Marking International Women’s Day, Treasury Sanctions Iranian Officials and Entities for Serious Human Rights Abuses

March 8, 2023

Coordinated Action with the European Union, the United Kingdom, and Australia

WASHINGTON — Today, the Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is sanctioning several Iranian regime officials and entities, including two senior officials in Iran’s prison system who have been responsible for serious human rights abuses against women and girls. OFAC is also taking action against the top commander of the Iranian army and a high-ranking leader in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), as well as an Iranian official who was central to the regime’s efforts to block internet access. Finally, OFAC is sanctioning three Iranian companies and their leadership for enabling the violent repression by the Iranian Law Enforcement Forces (LEF) of peaceful protestors, including many women and girls.

Iran’s prisons are notorious for mistreatment, abuse, and death. Women prisoners, especially, suffer sexual violence, torture, and other cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment.

“The United States, along with our partners and allies, stand with the women of Iran, who advocate for fundamental freedoms in the face of a brutal regime that treats women as second-class citizens and attempts to suppress their voices by any means,” said Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Brian E. Nelson. “We will continue to take action against the regime, which perpetuates abuse and violence against its own citizens—especially women and girls.”

Marking International Women’s Day, Treasury is taking this action in coordination with allies and partners — the European Union, United Kingdom, and Australia — demonstrating a unified commitment to holding the Iranian regime to account for denying the women and girls of Iran their human rights and dignity. These designations are pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13553, which authorizes the imposition of sanctions on certain persons with respect to serious human rights abuses by the Government of Iran, and E.O. 13846, which authorizes sanctions on persons who engage in censorship or other activities with respect to Iran.

This is the tenth round of OFAC designations targeting the Iranian regime for its crackdown on peaceful demonstrators and depriving the Iranian people of access to the global internet since
nationwide protests began in September 2022.

**PRISON OFFICIALS**

**Ali Chaharmahali (Chaharmahali)** is the Director-General of Alborz Province Prisons, a region that is home to some of Iran’s most notorious prisons. Protestors who have been sent to prisons under Chaharmahali’s oversight have been tortured and pressured into forced confessions. Prior to serving as the Director-General of Alborz Province Prisons, Chaharmahali served as warden of the infamous Evin Prison, under whose oversight prison officials, including members of the IRGC, tortured political opponents of the regime, including through the use of electrocutions, burnings, and severe beatings. Female inmates at Evin Prison during Chaharmahli’s tenure were frequently threatened with rape as a form of coercion. The women’s ward of Evin Prison lacks women’s health services and women have been denied access to medical care.

**Dariush Bakhshi (Bakhshi)** serves as the head of Orumiyeh Central Prison in West Azerbaijan Province, Iran. Women in Orumiyeh Central Prison, including protestors, have been subjected to sexual violence and other forms of mistreatment at the hands of prison officials and IRGC interrogators. Prisons officials under Bakshi’s oversight have used their positions of power to coerce women inmates into having sexual relations in exchange for better treatment, such as short furloughs from prison. Bakhshi has personally overseen the physical abuse of prisoners held for political or religious reasons. Prison officials in his jurisdiction have attacked such prisoners with batons, tear gas, and electroshock weapons.

Chaharmahali and Bakhshi are being designated pursuant to E.O. 13553 for being persons acting on behalf of the Government of Iran (GoI) (including members of paramilitary organizations) who are 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.

**LEF PROCUREMENT COMPANIES**

Iranian company **Naji Pas Company (Naji Pas)** is responsible for supplying Iran’s security services, including the LEF, with equipment and consumable goods from domestic and international suppliers.

The LEF, which has routinely employed lethal force to suppress Iranian protests, was designated pursuant to E.O. 13553 on June 9, 2011, for being responsible for or complicit in serious human rights abuses in Iran since the June 2009 disputed presidential election.
Additionally, Naji Pas helps organize Iran’s annual International Police, Safety, and Security Equipment (IPAS) exhibition, which is attended by hundreds of companies looking to sell equipment and technology to the LEF. Reza Asgharian (Asgharian), the CEO of Naji Pas, has played a leading role in the IPAS exhibition.

Naji Pas is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13553 for having materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, the LEF.

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

Naji Pars Amin Institute (Naji Pars) is licensed by the LEF to provide a wide range of protection and security services for various Iranian businesses and government facilities under the supervision of the LEF. Naji Pars specializes in protection and surveillance matters and provides advisory services and training to the LEF. The LEF is directly involved in management of Naji Pars’ business operations. Bahram Abdollahinejad (Abdollahinejad) is the CEO of Naji Pars.

Naji Pars is being designated for being owned or controlled by, directly or indirectly, the LEF.

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

Entebagh Gostar Sepehr Company, under the leadership of its CEO, Gholamreza Ramezanian Sani (Sani), manufactures or imports a wide variety of police-related equipment, much of which is used by the LEF to violently suppress protests. Its products include equipment ranging from electroshock weapons and bulletproof gear to sniper rifles and firearm accessories such as stocks and silencers.

Entebagh Gostar Sepehr Company is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13553 for having materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, the LEF.

Sani is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13553 for having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, Entebagh Gostar Sepehr Company.

INTERNET CENSORSHIP

Mahdi Amiri (Amiri) serves as the Technical Director of the Cyberspace Affairs Deputy of the Prosecutor General’s Office. In this role, Amiri has worked directly with Iran’s chief internet censorship body, the Committee for Determining Instances of Criminal Content (CDICC), and the
Iranian Cyber Police to block and censor content on certain websites. Iranian authorities have repeatedly used internet filtering, such as blocking websites and internet shutdowns, to quell protests by limiting communication and the sharing of information.

Mahdi Amiri is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13846 for acting or having purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, the CDICC, a person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to E.O. 13628, which was revoked and superseded by E.O. 13846. The CDICC was designated pursuant to E.O. 13628 on May 30, 2013, for engaging in censorship or other activities with respect to Iran on or after June 12, 2009, that prohibit, limit, or penalize the exercise of freedom of expression or assembly by citizens of Iran or that limit access to print or broadcast media.

**OVERSEEING PROTEST SUPPRESSION**

Sayyed Abdolrahim Mousavi (Mousavi) has served as the Commander-in-Chief of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army (IRIA) since August 2017. Units under his control have been involved in the suppression of demonstrations during both the November 2019 economic protests and protests following the death of Mahsa Amini in September 2022. Troops under Mousavi’s command used machine guns to fire indiscriminately into crowds of protestors.

Mousavi is being designated for being an official of the GoI or a person acting on behalf of the GoI (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.

Habib Shahsavari (Shahsavari) acts as the IRGC Commander of the Shohada Provincial Corps in West Azerbaijan Province. Shahsavari also served as one of the deputy commanders of IRGC’s northwest Hamzeh Sayyid al-Shohada Headquarters. Shahsavari previously served as the commander of the IRGC’s West Azerbaijan Martyrs Corp, where forces under his command reportedly detained and tortured individuals in IRGC intelligence detention centers. His subordinates reportedly have shot and killed civilians in West Azerbaijan and Kurdistan.

Shahsavari is being designated 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. 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 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 here. For detailed information on the process to submit a request for removal from an OFAC sanctions list, please click here.

Click here for identifying information on the individuals designated today.

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