



JIMMY CARTER

February 22, 2021

To President Joe Biden

Rosalynn and I continue to be impressed by your leadership during your first month in office. We knew you would do a wonderful job. I appreciate our conversations and hope you will call on us or The Carter Center when we can be of help to you. Today I call your attention to the Treasury Department's decision to ease sanctions on Dan Gertler in the final days of the previous administration. I understand from recent reports that the decision is under review. I hope that it will be reversed quickly and that American banks will be notified not to unfreeze assets or conduct business with Mr. Gertler in the meantime.

According to the Treasury Department, Mr. Gertler engaged in "opaque and corrupt mining deals" that cost the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) more than a billion dollars in revenue in a country where 72 percent of people live in extreme poverty. The sanctions levied on Mr. Gertler showed the strength of the Global Magnitsky Act, demonstrating to the world that the United States would hold accountable those "engaged in the looting of natural resources and the humanitarian consequences that follow." The reversal of those sanctions undermines the credibility of American institutions and our reputation as a global champion of human rights.

These financial losses were uncovered through years of effort and collaboration by dedicated public servants, journalists, and civil society organizations, often at great risk. Therefore, support to networks and coalitions that bring together international and Congolese organizations to speak with one voice, like the "Congo Is Not For Sale" consortium, remains critical. The U.S. Embassy and Ambassador Hammer have been strong allies of organizations fighting for human rights and economic justice in the DRC, and the United States' continued support to civil society will be crucial going forward. The Carter Center remains a committed partner in this effort.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
The President  
The White House

Cc The Honorable Janet Yellen  
The Honorable Anthony Blinken  
Ambassador Michael Hammer  
National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan