

# Treasury Sanctions Networks Providing Support to the Government of Syria

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July 21, 2016

*(Archived Content)*

## *Action Targets the Government of Syria and Proliferators of Weapons of Mass Destruction*

**WASHINGTON** – In response to continuing violence by the Assad regime against its citizens, the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) today designated eight individuals and seven entities for providing support or services to the Government of Syria, aiding Syria’s weapons of mass destruction program, and/or supporting designated individuals and entities. As a result of today’s action, any property or interests in property of the designated persons in the possession or control of U.S. persons or within the United States must be blocked. Additionally, transactions by U.S. persons involving the designated persons are generally prohibited.

“From expanding its weapons of mass destruction program to inflicting horrific violence upon the Syrian people, the Assad regime relentlessly engages in destabilizing behavior,” said Adam J. Szubin, Acting Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence. “Treasury will continue to act against those responsible for fueling the Assad regime’s repressive actions and dangerous weapons proliferation.”

Today’s action was taken pursuant to four Executive Orders (E.O.s) related to Syria: E.O. 13582 targets the Government of Syria and its supporters; E.O. 13382 targets proliferators of weapons of mass destruction and their supporters; E.O. 13572 targets Syrian officials and others responsible for human rights abuses in Syria; and E.O. 13573 targets senior officials of the Government of Syria.

## *Government of Syria Financial Facilitation, Including Oil-Related Assistance*

OFAC designated Yusuf Arbash and Nabil Tizini pursuant to E.O. 13582 for materially assisting, sponsoring, or providing financial, material or technological support for, or goods in services in support of, and acting for or on behalf of, Hesco Engineering and Construction Ltd (Hesco), a designated Syrian engineering and construction company that operates energy production facilities in Syria, or other designated individuals.

**Yusuf Arbash** is the head and director of Hesco's office in Russia. In August 2015, he worked with officials of a Russian construction group to arrange a financial transfer from Syria. Arbash, accompanied in this meeting by his father-in-law and previously-designated Hesco founder George Haswani, worked to conceal the Syrian origin of those funds.

**Nabil Tizini** is the financial manager for both Hesco's office in Russia and Yusuf Arbash. Nabil Tizini controlled bank accounts for Hesco and as part of his duties, confirmed a purchase order by Hesco for oilfield equipment worth hundreds of thousands of dollars.

#### *Government of Syria Military Procurement, Including Aircraft Tires and Weapons*

OFAC also designated today Yona Star International (Yona Star), Salah Habib, T-Rubber Co., Ltd (T-Rubber), and Jonha Lang (a.k.a. Lang Gangshan) pursuant to E.O. 13582 for materially assisting, sponsoring, or providing financial, material or technological support for, or goods in services in support of, and acting for or on behalf of, the Government of Syria or designated individuals and entities.

**Yona Star** has long acted as a shipping agent for the Syrian Air Force, as well as other designated Government of Syria entities, including the Scientific Studies and Research Center (SSRC), Syrian Air Force Intelligence, and the Army Supply Bureau. Yona Star has also attempted to ship aircraft tires to the Government of Syria. The company has offices in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Damascus, Syria.

**Salah Habib**, who manages Yona Star and serves as the company's owner and CEO, is a key figure in a network of intermediary and logistics firms based in the UAE that have shipped sensitive merchandise and war materials to Syria. SSRC regularly utilized Salah Habib's network to procure and send merchandise in violation of international sanctions against Syria.

**T-Rubber** supplied aircraft tires to the Syrian Ministry of Defense and Syrian Air Force. In 2012, T-Rubber had contracts valued at over \$2 million dollars with the Syrian Ministry of Defense for the purchase of aircraft tires, and in 2013, received payments from the Syrian Ministry of Defense on related contracts.

**Jonha Lang** is a T-Rubber representative and sales manager. In 2014, Lang helped a Yona Star employee in China negotiate the terms of a contract valued at over \$1 million for T-Rubber to sell aircraft tires to the Syrian Air Force.

