

# Treasury Designates Senior Iranian Regime Officials Preventing Free and Fair Elections in Iran



February 20, 2020

*Action follows the disqualification of several thousand candidates by Iran's Guardian Council*

**WASHINGTON** – The U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) today took action against five members of Iran's Guardian Council and its Elections Supervision Committee, which are appointed by Iran's Supreme Leader or his appointees. The Guardian Council, which is responsible for "vetting" candidates, uses this power to disqualify Iranians from competing in elections. Treasury's action targets Ahmad Jannati, the Secretary of the Guardian Council, and Mohammad Yazdi, a member of Iran's Guardian Council who was formerly Iran's first Judiciary Chief, and three additional members of its Elections Supervisory Committee. The Supreme Leader uses his appointees to deprive the Iranian people of free and fair elections by blocking candidates that do not mirror his radical views.

"The Trump Administration will not tolerate the manipulation of elections to favor the regime's malign agenda, and this action exposes those senior regime officials responsible for preventing the Iranian people from freely choosing their leaders," said Secretary Steven T. Mnuchin. "The United States will continue to support the democratic aspirations of Iranians."

This action is being taken pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13876 of June 24, 2019. The E.O. imposed sanctions on the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Supreme Leader's Office (SLO) and authorized the imposition of sanctions on certain others determined to be associated with the Supreme Leader or the SLO. Today's action complement Treasury's previous sanctions targeting senior regime officials who support the Supreme Leader and maintain the regime's control of Iranian political institutions, including the Iranian regime's Foreign Minister, Javad Zarif; the head of Iran's Judiciary, Ebrahim Raisi; and the Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani.

**AHMAD JANNATI AND MOHAMMAD YAZDI**

Today, OFAC designated Ahmad Jannati, the longtime Secretary of Iran's Guardian Council, who was originally appointed to the Council by the Supreme Leader in February 1980 and reappointed to a six-year term in 2016. As Secretary of the Guardian Council, and a member of the Elections Supervision Committee for the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections, Jannati oversaw the disqualification of nearly half of potential parliamentary candidates, including several incumbent legislators.

In addition to chairing the Guardian Council, Jannati is the chair of the Assembly of Experts, an entity responsible for choosing the next Supreme Leader. Jannati was also appointed by the Supreme Leader to the Expediency Council, which is an advisory body for the Supreme Leader with an ultimate adjudicating power in disputes over legislation between the parliament and the Guardian Council.

Mohammad Yazdi was most recently re-appointed by the Supreme Leader to the Guardian Council in July 2019 as a religious jurist. Yazdi also served on the central supervisory committee for the upcoming presidential and midterm elections. Additionally, as Iran's Judiciary Chief from 1989-1999, Yazdi abolished the Office of the Prosecutor, effectively rendering all judges prosecutors and leading to the widespread violation of basic human rights.

Jannati and Yazdi are being designated pursuant to E.O. 13876 for being persons appointed by the Supreme Leader of Iran to a position as a state official of Iran.

## **SIAMAK RAHPEYK, ABBAS ALI KADKHODAEI, AND MOHAMMAD HASAN SADEGHI MOGHADAM**

Siamak Rahpeyk is a legal expert appointed by Jannati to the Guardian Council's Central Committee for Election Supervision and as deputy head in charge of executive and election affairs. Rahpeyk has justified the Guardian Council's role to disqualify election candidates.

Abbas Ali Kadkhodaei is also a legal expert appointed by Jannati to the position of deputy head of the Guardian Council, speaker of the Guardian Council, and to the Central Committee for Election Supervision. Before initial parliamentary disqualifications were announced on January 27, 2020, he stated that insults, defamation, or inflammatory remarks towards the Supreme Leader would be considered when vetting candidates.

Mohammad Hasan Sadeghi Moghadam is also a legal expert appointed by Jannati to the Guardian Council's Central Committee for Election Supervision. Sadeghi Moghadam also serves

as a senior advisor to Jannati. He has defended the practice of candidate disqualification, stating that it is the Guardian Council's legal responsibility to vet candidates.

Rahpeyk, Kadkhodaei, and Sadeghi Moghadam are being designated pursuant to E.O. 13876 for being persons appointed to a position as a state official of Iran, or as the head of any entity located in Iran or any entity located outside of Iran that is owned or controlled by one or more entities in Iran, by Jannati, a person appointed by the Supreme Leader.

## **SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS**

All property and interests in property of these persons 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 (or transiting) the United States that involve any property or interests in property of blocked or designated persons.

In addition, non-U.S. persons that engage in certain transactions with the persons designated today may themselves be exposed to designation. Furthermore, any foreign financial institution that knowingly conducts or facilitates a significant transaction for or on behalf of the persons designated today could be subject to U.S. correspondent or payable-through account sanctions.

[Read identifying information on the entities designated today.](#)

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