

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Press Center



Treasury Department Issues New General License to Boost Internet-Based Communication, Free Flow of Information in Iran, Sudan and Cuba

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WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) today amended the Iranian Transactions Regulations, Sudanese Sanctions Regulations, and Cuban Assets Control Regulations to ensure that individuals in these countries can exercise their universal right to free speech and information to the greatest extent possible. The amendments add general licenses authorizing the exportation of certain personal Internet-based communications services – such as instant messaging, chat and email, and social networking – to Iran, Sudan and Cuba. The amendments also permit the exportation of related software to Iran and Sudan.

"Consistent with the Administration's deep commitment to the universal rights of all the world's citizens, the issuance of these general licenses will make it easier for individuals in Iran, Sudan and Cuba to use the Internet to communicate with each other and with the outside world. Today's actions will enable Iranian, Sudanese and Cuban citizens to exercise their most basic rights," said Deputy Treasury Secretary Neal Wolin.

The new general licenses authorize exports from the United States or by U.S. persons to persons in Iran and Sudan of services and software related to the exchange of personal communications over the Internet, including web browsing, blogging, email, instant messaging, and chat; social networking; and photo and movie sharing. Today's amendments also provide that specific licenses may be issued on a case-by-case basis for the exportation of services and software used to share information over the Internet that not covered by the general licenses.

"As recent events in Iran have shown, personal Internet-based communications like email, instant messaging and social networking are powerful tools. This software will foster and support the free flow of information – a basic human right – for all Iranians," continued Wolin. "At the same time as we take these steps, the Administration will continue aggressively to enforce existing sanctions and to work with our international partners to increase the pressure on the Government of Iran to meet its international obligations."

The sanctions regulations on Cuba also have been amended to include a similar authorization and statement of licensing policy for the exportation of such services to Cuba. Unlike Iran and Sudan, the exportation of goods and technology, including software, to Cuba is separately licensed or otherwise authorized by the Commerce Department.

Today's action follows up on the December 2009 notification submitted to Congress by the State Department of a national interest waiver under the Iran Iraq Arms Non-Proliferation Act to authorize the exportation of free mass market software to Iran necessary for the exchange of personal communications and/or sharing of information over the Internet.

To view the final rule click [here](#) .

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