



## ***PRESS RELEASE***

---

Press Release No. : 06/2007

Phone : (679) 322 3333

Date : 07 May 2007

Fax : (679) 331 6454

E-mail : [razim@rbf.gov.fj](mailto:razim@rbf.gov.fj)

---

### **Beware of Scams Advance Fee Fraud & Lottery Scams**

Members of the public are advised to exercise extreme caution when receiving unsolicited fax, letters or emails providing attractive opportunities to get rich fast with minimal effort. This is most often a common type of fraud known as **Advance Fee Fraud**.

There has been an increase in the number of Fiji citizens who have been defrauded into sending money to foreign nationals as advance fees for **fraudulent business proposals** and **illegal lotteries**.

#### **What is Advance Fee Fraud?**

This is a type of fraud where the perpetrators lure their victims by promising them huge sums of money in exchange for assisting the perpetrators in transferring millions of dollars out of a particular country such as Nigeria, Ghana, the Ivory Coast, South Africa, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Spain, Canada, the United State and Russia. However, victims will be instructed to pay upfront certain fees and charges to enable the transfer of funds to proceed any further.

In other varieties of “advance fee fraud”, victims may be informed that they have won millions of dollars in an overseas lottery or have been named a beneficiary in a multi-million dollar inheritance. Victims will than be informed that before they can access their winnings or their inherited wealth, they have to first pay some type of fees or charges.

#### **How Does the Advanced Fee Fraud Operate?**

1. This is a type of fraud where potential victims will receive an unsolicited fax, email, or letter requesting them to assist in **moving millions of dollars out of a particular country through their bank account**. In return for the victim’s assistance in transferring the funds, the victim will receive an attractive percentage of the total funds in question. In other varieties of Advance fee fraud, the perpetrator may inform a potential victim that he/she has **won a prize in a multi-million dollar lottery in a European country; or is a beneficiary of a multi-million dollar inheritance** which is in a foreign bank account. Some victims maybe informed that a term deposit valued at millions of dollars in their name is maintained in a foreign bank or financial institution.
2. Once a victim responds to the initial invitation, the victim will be requested by the perpetrators to **provide certain personal information** such as their bank account details and will be provided with the details of how and when the funds concerned will be transferred to them.

3. At this point the victim will be informed by the perpetrator that before the funds can be transferred into his or her bank account, the victim is required to **pay some administrative costs** upfront such as fees for tax clearances, transfer tax or for anti-money laundering certificates. The victim will be given instructions on how to make the advance payment and to whom.
4. Once the advance fee is paid by the victim, the perpetrators will cease all communication with the victim. Any attempts by the victim to contact the perpetrators will be unsuccessful. In most instances the victim may be fooled into making more than one advance payment. Once the perpetrators have obtained whatever funds they can from his or her victim, the perpetrators will stop communicating with the victim.

### **Advice to Members of the Public**

The public is advised to exercise extreme care and caution when receiving such unsolicited letters, faxes and emails.

There is often no way of recovering any money lost by participating in such schemes due to the nature of the fraud. Therefore the public is advised to just ignore such unsolicited correspondences or not to respond to it until you have verified the credentials of the persons involved and you are sure that it is a genuine proposal.

- **Ignore all unsolicited correspondences** that inform you that you have won a prize in a million dollar lottery. Remember that if you have not purchased a lottery ticket, you cannot win any prize.
- **Do not give out your personal information** such as banking details to complete strangers who establish contact with you through unsolicited correspondences.
- **Do not pay any advance fees** unless you are absolutely sure that the goods and services will be delivered.
- **Discuss first** with your bank, foreign exchange dealer or with the Financial Intelligence Unit before proceeding to make any payment.

If you have participated in such scams and have lost money, there is no avenue for recovering your money due to the nature of the fraud. Do not become a victim, always think sensibly and do not be fooled.

For further clarifications please contact Ms. Laisa Kubuabola, FIU Officer at the Financial Intelligence Unit on telephone number 322-3394 from 8.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

**Razim Buksh**  
**Director**  
**Financial Intelligence Unit**