

## Namibian firm formed by Ex-Comverse chief Alexander

CHAMWE KAIRA and VERNON WESSELS, Bloomberg, THE JERUSALEM POST

Feb. 26, 2007

Jacob "Kobi" Alexander, the former Comverse Technology Inc. chief executive officer wanted in the US for securities fraud, formed a company in Namibia that will invest in construction, tourism and agriculture.

Kobi Alexander Enterprises has already developed two projects in the coastal city of Walvis Bay involving the construction of 200 houses for low-income earners, the company said in an advertisement published Friday in *The Namibian*, a Windhoek-based newspaper. The company's motto is "Putting Namibia First."

"Mr. Kobi Alexander, its founder, brings with him a wealth of business acumen," the advertisement said. "He is the founder of Comverse Technology, the world's leading supplier of enhanced services for telecommunications companies."

Alexander, an Israeli citizen, was arrested in Namibia in September. He is free there on bail while the US seeks his return to face 35 criminal counts related to stock-option backdating, conspiracy, securities fraud, money laundering and bribery. He said he will plead not guilty to those charges.

An extradition hearing for Alexander, 54, will be heard in a Namibian court from April 25 to April 27. Alexander's Namibian lawyer Richard Metcalfe didn't immediately return a message left on his mobile-phone seeking comment.

At least 200 US companies have disclosed internal or federal probes into whether they inflated the value of options awarded to executives by backdating or timing the grants to coincide with days when the stock price was low.

Seven people have been charged by US authorities over option grants. Myron Olesnyckyj, former general counsel of Monster Worldwide Inc., pleaded guilty February 15 to federal charges in New York that he backdated millions of dollars worth of stock options issued to executives and employees.

Comverse's former general counsel, William Sorin, pleaded guilty in November to taking part in an options backdating scheme that led to charges against Alexander. Sorin agreed on January 10 to pay \$3.1 million to settle US Securities and Exchange Commission accusations he conspired with Alexander to backdate stock options. David Kreinberg, Comverse's former finance chief, pleaded guilty in October to conspiracy and securities fraud.

Both men await sentencing and a US prosecutor has said they are cooperating with the investigation of Comverse and Alexander.

Alexander, who has US residency, was declared a fugitive in August, when he was first accused of fraud conspiracy. After leaving the US, he traveled via Israel to Namibia with his wife Hanna and three children, arriving at the end of July.

Before being arrested by Namibian police September 27, Alexander transferred 120m. Namibian dollars (\$16.9m.) from Israel to Namibia and was granted a two-year work permit on a pledge to spend N\$300m. in the country.

Alexander said in court papers filed in Windhoek on October 4 that he had invested N\$11m. in the country, including N\$3.4m. in low-cost housing in the western town of Swakopmund, because of demand created by the opening of the Langer Heinrich uranium mine being developed by Paladin Resources Ltd.

Alexander invested another N\$5.9m. in an auto-body shop business in Windhoek and bought a N\$3.5m. house on a golf estate. He also enrolled his children in the 275-pupil Windhoek International School, where fees last year ranged between N\$18,000 and N\$118,000 a year, according to the school brochure.

"I have invested responsibly and with a view to engaging previously disadvantaged Namibians," Alexander said.

Namibia, a former German colony, won independence in 1990 after being occupied since the end of World War I by South Africa, which enforced its apartheid policies there.

(Bloomberg)



This article can also be read at <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1171894519830&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>

[ [Back to the Article](#) ]

---

Copyright 1995-2007 The Jerusalem Post - <http://www.jpost.com/>