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Guinea detains official from Israeli miner in corruption probe

Authorities in Guinea have detained a senior official with the local unit of Israeli mining firm BSG Resources (BSGR) and are questioning him over corruption allegations, an official familiar with the case said on Sunday.

Ibrahima Sory Toure, a vice president in Guinea of Israeli billionaire Beny Steinmetz's mining company, was taken into custody by police on Friday.

"Toure's detention is linked to an inquiry relating to allegations of corruption targeting the company BSGR," said a senior government official who asked not to be named.

The current Guinean government alleges that BSGR bribed officials and Mamadie Toure, the wife of former President Lansana Conte, to win a licence to develop the northern half of the giant Simandou iron ore deposit.

Ibrahima Sory Toure is the brother of Mamadie Toure, who currently lives in the United States.

"My client was detained and is being questioned to obtain information about BSGR. For the moment no precise charges have been filed against him," Momo Sacko, Toure's lawyer, told Reuters.

Sacko said Toure's home had also been searched by the police and a number of documents and computers had been seized.

A police official said a second unnamed BSGR employee was also being questioned.

A committee of the Guinean government set up to review the legality of mining licences is due in the coming weeks to report its findings on BSGR, which is in a partnership with [Brazilian](#) mining group Vale to develop the concession.

No charges have been brought in Guinea, however U.S. authorities are also investigating the Simandou deal.

Earlier this month, FBI agents arrested BSGR representative Frederic Cilins in Florida, on charges of obstructing a criminal investigation, tampering with a witness and destruction of records.

BSGR denies allegations that it paid bribes for its concession. The firm says it operates to the highest standards of corporate governance and has criticized the review, saying it is designed to allow Guinea to renege on its obligations.

(Reporting by Saliou Samb, writing by Joe Bavier; Editing by Theodore d'Afflisio)

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