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The US rolls out sanctions, again, to protect votes in Africa, this time in Liberia and Sudan

США знову вводять санкції, щоб захистити голоси в Африці, цього разу в Ліберії та Судані

Ліберія збирається провести загальні вибори 10 жовтня 2023 р., де колишній найкращий футболіст світу, 56-річний президент Джордж Веа зустрінеться з 19 суперниками на другий президентський термін. Це будуть четверті вибори у Ліберії після закінчення громадянської війни у 2003 році. Напередодні виборів у столиці Монровії виникли осередки насильства. 10 серпня відбулися зіткнення між прихильниками Д. Веа та прихильниками його головного суперника, 79-річного Джозефа Боакаї, колишнього віце-президента та лідера Партії єдності (UP). Координаційний комітет виборів (ІКК) вимагає притягнути до відповідальності прихильників Д. Веа і Д. Боакая.

<https://www.news24.com/news24/africa/news/the-us-rolls-out-sanctions-again-to-protect-votes-in-africa-this-time-in-liberia-and-sudan-20230929>

The US has new targets for sanctions in African countries where, it says, electoral processes are under threat.

It has previously imposed such measures in places such as Sierra Leone and Nigeria.

Now Liberia and Sudan are in the crosshairs.

The United States says its latest round of targeted sanctions in Liberia and Sudan are a part of efforts at promoting and sustaining democracy in Africa.

On Wednesday US Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced a new visa restriction policy for those undermining democracy in Liberia.

Liberia is set to hold general elections on 10 October, when former World Footballer of the Year, President George Weah, 56, faces 19 rivals for a second presidential term.

These will be the fourth elections in Liberia since the end of the civil war in 2003.

Blinken said the US would restrict those it believed responsible for, or complicit in, vote rigging; using violence to prevent campaigning, suppression of the media; and "any other activity designed to improperly influence the outcome of an election".

Ahead of the elections, there have been pockets of violence in the capital, Monrovia.

On 10 August, there were clashes between Weah's supporters and those of his main rival, 79-year-old Joseph Boakai, a former vice president and leader of the Unity Party (UP).

The Election Coordinating Committee (ECC) demanded the prosecution of Weah and Boakai's supporters.

In Sudan, Blinken said, the US was sanctioning two entities and one individual for their roles in undermining peace, security, and stability.

"We are imposing sanctions on Ali Karti, secretary-general of the Sudanese Islamic Movement, a hardline Islamist group that actively opposes Sudan's democratic transition," Blinken said.

Karti was the foreign minister under Omar al-Bashir's regime, overseeing initiatives to undermine the former transitional administration led by civilians and scuttle the Framework Political Agreement process after the al-Bashir regime fell.

The US identified him and other former regime leaders as currently impeding attempts to achieve a truce between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), assembling troops to allow for continued fighting, and thwarting Sudanese civilian attempts to resume the country's stalled democratic transition.

Same template, more countries

Blinken issued similar visa restrictions to individuals "involved in undermining democracy in Nigeria" ahead of elections that were disputed but won by Bola Tinubu.

In June, Julius Maada Bio was re-elected with 56% of the vote in Sierra Leone, and the US issued similar restrictions to those deemed to have undermined democracy.

Similar targeted restrictions were issued in Somalia last year ahead of the general elections.

Numerous other targeted sanctions are in place in Somalia, Ethiopia, and the Sahel region, particularly on individuals linked to violent extremism and the funding of terrorism.

Outside the targeted sanctions on elections, numerous African countries are embargoed under the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC).

Those are the Central African Republic (CAR), Ethiopia, Libya, Mali, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Guinea-Bissau, Eritrea, and Zimbabwe.