WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated 16 individuals and five entities pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13405 in response to the Lukashenka regime’s escalating violence and repression, including its reckless forced diversion of a commercial Ryanair flight and arrest of journalist Raman Pratasevich (Pratasevich) and his companion, Sofia Saega (Saega). The persons designated today have harmed the people of Belarus through their activities surrounding the fraudulent August 9, 2020, presidential election in Belarus and the ensuing brutal crackdown on protesters, journalists, members of the opposition, and civil society. Today’s actions, taken together with those by our international partners and across the U.S. government, seek to hold the Lukashenka regime to account for its ongoing abuses and recent affronts to international norms, including its forced diversion of a commercial Ryanair flight and the subsequent arrest of Pratasevich and Saega. Alongside the actions taken today by Canada, the European Union (EU), and the United Kingdom (UK), these designations demonstrate steadfast transatlantic commitment to supporting the Belarusian people and their democratic aspirations.

“The United States and its partners will not tolerate continued attacks on democracy and the ceaseless repression of independent voices in Belarus,” said Office of Foreign Assets Control Director Andrea M. Gacki. “Today’s actions, taken on both sides of the Atlantic, hold accountable those who continue to suppress the democratic aspirations of the Belarusian people through abuses of human rights, attacks on the free press, and disregard for other fundamental freedoms. The recent forced diversion of Ryanair flight 4978 by the Belarusian government is one of many examples of the Lukashenka regime’s continued disregard for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Belarusian people in hopes of crushing the pro-democracy movement in Belarus.”

LUKASHENKA’S CLOSE ASSOCIATES
As Lukashenka’s press secretary, Natallia Mikalaеuna Eismant (Eismant) manages Lukashenka’s public image in the press and on social media and is known as one of his closest associates. Eismant created and pushed a narrative that labeled Belarusians protesting the fraudulent August 9, 2020, presidential election as proponents of chaos and disorder, while labeling Lukashenka as the solution to end the political chaos, portraying him as a champion of discipline and stability, and enabling the violence perpetrated against demonstrators.

Natallia Ivanauna Kachanava (Kachanava) is the Chairperson of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly, the Belarusian Parliament’s upper house, and the former Presidential Chief of Staff for Lukashenka. She is the presidential envoy to Minsk, where she is directly subordinate to Lukashenka and represents his interests in Belarus’ capital. Furthermore, Kachanava is a prominent supporter of Lukashenka and one of his closest associates. For instance, Kachanava has referred to pro-democracy protests as illegal and claimed that the significant number of Belarusian people protesting were an “aggressive minority” bolstered by foreign interference.

Eismant is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13405 for having materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, Lukashenka, a person listed in or designated pursuant to E.O. 13405. Kachanava is being designated for acting or purporting to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, Lukashenka, a person listed in or designated pursuant to E.O. 13405. Eismant was sanctioned by Canada, the EU, and the UK in 2020, and Kachanava was sanctioned by the EU in 2020 and the UK in 2021.

**PERPETRATORS AND FACILITATORS OF VIOLENT SUPPRESSION OF PEACEFUL PROTESTS**

OFAC is designating six individuals and four entities for their roles in the violent crackdown on peaceful protests following the August 9, 2020, fraudulent Belarusian presidential election. These individuals and entities are key facilitators and perpetrators of the Lukashenka regime’s continued assault against peaceful protesters, journalists, members of the opposition, and civil society.

The Internal Troops of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Belarus (Internal Troops), a Belarusian police force subordinate to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), has been involved in the violent suppression of peaceful protesters in multiple locations in
Belarus since the August 9, 2020, fraudulent presidential election. On October 2, 2020, OFAC designated the Internal Troops’ then-Commander Yuriy Nazaranka and Deputy Commander Khazalbek Atabekau pursuant to E.O. 13405 for being responsible for, or having participated in, actions or policies that undermine democratic processes or institutions in Belarus.

The **Main Directorate for Combating Organized Crime and Corruption of the MVD of the Republic of Belarus** (GUBOPiK) continues to play a leading role in the post-election crackdown, including deploying specialized “Attack” units created to perpetrate violence against protesters. For instance, GUBOPiK was involved in a raid on an opposition presidential candidate’s office and the abduction of opposition figure Mariya Kalesnikava. Pratasevich was also in GUBOPiK custody following his arrest.

**Mikalai Karpiankou** (Karpiankou) is Belarus’ Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs and the current Commander of the Internal Troops. In his previous role as head of GUBOPiK, Karpiankou personally led members of GUBOPiK in pursuing and beating peaceful protesters in Minsk, the capital city of Belarus. In January 2021, a leaked audio recording allegedly captured Karpiankou discussing plans to build an internment camp for detained protesters and advising security services to shoot protesters in the face and genitals.

**Alyaksandr Vyachaslavavich Astreika** (Astreika) and the **Directorate of Internal Affairs of the Brest Oblast Executive Committee** (Brest UVD) are being designated for their roles in the violent crackdown on peaceful protesters in Brest, a city in southwestern Belarus, following the August 9, 2020, fraudulent presidential election. The Brest UVD, which Astreika led before becoming the head of the Minsk Oblast UVD, uses violence against peaceful protesters and detained journalists attempting to cover protests. Canada, the EU, and the UK previously sanctioned Astreika in 2020.

