

Ukraine Authorities Freeze Sunday Adelaja's Assets

Pastor Sunday Adelaja is free, at least for one more week.

The Nigerian-born pastor, who oversees one of the largest evangelical churches in Eastern Europe, faced the possibility of arrest Tuesday.

Police summoned him to their headquarters in Kiev, Ukraine, where he could have been detained in an investigation into his alleged involvement in a now-defunct business run by members of his church.

Adelaja told a Nigerian newspaper that police turned him away at the door because the charges are not ready, but they told him to return next week.

Though he is free, Adelaja learned that all his assets, including his home, vehicles and bank accounts, have been seized by the government.

Police have been investigating Adelaja for several years in connection with an investment firm run by members of his church.

The company collapsed in the global recession and authorities are accusing Adelaja of fraud and running a criminal enterprise.

Adelaja said neither he nor his leaders had any connection with the business and police have never produced evidence of a link.

He said five members of his church have been imprisoned without trial in an attempt to force them to testify against him.

Adelaja told CBN News that he's facing persecution for religious, ethnic and political reasons.

"Because of the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church, because the Russian Orthodox Church has been trying to get rid of not just myself, but the all the evangelical(s) in Ukraine ... and I am a black man leading a congregation of 99 percent Europeans," he said.

"So I am a target, and this economic meltdown and the collapse of this company has presented them with a perfect opportunity," he said.

Adelaja publicly supported the 2004 Orange Revolution that brought down President Viktor Yanukovich.

Since then, the democratic reformers have suffered a series of setbacks in Ukraine and Yanukovich is back in power.