

# U.S. Government Sanctions Organizations and Individuals in Connection with an Iranian Defense Entity Linked to Iran's Previous Nuclear Weapons Effort

March 22, 2019

**WASHINGTON** – The U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), together with the U.S. Department of State, designated 14 individuals and 17 entities today in connection with Iran's Organization of Defensive Innovation and Research (SPND), which has provided support to designated Iranian defense entities and whose key personnel played a central role in the Iranian regime's past nuclear weapons effort. This action targets current SPND subordinate groups, supporters, front companies, and associated officials.

"The U.S. government is taking decisive action against actors at all levels in connection with Iran's Organization of Defensive Innovation and Research (SPND) who have supported the Iranian regime's defense sector," said Treasury Secretary Steven T. Mnuchin. "The United States will continue applying maximum pressure to the Iranian regime, using all economic tools to prevent Iran from developing weapons of mass destruction. Anyone considering dealing with the Iranian defense industry in general, and SPND in particular, risks professional, personal, and financial isolation."

The Department of State sanctioned SPND on August 29, 2014 pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13382 for engaging in or attempting to engage in activities that have materially contributed to, or posed a risk of materially contributing to, the proliferation of WMD or their means of delivery. E.O. 13382 provides authority to impose sanctions on proliferators of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery and supporters. Under its "Amad Plan," Iran procured materials and equipment, and conducted a variety of activities, relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device. Iran also re-engineered a ballistic missile's reentry vehicle for probable use as a delivery system for a nuclear weapon. Scientists have engaged in proliferation-sensitive research and experiments on behalf of SPND organizations, which spend millions of dollars each year on a broad spectrum of defense-related projects.

## **Shahid Karimi Group**

OFAC designated Shahid Karimi Group, an SPND subordinate group that works on missile and explosives-related projects for SPND, and four associated individuals. Shahid Karimi Group has conducted weapons systems, materials, and explosion research on behalf of SPND. OFAC designated Shahid Karimi Group pursuant to E.O. 13382 for being owned or controlled by, or acting or purporting to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, SPND.

Mohammad Reza Mehdipur is head of Shahid Karimi Group, and has been involved in explosion and shock research conducted on behalf of SPND.

Akbar Motallebizadeh previously was head of Shahid Karimi Group, where he supervised SPND projects. Akbar Motallebizadeh also has served as an advisor to Mohsen Fakhrizadeh (Fakhrizadeh), the head of SPND. Fakhrizadeh was designated pursuant to E.O. 13382 on July 8, 2008.

Jalal Emami Gharah Hajjlu was a weapons systems researcher at Shahid Karimi Group. Jalal Emami Gharah Hajjlu also served as a senior expert and quality control manager for the Amad Plan.

Sa'id Borji is an explosives and metals expert for SPND's Shahid Karimi Group who has assisted SPND's efforts to procure equipment used for containing explosions.

OFAC designated Mohammad Reza Mehdipur pursuant to E.O. 13382 for acting or purporting to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, Shahid Karimi Group. OFAC also designated Akbar Motallebizadeh, Jalal Emami Gharah Hajjlu, and Sa'id Borji pursuant to E.O. 13382 for having provided, or attempted to provide, financial, material, technological or other support for, or goods or services in support of, Shahid Karimi Group.

### **Shahid Chamran Group**

Shahid Chamran Group's work has included studies on electron acceleration and mass transfer. This SPND subordinate group also has conducted research for SPND related to electromagnetics, pulse power, and wave generation.

Sayyed Asghar Hashemitabar has served as a managing expert at Shahid Chamran Group, where he has focused on pulse power research.

OFAC designated Shahid Chamran Group pursuant to E.O. 13382 for being owned or controlled by SPND. OFAC designated Sayyed Asghar Hashemitabar pursuant to E.O. 13382 for acting or purporting to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, Shahid Chamran Group.

