

## JUSTICE NEWS

### Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **French Citizen Sentenced for Obstructing a Criminal Investigation into Alleged Bribes Paid to Win Mining Rights in Guinea**

Frederic Cilins, a 51-year old French citizen, was sentenced today in the Southern District of New York to 24 months in prison for obstructing a federal criminal investigation into alleged bribes to obtain mining concessions in the Republic of Guinea.

Assistant Attorney General Leslie R. Caldwell of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara of the Southern District of New York and Assistant Director in Charge George Venizelos of the FBI's New York Field Office made the announcement. The sentence was imposed by U.S. District Court Judge William H. Pauley III.

"Cilins offered to bribe a witness in an FCPA investigation to stop the witness from talking to the FBI," said Assistant Attorney General Caldwell. "Today's sentence holds Cilins accountable for his effort to undermine the integrity of our justice system, and sends a message that those who interfere with federal investigations will be prosecuted and sent to prison."

"Frederic Cilins went to great lengths to thwart a Manhattan federal grand jury's investigation into an alleged bribery scheme in the Republic of Guinea," said U.S. Attorney Bharara. "In an effort to prevent the federal authorities from learning the truth, Cilins paid a witness for her silence and to destroy key documents. Today, Cilins learned that no one can manipulate justice."

"Cilins obstructed the efforts of the FBI during the course of this investigation," said Director in Charge Venizelos. "His guilty plea and sentence demonstrate our shared commitment with the department's Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney's Office to hold accountable those who seek to interfere with the administration of justice. This case should be a reminder to all those who try to circumvent the efforts of a law enforcement investigation: the original crime and the cover-up both lend themselves to prosecution."

According to court documents, Cilins obstructed an ongoing federal investigation concerning potential violations of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) and other crimes. Federal law enforcement was investigating whether a particular mining company with which Cilins was affiliated paid bribes to officials of a former governmental regime in the Republic of Guinea to obtain and retain valuable mining concessions in the Republic of Guinea's Simandou region. During monitored and recorded phone calls and face-to-face meetings, Cilins agreed to pay substantial sums of money to induce a witness to the alleged bribery scheme to leave the United States to avoid questioning by the FBI, as well as to give documents to Cilins for destruction that had been requested by the FBI as part of the investigation. Cilins also sought to induce the witness to sign an affidavit containing false statements regarding matters under investigation by the

grand jury. That witness was the former wife of a now-deceased Guinean government official who held an office in Guinea that allowed him to influence the award of mining concessions.

Cilins pleaded guilty on March 10, 2014 to a one-count superseding information charging him with obstruction of a federal investigation. In addition to his sentence, he was ordered to pay a fine of \$75,000 and forfeit \$20,000.

The case was investigated by the FBI. The case is being prosecuted by Trial Attorney Tarek Helou of the Criminal Division's Fraud Section and Assistant United States Attorney Elisha J. Kobre of the Southern District of New York. The Criminal Division's Office of International Affairs and Office of Enforcement Operations provided valuable assistance in the investigation.

Additional information about the Justice Department's FCPA enforcement efforts can be found at [www.justice.gov/criminal/fraud/fcpa](http://www.justice.gov/criminal/fraud/fcpa) .

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