

JUSTICE NEWS

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Gabonese National Pleads Guilty to Foreign Bribery Scheme

Defendant Bribed High-Ranking Government Officials in Multiple African Countries to Obtain Uranium Concessions and Other Mining Rights for Himself and Others

The son of a former Prime Minister of Gabon pleaded guilty earlier today in federal court to conspiring to make corrupt payments to government officials in Africa in violation of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA).

Deputy Assistant Attorney General Sung-Hee Suh of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Robert L. Capers of the Eastern District of New York, Assistant Director in Charge William F. Sweeney Jr. of the FBI's New York Field Office and Acting Special Agent in Charge Ronald L. Whitsett of the Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation (IRS-CI), New York made the announcement.

Samuel Mebiame, 43, a Gabonese national, worked as a consultant to a mining company that was owned by a joint venture between Och-Ziff Capital Management Group LLC (Och-Ziff), a New York-based hedge fund management company, and an entity incorporated in Turks and Caicos. According to court documents, between at least 2007 and 2012, Mebiame worked as a "fixer" for the joint venture and conspired with others to pay bribes to high-level government officials in Chad and Niger in order to obtain business opportunities and mining rights for the joint venture in both of those countries. In addition, Mebiame paid bribes to high-level government officials in Guinea as an agent of the Turks and Caicos entity to obtain business opportunities and mining rights in that country.

In addition, according to court documents, the bribes paid by Mebiame to the high-ranking government officials were often masked through additional intermediaries or lawyers. In Niger, Mebiame paid more than \$3 million in bribes to a high-ranking government official both directly and through intermediary agents, who were selected by the government official. Mebiame also made payments for luxury cars for that foreign official. In return, Mebiame obtained licenses for uranium concessions for the joint venture from the government of Niger. Similarly, in Chad, Mebiame bribed a high-ranking government official with cash payments and luxury foreign travel for the official and the official's wife. In return, Mebiame obtained uranium concessions for the joint venture, including an asset which had been stripped from a French-owned company by the Chadian government at Mebiame's urging. In Guinea, during a time when the conspirators were seeking to establish a state-owned mining company there, Mebiame made corrupt payments to gain special access to senior Guinean government officials. Mebiame provided the officials with cash and other benefits, including an S-Class Mercedes Benz vehicle and the use of private planes, in exchange for special access and confidential information.

On Sept. 29, 2016, in connection with the government's investigation, Och-Ziff was charged pursuant to a criminal information with violations of the FCPA's anti-bribery, books and records, and accounting controls violations for conduct in Libya and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and conduct in Chad and Niger connected to Mebiame's conduct. Och-Ziff entered into a deferred prosecution agreement in connection with those charges. An Och-Ziff subsidiary company, OZ Africa Management GP LLC (OZ Africa), pleaded guilty to a one-count criminal information related to large-scale bribe payments in the Democratic Republic of Congo. OZ Africa is scheduled to be sentenced on March 29, 2017.

The FBI's New York Field Office and IRS-CI New York are investigating the case. Assistant Chief Leo R. Tsao and Trial Attorney James P. McDonald of the Criminal Division's Fraud Section and Assistant U.S. Attorneys James P. Loonam, Jonathan P. Lax and David Pitluck of the Eastern District of New York are prosecuting the case. The Criminal Division's Office of International Affairs provided significant assistance in this matter. The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission's Boston Regional Office provided significant cooperation.

The Criminal Division's Fraud Section is responsible for investigating and prosecuting all FCPA matters. Additional information about the Justice Department's FCPA enforcement efforts can be found at www.justice.gov/criminal/fraud/fcpa.

[Mebiame Samuel Information](#)

[Mebiame Samuel Plea Agreement](#)

Topic(s):

Financial Fraud

Foreign Corruption

Component(s):

[Criminal Division](#)

[Criminal - Criminal Fraud Section](#)

[USAO - New York, Eastern](#)

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