

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Press Center



Treasury Sanctions Four Burundian Individuals

12/18/2015

Action Targets Individuals Fueling the Recent Violence in Burundi

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) today sanctioned four individuals, Gervais Ndirakobuca, Leonard Ngendakumana, Joseph Mathias Niyonzima, and Alexis Sinduhije, pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13712 for being responsible for or complicit in or for engaging in actions or policies that threaten the peace, security, or stability of Burundi. The President signed E.O. 13712 on November 22, 2015 to target individuals in the government and armed groups that contribute to the situation in Burundi, including those engaging in threats to peace and security, actions that undermine democratic institutions, and human rights abuses. As a result of today's actions, all property and interests in property of these individuals that are under the jurisdiction of the United States or in the control of U.S. persons are blocked, and U.S. persons are generally prohibited from engaging in transactions with these individuals.

"The people of Burundi have endured the horrific consequences of this crisis," said Acting OFAC Director John E. Smith. "Today's action underscores Treasury's resolve to target those responsible for fueling violence, instability, and human rights abuses in Burundi."

OFAC's action, which targets both pro-regime and armed opposition figures, follows the events of last week when, on December 11, at least 100 people were killed in connection with a coordinated assault on multiple government military bases in Burundi's capital, Bujumbura, and a subsequent violent response by Government security forces. This incident marks the latest escalation after several months of violence and political unrest in Burundi that began following President Nkurunziza's pursuit of a third term in office. Since April, hundreds have been killed or injured by pro-regime and opposition forces, and more than 200,000 have fled the country, according to UN estimates.

Gervais Ndirakobuca

Gervais Ndirakobuca is the Chief of Staff for Burundi's Ministry of Public Security and has been closely involved with the Government's internal security efforts, including silencing those opposed to President Pierre Nkurunziza's third term bid for the presidency. He has used Burundi's current instability to stir up animosity among the country's rival factions and has mobilized groups to reinforce support for the President and his regime. In early June 2015, witnesses claimed Ndirakobuca shot a civilian in Bujumbura's Musaga neighborhood during a clash between patrolling youths and Burundian police.

Leonard Ngendakumana

Leonard Ngendakumana is one of several Burundian security sector elites who was involved in an attempt to overthrow the Government of Burundi in May 2015. In the months after the coup, Ngendakumana continued working with coup leader, former Chief of Burundi Intelligence Service Godefroid Niyombare, to lead opposition forces and continue fighting President Nkurunziza's regime. His forces have been responsible for grenade attacks perpetrated in Burundi's capital, including several targeting police, as well as polling stations. His opposition forces were also involved in early July 2015 clashes with Burundian security forces in Rugazi, near the border with Rwanda.

Joseph Mathias Niyonzima

Joseph Mathias Niyonzima has supervised and provided support to elements of the Imbonerakure pro-government militia, a group that has been linked to the arrest and torture of individuals suspected of opposing the Nkurunziza regime. He has also been involved in plans to assassinate prominent opposition leaders.

Alexis Sinduhije

Alexis Sinduhije is a particularly active supporter of armed rebellion in Burundi and has recruited and trained opposition forces. Sinduhije is considered a major military leader within the Burundian opposition as a result of his logistical network and the competent fighters under his command. Sinduhije has been linked to plans to assassinate senior Burundian officials and has continued to actively plan attacks on government targets.

For identifying information on the individuals designated today, click [here](#).

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