

# Treasury Sanctions the Zhao Wei Transnational Criminal Organization

January 30, 2018

*Action targets criminal network tied to drug trafficking, money laundering, bribery, and human and wildlife trafficking facilitated through Laotian Casino*

WASHINGTON – Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated the Zhao Wei Transnational Criminal Organization (Zhao Wei TCO) pursuant to Executive Order 13581, "Blocking Property of Transnational Criminal Organizations." Based in Laos within the Golden Triangle Special Economic Zone (GTSEZ), the Zhao Wei TCO exploits this region by engaging in drug trafficking, human trafficking, money laundering, bribery, and wildlife trafficking, much of which is facilitated through the Kings Romans Casino located within the GTSEZ.

OFAC also designated a network of four individuals and three entities across three jurisdictions – Laos, Thailand, and Hong Kong – for materially assisting, sponsoring, or providing financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, the Zhao Wei TCO, or for being owned or controlled by persons designated as part of this action. As a result of today's action, all assets of those designated that are under U.S. jurisdiction are frozen, and U.S. persons are generally prohibited from engaging in transactions with them.

"The Zhao Wei crime network engages in an array of horrendous illicit activities, including human trafficking and child prostitution, drug trafficking, and wildlife trafficking. We are targeting key figures in this transnational criminal organization, which stretches from the Kings Romans Casino in Laos throughout Southeast Asia," said Sigal Mandelker, Treasury Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence. "OFAC is designating the Zhao Wei network as part of a broader strategy to disrupt the financial infrastructure of transnational criminal organizations that pose a threat to the United States and our allies."

Operating largely through the Kings Roman Casino, the Zhao Wei TCO facilitates the storage and distribution of heroin, methamphetamine, and other narcotics for illicit networks, including the

United Wa State Army, operating in neighboring Burma, which the President identified in 2003 as a significant foreign narcotics trafficker pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act. Since 2014, Thai, Lao, and Chinese authorities have seized large narcotics shipments that have been traced to the Kings Romans Casino.

The Zhao Wei TCO, including through senior officials of the Kings Romans Casino, permits and promotes human trafficking and child prostitution. OFAC's action supports the President's proclamation naming January 2018 as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month. The Zhao Wei TCO also exploits the GTSEZ to engage in wildlife trafficking of endangered and vulnerable animals, including Asiatic black bears, pangolin, tigers, rhinos, and elephants.

Today's OFAC designation was conducted in close coordination with the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Penalties for violations of E.O. 13581 range from civil penalties of up to \$289,238 per violation to more severe criminal penalties. Criminal penalties may include up to 20 years in prison and fines up to \$1 million pursuant to Title 18 of the United States Code for criminal violations of E.O. 13581.

### **Zhao Wei TCO Leadership**

**Zhao Wei**, a Chinese national, is designated for providing material support and acting for or on behalf of the Zhao Wei TCO. He is the co-owner and director of Kings Romans International (HK) Co., Limited, the sole owner and director of Kings Romans International Investment Co. Limited, and director of King Romans Company Limited. He also maintains de facto control over the GTSEZ. Zhao Wei engages in extensive bribery to facilitate money laundering, narcotics trafficking, and wildlife trafficking at the Kings Romans Casino.

**Guiqin Su**, a Chinese national, is designated for providing material support and acting for or on behalf of the Zhao Wei TCO. She is the wife of Zhao Wei and a director of Kings Romans International (HK) Co., Ltd. Su also moves money on behalf of the Zhao Wei TCO.

**Abbas Eberahim**, an Australian national, is designated for providing material support and acting for or on behalf of the Zhao Wei TCO. He is in charge of security at the Kings Romans Casino and was the former managing director. Eberahim has engaged in bribery on behalf of the Zhao Wei TCO.

**Nat Rungtawankhiri**, a Thai national, is being designated for providing material support and acting for or on behalf of the Zhao Wei TCO. He is a director of King Romans Company Limited. Rungtawankhiri also moves money on behalf of the Zhao Wei TCO.

### **Zhao Wei TCO Companies**

**Kings Romans International (HK) Co., Limited**, registered in Hong Kong, is designated for being owned or controlled by Zhao Wei and Guiqin Su. It is one of the primary entities through which the Zhao Wei TCO operates. Zhao Wei and Guiqin Su are the owners and directors of the company.

**Kings Romans International Investment Co. Limited**, registered in Hong Kong, is designated for being owned or controlled by Zhao Wei. It is one of the primary entities through which the Zhao Wei TCO operates. Zhao Wei is the owner and director of the company.

**King Romans Company Limited**, registered in Thailand, is designated for being owned or controlled by Zhao Wei and Nat Rungtawankhiri. They are both directors of the company.

[To see a chart relating to today's announcement, click here.](#)

[To see the identifying information relating to today's announcement, click here](#) .

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