Treasury Sanctions Iranian Regime Officials Tied to Continued Violence Against Protestors

December 21, 2022

WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is targeting the Prosecutor General and key military and paramilitary officials in Iran, as well as a company manufacturing and providing Iran's Law Enforcement Forces with anti-riot equipment. As nationwide protests continue throughout Iran, the response from Iranian security forces has continued to escalate. In the past two weeks, two protestors have been executed, one publicly, and several others have been sentenced to death. Today's action targets the senior official overseeing the prosecution of protestors, as well as leaders of military and paramilitary organizations violently cracking down and detaining protestors and a company that procures and provides security forces with tools of suppression.

"We denounce the Iranian regime's intensifying use of violence against its own people who are advocating for their human rights," said Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Brian E. Nelson. "The United States and our partners are dedicated to holding Iranian officials to account for egregious abuses committed against Iranian citizens fighting for their fundamental freedoms."

Today's actions are taken pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13553, which authorizes the imposition of sanctions on persons with respect to certain serious human rights abuses by the Government of Iran, an official of the Government of Iran, or a person acting on behalf of the Government of Iran, and follows a series of designations targeting key members of the Iranian state apparatus responsible for the crackdown on peaceful demonstrators, including Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Intelligence Organization Commander Mohammad Kazemi and Deputy Commander for Operations Abbas Nilforushan.

MOHAMMAD JAFAR MONTAZERI

Mohammad Jafar Montazeri (Montazeri), Iran's Prosecutor General, also referred to as the Attorney General, oversees prosecutions and the enforcement of criminal judgments throughout Iran, including such actions brought in Iran's Revolutionary Courts, the primary

venue for charging those arrested in the protests. In late September, Montazeri issued a directive to courts to act "decisively" and issue harsh sentences to many of those arrested during the ongoing protests. The case of the first executed protestor, a young man named Mohsen Shekari, proceeded with little resemblance to a meaningful trial, according to multiple international sources. Mr. Shekari was charged with blocking a street and attacking a security force member in Tehran who needed stitches. There is evidence that Mr. Shekari was tortured and denied access to a lawyer. He was executed less than three weeks after his conviction.

Observers have consistently documented the use of torture by Iranian authorities during investigations for the purpose of extracting confessions. Defendants reportedly have also been denied the right to be represented by counsel during trials before the Revolutionary Courts. Iranian authorities have used sham Revolutionary Court trials to issue at least a dozen death sentences for protesters. Dozens more, including persons under the age of eighteen years old, are expected to be tried on capital charges in connection with protests.

Montazeri is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13553 for being an official of the Government of Iran or a person acting on behalf of the Government of Iran (including members of paramilitary organizations) who is responsible for or complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, the commission of serious human rights abuses against persons in Iran or Iranian citizens or residents, or the family members of the foregoing, on or after June 12, 2009, regardless of whether such abuses occurred in Iran.

IMEN SANAT ZAMAN FARA COMPANY

Iranian company **Imen Sanat Zaman Fara** manufactures numerous types of equipment for Iran's Law Enforcement Forces (LEF), and in particular, the LEF Special Units, one of the Islamic Republic's main protest suppression forces. Treasury designated the LEF pursuant to E.O. 13553 on June 9, 2011, for its role in the 2009 post-election crackdown, and the LEF Special Units pursuant to E.O. 13553 on December 7, 2021, for being persons acting on behalf of the Government of Iran responsible for or complicit in the commission of serious human rights abuses against persons in Iran or Iranian citizens.

Among other equipment, the Imen Sanat Zaman Fara Company produces armored vehicles, also described as "tactical" vehicles, for use in crowd suppression. During the recent nationwide protests, video and photographic evidence has illustrated Iranian security forces using armored vehicles to suppress protests and, in some cases, attempt to run over protestors. LEF Special Units commander Hassan Karami explicitly lauded the use of Imen Sanat Zaman Fara Comp

armored vehicles in protest suppression. Imen Sanat Zaman Fara Company also produces automatic grenade launchers, bulletproof vests, shields, and other products used by security forces in protest suppression.

Imen Sanat Zaman Fara Company is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13553 for materially assisting, sponsoring, or providing financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, the LEF, a person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to E.O. 13553.

IRGC AND BASIJ SENIOR OFFICIALS

OFAC is also designating two senior officials of Iran's Basij Resistance Forces, a paramilitary organization controlled by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). **Moslem Moein (Moein)**, as chief of the Basij Cyberspace Headquarters, oversees efforts to control and censor Iranians' online activities. He has spoken publicly about the Basij's priority to monitor Iranians' use of the internet. Additionally, Moein has advocated for the development of Iran's national intranet, which could allow the regime to disconnect Iran from the global internet. The Iranian government continues to filter and block the free flow of information in Iran.

As the recently appointed Deputy Coordinator of the Basij, **Hossein Maroufi (Maroufi)** has played a role in the Basij's violent response to the protests. Maroufi was also involved in the regime's crackdown in 2019 during nationwide protests stemming from a rise in gasoline prices. In his role as the IRGC Commander of Golestan Province during this time, Maroufi was allegedly responsible for ordering the use of deadly weapons against Iranian protestors, as well as orchestrating mass arrests of demonstrators.

Moein is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13553 for having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, the Basij, a person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to E.O. 13553. Maroufi, is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13553 for having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, the IRGC, a person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to E.O. 13553.

Today's action further targets two IRGC officials, **Hassan Hassanzadeh (Hassanzadeh)**, the commander of IRGC forces in Tehran, and **Seyed Sadegh Hosseini (Hosseini)**, the commander of the Beit-al Moghadas Corps and IRGC Commander in Kurdistan.

As commander of IRGC forces in Tehran, Hassanzadeh has overseen the crackdown against protests in the city. During the recent demonstrations in Tehran, Hassanzadeh announced t

many protestors had been captured, claiming that Basij members had been targeted, and that weapons were confiscated. IRGC forces in Tehran have arrested protestors to allegedly defend the Islamic Republic's centers of power.

Hosseini, in his role as the IRGC Commander in Kurdistan, has spoken out strongly against protestors in the region he oversees. Hosseini was also involved in the regime's crackdown during the November 2019 protests shortly after he became the IRGC Commander in Kurdistan and began serving on the Provincial Security Council. During this period, Hosseini authorized the use of deadly force against unarmed protestors and ordered the mass arrest of demonstrators, leading to the death of at least seven people.

Hassanzadeh and Hosseini are being designated pursuant to E.O. 13553 for having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, the IRGC, a person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to E.O. 13553.

SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS

As a result of today's action, 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. In addition, any entities that are owned, directly or indirectly, 50 percent or more by one or more blocked persons are also blocked. OFAC regulations generally prohibit all dealings by U.S. persons or within the United States (including transactions transiting the United States) that involve any property or interests in property of blocked or designated persons.

In addition, persons that engage in certain transactions with the persons designated today may themselves be exposed to sanctions or subject to an enforcement action. Furthermore, unless an exception applies, any foreign financial institution that knowingly facilitates a significant transaction or provides significant financial services for any of the persons designated today could be subject to U.S. sanctions.

The power and integrity of OFAC sanctions derive not only from OFAC's ability to designate and add persons to the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons (SDN) List, but also from its willingness to remove persons from the SDN List consistent with the law. The ultimate goal of sanctions is not to punish, but to bring about a positive change in behavior. For information concerning the process for seeking removal from an OFAC list, including the SDN List, please refer to OFAC's Frequently Asked Question 897. Detailed information on the process to submit a request for removal from an OFAC sanctions list.

Click here for identifying information on the individuals designated today.