



EXOTIC BIRDS SCAM

The scam involves victims being lured into buying exotic birds at unusually good prices, only to find out they have been scammed.



INDICATORS

- The sender accounts are usually onboarded via the Mama Money online platform (App).
- Multiple senders remitting to the same recipient using the same device without a clear relationship or purpose. Majority of the senders are South African citizens.
- Amounts range between R3 000 and R9 000 and payments are made in high velocity.
- The use of multiple social media platforms to promote legitimacy.

MODUS OPERANDI

The syndicate uses social media such as Facebook, YouTube, TikTok and Twitter to entice individuals to buy exotic pets. The linked business is “Parrots Boutique” with an official website: www.parrotsboutique.co.za. Payments are made via EFT into the Mama Money account. Thereafter, payments are remitted to Cameroon. Scammers primarily receive payments through mobile wallets and immediately use the funds.

The sender accounts are onboarded in the following ways:

- The syndicate targets South African citizens in vulnerable communities and requests their FIC Act documents and pays them a fee. These documents would then be used to register an account with Mama Money.
- The syndicate would request the victim’s FIC Act documents to generate an invoice.

The syndicate would then use these accounts to create orders for money remittance and send the victims payment details. The victim is then asked to provide proof of payment to the syndicate. If there is an issue with the payment the syndicate would call Mama Money’s client experience team and have any issues linked to the payment resolved.



TAKE ACTION! This is what you can do

- Research the company and read any reviews.
- Try calling the phone number provided. Be cautious if the line is disconnected. If there is no answer, try again. If you cannot reach the person, then cease dealing with them.
- Know the procedures involved in the importation of exotic birds. All countries have regulatory requirements. All animals entering any country must be custom cleared.
- Tell the person you are dealing with that you will collect the parrot (even if you are not) and see how they react. If they give excuses for why you cannot do that, be cautious in proceeding with the transaction.
- Do not send money to someone you do not know or have not met in person.

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