning the Claimant's name and particulars in the said publication, the defamatory words contained therein are clear and direct and do not need any further interpretation or definition.
12. The said publication, particularly, the words contained therein and their natural and ordinary meaning, the Defendants meant and were understood to say or mean:
  - i. That the Claimant is a corrupt individual who for self-serving purposes goes against the rule of law, laid down procedure and best practices.
  - ii. That the Claimant is unfit to be retained and/or engaged as in any leadership position in public/private institutions.
  - iii. That the words alluded to in paragraph 5 above carry criminal imputation as it is a criminal offence for a person to pervert national interest for the purpose of personal gratification by influencing or seeking to influence laid down rules and procedure in a government institution for personal gains.
  - iv. That the Claimant has no good conscience but a dubious one.
  - v. That the Claimant is a dishonourable and dishonest woman who should be treated with disdain by the government and the members of the public.
  - vi. That the Claimant indulges in illegal, condemnable and questionable transactions.
11. The Defendants knew and have every reason to believe the said words and publication to be false but still went ahead to maliciously and falsely published same in order to damage the reputation and the character of the Claimant.



## PARTICULARS OF MALICE:-

- i. As most of the beneficiaries reside in remote locations, with no banking infrastructure services of Banks or agents have to be secured to pay beneficiaries at their location because many of them are too poor, old or incapacitated to travel long distances to access the funds.
- ii. By the procurement process the National Social Safety Net Coordinating Office (NASSCO) was required to advertise to payment service providers that would effect payments to beneficiaries in the community.
- iii. The Claimant was not a member of the committee that made the advertisement and completed the selection process of providers.
- iv. Of the Banks that responded to the adverts and engaged in the bidding process, only 3 Banks offered to support the process at no cost to the programme thus securing the bid as against others who charged for their services. The 3 Banks were Stanbic IBTC, Access Bank and GTBank.
- v. The advertisement and bidding process were all open and its details were available/ascertainable by the Defendants if they had cared to investigate or verify the false allegations before publishing.
- vi. After a period of about 5 months the 3 Banks wrote to inform the NASSCO that they could not continue with the process because it was too costly to them.
- vii. Following the process outlined in the Public Procurement Act the NASSCO has since engaged mobile money providers, as payment service providers for areas where there is no banking infrastructure.
- viii. Mr. Peter Papka at his sole discretion chose to resign his appointment without any undue influence from the Claimant or any other person. The letter of resignation of Mr. Peter Papka is hereby pleaded.
- ix. The appointment of a replacement to fill the position of chairman of NASSCO vacated by Mr. Peter Papka followed World Bank Procurement Guidelines with Curriculum Vitae being solicited from interested persons from both the public and private sector and a Committee also set up to evaluate qualified candidates.
- x. At the end of the exercise Mr. Iorwakwaga Apera clearly emerged as the leading candidate as he was scored first place after both the oral and written interview for the position and was therefore recommended by the Committee to be offered the job as National Coordinator of NASSCO. The Technical Report of the Committee is hereby pleaded as well as the Report of the Interview Process for the Selection of National Coordinator NASSCO.
- xi. Hiring of staff of NASSCO is done by the National Coordinator of NASSCO and not the Claimant and from Mr. Peter Papka, the former National Coordinator's handover notes in page 6, it was clear that he had identified the need for the appointment of more staff and had initiated the process, and not the Claimant. The handover notes of Mr. Peter Papka are hereby pleaded.
- xii. The Claimant has never engaged in any underhand, fraudulent or corrupt practices in the course of her duties as the head of the NSIP.


