

# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

## Treasury Sanctions the IRGC Cooperative Foundation and Senior Iranian Officials Connected to Protest Suppression

January 23, 2023

WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is designating Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Cooperative Foundation and five of its board members, the Deputy Minister of Intelligence and Security, and four senior IRGC commanders in Iran under human rights authorities. Today’s action, in coordination with both the United Kingdom and European Union, targets a key economic pillar of the IRGC, which funds much of the regime’s brutal suppression; as well as senior security officials coordinating Tehran’s crackdown at the national and provincial levels.

“The United States remains committed to supporting the Iranian people in their demands for human rights and other fundamental freedoms,” said Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Brian E. Nelson. “Along with our partners, we will continue to hold the Iranian regime accountable so long as it relies upon violence, sham trials, the execution of protestors, and other means of suppressing its people.”

Today’s actions are being 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 an official of the Government of Iran or a person acting on behalf of the Government of Iran. This is the ninth round of OFAC designations targeting actors responsible for the crackdown on peaceful demonstrators and efforts to disrupt and cut Iran’s access to the global internet since nationwide protests began in 2022. Previous designations include Prosecutor General Mohammad Jafar Montazeri, Minister of Interior Ahmad Vahidi, Minister of Intelligence Esmail Khatib, and Minister of Information and Communications Technology Eisa Zarepour.

### **IRGC COOPERATIVE FOUNDATION**

The **IRGC Cooperative Foundation** is an economic conglomerate established by senior IRGC officials to manage the group’s investments and presence in numerous sectors of the Iranian

economy, including manufacturing and construction. The IRGC Cooperative Foundation serves as a slush fund for the IRGC's personnel and their business interests. Though ostensibly established to support IRGC service members, the IRGC Cooperative Foundation has morphed into a wellspring of corruption and graft, perpetrated by senior members of the organization. IRGC Cooperative Foundation funds have likewise supported the IRGC's military adventures abroad, including into the pockets of militant groups associated with the IRGC's external operations arm, the IRGC-Qods Force.

With national protests in their fourth month, the IRGC continues to aggressively crack down on peaceful demonstrations and has played a leading role in suppressing protests through extensive human rights abuses.

The IRGC Cooperative Foundation is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13553 for being owned or controlled by, directly or indirectly, the IRGC. The IRGC Cooperative Foundation was previously designated pursuant to counterterrorism and non-proliferation authorities.

**Ali Asghar Norouzi (Norouzi)** serves as the chairman of the IRGC Cooperative Foundation's board of directors. In his position as a senior IRGC officer, Norouzi has played a crucial role in facilitating the transfer of funds and weapons to regional proxies in the Middle East.

**Seyyed Amin Ala Emami Tabatabai (Tabatabai)** serves as vice chairman of the IRGC Cooperative Foundation's board of directors and its managing director.

**Ahmad Karimi (Karimi)**, **Yahya Ala'oddini (Ala'oddini)**, and **Jamal Babamoradi (Babamoradi)** all serve on the IRGC Cooperative Foundation's board of directors.

Norouzi, Tabatabai, Karimi, Ala'oddini, and Babamoradi 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 Cooperative Foundation.

## **IRGC OFFICERS**

**Mohammad Nazar Azimi (Azimi)** serves as the commander of the IRGC's Najaf Ashraf West Headquarters, the IRGC command responsible for the western Iranian provinces of Kermanshah, Hamadan, and Ilam. Azimi's deputy, **Kourosh Asiabani (Asiabani)**, commander of the Shahid Kazemi Headquarters, oversees IRGC activities in Kermanshah province.

IRGC forces under the command of Azimi and Asiabani have committed some of the worst acts of violence by Iranian security forces since the beginning of protests in September 2022.

In Javanrud, a small town in Kermanshah province, IRGC troops used live ammunition, including from semi-heavy machine guns, to quell protests, killing and wounding dozens. The IRGC has shelled vehicles attempting to deliver blood bags to those wounded in local hospitals, preventing their delivery. Witnesses have personally linked Asiabani to these abuses.

**Mojtaba Fada (Fada)**, the IRGC commander of Isfahan Province and a member of its provincial security council, has overseen the crackdown on regime opponents in Isfahan. During nationwide protests in November 2019 sparked by economic grievances, Fada ordered mass arrests and directed the use of live ammunition against unarmed protestors, during which over 20 people were killed.

Treasury is also designating today **Hossein Tanavar (Tanavar)**, who serves as the commander of the 17th IRGC Division in Qom, Iran.

Azimi, Asiabani, Fada, and Tanavar 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.

## **NASER RASHEDI**

**Naser Rashedi (Rashedi)** serves as the Deputy Minister for Intelligence in the Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS). In September 2022, Treasury designated Rashedi's superior, Esmail Khatib, and MOIS pursuant to E.O. 13694, as amended, for their involvement in malicious cyber activity against the Albanian government and its people. MOIS was previously designated pursuant to E.O. 13553 in February 2012 for its central role in perpetrating human rights abuses against the people of Iran. MOIS agents have been linked to a wide range of human rights abuses meant to suppress the protests that began in September 2022, including beatings, sexual abuse, surveillance and censorship, and the coerced confessions of prisoners.

Rashedi is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13553 for having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, MOIS.

## **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. All transactions 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 are prohibited.

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.](#)

[For identifying information on the individuals designated today.](#)

###