



PRESS RELEASE

Former Goldman Sachs Investment Banker Convicted of Foreign Bribery and Money Laundering



Thursday, August 6, 2026

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District
of New York

Defendant Asante Kwaku Berko Paid More than \$1 Million in Bribes Related to the Development of a Power Plant in Ghana

BROOKLYN, NY – Asante Kwaku Berko, a dual citizen of the United States and Ghana, was convicted today by a federal jury in Brooklyn on all counts of an indictment charging conspiracy to violate the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), violating the FCPA, and money laundering conspiracy for paying bribes to Ghanaian government officials in connection with the development of a power plant in Ghana. The verdict followed a nine-day trial before United States District Judge Diane Gujarati. When sentenced, Berko faces up to 30 years in prison. Berko was ordered remanded pending sentencing.

Joseph Nocella, Jr., United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, A. Tysen Duva, Assistant Attorney General of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, and James C. Barnacle, Jr., Assistant Director in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office, announced the verdict.

"Today's verdict marks another significant victory in this Office's longstanding commitment to rooting out corruption," stated United States Attorney Nocella. "The defendant abused his access to high-level foreign government officials and his platform as an investment banker at a prestigious American firm to line his own pockets with millions of dollars."

“We live in a global economy that American companies must be able to compete in fairly,” said Assistant Attorney General Duva of the Justice Department’s Criminal Division. “This defendant corrupted that fair competition. He abused his position at a world-renowned American investment bank by helping bribe Ghanaian officials, so he and his co-conspirators, including senior executives at a Turkish company, could make money. Today’s conviction makes clear that criminals who undermine our country’s interests by corrupting foreign governments and cutting off fair competition will face the full force of the Department of Justice.”

“Today’s verdict highlights the importance of domestic and international partnerships, and the magnitude of success that working together creates. The FBI is thankful for the assistance from the Department of Justice and the United Kingdom – specifically to the Office of International Affairs, U.S. Marshals Service, and INTERPOL – in pursuing justice to protect our country’s financial integrity,” stated FBI Assistant Director in Charge Barnacle.

U.S. Attorney Nocella also expressed his appreciation to the Government of the United Kingdom, the U.K. National Centre Bureau for INTERPOL, the Embassy of the United States in London, the Department’s Office of International Affairs and the U.S. Marshals Service for providing substantial assistance in securing the arrest and extradition of the defendant.

As proved at trial, Berko conspired to pay more than \$1 million in bribes to multiple Ghanaian government officials in connection with the development and financing of a power plant estimated to generate hundreds of millions of dollars in profits.

Beginning in December 2014, Berko, a former Executive Director in the Investment Banking Division at Goldman Sachs group, was responsible for securing and managing a deal between the Republic of Ghana and Aksa Enerji Uretim A.S. (Aksa), a Turkish energy company and Goldman client, for the construction and financing of a power plant in Ghana amidst a national energy crisis in the country.

During the scheme, Berko and his co-conspirators paid and conspired to pay bribes to individuals at numerous levels of the Ghanaian government to ensure that Aksa won its bid to build and operate the power plant. For example, in April 2015, Berko and the conspirators discussed paying \$1 million to the Ghanaian Minister of Power who was responsible for securing key approvals enabling the project to progress and \$250,000 to his senior adviser. Bribes were also paid to five Ghanaian officials during an all-expenses-paid trip to Turkey to view equipment for the power plant. After the power plant deal was ratified by the Ghanaian parliament in July 2015, Berko and his co-conspirators exchanged detailed emails regarding bribe payments. For example, in August 2015, they discussed \$250,000 in bribe payments paid to various individuals, including \$46,000 to members of the Ghanaian Parliament, which ratified the agreement between Aksa and the government of Ghana, paid by Berko himself. Also in August 2015, the co-conspirators discussed how a bribe recipient was waiting for the “holy rain” (i.e., the bribe payment) and “would appreciate it sooner rather than later.”

To conceal the scheme from Goldman and others, Berko lied to the compliance team at Goldman that was responsible for vetting the deal. Berko also used his personal email account, instead of his Goldman business email account, to discuss the deal and the bribe payments and directed his co-conspirators to do the same. In addition, Berko and his co-conspirators concealed and laundered the bribe payments using shell companies, sham invoices, nominee account holders and cash withdrawals. Payments in furtherance of the bribery scheme were laundered through U.S. and foreign bank accounts. Goldman ultimately withdrew from the deal due to corruption concerns.

The government's case is being handled by the Business and Securities Fraud Section of the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York and the Criminal Division's Fraud Section. Assistant United States Attorneys Jessica Weigel, Nick M. Axelrod and Tara McGrath are prosecuting the case with Assistant Chief Katherine Raut and Senior Trial Attorney Katherine Nielsen, and with assistance from Paralegal Specialists Melina Piatti-Chayan, Isha Jayadev and Teresa Dolan.

The Defendant:

ASANTE KWAKU BERKO

Age: 52

United Kingdom / Ghana

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 20-CR-328 (DG)

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Topic

FINANCIAL FRAUD

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