

## **Money laundering: Global scourge**

*An extract from Nick Kochan's book- The Washing Machine*

Our security depends on it. Our way of doing trade with trust is based on it. Global economic activity with nations relies on it. Money must be earned and spent fairly and openly. By the same token, money that is earned illegally or is unaccountable, must be excluded from the economic system. Its possessors must be apprehended. That is the money laundering mantra. Those who wage the war against economic crime are working harder than ever to stem the tide of black money as acquisitive crime threatens to get out of control.

The criminal who possesses black money and wants to pass it off as legitimate must fabricate an explanation to make the source look genuine. These tricksters make friends with corrupt elements in the financial system. They will hide their money so that it becomes untraceable to those who may want to hunt it. As more people or financial institutions handle money with dirty origins, those origins can be lost. And criminals are caught and convicted by the dirty money they possess.

So who are the elements in our society who close their eyes to criminal money? Most are those who committed the crime in the first place. There are four key groups. They are global corporations engaged in fraud; corrupt governments and their politicians who accept bribes; organized criminals who trade in drugs and other illegal goods; and terrorists. These are nebulous forces, and there will be those who say much talk of global money laundering is fuelled by paranoia and even hysteria. 'The Washing Machine', Nick Kochan's investigative book on financial crime, shows that tyrants have triumphed by having their money laundered, drug gangs have ruined countries by passing their money through complicit banks, terrorists have waged wars on the financial system to fund their outrages and companies have made themselves available to organized criminals in a Faustian laundering pact. Laundering is as sinister as it is ubiquitous.