

JULY 24, 2020

FAKE NEWS NEWS LETTER

FOR THE WEEK ENDING

#StopFakeNews

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FAKE NEWS NEWSLETTER

FOR JULY 20 TO JULY 24, 2020

Four months after the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) confirmed the first case of Coronavirus in Lagos, Nigerian has recorded over 40,000 cases of the deadly virus disease.

Cases of COVID-19 spans across the nation's 36 states and the FCT even as countering falsehood about the virus is also not on a decline.

The Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) has kept up with fact-checking misinformation around the pandemic and other issues.

Below are some stories we fact-checked last week:

DID NCDC SAY NO STATE REPORTED NEW COVID-19 CASES IN 24 HOURS?

On Saturday, July 18, 2020, fact-checkers at the CDD spotted a report on [NewsExtra](#) claiming that no state in Nigeria reported new cases of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in 24 hours.

The report published with the headline, COVID-19: No state reported a new case in 24 hours –NCDC; further said that the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) announced 653 cases of the deadly viral disease.

Investigations by CDD fact-checkers show that contrary to the claim by the blog, there were reported cases of COVID-19 cases by the NCDC.

The official Twitter page of the NCDC of the Nigeria Centre of Disease Control (NCDC) on Saturday, July 18, 2020, showed that 653 new cases were recorded across states in the country.

Read full fact check [here](#).

CDD Fact Check

Did NCDC Say No State Reported New COVID-19 Cases in 24 Hours?

FACT

CDD fact-checkers can confirm that the claim by NewsExtra that no case of COVID-19 was reported in 24 hours between July 17 and July 18, 2020.

CDD is urging members of the public to read beyond headlines before sharing any news report, especially from blogs are in the habit of using sensational headlines to draw traffic to their blogs.

You can also forward suspicious messages for verification at +2349062910568 or contact us on twitter @CDDWestAfrica.

Verdict: FALSE

#StopFakeNews



NO MONEY BELONGING TO MAGU WAS FOUND IN IKOYI CEMETERY

Since Monday, July 13 2020, [several online blogs](#) in Nigeria have consistently [published](#) an image claiming it is Ikoyi Cemetery where monies belonging to suspended Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Ibrahim Magu, was discovered.

Some of the reports claimed the amount found was *\$150 million*.

The images used were altered to include operatives of the anti-corruption agency. The same image was used in April 2017 to make a similar claim by several [online blogs](#).

Also, an investigation by the Centre for Democracy for Development (CDD) fact-checkers shows that the original images were not shot in Nigeria.

For instance, one of the original images showing people at the Batu Arang cemetery was shot in Malaysia while a photograph of someone standing on bundles of money is from a grave in Ecuador.

Read full fact check [here](#).



IS BUHARI THE MOST FOLLOWED AFRICAN LEADER ON TWITTER?

On Wednesday, July 22, 2020, the News agency of Nigeria (NAN) reported that President Muhammadu Buhari is the most followed African leader on twitter.

NAN, in its report, quoted a report, Twiplomacy Study 2020, which was also used by several online media platforms including Vanguard News, PMNews online, Newswireng, Pulse Nigeria, All Africa.

An investigation by fact-checkers at the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) shows that President Buhari is not Africa's most-followed leader on Twitter.

A check on the microblogging site, Twitter which Twiplomacy used in its ratings show that the President of Egypt, Abdelfattah Elsisi ([@AلسيسيOfficial](#)) is the most followed African leader on the social media platform.

The Egyptian President rakes in 4,133,263 followers compared to [@MBuhari](#), who has 3,121,169 followers.



Also, in its report, Twiplomacy indicated that President Buhari is the most followed sub-Saharan African leader and not Africa’s most-followed president on Twitter. The Twiplomacy report quoted by NAN was specific about the details.

Part of the Twiplomacy [report](#) reads
“Muhammadu Buhari, the president of Nigeria, is by far the most followed Sub-Saharan African leader with 3,121,169 followers ahead of Paul Kagame the president of Rwanda with 1,910,159 followers.”

There are 46 of Africa’s 54 countries in “sub-Saharan”, which excludes Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Somalia, Sudan, Algeria, Djibouti and Tunisia.

Read full fact check [here](#).

RAYMOND ‘HUSHPUPPI’ ABBAS NOT RELEASED FROM THE US!

On Wednesday, July 22, 2020, the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) spotted a screenshot showing that Ramon Olorunwa Abbas popularly known as Hushpuppi was released from the United States Federal Bureau of prisons.

The screenshots which went viral on WhatsApp and social media platform suggested that Hushpuppi who is facing charges for alleged online fraudulent activities had regained his freedom.

The report further published by news blogs including GH [Gossip](#), Instablog and many others.

BOP MENU

Find an inmate

Find By Number Find By Name

Type of number
BOP Register Number

Number
54313424

Search Clear Form

Name: RAMON OLORUNWA ABBAS
Register Number: 54313-424
Age: 37
Race: Black
Sex: Male
Released On: 07/20/2020

Our records contain information about federal inmates incarcerated from 1982 to the present.
About the locator & record availability



An investigation by fact-checkers at the CDD showed that contrary to the widespread claim online, Hushpuppi had not been released.

The suspected internet fraudster was only transferred from the US FBI prisons to another unnamed facility.

The image shared was a screenshot from the website of the FBI facility showing that Abbas, an inmate with BOP Register Number 54313424 was released on July 20, 2020.

Speaking on the controversy surrounding the release, Hushpuppi's lawyer, Gal Pissetzky, said he (Abbas) was only moved from the FBI prison to another facility in California to commence his trial.

[Premium Times](#) reports that Pissetzky said:

"These reports are not true. He has not been released. The Bureau of prisons website shows that he was released because he is being transferred now to California."

The California-based lawyer also told journalists on Wednesday, July 22, that he is still serving as Abbas' representative.

He said:

"He has not been 'released' and I am still his lawyer, he is on his way to California. Not everything you see on court documents is accurate."

"Just because the jail record says released does not mean he has been released he is being transferred to California," Pissetzky added.

Earlier in July, the Dubai police alleged that the 37-year-old Abbas and his gang allegedly defrauded 1,926,400 people from different parts of the world.

Charges against him show that he stole about 1.6 billion dirhams (N168 billion) from his victim.

He was initially taken to Chicago court and was denied bail before the case was transferred to California.

The matter is being handled by the federal bureau of investigation (FBI), which took over the case from the Dubai police.

Read the rest of the fact check here.

CDD Fact Check

Raymond 'Hushpuppi' Abbas Not Released from US!

FACT

The claim that Hushpuppi has regained his freedom is false. The suspected internet fraudster was only transferred from FBI prison to another facility in California.

CDD urges the general public to desist from sharing false news without verifying them.

You can also forward suspicious messages for verification at +2349062910568 or contact us on twitter @CDDWestAfrica.

Verdict: FALSE

#StopFakeNews



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CDD, therefore, urges members of the public to always verify all information before disseminating them.

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#StopFakeNews #StopDisinformation



Centre for Democracy & Development
Centre pour la démocratie et le développement

The Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD) was established in the United Kingdom in 1997 as an independent, not-for-profit, research training, advocacy and capacity building organisation

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