- xiii. Contrary to the standards of responsible journalism, the Defendants ought to have contacted the Claimant or her office to verify the details contained in the alleged publication before going to the press.
- xiv. Further to the above, the Defendants failed and neglected to do so opting to rely on a unilaterally conceived and ill-motivated false report.
12. Despite the falsity of the publication referred to in paragraph 5 above and the great distress it has caused the Claimant, the Claimant caused her Solicitors Messrs. Primera Africa Legal to write a letter of demand to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Defendant dated 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2019, (to which the 1<sup>st</sup> Defendant acknowledged receipt on the 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2019), requesting only for a retraction and apology from the 1<sup>st</sup> Defendant, which letter the Defendants ignored. The letter is hereby pleaded The 1<sup>st</sup> Defendant is put on notice to produce the original in her custody otherwise Claimant shall rely on the copy in her custody at the hearing of this suit.
13. Claimant avers that had the Defendants exercised some caution and fairness before their publication, particularly by:-
- i. Cross-checking the facts of the case from the Claimant or at least hear the Claimant's side of the story.
  - ii. Painsstakingly, honestly and with unbiased minds gone through their facts, they would not have recklessly engaged themselves in or embarked upon the malicious publication made against the Claimant in the most conspicuous manner in their publication of July 23, 2019 and also online.
- They would have realized that the news was not only false, but malicious in its entirety.
14. The entirety of the Defendants publication aforementioned was calculated to and it did disparage the Claimant in her office, appointment, calling, practice, vocation, circumstances and all undertakings in that it had ridiculed the Claimant and caused opprobrium to her hard earned reputation, which name had remained unblemished all through her stint in public service of Nigeria.
15. Till date the Defendants have refused to publish an apology, retract the publication or respond to the Claimant's Solicitor's letters.

**WHEREOF** the Claimant claims against the Defendants jointly and severally as follows:

1. A declaration that the Defendants' publication on the July 23, 2019 at Page 33 of the Leadership Newspaper and also available online at <https://leadership.ng/2019/07/23/aisha-buhari-right-on-nsip/> under the banner headline; "Aisha Buhari Right on NSIP" about the Claimant was defamatory of the Claimant and has caused Claimant irreparable harm.
2. A Declaration that the Defendants had a duty to investigate the accuracy or veracity of the publication which they knew would wreak irreparable damage to the reputation and goodwill of the Claimant before publishing same.
3. A Declaration that the Defendants are in breach of the minimum standards of responsible journalism/reporting by rushing to publish reports which they know would cause damage to the reputation of the Claimant without reaching out to the Claimant to hear her side of the matter nor causing proper investigation to verify the reports.
4. An Order of Court directing the Defendants to publish a full page retraction of the said false reports together with a public apology to the Claimant on the front page of its Newspaper.
5. An order of Court directing the Defendants to make a full page public apology to the Claimant for the embarrassment and public ridicule suffered by the Claimant as a result of their publication of July 23, 2019 same to be published on three other national newspapers viz; the Thisday Newspapers, Daily Trust Newspapers and the Punch Newspapers.
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7. An Order of Court compelling the Defendants to pay the sum of N500,000,000.00 (Five Hundred Million Naira only) to the Claimant as general damages for the defamatory report against the Claimant in the Defendants publication of July 23, 2019.
8. The sum of N2,000,000.00 (Two Million Naira only) as costs of this suit.
9. Interest on the entire judgment sum at 15% per annum from the date of judgment till same is liquidated.

10. SUCH FURTHER ORDER(S) as this Honourable Court may deem fit to make in the circumstances.

Dated this 13th day of Sept 2019

  
Olufemi Olatoluwa Fabunmi Esq.  
Olawole Olaniji Abiola Esq.  
Muawiya Yirusa Esq.  
Victor Forghé Esq.  
Primera Africa Legal  
Claimant's Solicitors  
50, Aguiyi Ironsi Street  
Maitama, Abuja

For Service on  
The Defendants  
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CLAIMANT

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1. Leadership Group Limited
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DEFENDANTS

LIST OF WITNESSES

Take Notice that the Claimant shall rely on the testimony of the following witnesses in proof of her case:

1. Maryam Uwais, MFR;
2. Bukhari Bello;
3. Any other relevant witness.

Dated this 13<sup>th</sup> day of Sept 2019

  
Olufemi Oluwaluwa Fabunmi Esq.  
Olawole Olaniji Abiola Esq.  
Muawiya Yinusa Esq.  
Victor Forghé Esq.  
Primer Africa Legal  
Claimant's Solicitors  
50, Aguiyi Ironsi Street  
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Mrs. Maryam Uwais MFR.

