

Treasury Increases Sanctions Against Syria

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(Archived Content)

Action Targets Senior Syrian Officials as well as Companies

Supporting the Government of Syria and Linked to Iran's IRGC-QF and Hizballah

WASHINGTON – Since peaceful protests against the Assad regime began more than two years ago, the U.S. Department of the Treasury has employed a series of new Executive Orders (E.O.) to sanction and expose those involved in human rights abuses in Syria as well as senior Syrian government officials. Continuing these efforts, the Treasury Department today designated four senior officials of the Syrian government; one airline responsible for transporting weaponry to the Assad regime; and one privately owned television station for providing services to the Syrian government – including the despicable practice of airing forced confessions. To date, the United States has imposed sanctions on the Government of Syria, including its Central Bank and oil companies, and more than 100 individuals and entities under a number of our authorities.

“Treasury will continue to use all of the tools at our disposal to expose and disrupt the financial networks of those responsible for the Syrian government’s egregious campaign to suppress its people,” said Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David S. Cohen. “We are determined to target activity contributing to the abhorrent humanitarian situation in Syria – whether by overseeing the Assad government’s indiscriminate killing of civilians, shipping weapons to the Syrian government, abusing positions of trust to supply intelligence to the regime, or disseminating the regime’s propaganda.”

Today, the Treasury Department designated four senior officials of the Syrian government, including the Minister of Defense Fahd Jassem al-Frej, the Minister of Health Sa’ad Abdel-Salam al-Nayef, the Minister of Industry Adnan Abdo Al-Sukhni, and the Minister of Justice Najm Hamad al-Ahmad, pursuant to E.O. 13573, which targets the Syrian regime’s continuing escalation of violence against the Syrian people. Fahd Jassem al-Frej was appointed Minister of Defense and Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Army and the Armed Forces by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on July 18, 2012, following the death of his predecessor Dawood Rajiha. In August 2012, President Assad appointed Adnan Abdo Al-Sukhni as Minister of Industry, Najm Hamad Al-Ahmad as Minister of Justice, and Sa’ad Abdel-Salam al-Nayef as Minister of Health.

Minister of Defense al-Frej is also being designated pursuant to E.O. 13572 for his role in the commission of human rights abuses in Syria. During his time as Syrian Minister of Defense, the Syrian military forces have wantonly and capriciously killed Syrian civilians, including through the use of summary executions and indiscriminate airstrikes against civilians. Some of these airstrikes killed civilians waiting outside of bakeries.

The Treasury Department today also designated the Syrian government-owned Syrian Arab Airlines, pursuant to our counter-terrorism authority, E.O. 13224, for acting for or on behalf of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force (IRGC-QF). The IRGC-QF has used Syrian Arab Airlines cargo flights to transport illicit cargo – including weapons and ammunition – to Syria. Hizballah, Iran's terrorist proxy, helped facilitate these flights for the IRGC-QF. The weapons, suspected to include mortars, small arms, rockets, and light anti-aircraft guns, have been sent to Syria to support the Syrian regime's violent crackdown against its own people. Syrian Arab Airlines is also being identified as part of the Government of Syria pursuant to E.O. 13582, which blocks the property of the Syrian government.

Finally, today's action targets Al-Dunya Television, a privately owned 24-hour, satellite channel that began transmission in March 2007. Al-Dunya Television is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13582 for its links to the Government of Syria. Correspondents of Al-Dunya and official Syrian television allegedly conducted interviews that were not broadcast, but were delivered to Syrian intelligence personnel who used them to arrest interviewees who refuted the reports of Syrian authorities. After ransacking and storming farms in Harasta, Syria, Syrian government forces planted weapons and ammunition and brought in an Al-Dunya crew to falsely portray the location as a weapons depot. Correspondents from Al-Dunya and Syrian television accompanied Syrian military intelligence units to interview detainees. The detainees were interviewed after being tortured and threatened with death to force them to say what the Government of Syria wanted.

U.S. persons are generally prohibited from engaging in any transactions with the individuals and entities designated today, and any assets of those designees subject to U.S. jurisdiction are frozen.

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