

# Treasury Targets Assets of Russian Financier who Attempted to Influence 2018 U.S. Elections

September 30, 2019

**Washington** – Today, the U.S. Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) took action against Russian actors that attempted to influence the 2018 U.S. midterm elections, though there was no indication that foreign actors were able to compromise election infrastructure that would have prevented voting, changed vote counts, or disrupted the tallying of votes. Today’s action also increases pressure on previously designated person Yevgeniy Prigozhin by targeting his physical assets, including three aircraft and a yacht, as well as employees of the Internet Research Agency, which Yevgeniy Prigozhin finances. While today’s action only targets Russian actors, the U.S. Government is safeguarding our democratic processes from adversaries — primarily Russia, Iran, and China — that may be seeking to influence the upcoming 2020 elections.

“Treasury is targeting the private planes, yacht, and associated front companies of Yevgeniy Prigozhin, the Russian financier behind the Internet Research Agency and its attempts to subvert American democratic processes. Free and fair elections are the cornerstone of American democracy, and we will use our authorities against anyone seeking to undermine our processes and subversively influence voters,” said Secretary Steven T. Mnuchin. “This Administration will work tirelessly to safeguard our electoral process, and will aggressively pursue any other foreign actor that attempts to interfere in the 2020 elections.”

Today’s action marks Treasury’s first imposition of sanctions under E.O. 13848, “Imposing Certain Sanctions in the Event of Foreign Interference in a United States Election,” which the President signed in September 2018, warning all countries that they may face sanctions should they interfere in U.S. elections.

## DESIGNATION TARGETS

Today’s action targets four entities, seven individuals, three aircraft, and a yacht that are all associated with the Internet Research Agency and its financier, Yevgeniy Prigozhin.

The **Internet Research Agency** used fictitious personas on social media and disseminated false information in an effort to attempt to influence the 2018 U.S. midterm elections and try to undermine faith in U.S. democratic institutions. In connection with the 2018 U.S. midterm elections, the Internet Research Agency conducted a variety of activities that were part of a broad campaign to try to influence the U.S. political system. For example, as of October 2018, the Internet Research Agency released a staged video filmed by one of their employees that claimed they were seeking to influence and interfere in the 2018 midterms. In November 2018, the Internet Research Agency posted a statement on a website titled the “Internet Research Agency American Division” claiming that the organization sought to discredit candidates it deemed hostile to Russia and that they were utilizing social media to further its campaign. As a result of these activities, the Internet Research Agency is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13848 for directly or indirectly engaging in, sponsoring, concealing, or otherwise being complicit in foreign interference in a U.S. election.

The Internet Research Agency was previously designated pursuant to E.O. 13694, as amended, on March 15, 2018.

The Treasury Department is also imposing sanctions on six members of the Internet Research Agency for their efforts in furthering the objectives of the organization. As of 2018, **Dzheykhun Nasimi Ogly Aslanov** (Aslanov), **Mikhail Leonidovich Burchik** (Burchik), **Vadim Vladimirovich Podkopaev** (Podkopaev), **Vladimir Dmitriyevich Venkov** (Venkov), **Igor Vladimirovich Nesterov** (Nesterov), and **Denis Igorevich Kuzmin** (Kuzmin) were all members of the Internet Research Agency involved in attempting to interfere in U.S. elections. As a result, Aslanov, Burchik, Podkopaev, Venkov, Nesterov, and Kuzmin are being designated pursuant to E.O. 13848 for acting for or on behalf of and materially assisting the Internet Research Agency in connection with the 2018 U.S. midterm elections.

Aslanov, Burchik, Podkopaev, and Venkov were previously designated pursuant to E.O. 13694, as amended, on March 15, 2018.

In renewed action, the Treasury Department is increasing its pressure against **Yevgeniy Prigozhin** (Prigozhin) by not only calling out his support for the Internet Research Agency in connection with its efforts to interfere in the 2018 U.S. midterm elections, but also identifying his personal property, including several private jets and a yacht. Prigozhin has spent significant funds to further the Internet Research Agency’s attempted influence operations in connection with the 2018 U.S. midterm elections. As a result, Prigozhin is being designated pursuant to E.O.

13848 for materially assisting and providing financial support to the Internet Research Agency in connection with the 2018 U.S. midterm elections.

Prigozhin was previously designated pursuant to E.O. 13694, as amended, on March 15, 2018. Prigozhin was also designated pursuant to E.O. 13661 on December 20, 2016 for materially assisting senior officials of the Russian Federation.

Prigozhin utilizes a series of front companies to manage his luxury personal property to include three private jets and a yacht. Beratex Group Limited (Beratex), an entity registered in the Seychelles, owns and operates a private jet that until just recently flew under the tail number M-VITO. Beratex originally purchased M-VITO in 2012, and since then, photographs on social media accounts have shown that Prigozhin's family have used the plane. Between 2017 and 2018, M-VITO conducted numerous flights throughout Africa, the Middle East, and Europe to include Sudan, the Central African Republic, Madagascar, Ethiopia, Libya, Syria, Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates, Armenia, Germany, Spain, and Russia. In addition to M-VITO, Beratex is also the registered owner of St. Vitamin, a yacht the company acquired in 2014. Prigozhin's family has vacationed on St. Vitamin, as evidenced by photographs posted on social media accounts. Beratex is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13661, E.O. 13694, as amended, and E.O. 13848 for materially assisting Prigozhin. M-VITO and St. Vitamin are being identified as property in which Beratex has an interest.



*M-VITO: One of Prigozhin's private jets. Between 2017 and 2018, M-VITO conducted numerous flights throughout Africa, the Middle East, and Europe*

*Anna Zvereva/Flickr ([CC BY-SA 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/))*



*St Vitamin: Prigozhin's Yacht*

Prigozhin also owns and uses **VP-CSP**, a private jet registered in the Cayman Islands. Since 2017, **Linburg Industries LTD.** (Linburg), a company incorporated in the Seychelles, has been the registered owner and operator of VP-CSP. Between 2017 and 2018, VP-CSP conducted flights throughout Africa, the Middle East, and Europe to include Sudan, the Central African Republic, Egypt, Libya, Lebanon, Syria, Germany, Spain, Greece, Finland, Estonia, and Russia. Linburg is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13661, E.O. 13694, as amended, and E.O. 13848 for materially assisting Prigozhin. VP-CSP is being identified as property in which Linburg has an interest.

Finally, by October 2018, Prigozhin's employees arranged for the purchase of **M-SAAN**, a private jet registered in the Isle of Man. M-SAAN's registered owner and operator is **Autolex Transport Ltd.** (Autolex), a company incorporated in the Seychelles. Autolex is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13661, E.O. 13694, as amended, and E.O. 13848 for materially assisting Prigozhin. M-SAAN is being identified as property in which Autolex has an interest.

As a result of today's designations, all property and interests in property of these persons, including the identified aircraft and vessel, that are or come within the possession of U.S. persons are blocked, and U.S. persons are generally prohibited from engaging in transactions

with them. Additionally, any entities 50 percent or more owned by one or more of these designated persons are also blocked. Due to the designation of some of these persons under E.O. 13694, as amended, and E.O. 13661, foreign persons may be subject to secondary sanctions for knowingly facilitating a significant transaction or transactions with those designated persons.

The identification of these aircraft and vessel serves as a warning to those who continue to provide M-VITO, St. Vitamin, VP-CSP, and M-SAAN landing rights or other general services. By continuing to service these aircraft and the vessel, providers of such services run the risk of facilitating or supporting Prigozhin's nefarious activities and may also be subject to future sanctions.

[Identifying information on the individuals and entities designated today.](#)

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