



A VICTORY AGAINST KLEPTOCRACY: VICE-PRESIDENT OF EQUATORIAL GUINEA SENTENCED FOR CORRUPTION

Douala/N'djamena/Paris/Washington, February 10, 2020

The Central African Coalition Against Kleptocracy welcomes the verdict issued today by the French Court of Appeal of Paris, convicting Teodoro Nguema Obiang, known as Teodorin, Vice President of Equatorial Guinea. This decision confirms an earlier lower court's decision that found Mr Nguema guilty of money laundering and embezzlement of public funds, as well as the confiscation of seized goods including a \$100 million mansion in Paris.

"This decision sends a clear message to the Obiang regime in Equatorial Guinea and all the kleptocrats around the world that the shameless plundering of their countries' wealth is going to end" said Tutu Alicante, Executive Director of EG Justice.

We call on the governments of France, Switzerland, Portugal, Italy, Brazil, the United States and other safe havens of kleptocrats to continue its bold actions in fighting corruption, and take steps against the stolen assets from other countries like the Republic of Congo, Chad and Cameroon.

Despite being rich in natural resources, Central Africa is the region in the world with the highest concentration of kleptocrats. We also welcome the indictment of Denis Christel Sassou Nguesso by France in December 2019, son of Sassou Nguesso President of the Republic of Congo and Congressman of Oyo for the same charges as Mr Nguema including the seizing of more than \$ 30 million flat in Paris.

"Citizens and civil society will not stay silent while their rulers are using public resources for their own benefit. The Coalition will shine a spotlight on corruption cases, to ensure that the money meant for education and health for poor children is not being used to buy a luxury car or a mansion in Paris", said Andrea Ngombet, founder of the Sassoufit Collective.

This decision is the first step towards the compensation for victims of corruption: the Equatorial Guinean people who are deprived of their basic needs while the regime's finance its lavish lifestyle by looting the state funds.

ADISI, Sassoufit, EG Justice and Public Interest Law Center are members of this coalition that plans to closely monitor the repatriation process intended by France.

This decision is a significant step in the right direction. Although, additional steps are necessary. It is the Coalition's belief that Western democracies need to implement stronger regulations to prevent kleptocratic and corrupt regimes from bypassing beneficial ownership laws and sanctions.

Fighting kleptocrats is not only about stopping them from plundering state coffers: it is also disabling the system that allows them to continue living prodigally on the poor's back. And it is also about stopping dirty money being used to corrupt Western governments and undermining institutions.