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FRIENDS OF ANGOLA AND TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL WELCOME US SANCTIONS AGAINST FORMER OFFICIALS IN ANGOLA

US government announces two different designations of sanctions against Isabel dos Santos, General Leopoldino Fragoso do Nascimento and General Manuel Hélder Vieira Dias Júnior to combat corruption

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The United States announced on Thursday (9 December 2021) that Isabel dos Santos, former Chair of an Angolan state-owned oil company Sonangol, and two former senior government officials – General Leopoldino Fragoso do Nascimento and General Manuel Hélder Vieira Dias Júnior – have been sanctioned for misappropriating public funds for their personal benefit. Friends of Angola and Transparency International welcome this announcement after years of advocating to hold corrupt officials to account.



The US government issued two different designations of sanctions. The first, under Section 7031(c) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act [denies visas and entry into the US](#) for dos Santos, Nascimento, Dias Júnior and their immediate families. The second, issued by the US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) against Nascimento and Dias Júnior, pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13818, builds upon and implements the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act to target perpetrators of corruption and serious human rights abuses. These sanctions [block the generals](#) from accessing and require reporting on all of their property in the control of the US.

In 2020, [the Luanda Leaks showed](#) how Isabel dos Santos became Africa's richest woman using a network of offshore companies that allowed her to take advantage of her powerful connections and appropriate millions in state funds. Generals Nascimento and Dias Júnior are suspected of siphoning off millions from public funds intended for infrastructure projects. This significant step taken by the US government to sanction dos Santos and the two Generals was made on International Anti-Corruption Day 2021, following years of lobbying from many groups, including Friends of Angola and Transparency International Portugal, as well as Angolan journalists and ordinary citizens demanding justice in their country.

Florindo Chivucute, Executive Director of Friends of Angola said:

"Friends of Angola, our partners and the people of Angola join together against all forms of corruption. Angola can no longer be allowed to languish in poverty while a privileged few like Isabel dos Santos appropriate public funds for their own gain. We celebrate these sanctions as a concrete step to hold corrupt officials accountable and protect the interests of all citizens of Angola."

While these sanctions give hope to many Angolans, Friends of Angola, Transparency International Portugal and partners will not rest in the fight against corruption. The US decision to [establish a Coordinator on Global Anti-Corruption](#) offers an opportunity for greater accountability for corruption in the US, Angola and around the world.



Ana Carvalho, Executive Director of Transparency International Portugal said:

“This decision makes even more urgent the need to institute Global Human Rights Sanctions Regimes both within Europe and around the globe. Investigations by the ICIJ and the OCCRP have made evident that the EU, and Portugal in particular, are havens for laundering dirty money from Angolan kleptocrats, allowing illicit financial flows to undermine democracy across borders. We also call for the inclusion of civil society organisations in strategic litigation to expedite processes and support victims. Human rights cannot be held hostage by slow-moving and easy to dismiss requests for judicial cooperation.”

Notes to editors

OCCRP: [How Angolan elites built a private banking network to move their riches into the European Union](#) (April 2020)

Transparency International: [Seizure of dos Santos assets in Portugal welcome step, but judicial cooperation with Angola must continue](#) (March 2020)

Transparency International: [FinCEN Files & Luanda Leaks: Suspicious EuroBIC payments further proof of anti-money laundering failures in Portugal](#) (September 2020)

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