

Treasury Targets Facilitators Moving Millions to HAMAS in Gaza

August 29, 2019

Washington – Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), in partnership with the Sultanate of Oman, designated financial facilitators responsible for moving tens of millions of dollars between Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force (IRGC-QF) and HAMAS’s operational arm, the Izz-Al-Din Al-Qassam Brigades in Gaza. OFAC designated Muhammad Sarur, Kamal Abdelrahman Aref Awad, Fawaz Mahmud Ali Nasser, and Muhammad Kamal al-Ayy for providing financial, material, technological support, financial or other services to, or in support of, HAMAS. These individuals were designated under Executive Order (E.O.) 13224, which targets terrorists and those providing support to terrorists or acts of terrorism.

“These facilitators funneled tens of millions of dollars from Iran’s Qods Force through Hizballah in Lebanon to HAMAS for terrorist attacks originating from the Gaza Strip. HAMAS’s continued violent campaign against innocent civilians and the state of Israel is to the great detriment of the people in Gaza,” said Sigal Mandelker, Treasury’s Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence. “This Administration will not falter to hold HAMAS and its Iranian leaders accountable for their violence. Treasury will continue to disrupt terrorist networks by targeting those who generate funds to carry out the Iranian regime’s violent agenda.”

The Lebanon and Gaza-based financial facilitators targeted today are critical intermediaries between the Iranian regime, and the Izz-Al-Din Al-Qassam Brigades and end users in the West Bank. At the center of this scheme is a Lebanon-based financial operative, Muhammad Sarur, who has been identified as being in charge of all financial transfers between the IRGC-QF and the Izz-Al-Din Al-Qassam Brigades, and has an extensive history working at Hizballah’s sanctioned bank, Bayt al-Mal. Bayt al-Mal was designated by OFAC in 2006 for being owned or controlled by, and acting for or on behalf of Hizballah. Also sanctioned today are three Gaza-based individuals who have been integral to providing funding to HAMAS’s prisoner and martyrs infrastructure in the West Bank and Gaza.

HAMAS was designated by the Department of State as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) in

October 1997 and as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) pursuant to E.O. 13224 in October 2001. It was also listed as a Specially Designated Terrorist (SDT) in January 1995 in the Annex to E.O. 12947, which targets terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process.

MUHAMMAD SARUR

Muhammad Sarur (Sarur) provides financial, material, technological support, financial or other services to or in support of, HAMAS.

Sarur, a Beirut, Lebanon-based HAMAS and Hizballah-linked financial operative, is in charge of transferring tens of millions of dollars per year from the IRGC-QF to the Izz-Al-Din Al-Qassam Brigades. As of 2014, Sarur was identified as in charge of all money transfers from the IRGC-QF to Izz-Al-Din Al-Qassam Brigades. Overall, in the past four years, the IRGC-QF transferred over U.S. \$200 million dollars to the Izz-Al-Din Al-Qassam Brigades. The IRGC-QF, a branch of the IRGC, has provided material support to numerous terrorist groups. The IRGC-QF is a designated FTO and SDGT, and the Izz-Al-Din Al-Qassam Brigades is a designated FTO, SDGT, and SDT.

Sarur served as a middle-man between the IRGC-QF and HAMAS and worked with Hizballah operatives to ensure funds were provided to the Izz-Al-Din Al-Qassam Brigades. In 2011 and extending through 2016, Sarur worked for Hizballah's Bayt al-Mal. To transfer funds to HAMAS in Gaza, Sarur coordinated transfers through an individual who served as a Gaza-based HAMAS financial facilitator and money smuggling operations officer.

KAMAL ABDELRAHMAN AREF AWAD

Kamal Abdelrahman Aref Awad (Awad) provides financial, material, technological support, financial or other services to or in support of, HAMAS.

In early 2018, Awad, a Gaza-based HAMAS financial associate, coordinated with the same Gaza-based HAMAS financial facilitator, leveraged by Sarur, to provide hundreds of thousands of dollars in deposits for HAMAS.

As of 2017, the Izz-Al-Din Al-Qassam Brigades worked through Awad to distribute funds to the families of "martyrs" in the West Bank. Also in 2017, Awad coordinated the mismanagement of certain HAMAS prisoner entitlement funds. As of early 2016, HAMAS senior official Salih al-Aruri relied on Awad for detailed information regarding HAMAS prisoners and payments to HAMAS prisoners. Salih al-Aruri was designated by OFAC as an SDGT in September 2015 for acting for or on behalf of, and providing financial support to, HAMAS.

FAWAZ MAHMUD ALI NASSER & MUHAMMAD AL-AYY

Fawaz Muhmud Ali Nasser (Nasser) and Muhammad Kamal al-Ayy (al-Ayy) provide financial, material, technological support, financial or other services to or in support of, HAMAS.

As of mid-2018, Nasser, a Gaza-based HAMAS financial auditor, worked with Gaza-based money exchanger al-Ayy to transfer Iranian funds through Hizballah to HAMAS and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), a designated FTO, SDGT, and SDT. Nasser also managed funds related to HAMAS prisoners, including those in the Ofer prison.

As of late 2016, al-Ayy worked with a Gaza-based HAMAS financial facilitator to coordinate funds transfers to HAMAS.

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 designated today may themselves be exposed to sanctions or subject to an enforcement action.

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

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