

Treasury Sanctions Individuals and Companies Associated with Japan's Major Organized Crime Syndicate, the Yakuza

October 2, 2018

WASHINGTON – Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) took action against two companies and four individuals in Japan associated with the Yamaguchi-gumi, the largest and most prominent Japanese Yakuza syndicate. Two Kobe, Japan-based companies, Yamaki, K.K. and Toyo Shinyo Jitsugyo K.K., along with four individuals, Utao Morio, Chikara Tsuda, Yasuo Takagi, and Katsuaki Mitsuyasu, were designated pursuant to Executive Order 13581, which targets significant transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) and their supporters. These efforts are designed to protect the U.S. financial system from the malign influence of TCOs and to expose the companies and individuals who are supporting them or acting on their behalf.

“Treasury is targeting Yakuza-controlled companies to expose the underlying ownership of these seemingly legitimate companies. We are ramping up pressure on this dangerous Japanese crime syndicate and local gang leaders who profit from everything from sexual exploitation, to weapons smuggling, and extortion,” said Sigal Mandelker, Treasury Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence. “By exposing this broad network of front companies and individuals supporting the Yamaguchi-gumi Yakuza syndicate we intend to disrupt the global financial infrastructure of this illicit transnational criminal organization.”

The Yakuza was identified as a significant TCO in the Annex to Executive Order 13581 (Blocking Property of Transnational Criminal Organizations) on July 24, 2011. The Yakuza comprises the major Japanese organized crime syndicates and is engaged in serious criminal activities, including human trafficking, drug smuggling, weapons trafficking, extortion, and white collar crimes. With the help of local crime syndicates in East Asia, the Yakuza is known to profit from nearly all aspects of sexual exploitation: sex trafficking, sex tourism, prostitution, and “mail order” marriages. The U.S. Department of the Treasury is committed to countering networks that are engaged in human trafficking and is a member of the [President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons \(PITF\)](#).

The Yakuza engages in money laundering, using front companies within legitimate industries, including construction, real estate, and finance, to hide illicit proceeds. The Yakuza acts globally and has relationships with criminal affiliates in Asia, Europe, and the Americas. In the United States, the Yakuza has been known to be involved in money laundering and drug trafficking. To date, OFAC has designated 21 individuals, 5 criminal syndicates, 2 subsidiary gangs, and 2 companies associated with the Yakuza. This action marks the first time Yakuza-owned companies have been targeted by OFAC.

As a result of today's action, any property or interests in property of the designated persons in the possession or control of U.S. persons or within the United States must be blocked, and U.S. persons generally are prohibited from dealing with any of the designated persons.

Yamaki, K.K. is a Japanese real estate company that owns the plot of land where the Yamaguchi-gumi headquarters stands in Kobe, Japan. Yamaki, K.K. is owned and controlled by Yamaguchi-gumi members Utao Morio and Chikara Tsuda. All Yamaguchi-gumi subsidiary gang leaders, called jikisans, serve as shareholders of Yamaki, K.K. The company is involved in the management and leasing of real estate, art sales, and the management of golf driving ranges and parking lots.

Toyo Shinyo Jitsugyo K.K. is a Japanese real estate company that manages the Yamaguchi-gumi syndicate general headquarters in Kobe, Japan. The company is owned and controlled by Yamaguchi-gumi member Yasuo Takagi and was formerly owned by Yamaguchi-gumi member Katsuaki Mitsuyasu. Toyo Shinyo Jitsugyo K.K. shares are only distributed among Yamaguchi-gumi executive leadership. Toyo Shinyo Jitsugyo K.K. is involved in the management, buying, selling, leasing, brokering, and mediation of real estate; money lending business; art sales; and the management of golf driving ranges, parking lots, cafes, and cafeterias.

Both companies support Yamaguchi-gumi-related operations, each with a high-ranking syndicate member serving as company President. In 2017, the companies were raided by Japanese police in connection with a Yamaguchi-gumi racketeering scheme.

Utao Morio was the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Yamaki, K.K. and is the current Yamaguchi-gumi honbucho (manager of headquarters). He served as the Yamaguchi-gumi regional boss of the Chugoku Shikoku region of Japan and high-level Yamaguchi-gumi wakagashira-hosa (deputy lieutenant) before being promoted to Yamaguchi-gumi honbucho in October 2016.

Chikara Tsuda is the CEO of Yamaki, K.K., current Yamaguchi-gumi wakagashira-hosa (deputy lieutenant), and leader of the Yamaguchi-gumi subsidiary gang Soushin-kai located in Osaka.

Tsuda was named the new head of Yamaki, K.K. at a shareholders' meeting in May 2017.

Yasuo Takagi is the CEO of Toyo Shinyo Jitsugyo K.K., current Yamaguchi-gumi wakagashira-hosa (deputy lieutenant), and leader of the Yamaguchi-gumi subsidiary gang Shimizu-ikka located in Shizuoka. He has represented the Yamaguchi-gumi during meetings with other Yakuza syndicates.

Katsuaki Mitsuyasu was the CEO of Toyo Shinyo Jitsugyo K.K. before Takagi took over the position in May 2016. He served as a Yamaguchi-gumi wakagashira-hosa (deputy lieutenant) and leader of the Yamaguchi-gumi subsidiary gang Kosei-kai located in Fukuoka. He currently serves as the advisor to Yamaguchi-gumi subsidiary group Izu-gumi.

Penalties for violations of E.O. 13581 range from civil penalties of up to \$295,141 or twice the amount of the underlying transaction 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.

[Identifying information on the persons designated today.](#)

[Chart relating to today's announcement](#) .

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