

Treasury Designates Hizballah Operatives and Financial Facilitators in South America and Lebanon

September 12, 2023

WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), in coordination with the **Drug Enforcement Administration**, designated key Hizballah operatives and financial facilitators in South America and Lebanon. This action includes **Amer Mohamed Akil Rada**, who in addition to his role as a senior Hizballah operative, was one of the operational members of Hizballah who carried out the terrorist attack against the Asociacion Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA) in Argentina in 1994 that killed 85 people. **Amer and his associates manage a commercial enterprise for Hizballah, including charcoal exports to Lebanon.** This action targets seven key individuals and entities in this network that generates revenue for Hizballah's terrorist activities and enables the terrorist group's presence and nefarious activities in Latin America. Since its inception, Hizballah has established an extensive global infrastructure that includes commercial activities that allow Hizballah operatives to travel freely, strategically case targets, and transfer materials and funds.

"Today's action underscores the U.S. government's commitment to pursuing Hizballah operatives and financiers no matter their location," said Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Brian E. Nelson. "We will continue to root out those who seek to abuse the U.S. and international financial system to fund and engage in terrorism."

OFAC is designating this South America- and Lebanon-based network of family members, business associates, and companies under E.O. 13224, as amended, which targets terrorists, terrorist organizations, leaders, and officials of terrorist groups, and those providing support to terrorists or acts of terrorism.

AMER MOHAMED AKIL RADA

Amer Mohamed Akil Rada (Amer) is a longtime Hizballah member who currently lives in Lebanon but served in an operational role for the group for over a decade in South America. Amer functioned as a senior operative for Hizballah's External Security Organization (ESO),

which is responsible for Hizballah's extraterritorial operations. Amer has coordinated the activities of various commercial enterprises for Hizballah, including charcoal exports from Colombia to Lebanon. As a Hizballah operative and leader, Amer uses as much as 80 percent of the proceeds of his commercial enterprise to benefit Hizballah.

In addition, Amer worked in close coordination with U.S.-designated Salman Raouf Salman to case targets around South America on behalf of Hizballah and was one of the operational members of Hizballah who carried out the AMIA bombing, the 1994 attack on the community center for the largest Jewish community in South America, killing 85 people and wounding hundreds more. He was also allegedly involved in the Israeli embassy bombing in Buenos Aires in 1992.

Amer 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, Hizballah.

SAMER AKIL RADA AND BCI TECHNOLOGIES C.A.

Samer Akil Rada (Samer), Amer's brother, is a member of Hizballah and has been actively linked to crimes related to illicit drug trafficking and money laundering in various countries in Latin America. Samer was previously based in Belize but fled because of a drug-related case. He was also implicated in the shipment of 500 kilograms of cocaine worth approximately \$15 million that were hidden in fruit shipments and ultimately seized in El Salvador. Samer is the General Manager and CEO of Venezuela-based **BCI Technologies C.A.**

Samer is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended, for having materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, Hizballah. BCI Technologies is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended, for being owned, controlled, or directed by, directly or indirectly, Samer.

MAHDY AKIL HELBAWI AND ZANGA S.A.S.

Mahdy Akil Helbawi (Helbawi) is Amer's son and conducts, on Amer's behalf, business activities in Colombia, almost certainly in an effort to evade detection and circumvent sanctions. Helbawi established a Colombia-based charcoal company Zanga S.A.S., which has been the main supplier of companies controlled by individuals in this network, including Amer. Helbawi is the CEO of **Zanga S.A.S.**

Helbawi is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended, for having materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, Amer. Zanga S.A.S. is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended, for being owned, controlled, or directed by, directly or indirectly, Helbawi.

BLACK DIAMOND SARL AND ALI ISMAIL AJROUCH

Zanga S.A.S. received transfers totaling approximately \$40,000 from Lebanon-based company **Black Diamond SARL**, citing purchases of coal or charcoal. **Ali Ismail Ajrouch** is the owner of Black Diamond SARL.

Black Diamond SARL is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended, for having materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, Zanga S.A.S. Ali Ismail Ajrouch is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended, for owning or controlling, directly or indirectly, Black Diamond SARL.

SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS

As a result of today's action, all property and interests in property of the individuals and entities named above, and of any entities that are owned, directly or indirectly, 50 percent or more by them, individually, or with other blocked persons, that are in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons must be blocked and reported to OFAC. OFAC's 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, engaging in certain transactions with the individuals and entities designated today entails risk of secondary sanctions pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended. Two individuals being designated today are also subject to the Hizballah Financial Sanctions Regulations, which implement the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015, as amended by the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Amendments Act of 2018. Pursuant to these authorities, 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 by a foreign financial institution that either knowingly conducted or facilitated any significant transaction on behalf

of a Specially Designated Global Terrorist or, among other things, knowingly facilitates a significant transaction for Hizballah or certain persons designated for their connection to Hizballah.

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 here](#). For detailed information on the process to submit a request for [removal from an OFAC sanctions list, please click here](#).

[View identifying information related to today's action.](#)

###