

SFO GAINS £4.4M FROM CIVIL RECOVERY ACTION IN BRIBERY CASE

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The Serious Fraud Office (SFO) will receive £4.4M from a corruption case in which a Canadian energy company bribed Chad diplomats in North America.

Canada's Griffiths Energy, using a front company called Chad Oil, bribed senior diplomats at the Chad Embassy in the United States in return for oil contracts in the central African nation.

Griffiths Energy pleaded guilty in 2013 to corruption charges brought by Canadian authorities in the same year. London's High Court has now granted the SFO's civil order to recover the £4.4M – ending a four-year battle to seize funds from the wife of the former deputy chief of Chad embassy in the United States.

The SFO said it began civil recovery proceedings after the corruption case came under the UK's jurisdiction following the company's takeover by Glencore Plc in 2014.

"This is a positive result in the ongoing fight against criminals who attempt to hide their ill-gotten gains in our jurisdiction," said David Green, the SFO Director.

Aziz Rahman, founder of Rahman Ravelli, said the case showed the costly civil implications of bribery.

He added: "When cases of corruption make the news, there is often a focus on the penalties imposed on a company or individual by a criminal court.

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“But such cases also offer the potential for the authorities to seize a company’s or individual’s assets via the civil route. If bribery is discovered, therefore, it can mean criminal prosecution and / or a costly civil action.

“By obtaining a civil recovery order, the authorities can seize assets if they believe them to be the proceeds of crime – even if there has been no conviction for the suspected offence.

“Faced with such a prospect, any company must see that it would be best to take steps to prevent it ever becoming involved in bribery anywhere in the world, rather than paying the heavy civil or criminal price for failing to do this.”

Read our article: [AIRBUS AND THE RISKS OF BRIBERY ACROSS BORDERS](#)

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