

# Treasury Sanctions Individuals for Prolonging Violence and Threatening Humanitarian Assistance in Mali

December 20, 2019

## *Action Taken Concurrently with the UN Security Council*

**Washington** – Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned five Malian individuals pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13882. This action, the first pursuant to this E.O., targets individuals threatening the peace, security, or stability of Mali, as well as an individual obstructing humanitarian assistance. E.O. 13882 also targets those threatening implementation of the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation, as well as threats to Malian institutions, Malian defense and security forces, international security presences, or peacekeeping operations.

Today’s action is being taken concurrently with the designation of these five individuals by the UN Security Council Mali Sanctions Committee for an asset freeze, which obligates all UN Member States to freeze assets on their territories that are owned or controlled by these five individuals. Previously, on July 10, 2019, the UN Security Council Mali Sanctions Committee imposed a travel ban on the five individuals being designated today, requiring all UN Member States to prevent the entry into or transit through their territories of these individuals, provided that nothing shall oblige a Member State to refuse its own nationals entry into its territory.

“The United States, acting in coordination with the United Nations, is targeting militia leaders, extremist supporters, and traffickers, all of whom have prolonged the suffering of the Malian people,” said Deputy Secretary Justin G. Muzinich.

## **HOUKA HOUKA AG ALHOUSSEINI**

Houka Houka Ag Alhousseini (Houka Houka) was designated for being responsible for, or complicit in, or having directly or indirectly engaged in, actions or policies that threaten the peace, security, or stability of Mali.

Houka Houka is an active fighter for Jama’at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), a designated Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). Houka Houka has been responsible for tax collection

activities to raise funds for Al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) operations in Mali. AQIM is also a designated FTO. Houka Houka has extended his authority by using the fear that AQIM instigates in the Timbuktu region through targeted assassinations and complex attacks against Malian and international defense and security forces.

## **MAHRI SIDI AMAR BEN DAHA**

Mahri Sidi Amar Ben Daha (Ben Daha) was designated for being responsible for, or complicit in, or having directly or indirectly engaged in, actions or policies that threaten the peace, security, or stability of Mali.

Ben Daha operates transportation companies in eastern Mali that launder narcotics trafficking money and deliver supplies to jihadists. Ben Daha has used profits from illicit narcotics trafficking to purchase commercial bus and trucking companies. From November 14 to 18, 2018, Ben Daha instructed dozens of combatants to blockade the venue for regional consultations in Gao in coordination with Mohamed Ould Mataly, effectively blocking discussion on key provisions of the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation related to reform of the territorial structure of northern Mali.

## **MOHAMED OULD MATALY**

Mohamed Ould Mataly (Ould Mataly) was designated for being responsible for, or complicit in, or having directly or indirectly engaged in, actions or policies that threaten the peace, security, or stability of Mali.

In November 2018, Ould Mataly coordinated with his close associate Mahri Sidi Amar Ben Daha to instruct dozens of combatants to blockade the venue for regional consultations in Gao, blocking discussion on key provisions of the Agreement. In July 2016, Ould Mataly was one of the instigators of demonstrations hostile to the implementation of the Agreement.

## **MOHAMED BEN AHMED MAHRI**

Mohamed Ben Ahmed Mahri (Ben Ahmed Mahri) was designated for being responsible for, or complicit in, or having directly or indirectly engaged in, actions or policies that threaten the peace, security, or stability of Mali.

Ben Ahmed Mahri has funded terrorist armed groups through his drug trafficking, notably Al-Murabitun, which merged with other terrorist groups to form JNIM, with control over routes that

cross northern Mali from Mauritania, Burkina Faso, and Niger. Ben Ahmed Mahri uses convoys led by UN-sanctioned individual Ahmoudou Ag Asriw to traffic drugs. These trafficking convoys frequently generate clashes with competitors associated with other armed groups.

## AHMED AG ALBACHAR

Ahmed Ag Albachar (Ag Albachar) was designated for being responsible for, or complicit in, or having directly or indirectly engaged in, obstructing the delivery or distribution of, or access to, humanitarian assistance, in relation to Mali.

Ag Albachar, the self-proclaimed president of a humanitarian commission, has intimidated and extorted aid organizations in Mali's Kidal region, severely hindering their work. Ag Albachar has controlled which humanitarian projects take place, as well as the projects' location, timing, and who implements them. Ag Albachar has also usurped a significant share of humanitarian aid in the Kidal region by imposing illegitimate constraints on humanitarian actors under the threat of violence.

## SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS

As a result of today's action, all property and interests in property of the individuals named above, and of any entities that are owned, directly or indirectly, 50 percent or more by them, individually, or with other designated persons, that are in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons, are blocked and must be reported to OFAC. Unless authorized by a general or specific license issued by OFAC or otherwise exempt, OFAC's regulations generally prohibit all transactions by U.S. persons or within (or transiting) the United States that involve any property or interests in property of designated or otherwise blocked persons.

[Information on the individuals designated today.](#)

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