**Andrei Ivanavich Shved** (Shved) was named Belarus’ prosecutor general one month after the August 9, 2020, fraudulent presidential election. In that position, he has filed politically motivated terrorism charges and extradition requests against presidential candidate Svyatlana Tsikhanouskaya and publicly defended his office’s prosecution of peaceful protesters. Shved is additionally responsible for an extradition request for Pratasevich in November 2020. Shved was sanctioned by the EU in 2020 and the UK in 2021.

The **State Security Committee of the Republic of Belarus** (Belarusian KGB) has continually pressured and targeted the opposition in the aftermath of the fraudulent 2020 election. The Belarusian KGB has detained, intimidated, and otherwise pressured the opposition, to
include Pratasevich. In November 2020, the Belarusian KGB added Pratasevich and another opposition journalist to its list of terrorists.

Ivan Tsertsel (Tsertsel) is the Chairman of the Belarusian KGB and has been in his position since September 2020. Tsertsel was sanctioned by the EU in 2020 and by the UK in 2021.

The Internal Troops, Karpiankou, Astreika, the Brest UVD, GUBOPiK, Shved, and the Belarusian KGB are being designated pursuant to E.O. 13405 for being responsible for, or having participated in, actions or policies that undermine democratic processes or institutions in Belarus. Tsertsel is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13405 for acting or purporting to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, the Belarusian KGB.

Additionally, today Treasury is sanctioning the leaders of two previously designated entities in Belarus’ security services. Sergei Yevgenevich Zubkov (Zubkov) heads the KGB Alpha, an elite unit of the Belarusian KGB involved in the crackdowns on peaceful protests. Zubkov was also sanctioned by Canada, the EU, and the UK in 2020. Mikhail Hryb (Hryb) is the leader of the Main Internal Affairs Directorate of the Minsk Executive Committee (Minsk GUVD), the Ministry of Interior’s branch in Belarus’ capital. On December 23, 2020, OFAC designated KGB Alpha and the Minsk GUVD pursuant to E.O. 13405 for undermining democratic processes or institutions in Belarus.

Zubkov is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13405 for being responsible for, or having participated in, actions or policies that undermine democratic processes or institutions in Belarus. Hryb is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13405 for acting or purporting to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, the Minsk GUVD.

**NOTORIOUS AKRESTSINA DETENTION CENTER**

Following the peaceful protests against the fraudulent August 9, 2020 presidential election, many protesters have been arrested and subsequently detained at the notorious Akrestsina Detention Center (Akrestsina) in Minsk. Protesters have described intense physical abuse, including torture and inhumane conditions during their detention at Akrestsina. It has been the site of beatings, arbitrary detentions, and other human rights abuses in the months since the fraudulent presidential election.

Akrestsina is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13405 for having materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, human rights abuses related to political repression in Belarus.
ORCHESTRATORS OF FRAUDULENT ELECTION

OFAC is also designating eight members of the previously designated Central Commission of the Republic of Belarus on Elections and Holding Republican Referenda (Belarusian CEC). Officials in the Belarusian CEC are responsible for falsely proclaiming Lukashenka the winner of the August 9, 2020, fraudulent presidential election despite a number of significant irregularities, including but not limited to: prevention of multiple opposition candidates from appearing on the ballot and restrictions on the ability of the opposition to campaign; reports of voter coercion; unequal access of candidates to the media; intimidation and detention of candidates, opposition supporters, and independent election monitors; the blocking of international and independent observers from entering polling stations as authorized under Belarusian law; and instances of observers being pressured into signing ballot results before voting took place. OFAC previously designated the Belarusian CEC on December 23, 2020, pursuant to E.O. 13405, for being responsible for, or having participated in, actions or policies that undermine democratic processes or institutions in Belarus. Other members of the Belarusian CEC’s leadership, including Chairwoman Lidziya Yarmoshina, Deputy Chairperson Vadzim Ipatau, Secretary Alena Dmukhayla, and Belarusian CEC member and Minister of Justice Oleg Leonidovich Slizhevsky, are already designated pursuant to E.O. 13405.

Volha Lianeidawna Darashenka, Andrei Anatoljevich Gurzhy, Siarhei Aliaksiejevich Kalinowski, Sviatlana Piatrowna Katsuba, Aliaksandr Mikhailievich Lasiakin, Ihar Anatoljevich Plyshewski, Maryna Jurjewna Rakhmanava, and Iryna Aliaksandrawna Tselikaviets have acted on behalf of the Belarusian CEC internationally as election observers and were responsible for certifying the fraudulent presidential election in Belarus on August 9, 2020. All eight members are being designated pursuant to E.O. 13405 for acting or purporting to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, the Belarusian CEC. All eight were sanctioned by Canada, the EU, and the UK in 2020.

SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS

As a result of today’s action, all property and interests in property of the persons and entities 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, 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 are generally prohibited. 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.

Identifying information on the individuals and entities designated today.