

Treasury Sanctions Three Individuals for Their Roles in the Conflict in South Sudan



December 14, 2018

Actions Demonstrate U.S. Commitment to Stabilizing South Sudan

Washington – Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) imposed sanctions on three individuals pursuant to Executive Order (E.O) 13664: Israel Ziv and Obac William Olawo, for being leaders of entities whose actions have the purpose or effect of expanding or extending the conflict in South Sudan, and Gregory Vasili, for actions that have undermined peace, stability, and security in South Sudan. Additionally, OFAC designated six entities for being owned or controlled by two of the aforementioned individuals. The behavior of each designated person stands in direct opposition to significant U.S. efforts to help those affected by the conflict in South Sudan and establish a lasting peaceful resolution to the current conflict.

“Treasury is targeting individuals who have provided soldiers, armored vehicles, and weapons used to fuel the conflict in South Sudan. We are intent on holding accountable those who profit off the misery and suffering of the South Sudanese people and facilitate violence against civilians,” said Sigal Mandelker, Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence. “As the United Nations Security Council recently highlighted, hundreds of women and girls within the last few weeks have been raped and attacked as part of a horrifying escalation in sexual violence in South Sudan. The United States will be relentless in its efforts to identify those who profit from these conflicts and isolate them from the U.S. and international financial system. We will not hesitate to target those who commit these atrocities, interfere with the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and undermine the peace and stability of South Sudan.”

Today’s action aligns with the designations of three South Sudanese individuals in September 2017 for actions or policies that threaten the peace, security, or stability of South Sudan. In addition, these actions recall the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network’s (FinCEN) September 2017 Advisory to U.S. financial institutions about the possibility that certain South Sudanese

political figures may try to use the U.S. financial system to move or hide proceeds of public corruption. FinCEN's [Advisory](#)  describes South Sudanese corruption and reminds financial institutions of their due diligence and suspicious activity report (SAR) filing obligations related to senior foreign political figures. FinCEN has also published [advisories](#)  to U.S. financial institutions on human rights abuses enabled by corrupt senior foreign political figures and their financial facilitators .

As a result of today's action, any property or interests in property of those designated by OFAC that is within or transiting U.S. jurisdiction or the possession or control of a U.S. person must be blocked and reported to OFAC. OFAC's regulations generally prohibit all transactions by U.S. persons or within or transiting the United States that involve any property or interests in property of a designated person. Such property includes all property of entities 50 percent or more owned by one or more designated persons. Further details on these designations are included below.

THE CONFLICT IN SOUTH SUDAN

According to credible public reports, an estimated 382,000 individuals have died, and more than 4 million have been displaced, as a result of the conflict that has plagued South Sudan since December 2013. The December 2017 cessation of hostilities and September 2018 peace agreement have been only partially implemented, and reports describing the use of child soldiers and indiscriminate violence—including horrific instances of the use of sexual violence against hundreds of women and girls in government-controlled parts of the country—continue to this day. Famine looms once again in multiple areas of South Sudan, and more than five million people will face life-threatening hunger in the coming year. Concurrently, endemic corruption has resulted in the unchecked exploitation of South Sudan's natural resources, with public reporting demonstrating that the issue expands beyond the borders of South Sudan and involves external actors who have enabled and supported conflict in South Sudan in order to make a profit. These and other human rights abuses and endemic corruption continue to undermine the ability to form the essential foundation of a stable, secure, and functioning society; have devastating impacts on individuals; weaken democratic institutions; degrade the rule of law; perpetuate violent conflict; facilitate the activities of dangerous persons; and undermine economic markets.

Nevertheless, the United States applauds the efforts of our regional and international allies to work towards an end to this horrible conflict, and we remain committed to working in support

of the citizens of South Sudan as they continue down the path toward justice, liberty, prosperity, and peace. In support of our partners' efforts and the United States' commitment to seeing a peaceful and prosperous South Sudan, as well as to protect the financial system of the United States from abuse, the Treasury Department will continue to impose tangible and significant consequences on those who commit serious human rights abuse or engage in corruption. The United States calls on leaders of this peace process to take swift action against the perpetrators of any and all violence, including the recent disturbing reports of sexual violence, or other activities that undermine the peace, security, or stability of South Sudan. The United States' decision to sanction these individuals should serve as a warning to all to stop such behavior immediately and respect the peace process and the UN arms embargo. We will continue to focus on those interrupting or preventing the peace process, engaging in corruption, and preventing distribution of humanitarian aid.

GREGORY VASILI

Gregory Vasili (Vasili) is a South Sudanese individual who has facilitated the transportation of South Sudanese soldiers and tanks to and from locations in South Sudan, and has been involved in brokering deals for the sale of military equipment to the Government of South Sudan. In addition, while governor of Gogrial State in South Sudan in 2017, Vasili oversaw an explosion of intra-clan ethnic violence that resulted in scores of civilians being killed and thousands displaced from their homes. According to public reports, following his early 2017 appointment as governor, Vasili provided arms to and commanded a militia to assist individuals from his own clan who were engaged in conflict with a competing clan. The Government of South Sudan removed Vasili from his position as governor in late 2017, with some attributing his removal to that intra-clan conflict, but since that time he has taken multiple trips to the region to mobilize tribal militiamen, including to pay authorities to secure the release of another individual who had been mobilizing local militias. Separate from his aggravation of local conflict, Vasili has been involved in various illicit activities, including involvement in a major food procurement scandal and winning gas contracts from the South Sudanese military while he was still serving in it.

ISRAEL ZIV

Israel Ziv (Ziv) is a retired Israeli Defense Forces Major General, who has supplied both the Government of South Sudan and the opposition with weapons and ammunition. Ziv used an agricultural company that was nominally present in South Sudan to carry out agricultural and

housing projects for the Government of South Sudan as a cover for the sale of approximately \$150 million worth of weapons to the government, including rifles, grenade launchers, and shoulder-fired rockets. Ziv has been paid through the oil industry and has had close collaboration with a major multi-national oil firm. While Ziv maintained the loyalty of senior Government of South Sudan officials through bribery and promises of security support, he has also reportedly planned to organize attacks by mercenaries on South Sudanese oil fields and infrastructure, in an effort to create a problem that only his company and affiliates could solve.

OFAC also designated three entities organized in Israel that are owned or controlled by Ziv: Global N.T.M Ltd, Global Law Enforcement and Security Ltd, and Global IZ Group Ltd.

OBAC WILLIAM OLAWO

Obac William Olawo (Olawo) is a wealthy South Sudanese businessman who has routinely imported standard and armored vehicles for the Government of South Sudan, and as of mid-2018 was engaged in the trade and shipment of arms and armaments to South Sudan.

According to public reports, in 2014 alone, an entity owned by Olawo received millions of dollars from the Government of South Sudan for its work importing armored cars and transporting weapons and troops, and in April and May of 2015, one of Olawo's entities was identified transporting soldiers, arms, and supplies in support of a government offensive.

OFAC also designated three entities in South Sudan that are owned or controlled by Olawo: Golden Wings Aviation, Crown Auto Trade, and Africana General Trading Ltd.

[Identifying information on the individuals designated today.](#)

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