

Press release from Omnia Strategy and Alaco Limited
16 August 2022

US sanctions corrupt protagonist of political persecution after Omnia/Alaco report exposes baseless complaints against Liberian opposition leader Alexander B. Cummings

London, United Kingdom, 16 August 2022 – Yesterday, the US Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (“**OFAC**”) designated the Solicitor General and Chief Prosecutor of Liberia, Sayma Syrenius Cephus, and other senior officials of the Liberian Government under the US Global Magnitsky Sanctions program for their involvement in ongoing public corruption.

From January to June 2022, Mr Cephus led the criminal prosecution of Alexander B. Cummings and two other senior figures of the Alternative National Congress (“**ANC**”) charged with conspiring to tamper with the constitutional document of the Collaborating Political Parties (“**CPP**”), Liberia’s former major opposition alliance. Mr Cephus’ extensive personal involvement in the prosecution of Mr Cummings highlighted the importance of the case to the Weah Government and drew criticism from commentators as a poor use of resources and evidence of a state-sponsored political trial.

On 24 May 2022, Omnia and Alaco released our joint report, ‘[The Framework of Political Persecution: The Case of Alexander B. Cummings](#)’, which detailed the findings of our independent investigation into the allegations made against Mr Cummings and his co-accused. Our report determined that these allegations had no legitimate foundation and provided an unsafe basis for a criminal prosecution. Alarming, our report also identified a pattern of exculpatory evidence having been selectively withheld by the Prosecution led by Mr Cephus.

On 3 June 2022, shortly after the release of our report, Mr Cephus announced that the Ministry of Justice had decided to drop all charges against Mr Cummings and his co-accused.

In its [press release](#), OFAC explicitly cites Mr Cephus’ alleged involvement in “*tampering with and purposefully withholding evidence in cases involving members of opposition political parties to ensure conviction*” as conduct forming the basis of his designation. Alongside Mr Cephus, OFAC announced sanctions on Nathaniel McGill, Minister of State for Presidential Affairs and Chief of Staff to President George Weah, and Bill Twehway, Managing Director of the National Port Authority (NPA).