

Treasury Sanctions Former Guatemalan Official for Engaging in Mining-related Corruption

January 17, 2024

WASHINGTON — Today, the Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned **Alberto Pimentel Mata (Pimentel)** for his role in exploiting the Guatemalan mining sector through widespread bribery schemes, including schemes related to government contracts and mining licenses. **Pimentel** is being designated pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13818, which builds upon and implements the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act and targets perpetrators of serious human rights abuse and corruption around the world. Today’s action follows the Department of State’s October 2023 announcement of visa restriction on **Pimentel** and other individuals for their involvement in significant corruption.

“The United States remains committed to holding accountable those who abuse their positions in pursuit of personal benefit, weakening the public’s faith in government institutions,” said Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Brian E. Nelson. “We stand in solidarity with the Guatemalan people as they strive to foster greater transparency, accountability, and government integrity within their system.”

Corrupt and anti-democratic acts undermine Guatemala’s public institutions and threaten the stability of Guatemala and the region as a whole. Today’s action demonstrates the U.S. government’s continued commitment to promote accountability for corrupt and undemocratic actors in Guatemala and expands upon the Administration’s efforts to address corruption as a root cause of irregular migration through the northern Central America region.

ALBERTO PIMENTEL MATA

Pimentel became the Minister of Energy and Mining in January 2020 and resigned from this position in July 2023. As Minister, **Pimentel** engaged in numerous corruption schemes related to government contracts and licenses. Additionally, **Pimentel** reportedly accepted large monthly payments to facilitate the acquisition of necessary permits and licenses for a private company operating in the energy and mining sector of Guatemala.

In another instance, **Pimentel** reportedly received a large illicit payment to begin the consultation process with local communities in El Estor, Izabal, Guatemala for the benefit of private entities. Separately, he reportedly requested large bribes of more than \$1 million from mining industry groups in Guatemala in exchange for mining licenses.

Pimentel reportedly misused his position by agreeing with a private company in Guatemala to write the terms of reference for an upcoming tender to favor the prospective bidder.

Pimentel also reportedly took payments in exchange for accepting a bid for a contract from a local company with no experience in the project activities. The winning bidder not only lacked experience, but the offer had a significantly higher price than the bid from a more experienced incumbent. Additionally, **Pimentel** reportedly engaged in retaliation against companies operating in the Guatemalan energy and mining sector that would not offer to pay him bribes.

Pimentel is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13818 for being a foreign person who is a current or former government official, or person acting for or on behalf of such an official, who is responsible for or complicit in, or who has directly or indirectly engaged in, corruption, including the misappropriation of state assets, the expropriation of private assets for personal gain, corruption related to government contracts or the extraction of natural resources, or bribery.

SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS

As a result of today's action, all property and interests in property of the person described above that are in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons are blocked and must be reported to OFAC. In addition, any entities that are owned, directly or indirectly, individually or in the aggregate, 50 percent or more by one or more blocked persons are also blocked. Unless authorized by a general or specific license issued by OFAC, or otherwise exempt, 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 designated or otherwise blocked persons. The prohibitions include the making of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services by, to, or for the benefit of any designated person, or the receipt of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services from any such person.

The power and integrity of OFAC sanctions derive not only from OFAC's ability to designate and add persons to the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons (SDN) List, but also from its willingness to remove persons from the SDN List consistent with the law. The

ultimate goal of sanctions is not to punish, but to bring about a positive change in behavior. For information concerning the process for seeking removal from an OFAC list, including the SDN List, please refer to [OFAC's Frequently Asked Question 897 here](#). For detailed information on the [process to submit a request for removal from an OFAC sanctions list, please click here](#).

GLOBAL MAGNITSKY

Building upon the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, E.O. 13818 was issued on December 20, 2017, in recognition that the prevalence of human rights abuse and corruption that have their source, in whole or in substantial part, outside the United States, had reached such scope and gravity as to threaten the stability of international political and economic systems. Human rights abuse and corruption undermine the values that form an essential foundation of stable, secure, and functioning societies; have devastating impacts on individuals; weaken democratic institutions; degrade the rule of law; perpetuate violent conflicts; facilitate the activities of dangerous persons; and undermine economic markets. The United States seeks to impose tangible and significant consequences on those who commit serious human rights abuse or engage in corruption, as well as to protect the financial system of the United States from abuse by these same persons.

[Click here for more information on the individual designated today.](#)

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