#### *Government of Syria Financial Facilitation and Regime Insiders*

OFAC also designated today the following three individuals and three entities pursuant to E.O. 13582: Atiya Khuri, Moneta Transfer & Exchange, Aous Ali, Imad Khuri, E.K.-Ultra Financial Group Limited, and Argus Construction. Atiya Khuri, Moneta Transfer & Exchange, and Aous Ali are also concurrently designated today pursuant to E.O. 13572 and/or E.O. 13573.

**Atiya Khuri (alternative spelling Atiya Khouri)** is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13582 for materially assisting, sponsoring, or providing financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, and acting for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, the Government of Syria, including the Central Bank of Syria. He is also designated pursuant to E.O. 13572 for materially assisting, sponsoring, or providing financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, Rami Makhluf and Syriatel; and pursuant to E.O. 13573 for materially assisting, sponsoring, or providing financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, Central Bank of Syria Governor Adib Mayaleh.

Atiya Khuri operates concurrently-designated Moneta Transfer & Exchange and moves cash between Syria, Lebanon, and Russia on behalf of Adib Mayaleh, and with authority from the Government of Syria. He paid for fuel procurement for the Government of Syria using Moneta Transfer & Exchange and received a commission for these transactions. Atiya Khuri, together with previously-designated Mudalal Khuri, coordinated financial deals for the Makhluf family. He also managed interests for a company set up by Rami Makhluf.

**Moneta Transfer & Exchange** is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13582 for materially assisting, sponsoring, or providing financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, Atiya Khuri and the Government of Syria, including the Central Bank of Syria, and for being owned or controlled by Atiya Khuri.

Moneta Transfer & Exchange is also being designated pursuant to E.O. 13572 and E.O. 13573 for materially assisting, sponsoring, or providing financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, and being owned or controlled by, Atiya Khuri. Moneta Transfer & Exchange is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13572 for materially assisting, sponsoring, or providing financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, Rami Makhluf and Syriatel. Finally, Moneta Transfer & Exchange is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13573 for materially assisting, sponsoring, or providing financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, Adib Mayaleh.

OFAC designated **Aous Ali** today pursuant to E.O. 13582 for materially assisting, sponsoring, or providing financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, and acting for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, the Government of Syria. He is also designated pursuant to E.O. 13572 for materially assisting, sponsoring, or providing financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, and acting for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, Rami Makhluf. Aous Ali is a Syrian businessman who has supported the Government of Syria

through his international business contacts. He supported several of Rami Makhluf's companies and functioned as the office manager and financial facilitator for Rami Makhluf and other members of the Makhluf family.

**Imad Khuri** is being designated today pursuant to E.O. 13582 for materially assisting, sponsoring, or providing financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of his brother, previously-designated Mudalal Khuri. He has engaged in business activities with Mudalal Khuri.

OFAC designated **E.K.-Ultra Financial Group Limited** today pursuant to E.O. 13582 for being owned or controlled by Nicos Nicolaou. Nicos Nicolaou is previously-designated E.K.-Ultra Financial Group Limited's director. Previously-designated Primax Business Consultants Limited acts as the company's secretary.

**Argus Construction** is being designated today pursuant to E.O. 13582 for materially assisting, sponsoring, or providing financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, previously-designated Wael Abdulkarim.

*Proliferation Activities in Support of Scientific Studies and Research Center (SSRC)*

The Mahrous Group, Iyad Mahrous, and Mahrous Trading FZE are designated today pursuant to E.O. 13382 for having provided, or attempted to provide, financial, material, technological, or other support for, or goods or services in support of, SSRC, and for acting or purporting to act for or on behalf of SSRC, which is the Syrian government agency responsible for developing and producing non-conventional weapons and the missiles needed to deliver them.

**Iyad Mahrous** arranged payment and shipment details for procurements on behalf of SSRC. In 2015, he attempted to acquire goods for SSRC. He also processed the goods' necessary customs paperwork for entry into Syria and for final shipment to SSRC.

Iyad Mahrous owns and operates Syria-based **Mahrous Group**. In 2015, while under his operation, Mahrous Group offered to procure unmanned aerial vehicles on behalf of SSRC.

**Mahrous Trading FZE** (Mahrous Trading) is registered in Dubai, UAE and has made payments to the SSRC's suppliers.

For the identifying information related to today's action, click [here](#).

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