

Treasury Targets Senior Hizballah Operative for Perpetrating and Plotting Terrorist Attacks in the Western Hemisphere



July 19, 2019

Washington – Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated a senior member of Hizballah’s External Security Organization (ESO), which is responsible for the planning, coordination, and execution of terrorist attacks outside of Lebanon. Specifically, OFAC designated Salman Raouf Salman for acting for or on behalf of Hizballah. Salman was designated under Executive Order (E.O.) 13224, which targets terrorists and those providing support to terrorists or acts of terrorism.

“This Administration will continue to target Hizballah terrorists who plot horrific murderous operations and indiscriminately kill innocent civilians on behalf of this violent group and its Iranian patrons. We are targeting Salman Raouf Salman, who coordinated a devastating attack in Buenos Aires, Argentina against the largest Jewish center in South America 25 years ago and has directed terrorist operations in the Western Hemisphere for Hizballah ever since,” said Sigal Mandelker, Treasury’s Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence. “The United States will continue to work with the Government of Argentina, and our friends throughout the region and the world, to ensure that Hizballah operatives can never disassociate themselves from their terrorist actions, and to prevent them from carrying out new attacks that enable Iran’s malign agenda.”

Today’s action underscores that Hizballah is first and foremost a terrorist organization, despite its attempts to falsely portray itself as a legitimate political entity. It is a reminder that prior to the attacks of September 11, 2001, Hizballah was the terrorist group responsible for the most American deaths. Hizballah is responsible for carrying out the largest terrorist attack in the history of Argentina and all of Latin America. This action also highlights Hizballah’s ongoing operational presence in the Western Hemisphere and that Hizballah continues to pose a threat to the region by actively plotting attacks against civilian targets. This is particularly evidenced by Salman’s direct role in a recent terrorist plot targeting innocent civilians in Chile and Peru, which was successfully disrupted by security services.

Hizballah was designated by the Department of State as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in October 1997 and as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) pursuant to E.O. 13224 in October 2001. It was listed in January 1995 in the Annex to E.O. 12947, which targets terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process, and also designated in August 2012 pursuant to E.O. 13582, which targets the Government of Syria and its supporters.

SALMAN RAOUF SALMAN

Salman Raouf Salman (Salman) acts for or on behalf of Hizballah.

Salman is a senior member of Hizballah's ESO (also known as the Islamic Jihad Organization), Hizballah's elite unit commanded by U.S.-designated Talal Hamiyah, which functions as the strategic arm and operational unit of Hizballah abroad. In this role, Salman directs Hizballah's foreign operations from Lebanon. Talal Hamiyah was designated pursuant to E.O. 13224 in September 2012 for providing support for Hizballah's activities. Salman is also the subject of an INTERPOL Red Notice.

Salman has a long history of leadership and operational planning within Hizballah, having served as one of the most prominent operatives behind the Asociacion Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA) bombing, the 1994 attack on the community center for the largest Jewish community in South America, which killed 85 innocent people and wounded hundreds more. In the aftermath of the AMIA bombing, Argentine security officials determined that Salman had been in contact with U.S.-designated Assad Barakat leading up to the attack, and that Salman was the coordinator of Hizballah sleeper cells in Buenos Aires and the Tri-Border Area of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay. Barakat was designated pursuant to E.O. 13224 in June 2004 for generating funding for Hizballah. Salman had provided all necessary support to perpetrate the terrorist attack against the AMIA building, coordinating the activities of the Hizballah attack squad in Buenos Aires, and maintaining communication with Hizballah leaders in Lebanon and the operations logistics command center in the Tri-Border Area.

Since his role in the AMIA bombing in Buenos Aires, Salman has risen through the ranks of Hizballah. Salman fled the region after the bombing, and in the years that followed, served as a member of the ESO, with particular focus on Southeast Asia and South America in the 1990s, including a flurry of operational missions in 1997 with three visits to Panama, two to Colombia, and one to Brazil.

More recently, Salman was identified as the Hizballah operative who served as the handler for U.S.-designated Mohammed Hamdar, who was arrested by Peruvian counterterrorism police in

October 2014 for planning a terrorist operation in Peru. At the time of his arrest, police raided his home and found traces of explosives, detonators, and other flammable substances, and a search of the garbage outside his home found chemicals used to manufacture explosives.

Hamdar's targets included places associated with Israelis and the Jewish community in Peru, as well as areas popular with Israeli backpackers, the Israeli embassy in Lima, and Jewish community institutions. Following Hamdar's arrest, he identified Salman as his Hizballah handler. Hamdar was designated pursuant to E.O. 13224 in October 2016 for acting on behalf of Hizballah.

DESIGNATION RELATED TO REWARDS FOR JUSTICE PROGRAM AND ARGENTINIAN ACTION

Today's action follows the designation of Salman Raouf Salman by the Government of Argentina on July 18, 2019. It also is announced in tandem with the State Department's July 19, 2019 announcement of a Rewards for Justice (RFJ) reward offer of up to \$7,000,000 for the identification or location of Salman Raouf Salman. The program provides rewards for information that helps bring terrorists to justice, prevents international acts of terrorism against U.S. persons or property, leads to the identification or location of a key terrorist leader, or disrupts terrorist financing. For more information about the reward offer or to submit information on Salman, visit the Rewards for Justice website at www.rewardsforjustice.net or contact the Rewards for Justice office via the confidential e-mail at LH@rewardsforjustice.net.

SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS

The Treasury Department continues to prioritize disruption of the full range of Hizballah's illicit financial and facilitation activities, and with this action has designated over 50 Hizballah-affiliated individuals and entities since 2017.

As a result of today's action, all property and interests in property of this target 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 individual designated today may themselves be exposed to sanctions or subject to an enforcement action.

Furthermore, the individual designated today is subject to secondary sanctions pursuant to the Hizballah Financial Sanctions Regulations, which implements the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015, as amended by the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Amendments Act of 2018. Pursuant to this authority, OFAC can prohibit or impose strict conditions on the opening or maintaining in the United States of a correspondent account or a payable-through account by a foreign financial institution that knowingly facilitates a significant transaction for Hizballah, or a person acting on behalf of or at the direction of, or owned or controlled by, Hizballah.

[View identifying information related to today's action.](#)

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