

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Treasury Sanctions the Saudi Rapid Intervention Force and Former Deputy Head of Saudi Arabia's General Intelligence Presidency for Roles in the Murder of Journalist Jamal Khashoggi

February 26, 2021

WASHINGTON – Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated Ahmad Hassan Mohammed al Asiri, Saudi Arabia's former Deputy Head of General Intelligence Presidency, and Saudi Arabia's Rapid Intervention Force in connection with the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. These persons are designated pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13818, which builds upon and implements the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act and targets perpetrators of serious human rights abuse and corruption around the world.

"Those involved in the abhorrent killing of Jamal Khashoggi must be held accountable. With this action, Treasury is sanctioning Saudi Arabia's Rapid Intervention Force and a senior Saudi official who was directly involved in Jamal Khashoggi's murder," said Secretary Janet L. Yellen. "The United States stands united with journalists and political dissidents in opposing threats of violence and intimidation. We will continue to defend the freedom of expression, which is the bedrock of a free society."

MURDER OF KHASHOGGI

Jamal Khashoggi, a Saudi journalist who wrote critically of the Government of Saudi Arabia, went into self-imposed exile in the United States in 2017. In his first column for *The Washington Post* in September 2017, Khashoggi said he had feared being arrested in an apparent crackdown on dissent. For decades, Khashoggi had been close to the Saudi royal family and also served as an advisor to the government before falling out of favor. On October 2, 2018, Khashoggi visited the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul to obtain an official Saudi document stating that he was divorced so that he could marry his Turkish fiancée. Khashoggi was murdered inside the Consulate as a part of an operation that was planned and implemented by senior officials of the Government of Saudi Arabia. As part of a broader U.S. government effort to promote accountability for those responsible for his brutal murder, on

November 15, 2018, Treasury designated 17 individuals for their role in the murder of Khashoggi.

Ahmad Hassan Mohammed al Asiri (Asiri), the former Deputy Head of Saudi Arabia's General Intelligence Presidency, was assigned to murder journalist Khashoggi. **Asiri** himself was the ringleader of the operation and coordinated with Saud al-Qahtani (al-Qahtani) to organize and dispatch the 15-man team to murder and dismember Khashoggi on October 2, 2018 inside the Saudi Consulate in Turkey. Following Khashoggi's death, **Asiri** was removed from his position as Deputy Head of General Intelligence and the Istanbul chief prosecutor's office filed an indictment against him for "instigating premeditated murder with monstrous intent."

Several members of the hit squad sent to intercept Khashoggi were part of Saudi Arabia's **Rapid Intervention Force (RIF)**, also known as the "Tiger Squad" or Firqat el-Nemr.

Asiri is designated pursuant to E.O. 13818 for being a foreign person who is responsible for or complicit in, or has directly or indirectly engaged in, serious human rights abuse.

RIF is designated pursuant to E.O. 13818 for being owned or controlled by, or having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, al-Qahtani, a person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to E.O. 13818.

SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS

As a result of today's action, all property and interests in property of the persons above that are in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons are blocked and must be reported to OFAC. In addition, any entities that are owned, directly or indirectly, 50 percent or more by one or more blocked persons are also blocked. 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. The prohibitions include the making of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services by, to, or for the benefit of any blocked person or the receipt of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services from any such person.

GLOBAL MAGNITSKY

Building upon the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, E.O. 13818 was issued on December 20, 2017, in recognition that the prevalence of human rights abuse and

corruption that have their source, in whole or in substantial part, outside the United States, had reached such scope and gravity as to threaten the stability of international political and economic systems. Human rights abuse and corruption undermine the values that form an essential foundation of stable, secure, and functioning societies; have devastating impacts on individuals; weaken democratic institutions; degrade the rule of law; perpetuate violent conflicts; facilitate the activities of dangerous persons; and undermine economic markets. The United States seeks to impose tangible and significant consequences on those who commit serious human rights abuse or engage in corruption, as well as to protect the financial system of the United States from abuse by these same persons.

[View more information on the persons previously designated.](#)

[View more information on the persons designated today.](#)

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