

U.S. and UK Target Houthi Forces Leadership for Supporting Acts of Terrorism

January 25, 2024

WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) imposed sanctions on key officials of the forces of Ansarallah, commonly known as the Houthis, for their support to acts of terrorism targeting commercial shipping. Today’s action targets four individuals who have supported the Houthis’ recent attacks against commercial vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, including holding civilian crews hostage. Concurrent with OFAC’s designations, the United Kingdom is also imposing sanctions on these key figures of Houthi forces.

“The Houthis’ persistent terrorist attacks on merchant vessels and their civilian crews lawfully transiting the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden threaten to disrupt international supply chains and the freedom of navigation, which is critical to global security, stability, and prosperity,” said Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Brian E. Nelson. “Today’s joint action with the United Kingdom demonstrates our collective action to leverage all authorities to stop these attacks.”

On January 17, 2024, the U.S. Department of State [announced](#) the designation of Ansarallah as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT), effective February 16, 2024. Today’s OFAC designation of Houthi forces officials, taken in advance of the effective date of the designation of Ansarallah, serves to further promote accountability for the group’s recent terrorist attacks. Individuals targeted today are being designated pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13224, as amended, which targets terrorist groups, their supporters, and those who aid acts of terrorism.

HOUTHİ FORCES OFFICIALS

Since October 2023, the Houthis have launched numerous ballistic missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) against vessels transiting the Red Sea and surrounding waterways, striking and causing significant damage to several merchant ships. In November, Houthi

forces boarded and hijacked the merchant vessel *Galaxy Leader* while it was underway in the Red Sea.

Mohamed al-Atifi (al-Atifi), the so-called Houthi “Minister of Defense,” has publicly stated that the Houthis will “turn the Red Sea into a graveyard” in response to any perceived action against Yemen by the U.S.-led Operation Prosperity Guardian, a coalition of ten nations deployed to the Red Sea to protect civilian commercial vessels from Houthi attacks.

Muhammad Fadl Abd al-Nabi (al-Nabi) is the so-called “Commander” of the Houthis’ maritime forces. Al-Nabi, alongside Mohamed Al-Atifi, visited the *Galaxy Leader*, the vessel hijacked by the Houthis on November 19, 2023. Al-Nabi has publicly committed to continuing attacks against vessels transiting the Red Sea.

Muhammad Ali al-Qadiri (al-Qadiri), the so-called Houthi “Coastal Defense Forces Chief” and “Director of the Houthi Naval College,” was tasked with executing attacks against vessels in the Red Sea. Al-Qadiri has publicly threatened to attack international maritime traffic in the Red Sea using advanced weapons and to expand the Houthis’ attack campaign against vessels sailing along the entire western coast of Yemen.

Muhammad Ahmad al-Talibi (al-Talibi), who serves as the so-called “Director of Procurement” for the Houthi forces, leads the Houthis’ efforts to smuggle Iranian-provided weapons, missiles, UAVs, and components needed to manufacture these weapons systems into Yemen. In his role, al-Talibi coordinates arms shipments through the smuggling networks of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and answers directly to principal Houthi forces decision makers.

Muhammad Ali al-Qadiri, Muhammad Ahmad al-Talibi, Mohamed al-Atifi, and Muhammad Fadl Abd al-Nabi are being designated pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended, for having materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or good or services to or in support of an act of terrorism, as defined in section 3(d) of E.O. 13224, as amended.

SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS

As a result of today’s action, all property and interests in property of the designated persons 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, non-U.S. financial institutions and other persons that engage in certain transactions or activities with sanctioned entities and individuals may expose themselves to sanctions risk 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.

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 individuals designated today.](#)

Additional Treasury resources on countering the financing of terrorism:

- [2022 National Terrorist Financing Risk Assessment](#) 
- [National Strategy for Combatting Terrorist and Other Illicit Financing](#) 
- [Action Plan to Address Illicit Financing Risks of Digital Assets](#) 
- [FATF Report: Virtual Assets Red Flag Indicators of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing](#)
- [Terrorist Financing Targeting Center](#)

###