

Treasury Designates Senior ISIS–Somalia Financier

July 27, 2023

WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) imposed sanctions on **Abdiweli Mohamed Yusuf**, the head of the finance office of the Somalia-based affiliate of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), designating him as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT). Abdiweli Mohamed Yusuf has played a key role in the delivery of foreign fighters, supplies, and ammunition on behalf of ISIS-Somalia, which serves as a hub for disbursing funds and guidance to ISIS branches and networks across the continent. ISIS-Somalia generates much of its revenue through extortion, specifically targeting local communities for money and recruits, often under the threat of violence.

“Terrorist groups, and ISIS-Somalia specifically, seek to exploit institutional vulnerabilities to finance their activities. The sanctions imposed today demonstrate the U.S. commitment to leveraging our authorities in support to our partners, including the Federal Government of Somalia, in their efforts to counter terrorist financing and strengthen national and regional stability and security,” said Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Brian E. Nelson after meeting with government officials and the Somali private sector in Mogadishu.

Today’s action builds on OFAC’s previous [designations](#) in November 2022 of a transnational ISIS-Somalia weapons trafficking network and senior members of the terrorist group. It also follows U.S. military action in January of this year that targeted and killed Somalia-based ISIS leader Suhayl Salim Abd El-Rahman, more commonly known as Bilal al-Sudani.

ISIS FINANCING IN SOMALIA

ISIS-Somalia has continued to facilitate financial transfers, including through mobile money, to support ISIS’s destabilizing activities across Africa. ISIS-Somalia has received most of its revenue — amounting to hundreds of thousands of dollars per month — from the extortion of financial institutions, mobile money service providers, and other local businesses, most of which were located in the Port of Bosaso in Bari region, Somalia. ISIS has moved these funds via cash transfers, and money laundering through businesses, hawalas, banks, and mobile money transfers within Somalia. In the first half of 2022, ISIS-Somalia generated nearly \$2 million by collecting extortion

payments from local businesses, related imports, livestock, and agriculture. In 2021, ISIS-Somalia generated an estimated \$2.5 million in revenue. ISIS-Somalia is one of the most significant ISIS affiliates in Africa, generating revenue for ISIS to disburse to branches and networks across the continent.

Abdiweli Mohamed Yusuf has served as the head of ISIS-Somalia's finance office since at least late 2019. Yusuf, a key senior member of ISIS-Somalia, meets with and reports to other ISIS leaders in Somalia, including ISIS al-Karrar office emir Abdiqadir Mumin and ISIS-Somalia emir Abdirahman Fahiyeh Isse Mohamud, whom the Department of State and OFAC designated in 2016 and 2022, respectively. Abdiweli Mohamed Yusuf has also directed the delivery of foreign fighters, supplies, and ammunition on behalf of ISIS. Yusuf was partially responsible for managing the revenue generated by ISIS-Somalia and has facilitated transfers for ISIS.

Abdiweli Mohamed Yusuf is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended, for having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, ISIS-Somalia.

SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS

As a result of today's action, all property and interests in property of the designated individual described 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, individually or in the aggregate, 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 exempt, OFAC's regulations generally prohibit 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.

In addition, financial institutions and other persons that engage in certain transactions or activities with the sanctioned entities and individuals may expose themselves to sanctions or be subject to an enforcement action. The prohibitions include the making of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services by, to, or for the benefit of any designated person, or the receipt of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services from any such person.

Furthermore, engaging in certain transactions with a number of the individuals and entities designated today entails risk of secondary sanctions pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended. Pursuant to this authority, OFAC can prohibit or impose strict conditions on the opening or maintaining in the United States of a correspondent account or a payable-through account of a

foreign financial institution that knowingly conducted or facilitated any significant transaction on behalf of a Specially Designated Global Terrorist.

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 more information on the individual designated today.](#)

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