

Treasury Sanctions Nicaragua-Based Russian Institution and Gold Companies

May 15, 2024

WASHINGTON — Today, the Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is targeting the Ortega-Murillo regime’s repression of the Nicaraguan people and its ability to manipulate the gold sector and profit from corrupt operations. Treasury is imposing sanctions on three Nicaragua-based entities, the **Training Center of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs in Managua (RTC)**; **Compania Minera Internacional, Sociedad Anónima (COMINTSA)**; and **Capital Mining Investment Nicaragua, Sociedad Anónima (Capital Mining)**, pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13851, as amended.

The RTC is a Nicaragua-based subdivision of the Government of the Russian Federation’s (GOR) Ministry of Internal Affairs, which trains those under the Ortega-Murillo regime’s command under the Russian authoritarian government’s playbook of oppression. It is a key actor in the Nicaraguan regime’s repression of civil society and unjust detention and imprisonment of individuals for expressing dissent, or otherwise peacefully exercising their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The designations of COMINTSA and Capital Mining target government-affiliated gold companies generating revenue for the Ortega-Murillo regime. Gold is Nicaragua’s top commodity export, and this action aims to degrade the ability of the Ortega-Murillo regime to manipulate the sector and profit from the corrupt operations of COMINTSA and Capital Mining.

“By leveraging the training it receives from the Russia-backed RTC and the revenue it generates from exploiting the gold sector, the Ortega-Murillo regime has continued its anti-democratic campaign of repression against its citizens,” said Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, Brian E. Nelson. “The United States remains committed to using our tools to support the Nicaraguan people, including by constraining the Ortega-Murillo regime’s ability to fund its oppressive and destabilizing activities.”

These actions are being taken these in response to the Ortega-Murillo regime’s continued repression of the people of Nicaragua and continued exploitation of vulnerable migrants,

including via the facilitation and profiting off of irregular migration to the United States.

THE TRAINING CENTER OF THE RUSSIAN MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS IN MANAGUA

Nicaragua is one of Russia's main partners in Central America, as evidenced by a series of high-level visits to Managua by representatives of the GOR. Russia's Ministry of Internal Affairs established a training center in Managua to provide specialized courses for the [Nicaraguan National Police](#) (NNP) and law enforcement of other Latin American countries. OFAC designated the NNP, the primary law enforcement entity in Nicaragua, on March 5, 2020, pursuant to E.O. 13851 for being responsible for or complicit in, or having directly or indirectly engaged in, serious human rights abuse in Nicaragua. The NNP was also designated pursuant to the Nicaraguan Human Rights and Anticorruption Act of 2018 for being responsible for or complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, or having knowingly participated in, directly or indirectly, significant acts of violence or conduct that constitutes a serious abuse or violation of human rights against persons associated with the protests in Nicaragua in April 2018.

Since its opening in Managua in October 2017, the RTC has been operating in Managua, training members of the NNP as part of a bilateral engagement between Nicaragua and Russia, Russian law enforcement officials at the RTC have trained members of the NNP, which has enabled the regime's brutal repressive tactics, training the NNP to conduct repression and tyrannical persecution in support of persecutions of the Nicaraguan people. The NNP is a central actor in the Ortega-Murillo regime's violent oppression of the Nicaraguan people. The RTC's support of the NNP helps maintain the cycle of violent oppression in Nicaragua. The NNP is a repressive state apparatus, carrying out extrajudicial killings, using live ammunition against peaceful protests, and even participating in death squads. The RTC in Nicaragua, by admission of President Ortega himself, trains Nicaraguan law enforcement officers to better confront "coup plotters," referring to those citizens who dare to publicly voice their opposition to the regime.

The RTC is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13851, as amended, for having materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, the NNP.

COMPANIA MINERA INTERNACIONAL, SOCIEDAD ANÓNIMA (COMINTSA)

COMINTSA is a Nicaraguan mining company and one of several regime-aligned companies that operate or have operated in Nicaragua's gold sector. Having revoked the license for operations from another artisanal mining company, the General Directorate of Mines granted COMINTSA concession areas for exploration and extraction of gold in the in the Autonomous Region of the North Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua in 2023. COMINTSA is reportedly owned and led by [Salvador Mansell Castrillo](#) (Mansell Castrillo), who is under OFAC sanctions.

On November 15, 2021, OFAC designated Mansell Castrillo pursuant to E.O. 13851 for having served as an official of the Government of Nicaragua at any time on or after January 10, 2007. Subsequently, on October 24, 2022, OFAC designated the [General Directorate of Mines](#) pursuant to E.O. 13851 for being owned or controlled by or having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, Mansell Castrillo.

COMINTSA is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13851, as amended, for operating or having operated in the gold sector of the Nicaraguan economy.

CAPITAL MINING INVESTMENT NICARAGUA, SOCIEDAD ANÓNIMA

Capital Mining is a Nicaraguan mining company and one of several regime-aligned companies that operate in Nicaragua's gold sector. Capital Mining is an intermediary in the gold sector controlled by [Laureano Ortega Murillo](#) (Ortega Murillo), the son of President Ortega and Vice President Murillo, and Mansell Castrillo that is known to charge some gold mining companies to do business in Nicaragua. On April 17, 2019, OFAC designated Ortega Murillo pursuant to E.O. 13851 for being an official of the Government of Nicaragua or having served as an official of the Government of Nicaragua at any time on or after January 10, 2007.

Capital Mining is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13851, as amended, for operating or having operated in the gold sector of the Nicaraguan economy.

TRAVEL INDUSTRY ADVISORY

In addition to the sanctions issued by OFAC today, the United States Department of State is issuing over 250 visa restrictions for Nicaraguan officials, and the Departments of State, Treasury, and Homeland Security are jointly releasing an advisory to alert the travel industry of the ways in which smugglers are facilitating illegal migration to the United States and remind the industry of key steps that they should take to avoid complicity in the exploitation of migrants.

This action reflects U.S. efforts to promote responsible practices in the industry, prevent and disrupt illicit activity, and enhance compliance with lawful immigration and migration pathways.

SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS

As a result of today's action, all property and interests in property of the designated persons 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 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.

In addition, financial institutions and other persons that engage in certain transactions or activities with the sanctioned entities and individuals may expose themselves to sanctions or be subject to an enforcement action. 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 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](#). For detailed information on the process to [submit a request for removal from an OFAC sanctions list](#).

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

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