

Treasury Lifts Sanctions Against Defected Syrian Prime Minister

 home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/tg1677

Press Releases

August 14, 2012

(Archived Content)

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of the Treasury today is lifting sanctions against former Prime Minister of Syria Riyad Hijab who recently severed his ties with the Assad regime. This action is being taken because Hijab is no longer a senior official of the Government of Syria. Hijab’s name will be removed from Treasury’s Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) and Blocked Persons List, and he is no longer subject to an asset freeze.

Since the uprising against the Assad regime began last year, the United States has used a number of different authorities to target and sanction those involved in human rights abuse in Syria, senior Syrian government officials, and the Syrian government itself in an effort to hasten the removal of the Assad regime from power and end the government’s campaign of violence against the Syrian people.

“Recent civilian and military defections from the Assad regime are further indications that the government is crumbling and losing its grip on power,” said Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David S. Cohen. “The United States encourages other officials within the Syrian government, in both the political and military ranks, to take similarly courageous steps to reject the Assad regime and stand with the Syrian people.”

On July 18, 2012, Treasury designated 29 senior officials of the Syrian government, including Prime Minister Riyad Hijab, pursuant to Executive Order 13573 of May 18, 2011 “Blocking Property of Senior Officials of the Government of Syria.” Three weeks later Hijab chose to defect from the Syrian government and denounce its campaign of violence.

One of the goals of identifying and levying sanctions on specific individuals is to encourage them to reconsider their involvement with the current Syrian government. Today’s action illustrates the flexibility and responsiveness of the U.S. sanctions regime, allowing a prompt response to events on the ground. It is not too late for others who continue to provide support to the Assad regime to sever their ties and to be relieved of the burden of sanctions.

Newly appointed Prime Minister Wael Nader Al-Halqi was designated by the Treasury Department in July 2012, in his previous position as the Minister of Health. The sanctions against Al-Halqi remain in effect.

###