



Two Kenyans win integrity award

Story by NATION Reporter

Two Kenyans who exposed underhand deals by Goldenberg International were yesterday awarded by an international watchdog on corruption.

Transparency International (TI) honoured police constable Naftali Lagat and Mr David Munyakei, a former clerk at the Central Bank of Kenya, for their role in unearthing the syndicate.

Mr Lagat intercepted a consignment of smuggled Gold at Wilson Airport in Nairobi and refused to release it to one of the directors of Goldenberg International, he told a Press conference at the Safari Park Hotel, where he was announced winner of the TI's Integrity Award, 2004.

Mr Munyakei, on his part, sneaked documents from Central Bank - revealing illegal transactions by Goldenberg International - to then opposition leaders Anyang' Nyong'o and Paul Muite, who used them to bring up the matter in Parliament. Another winner at the Safari Park Hotel was Prof Milica Bisic from Bosnia, who is professor of Economics at the University of Belgrade.

While she worked as head of the tax administration, she launched a relentless onslaught on corruption.

The annual award recognises individuals and organisations who have made a significant impact in fighting corruption. It has no monetary gain.

The award ceremony was part of the on-going seven-day TI conference in Nairobi, ending on October 13.

A statement by TI director Peter Eigen said: "In recognition of those whose bravery cost them (dearly), Transparency International is extending its tribute to three courageous individuals."

Mr Munyakei, 34, said: "I am happy that finally I've been honoured and hope that the Government now reinstates me in my job and compensates me for my role in fighting corruption."

He asked Parliament to review the Official Secrets Act, which he said, was being used by the Government to vindicate officers who resist corruption.

Mr Lagat, 42 and a father of three, said: "I'm one of the happiest people today. I never knew I could be honoured after being arrested and thrown into (police) cells for resisting corruption."

He went on: "Kenya is a small country but with large-scale corruption. We shall one day have a corruption-free country."

He said that after seizing the gold, he telephoned the Kenya Airport Police Unit at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport and handed over the consignment, only to be arrested later and interrogated at the CID headquarters.

The award comes with no monetary gain., the TI Kenya executive director Gladwell Otieno said.