



## UK Offers to Trace Money Kept Abroad

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Kenya's hunt for stolen billions of shillings stashed abroad could soon receive a boost. Britain has set up a team of investigators to help African countries recover such funds stolen by former regimes.

Britain's chief legal adviser Lord Goldsmith at the weekend spelt out plans to establish a "rapid reaction force" of trained financial detectives to support African governments trying to recover stolen assets, according to The Observer newspaper.

It quoted Lord Goldsmith, the British attorney-general, as saying huge sums were lying in banks, some of them European, and would be returned to their original countries as part of Whitehall's campaign to help alleviate Africa's poverty.

But Kenya and other African countries would have to make a formal request for help in tracking down the money and repatriating it.

The Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday said it welcomed the team's formation.

Spokesman Nicholas Simani said they were waiting for official communication to see how Kenya could benefit from working with the team.

"But even as we do that, Kenya will have to develop its own manpower, including investigators and asset recovery experts," Mr Simani said.

Justice and Constitutional Affairs minister Kiraitu Murungi has said foreign accounts worth Sh70 billion have been frozen as the Government steps up the hunt for money stolen from Kenyans during the Moi era.

Mr Murungi said officials of Kroll and Associates, the company the Government has hired to help recover the money, had traced the money.

It is not clear whether Britain's investigators will work in tandem with private investigating firms, such as Kroll, but they appear to have more power to act.

Lord Goldsmith said the aim was to try and seize assets held in Western banks and try to return them to their original countries as part of London's campaign to alleviate poverty in Africa.

"The investigators will work with other countries, and we shall help in training them as well as offering technical assistance in tracing the stolen assets," Lord Goldsmith told The Observer.