TREASURY SANCTIONS SYRIA INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC BANK

home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/tg1596

May 30, 2012

(Archived Content)

Treasury Takes New Action to Isolate the Assad Regime from the International Financial System

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of the Treasury today designated the Syria International Islamic Bank (SIIB) pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13382 for acting for or on behalf of the Commercial Bank of Syria and providing services to the Syrian Lebanese Commercial Bank, both of which are subject to U.S. and international sanctions. SIIB has acted as a front for the Commercial Bank of Syria, which has allowed that ban – Syria's largest commercial bank – to circumvent sanctions against it by the United States, the European Union and the Arab League.

"Today's action will add to the economic pressure on the Assad regime by closing off a key evasion route. The Treasury Department, working with others around the world who share our goal of ending the brutal repression of the Syrian people, will continue to close off the Assad regime's access to the international financial system," said Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David S. Cohen.

SIIB was established in Damascus in September 2007 and has 20 branches and three representative offices throughout Syria. From 2011 to 2012, SIIB surreptitiously facilitated financing worth almost $150 million on behalf of the Commercial Bank of Syria. Financial arrangements that were purportedly made by SIIB were actually made by the Commercial Bank of Syria. In addition to working with the Commercial Bank of Syria to circumvent sanctions, in 2012, SIIB facilitated several substantial payments for the Syrian Lebanese Commercial Bank, and facilitated a payment from this designated bank to an entity of proliferation concern.

The Treasury Department designated the Commercial Bank of Syria and its subsidiary, Syrian Lebanese Commercial Bank, under E.O. 13382 on August 10, 2011, based on the Commercial Bank of Syria's support to entities related to Syrian and North Korean proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. To view the August 2011 designation click here.

The Treasury Department is working closely with partners in the international community to isolate the Assad regime from the international financial system.

With respect to today's action, the U.S. Government consulted with the Government of Qatar on the designation of SIIB under E.O. 13382, and the Government of Qatar is taking corresponding actions. We commend the Government of Qatar for its important regional and international role in maintaining economic pressure on the Assad regime. Today's action does not target the Qatari investors who hold investments in SIIB.

Moreover, on June 6, Treasury will host in Washington the second meeting of the Friends of the Syrian People International Working Group on Sanctions. The meeting, which the United States will co-chair with the governments of Turkey and Qatar, will focus on ways to further strengthen international sanctions against the Syrian regime.

Executive Order (E.O.) 13382, signed on June 28, 2005, is an authority aimed at freezing the assets of proliferators of weapons of mass destruction and their supporters, and at isolating them from the U.S. financial and commercial systems. Designations under E.O. 13382 generally prohibit transactions between the designees and any U.S. person, and freeze any assets the designees may have under U.S. jurisdiction. Section 1(a)(iii) of E.O. 13382 provides for the designation of persons who have provided, or attempted to provide, financial, material, technological, or other support for, or goods or services in support of persons blocked under the Order. Section 1(a)(iv) of E.O. 13382 provides for the designation of persons which are owned or controlled by, or acting or purporting to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, of persons blocked under the Order.

Identifier:

Entity: Syria International Islamic Bank
AKA: Syrian International Islamic Bank
AKA: SIIB
Location: Syria International Islamic Bank Building, Main Highway Road

Al Mazzeh Area, P.O. Box 35494, Damascus, Syria
Alt. Location: PO Box 35494, Mezza'h Vellat Sharqia'h, beside the Consulate of Saudi Arabia Damascus, Syria

###