

Treasury Sanctions Former Haitian President for Drug Trafficking



August 20, 2024

WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned the former President of Haiti, **Michel Joseph Martelly** (Martelly), pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 14059 of December 15, 2021, "Imposing Sanctions on Foreign Persons Involved in the Global Illicit Drug Trade."

"Today's action against Martelly emphasizes the significant and destabilizing role he and other corrupt political elites have played in perpetuating the ongoing crisis in Haiti," said Acting Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Bradley T. Smith. "The United States, along with our international partners, is committed to disrupting those who facilitate the drug trafficking, corruption, and other illicit activities fueling the horrific gang violence and political instability."

The existence of widespread gang activity and human rights abuses in Haiti creates a permissive environment for drug trafficking activities, and the country is a transit point for illicit drugs entering the United States. Many of Haiti's political and business elites have long been involved in drug trafficking and have been linked to the gangs responsible for the violence that has destabilized Haiti. The United States is committed to promoting accountability and charting a more prosperous, democratic, and secure future for all Haitians.

Martelly abused his influence to facilitate the trafficking of dangerous drugs, including cocaine, destined for the United States. Additionally, Martelly engaged in the laundering of illicit drug proceeds, worked with Haitian drug traffickers, and sponsored multiple Haiti-based gangs. Martelly was previously sanctioned by the Government of Canada on November 17, 2022.

Martelly was sanctioned today pursuant to E.O. 14059 for having engaged in, or having attempted to engage in, activities or transactions that have materially contributed to, or pose a significant risk of materially contributing to, the international proliferation of illicit

drugs or their means of production. Today's sanctions action imposes several prohibitions related to Martelly, and OFAC has added Martelly to the Non-SDN Menu-Based Sanctions List (NS-MBS List).

OFAC coordinated closely with the Drug Enforcement Administration on this sanctions action.

SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS

As a result of this action, OFAC is imposing the following prohibitions described in section 2 of E.O. 14059: (1) U.S. financial institutions are prohibited from making loans or providing credit to Martelly; (2) Any transactions in foreign exchange that are subject to the jurisdiction of the United States and in which Martelly has any interest are prohibited; and (3) U.S. persons are prohibited from investing in or purchasing significant amounts of equity or debt instruments of Martelly.

U.S. persons may face civil or criminal penalties for violations of E.O. 14059. Non-U.S. persons are also prohibited from causing or conspiring to cause U.S. persons to wittingly or unwittingly violate U.S. sanctions, as well as engaging in conduct that evades U.S. sanctions. OFAC's [Economic Sanctions Enforcement Guidelines](#) provide more information regarding OFAC's enforcement of U.S. sanctions, including the factors that OFAC generally considers when determining an appropriate response to an apparent violation.

The power and integrity of OFAC sanctions derive not only from OFAC's ability to sanction persons, but also from its willingness to remove sanctions 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 NS-MBS 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](#).

For more information on the individual sanctioned today, click [here](#).

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