### **Shahid Fakhhar Moghaddam Group**

OFAC designated SPND subordinate group Shahid Fakhar Moghaddam Group (Shahid Fakhar) and two associated individuals. Shahid Fakhar has worked on projects to construct explosion simulators and built radiation and neutron monitoring and detection systems. Additionally, the entity helped SPND establish an institute dedicated to physics-related calculations.

Ruhollah Ghaderi Barmi (Ghaderi) is a director at Shahid Fakhar, where he oversees manufacturing and production. Ghaderi has been involved in Shahid Fakhar's attempts to procure X-ray equipment from foreign suppliers.

Mohammad Javad Safari (Safari) is a calculations and measurement expert at Shahid Fakhar.

OFAC designated Shahid Fakhar Moghaddam Group pursuant to E.O. 13382 for being owned or controlled by, or acting or purporting to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, SPND.

OFAC designated Ruhollah Ghaderi Barmi pursuant to E.O. 13382 for acting for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, Shahid Fakhar Moghaddam Group. OFAC designated Mohammad Javad Safari pursuant to E.O. 13382 for having provided, or attempted to provide, financial, material, technological or other support for, or goods or services in support of, Shahid Fakhar Moghaddam Group.

### **Additional SPND Subordinate Groups Designated Today.**

OFAC designated an additional 10 entities whose research and activities benefit SPND.

Sheikh Baha'i Science and Technology Research Center works on radiation and applied physics for SPND.

Shahid Avini Group has conducted studies on nuclear terrorism, distinguishing sources of natural and manmade incidents, and treaties and conventions governing the use and testing of various WMD.

Shahid Baba'i Group designs high-powered lasers, and also researches photonics and semiconductors under the auspices of SPND.

Shahid Movahhed Danesh Group has assisted SPND with laser and photonics research.

Abu Reihan Group has provided support for SPND projects related to satellites and plasma technology, and worked on SPND's missile projects.

Shahid Kazemi Group conducts acoustics-related research for SPND.

Shahid Shokri Science and Technology Research Group is an SPND subsidiary that focuses on radiation exposure.

Heidar Karar Research Group works on cyber defense systems for SPND. Its computer network exploitation operators have targeted U.S. individuals and companies.

Shahid Zeinoddin Group has worked on biological research and developing biotechnologies for SPND. Shahid Zeinoddin Group has studied treating various poisonings, drug delivery methods, and biological defense systems on behalf of SPND as well.

Bu Ali Group's undertakings have ranged from building bioreactors to conducting lab work on DNA sequencing for SPND.

Sadra Research Center specializes in cognitive sciences and has studied ways to mentally improve Iran's elite military personnel.

OFAC designated Shahid Avini Group pursuant to E.O. 13382 for being owned or controlled by, or acting or purporting to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, SPND. OFAC designated Sheikh Baha'i Science and Technology Research Center, Shahid Baba'i Group, Shahid Kazemi Group, Shahid Shokri Science and Technology Research Group, Heidar Karar Research Group, Bu Ali Group, and Sadra Research Center pursuant to E.O. 13382 for being owned or controlled by SPND.

OFAC designated Shahid Movahhed Danesh Group, Abu Reihan Group, and Shahid Zeinoddin Group pursuant to E.O. 13382 for having provided, or attempted to provide, financial, material, technological or other support for, or good or services in support of, SPND.

### **Additional Individuals Designated Today**

OFAC also designated Gholam Reza Eta'ati (Eta'ati) and Mansur Asgari pursuant to E.O. 13382 for acting or purporting to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, SPND.

Eta'ati, who is an expert in applied physics, is an SPND senior manager who oversees some of SPND's most sensitive projects.

Mansur Asgari has served as head of SPND's Research and Technology Department. Mansur Asgari previously was a manager under the Amad Plan, overseeing projects focused on explosives and exploding bridge-wire (EBW) detonators.

The U.S. Department of State designated Reza Ebrahimi (Ebrahimi) pursuant to E.O. 13382 for having engaged, or attempted to engage, in activities or transactions that have materially contributed to, or pose a risk of materially contributing to, the proliferation of WMD or their means of delivery (including missiles capable of delivering such weapons), including any efforts

to manufacture, acquire, possess, develop, transport, transfer or use such items, for Iran, a foreign country of proliferation concern.

