

UK printing company and two men found guilty in corruption trial

22 December 2014

Smith and Ouzman Ltd and two employees were convicted today at Southwark Crown Court as a result of a Serious Fraud Office investigation into corrupt payments made for the award of business contracts to the company.

The corrupt payments totalling £395,074 were made to public officials for business contracts in Kenya and Mauritania.

The company, Smith and Ouzman Ltd, a printing firm based in Eastbourne which specialises in security documents such as ballot papers and certificates, was convicted of three counts of corruptly agreeing to make payments, contrary to section 1(1) of the Prevention of Corruption Act 1906.

Christopher John Smith, chairman of Smith and Ouzman, age 71, from East Sussex, was convicted of two counts of corruptly agreeing to make payments.

Nicholas Charles Smith, sales and marketing director of Smith and Ouzman, age 43, from East Sussex was convicted of three counts of corruptly agreeing to make payments.

Timothy Hamilton Forrester, international sales manager of Smith and Ouzman, age 57, from East Sussex was acquitted of all three counts of corruptly agreeing to make payments.

Mr Abdirahman Mohamed Omar, a sales agent for Smith and Ouzman, age 38, from London, was acquitted of one count of corruptly agreeing to make payments in relation to a contract in Somaliland.

Director of the SFO, David Green CB QC commented:

"This is the SFO's first conviction, after trial, of a corporate for offences involving bribery of foreign public officials. Such criminality, whether involving companies large or small severely damages the UK's commercial reputation and feeds corrupt governance in the developing world. We are very grateful to the Kenyan authorities for their assistance in this case."