

Treasury Targets Hamas UAV Unit Officials and Cyber Actor

April 12, 2024

WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is taking action against Hamas, targeting Gaza- and Lebanon-based leaders of the terrorist group’s offensive cyber and unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) operations. Concurrent with this action, the European Union is imposing sanctions targeting Hamas.

“Today’s joint action reinforces our continued, collective focus on disrupting Hamas’s ability to conduct further attacks, including through cyber warfare and the production of UAVs,” said Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Brian E. Nelson. “Treasury, in coordination with our allies and partners, will continue to target Hamas’s facilitation networks wherever they operate, including in the cyber domain.”

This action builds on OFAC’s recent joint designations with Australia and the United Kingdom on [January 22, 2024](#) that targeted key Hamas financial facilitators, actions with the United Kingdom on [March 27, 2024](#), and [December 13, 2023](#) and [November 14, 2023](#), targeting Hamas leaders and financiers; as well as U.S. actions on [October 27, 2023](#), targeting sources of Hamas support and financing; [October 18, 2023](#), targeting Hamas operatives and financial facilitators; and [May 2022](#), designating officials and companies involved in managing Hamas’s secret international investment portfolio. Individuals and entities targeted today are being designated pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13224, as amended, which targets terrorist groups and their supporters.

HAMAS INFORMATION WARFARE CHIEF AND UAV CELL OFFICIALS

Hudhayfa Samir ‘Abdallah al-Kahlut (al-Kahlut) also known as “Abu Ubaida” has been the spokesman for the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades (al-Qassam Brigades), the military wing of Hamas in Gaza, since at least 2007. He publicly threatened to execute civilian hostages held by Hamas following the terrorist group’s October 7, 2023 attacks on Israel. Al-Kahlut leads the cyber influence department of al-Qassam Brigades. He was involved in procuring servers and

domains in Iran to host the official al-Qassam Brigades website in cooperation with Iranian institutions.

William Abu Shanab (Abu Shanab) is the commander of the Lebanon-based al-Shimali unit, which is supported by Hamas's Construction Bureau in Lebanon and has operations across Lebanon. The unit manages projects for the development and production of automatic 120mm mortars, mobile launchers for Grad rockets, development and production of flight simulators, UAVs for intelligence gathering and suicide UAVs. The unit's hundreds of operatives are trained on a range of skill sets to support Hamas terrorist operations, including urban warfare, UAV pilot training, aeronautics, naval diving, and intelligence gathering, among others. Abu Shanab previously served as an operative in the unit's UAV cell after undergoing training in Iran and Southeast Asia. He is believed to be heavily involved in the manufacture of the UAVs used by Hamas to conduct operations.

Bara'a Hasan Farhat (Farhat) is the assistant to Abu Shanab, the commander of the al-Shimali unit where **Khalil Muhammad 'Azzam ('Azzam)** is an intelligence official.

OFAC is designating al-Kahlut, Abu Shanab, Farhat, and 'Azzam pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended, for having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, Hamas, a person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to E.O. 13224.

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 blocked 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](#)

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