Treasury Sanctions Iranian Ambassador to Iraq

October 22, 2020

Iraj Masjedi, a senior officer in the IRGC-Qods Force, continues to try to destabilize Iraq

Washington – Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is designating Iraj Masjedi, a general in Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force (IRGC-QF) and Iran’s Ambassador to Iraq, for acting for or on behalf of the IRGC-QF. A close adviser to former IRGC-QF Commander Qassem Soleimani, Masjedi played a formative role in the IRGC-QF’s Iraq policy. In his decades of service with the group, Masjedi has overseen a program of training and support to Iraqi militia groups, and he has directed or supported groups that are responsible for attacks that have killed and wounded U.S. and coalition forces in Iraq. In his current capacity, Masjedi has exploited his position as the Iranian regime’s ambassador in Iraq to obfuscate financial transfers conducted for the benefit of the IRGC-QF.

“The Iranian regime threatens Iraq’s security and sovereignty by appointing IRGC-QF officials as ambassadors in the region to carry out their destabilizing foreign agenda,” said Secretary Steven T. Mnuchin. “The United States will continue to employ the tools and authorities at its disposal to target the Iranian regime and IRGC-QF officials that attempt to meddle in the affairs of sovereign nations, including any attempts to influence U.S. elections.”

Masjedi is being designated pursuant to the counterterrorism authority Executive Order (E.O.) 13224, as amended, for acting or purporting to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, the IRGC-QF. The IRGC-QF was designated pursuant to E.O. 13224 in 2007 for support to numerous terrorist groups. The IRGC, including its external arm, the IRGC-QF, was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on April 8, 2019.

A LONG-RUNNING THREAT TO IRAQI SECURITY

Iran’s ambassador to Iraq since 2017, Masjedi has publicly admitted the IRGC-QF’s role in special operations and the training of militia groups in Iraq, Syria, and beyond. He claims credit for organizing and supporting regional militias to advance Iran’s interests
throughout the Middle East an enterprise that has spawned untold destruction and corruption, robbing Iraq of a stable, prosperous future.

Masjedi has facilitated financial transfers for the benefit of the IRGC-QF in coordination with IRGC-QF financial facilitator Hushang Allahdad, acting at the direction of former IRGC-QF Commander Soleimani and his successor, Esma'il Ghani. Soleimani was designated pursuant to multiple authorities, including E.O. 13224, in 2011, while Allahdad and Ghani were designated pursuant to E.O. 13224 in 2010 and 2012, respectively. Since 2018, Masjedi has helped the IRGC-QF obtain foreign currency in Iraq, in return for equivalent sums that the IRGC-QF in Iran has transferred to relevant entities. Most recently, Masjedi has provided direct assistance in obtaining tens of billions of dinars on behalf of the IRGC-QF in Iraq.

In the decades prior to his ambassadorial appointment, Masjedi was a senior figure overseeing IRGC-QF activities in Iraq, which included attacks targeting U.S. and coalition personnel, as well as kidnappings and the assassination of Iraqi provincial officials who sought to curb Iranian influence in Iraq. The IRGC-QF provided training for Iraqi recruits, often inside Iran. The Iraqi recruits hailed from groups loyal to, and supported by, the IRGC-QF, which help maintain Iranian influence in Iraqi politics and security. The IRGC-QF also manufactured and distributed weapons, including explosively formed penetrators, that killed and wounded hundreds during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

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**SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS**

All property and interests in property of the individual designated today, subject to U.S. jurisdiction, are blocked, and U.S persons are generally prohibited from engaging in transactions with him or the blocked property. In addition, foreign financial institutions that knowingly facilitate significant transactions for, or persons that provide material or certain other support to, the individual designated today risk exposure to sanctions that could sever their access to the U.S. financial system or block their property and interests in property under U.S. jurisdiction.

View identifying information on the individual designated today.