Ebrahimi served as head of Iran's Aerospace Research Institute (ARI), leading the development of the Kavoshgar, a space launch vehicle based on the Shahab-3 ballistic missile. Ebrahimi also worked on Iran's Amad Plan, where he was involved in numerous explosive experiments relevant to the development of a nuclear weapon.

### **SPND Front and Cover Companies**

OFAC also designated today three key SPND front and cover companies, and four of their senior officials.

Pulse Niru has provided, or attempted to provide, financial, material, technological or other support for, or good or services in support of, SPND. Pulse Niru is a Tehran-based company that designs and manufactures pulse power devices, develops technology for controlled fusion, and produces particle accelerators.

Pulse Niru also has sought to procure equipment for SPND. Pulse Niru procures some equipment and advanced technologies from Chinese, Russian, and other foreign suppliers.

Mohammad Mahdi Da'emi Attaran (Attaran) is a manager and senior executive at Pulse Niru. A pulsed power expert, Attaran has spent over a decade working for Pulse Niru. He was directly involved in Pulse Niru's efforts to supply and provide specialized services to SPND.

Attaran also has lent his expertise to Iran's Center for Innovation and Technology Cooperation (CITC). CITC was designated pursuant to E.O. 13382 on July 12, 2012. CITC is positioned to support a range of Iran's WMD and military procurement objectives, and is assessed to facilitate procurement and technology transfers from the science community to the military.

Mohsen Shafa'i is Pulse Niru's managing director and has worked on the design, testing, and production of new technologies at Pulse Niru.

OFAC designated Mohammad Mahdi Da'emi Attaran and Mohsen Shafa'i pursuant to E.O. 13382 for acting or purporting to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, Pulse Niru.

Iranian company Kimiya Pakhsh Shargh (KPS) is owned or controlled by, or acting or purporting to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, SPND. KPS is subordinate to SPND and takes directions from senior SPND officials.

KPS procures materials from foreign suppliers, such as radioisotopes. While such radioisotopes have legitimate medical applications, they also can be used in processes that test and grade

welds on pressurized piping and vessels, machined parts, high-capacity storage containers, and concrete. The same materials also can be employed to identify structural irregularities caused by mechanical damage and corrosion, and to detect defects in metal castings.

Mehdi Masoumian (Masoumian), who is an SPND employee, serves as the managing director of KPS.

Mohammad Hossein Haghghighian's (Haghghighian's) responsibilities as KPS's commercial manager include handling customs and regulatory processes for importing goods. Haghghighian also oversees technical inspections of behalf of KPS.

OFAC designated Masoumian and Haghghighian pursuant to E.O. 13382 for acting or purporting to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, SPND.

Paradise Medical Pioneers Company (PMP) is owned or controlled by, or acting or purporting to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, SPND. PMP is a cover company that researches and produces composites, steels, polymers, and other materials for customers including SPND. PMP is administratively subordinate to SPND, and senior SPND officials, including SPND head Fakhrizadeh, hold various positions within the company.

### **Sanctions Implications**

As a result of today's action, all property and interests in property of these targets that are in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons must be blocked and reported to OFAC. OFAC's regulations generally prohibit all dealings by U.S. persons or within the United States (including transactions transiting the United States) that involve any property or interests in property of blocked or designated persons.

In addition, persons that engage in certain transactions with the individuals and entities designated today may themselves be exposed to sanctions or subject to an enforcement action. Furthermore, unless an exception applies, any foreign financial institution that knowingly facilitates a significant transactions for any of the individuals or entities designated today could be subject to U.S. sanctions.

Lastly, today's action serves as a warning to individuals and entities considering dealing with the Iranian regime's defense sector in general, and SPND in particular: by engaging in sanctionable activity with designated Iranian persons, you risk professional, personal, and financial isolation.

For identifying information on the entities and individual sanctioned today, click [here](#).

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