

Treasury Sanctions Congolese Officials Responsible for Undermining DRC Elections

March 21, 2019

WASHINGTON – Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned three senior Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) officials pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13413, as amended by E.O. 13671, which authorizes sanctions in light of actions or policies that undermine democratic processes or institutions in the DRC.

“This action follows persistent corruption by senior officials within the DRC’s National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) and the former Kabila Government to obstruct and delay preparations for credible and inclusive elections,” said Sigal Mandelker, Treasury Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence. “We stand with the Congolese people who went to the polls on December 30 but remain concerned about a flawed electoral process in which, following the presidential election, CENI continued to obstruct the democratic process and failed to ensure the vote reflected the will of the Congolese people. The United States will continue to assist those who seek to root out credible allegations of corruption but will not hesitate to leverage our authorities to impose tangible and significant consequences on malign actors in the DRC and around the world that undermine the democratic process and traffic in corruption.”

Specifically, OFAC designated three senior CENI officials: Corneille Yobeluo Nangaa (Nangaa), CENI President; Norbert Basengezi Katintima (Katintima), CENI Vice-President; and Katintima’s son, Marcellin Basengezi Mukolo (Basengezi), a high-level CENI advisor. As a result of today’s actions, all of the designated persons’ assets within U.S. jurisdiction are blocked, and U.S. persons are generally prohibited from engaging in transactions with them.

CORNEILLE YOBELUO NANGAA, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION (CENI)

Nangaa was nominated and sworn in as the President of CENI in November 2015. CENI is tasked with executing elections in the DRC, and under Nangaa’s leadership, elections originally

scheduled for December 2016 were postponed to December 2018. In postponing the 2016 elections, CENI cited a lack of funding and delays in voter registration. In his capacity as CENI President, Nangaa, and other CENI officials under his direction, embezzled and misappropriated CENI operational funds and undertook actions that slowed voter registration, facilitating election delays.

Nangaa oversaw CENI officials using several shell companies to embezzle CENI operational funds for their own personal and political gain. Nangaa and other CENI officials enriched themselves through the purchase and sale of gasoline for profit at the expense of CENI, which delayed registration in Kasai, an opposition stronghold, and meant that many voters were unable to register. In acquiring fuel to power generators for CENI offices, Nangaa negotiated a discounted rate and retained the difference from the budgeted amount to divide among senior CENI employees. Nangaa subsequently instructed CENI officials to fabricate receipts to account for the spending gap.

Under Nangaa's leadership, CENI officials inflated by as much as \$100 million the costs for the electronic voting machine contract with the intent to use surplus funds for personal enrichment, bribes, and campaign costs to fund the election campaign of Kabila's candidate. Nangaa, with other CENI officials, awarded an election-related contract and doubled the award amount on the understanding that the winning company would award the extra funds to a DRC company controlled by CENI leadership. Nangaa approved the withdrawal of CENI operation funds for non-authorized budget items for personal use by DRC government employees. Nangaa ordered CENI employees to fabricate expense receipts to cover spending gaps resulting from CENI funds being used for personal gain. Nangaa delivered bribes to Constitutional Court justices to uphold a decision by the CENI to delay DRC's 2016 elections.

NORBERT BASENGEZI KATINTIMA, CENI VICE PRESIDENT

Katintima was nominated and sworn in as the Vice President of CENI in November 2015. CENI is tasked with executing elections in the DRC, and under Katintima's leadership, elections originally scheduled for December 2016 were postponed to December 2018. In postponing the 2016 elections, CENI cited a lack of funding and delays in voter registration. In his capacity as CENI Vice President, Katintima and other CENI officials under his direction, embezzled and misappropriated CENI operational funds, facilitating election delays.

Katintima oversaw CENI officials using several shell companies to embezzle CENI operational funds for their own personal and political gain. Katintima withdrew and provided at least

\$80,000 from CENI operational funds to his personally-owned hospital, which provided medical care to all CENI employees. The Supreme Audit Institution had sent unidentified investigators to CENI to conduct an audit of its financial activities. However, CENI officials, including Katintima, agreed to bribe the investigators to conduct an inaccurate audit. Katintima delivered bribes to Constitutional Court justices to uphold a decision by the CENI to delay DRC's 2016 elections.

MARCELLIN MUKOLO BASENGEZI, CENI ADVISOR

Marcellin Basengezi is a CENI advisor and the son of Vice President Katintima. Basengezi has embezzled and misappropriated state assets from CENI and has undertaken actions that slowed registration, which facilitated election delays.

Basengezi and other CENI advisors were in charge of assigning CENI contracts, enabling them to award contracts to their own shell companies for personal profit and to circumvent official procurement procedures. Basengezi inflated costs for an election-related contract with the intent to use surplus funds for personal enrichment, bribes, and campaign costs to fund the election campaign of Kabila's successor. Basengezi awarded a separate election-related contract and doubled the award amount on the understanding that the winning company would award the extra funds to a DRC company controlled by CENI leadership. Basengezi and other CENI official have purchased and sold gasoline for profit at the expense of CENI, including selling fuel prepositioned for voter registration. The interest in self-enrichment of Basengezi and others delayed voter registration in Kasai, an opposition stronghold, and meant that many voters were unable to register.

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

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