CLAIMANT

AND

1. Leadership Group Limited
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3. Olajide Omojolomoju

DEFENDANTS

WITNESS STATEMENT ON OATH OF MARYAM UWAIS

I, Mrs. Maryam Uwais MFR., Lawyer & Public Servant, Female, Nigerian, Muslim of Asa Villa, Three Arms Zone, Abuja do hereby make oath and state as follows:

1. That I am the Claimant in this suit.
2. That by virtue of my position as Claimant I am very conversant with the facts deposed herein.
3. That I am a Nigerian resident in Abuja within the jurisdiction of this Honourable court, a renowned Legal Practitioner of over 36 years' experience, a philanthropist and recipient of several National and International awards including the prestigious Member of the Federal Republic (MFR) in acknowledgement of my untainted and unblemished service to humanity both within Nigeria and the world at large.
4. That the 1<sup>st</sup> Defendant is a Company registered under the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, with its registered office in Abuja within the jurisdiction of this Honourable court, and the publishers of Leadership newspaper, a daily newspaper with national wide coverage and readership in Nigeria which also shares news worldwide online, via its website at [www.leadership.ng](http://www.leadership.ng).
5. That the 2<sup>nd</sup> Defendant is the Chairman/Managing Director of the 1<sup>st</sup> Defendant as well as the Editor in Chief of Leadership newspaper.
6. That the 3<sup>rd</sup> Defendant is a correspondent in the employ of the 1<sup>st</sup> Defendant and the author of the false and malicious article published by the 1<sup>st</sup>

Defendant on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of July, 2019 with the headline "Aisha Buhari Right on NSIP".

7. That I am the Special Adviser to the President on Social Investments and Coordinator of the Federal Government's National Social Investment Programmes (NSIP); an initiative of the current government aimed at tackling the problem of poverty, unemployment and hunger across Nigeria by creating programmes aimed at ensuring an equitable distribution of resources to vulnerable populations including children, youth and women.
8. That on the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of July, 2019 I received several calls from friends and acquaintances drawing my attention to the false publication of the Leadership Newspaper by the 1<sup>st</sup> Defendant No. 3,304 of 23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2019, particularly at page 33 and also online and available to everyone worldwide via the link <https://leadership.ng/2019/07/23/aisha-buhari-right-on-nsip/> under the banner headline; "Aisha Buhari Right on NSIP", the Defendants falsely, maliciously, spitefully, recklessly and unethically wrote, printed and published an article full of falsehoods concerning me, which diminished me in the way of standing in the society, profession, calling and office as follows:-

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*And responding to Mrs Buhari's diatribe, Uwais had countered that the President's wife was perhaps not well informed, but LEADERSHIP investigations have revealed the President's wife may not be far from the truth, as the former SA to the President on SIP has allegedly turned the NSIP, which remains the flagship policy of the incumbent administration, into a cesspool of impunity, injustice and corrupt practices.*

*LEADERSHIP findings revealed that from the day she was appointed SA on SIP to President Buhari, Ms Uwais, through her actions in the NSIP, set out to promote personal interest high and above national interest, as she was alleged to have targeted taking total and absolute control of all the projects under the NSIP platform, especially those with assistance and support from the World Bank.*

*Investigations showed that the SA, SIP plotted and succeeded in sending away the former National Coordinator of the National*

Social Safety Net Coordinating Office, NASSCO, Mr Peter Papka, simply because, according to insider sources, his insistence on following World Bank procurement due process had thwarted the SA's plot to use a commercial bank, where she had substantial interest, for the project."

"At Mr Papka's exit, the SA, to complete her total takeover and control of the NASSCO, began a search for a new National Coordinator, and one who would not only be her stooge, but act according to her whims and caprices.

She was alleged to have succeeded, through subtle manipulation and the support of some World Bank staff, and settled for one Mr. Apera Iorwa, who, according to reliable sources who pleaded anonymity, came a distant third in the hierarchy of competence.

They alleged that this was simply because he was the preferred candidate for the hatchet job the SA planned to carry out in the National Social Safety Net Project, NASSNP, supported by the World Bank and the Swiss government, through the Abacha restituted fund."

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LEADERSHIP gathered that as at the time of this report, he has sent away two project accountants deployed to the project by the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation, OAGF, through unbridled harassment by the SA.

In fact, LEADERSHIP scooped that the current project accountant deployed by the office of the OAGF, who had faced serious evil machinations from Mr Iorwa and Ms Uwais; remains on the job through the insistence of the AGF."

"One of the civil servants who spoke to LEADERSHIP on condition of anonymity described what is going on as a "a well thought out plot to entrench a system of impunity and fraud. These frauds manifested in procurements of goods and services, which have resulted in loss of several millions to the project; to the benefit of Iorwa and Uwais, his boss."