

Treasury Sanctions Cuban Minister of Defense and Special Forces Brigade for Abuses Against Protestors

July 22, 2021

WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned one Cuban individual and one Cuban entity 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. Today's action targets the Cuban Minister of Defense, **ALVARO LOPEZ MIERA (LOPEZ MIERA)**, and the **BRIGADA ESPECIAL NACIONAL DEL MINISTERIO DEL INTERIOR (SNB)** of the Cuban Ministry of the Interior (MININT) in connection with the repression of peaceful, pro-democratic protests in Cuba that began on July 11.

"The Cuban people are protesting for the fundamental and universal rights they deserve from their government," said Secretary Janet L. Yellen. "Treasury will continue to enforce its Cuba-related sanctions, including those imposed today, to support the people of Cuba in their quest for democracy and relief from the Cuban regime."

SANCTIONS ON CUBA

In addition to the sanctions imposed today under the Global Magnitsky program, OFAC continues to enforce the Cuba sanctions program, which is the most comprehensive sanctions program administered by OFAC. With exceptions to ensure that certain categories of economic activity are allowed that directly benefit the Cuban people, OFAC administers an economic embargo on Cuba that prohibits U.S. persons (and entities owned or controlled by U.S. persons) from engaging in transactions and providing services that may sustain the Cuban regime. In addition, all Cuban nationals are blocked — regardless of whether they appear on Treasury's Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List (SDN List). The Treasury Department will continue to enforce these prohibitions consistent with applicable statutes and regulations.

ABUSE AGAINST PROTESTORS IN CUBA

Cuba's Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (MINFAR), which is led by, **LOPEZ MIERA**, has played an integral role in the repression of ongoing protests in Cuba, in which Cuban citizens are calling for an end to the 62-year old regime and deteriorating living conditions across the island, as well as demanding access to basic goods and services and medical attention. MINFAR and the Cuban government's security services have attacked protesters and arrested or disappeared over 100 protesters in an attempt to suppress these protests. **LOPEZ MIERA** is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13818 for being a foreign person who is the leader or official of MINFAR, an entity that has engaged in, or whose members have engaged in, serious human rights abuse, relating to his tenure. MINFAR is blocked pursuant to OFAC's Cuban Assets Control Regulations, 31 C.F.R. part 515 (CACR).

The **SNB**, also known as the Boinas Negras or Black Berets, is a special forces unit under the Cuban Ministry of the Interior (MININT), which was previously designated by OFAC under E.O. 13818 on January 15, 2021. During the July 2021 protests, the Cuban government deployed the SNB to suppress and attack protesters.

SNB is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13818 for being owned or controlled by, or for acting or purporting to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, MININT, which, as noted above, was previously designated by OFAC pursuant to the Global Magnitsky program for being a foreign person who is responsible for or complicit in, or having directly or indirectly engaged in, serious human rights abuse.

SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS

All property and interests in property of these persons that are blocked pursuant to the Cuban Assets Control Regulations, 31 C.F.R. part 515 (CACR), continue to be blocked. The CACR prohibits persons subject to U.S. jurisdiction from dealing in property in which Cuba or a Cuban national has an interest, unless authorized or exempt. Additionally, pursuant to the Global Magnitsky Sanctions Regulations, 31 C.F.R. part 583, 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 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 prohibited unless authorized by a general or specific license issued by OFAC, or otherwise exempt. These 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.

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

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