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Press Releases

United States and United Arab Emirates Disrupt Large Scale Currency Exchange Network Transferring Millions of Dollars to the IRGC-QF

May 10, 2018

Washington – Today the United States and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) jointly took action to disrupt an extensive currency exchange network in Iran and the UAE that has procured and transferred millions in U.S. dollar-denominated bulk cash to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force (IRGC-QF) to fund its malign activities and regional proxy groups.

Specifically, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated nine Iranian individuals and entities. Iran's Central Bank was complicit in the IRGC-QF's scheme and actively supported this network's currency conversion and enabled its access to funds that it held in its foreign bank accounts. This network of exchangers and couriers has converted hundreds of millions of dollars.

"The Iranian regime and its Central Bank have abused access to entities in the UAE to acquire U.S. dollars to fund the IRGC-QF's malign activities, including to fund and arm its regional proxy groups, by concealing the purpose for which the U.S. dollars were acquired. As I said following the President's announcement on Tuesday, we are intent on cutting off IRGC revenue streams wherever their source and whatever their destination. Today we are targeting Iranian individuals and front companies engaged in a large-scale currency exchange network that has procured and transferred millions to the IRGC-QF," said Treasury Secretary Steven T. Mnuchin. **"The Treasury Department thanks the UAE for its close collaboration on this matter.** Countries around the world must be vigilant against Iran's efforts to exploit their financial institutions to exchange currency and fund the nefarious actors of the IRGC-QF and the world's largest state sponsor of terror."

The IRGC-QF was designated pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13224 on October 25, 2007. The IRGC itself was also designated on October 13, 2017 pursuant to E.O. 13224 for its support to the IRGC-QF, and consistent with the Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act.

Mas'ud Nikbakht, Sa'id Najafpur, and Mohammad Hasan Khoda'i

Mas'ud Nikbakht, Sa'id Najafpur, and Mohammad Hasan Khoda'i are being designated pursuant to E.O. 13224 for acting for or on behalf of the IRGC-QF. Nikbakht, an IRGC-QF official, has worked with Meghdad Amini, a currency exchanger also being designated today, to conduct financial activities on behalf of the IRGC-QF. Najafpur is the managing director of Jahan Aras Kish, an IRGC-QF front company which is also being designated today. Khoda'i partnered with Mohammadreza Khedmati, another currency exchanger also being designated today, to establish front companies for the benefit of the IRGC-QF, and worked with Sa'id Najafpur and his associate, Meghdad Amini, to conduct financial activities on behalf of the IRGC-QF. Khoda'i also is an official at IRGC-QF front company, Jahan Aras Kish.

Mohammadreza Khedmati Valadzaghard, Meghdad Amini, and Foad Salehi

Mohammadreza Khedmati and **Meghdad Amini** are being designated pursuant to E.O. 13224 for assisting in, sponsoring, or providing financial, material, or technological support for, or financial or other services to or in support of, the IRGC-QF. **Foad Salehi** is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13224 for assisting in, sponsoring, or providing financial, material, or technological support for, or financial or other services to or in support of, the IRGC-QF and Mohammadreza Khedmati.

IRGC-QF financial facilitators Mohammadreza Khedmati, along with Meghdad Amini and Foad Salehi, transferred cash out of Iran to the UAE and converted it into USD banknotes with the help of currency exchange enablers, including Rashed Exchange, which is also being designated today.

Khedmati, the managing director Rashed Exchange, worked with the IRGC-QF to forge documents to conceal their illicit financial activities from UAE authorities. Meghdad Amini is an official at the IRGC-QF front company Jahan Aras Kish, which is also being designated today.

Salehi has assisted Khedmati in exchanging currency for the IRGC-QF and has transferred large amounts of currency to the UAE and exchanged it for the benefit of the IRGC-QF.

Jahan Aras Kish, Rashed Exchange, and Khedmati and Company Joint Partnership

Jahan Aras Kish is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13224 for assisting in, sponsoring, or providing financial, material, or technological support for, or financial or other services to or in support of, the IRGC-QF. Jahan Aras Kish, and IRGC-QF front company, is involved in transferring and converting funds for the IRGC-QF, and was involved in retrieving oil revenue from foreign bank accounts held by the Central Bank of Iran for IRGC-QF activities.

Rashed Exchange is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13224 for being owned or controlled by Mohammadreza Khedmati. Rashed Exchange was used to convert currency for the IRGC-QF.

Iran-based **Khedmati and Company Joint Partnership** is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13224 for being owned or controlled by Mohammadreza Khedmati and Mohammad Hasan Khoda'i.

As a result of these actions, all property and interests in property of those designated today subject to U.S. jurisdiction are blocked, and U.S. persons are generally prohibited from engaging in transactions with them. In addition, foreign financial institutions that knowingly facilitate significant transactions for, or persons that provide material or certain other support to, the individuals and entities designated today risk exposure to sanctions that could sever their access to the U.S. financial system or block their property and interests in property under U.S. jurisdiction.

As a reminder, due to President Trump's May 8, 2018 decision to cease the United States' participation in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), as of August 7, 2018, the United States Government will re-impose sanctions on the purchase or acquisition of U.S. dollar banknotes by the Government of Iran."

OFFICE OF FOREIGN ASSETS CONTROL
Specially Designated Nationals List Update

The following individuals have been added to OFAC's SDN List:

AMINI, Meghdad; DOB 05 Jun 1982; POB Tehran, Iran; Additional Sanctions Information - Subject to Secondary Sanctions; Gender Male; Passport U36089349 (Iran); National ID No. 0071070222 (Iran) (individual) [SDGT] [IRGC] [IFSR] (Linked To: ISLAMIC REVOLUTIONARY GUARD CORPS (IRGC)-QODS FORCE).

KHODA'I, Mohammad Hasan (a.k.a. KALANTARI, Sajjad); DOB 21 Sep 1983; Additional Sanctions Information - Subject to Secondary Sanctions; Gender Male; National ID No. 444-973367-3 (Iran) (individual) [SDGT] [IRGC] [IFSR] (Linked To: ISLAMIC REVOLUTIONARY GUARD CORPS (IRGC)-QODS FORCE).

NAJAFPUR, Sa'id (a.k.a. CHEKOSARI, Sa'id Najafpur; a.k.a. NAJAFPUR, Behnam; a.k.a. "DADR, Behnam"; a.k.a. "SADR, Behnam"); DOB 1980; Additional Sanctions Information - Subject to Secondary Sanctions; Gender Male (individual) [SDGT] [IRGC] [IFSR] (Linked To: ISLAMIC REVOLUTIONARY GUARD CORPS (IRGC)-QODS FORCE).

NIKBAKHT, Mas'ud (a.k.a. MAS'UD, Abu Ali; a.k.a. NOBAKHT, Mas'ud; a.k.a. NOWBAKHT, Mas'ud; a.k.a. NOWBAKHT, Sa'id); DOB 28 Dec 1961; Additional Sanctions Information - Subject to Secondary Sanctions; Gender Male; Passport 9004318; alt. Passport 9011128; alt. Passport 9004398 (individual) [SDGT] [IRGC] [IFSR] (Linked To: ISLAMIC REVOLUTIONARY GUARD CORPS (IRGC)-QODS FORCE).

SALEHI, Foad (a.k.a. BASAIR, Foad Salehi; a.k.a. BASIR, Foad Salehi); DOB 28 Apr 1986; POB Tehran, Iran; Additional Sanctions Information - Subject to Secondary Sanctions; Gender Male; Passport J37945161 (Iran); National ID No. 0077849248 (Iran) (individual) [SDGT] [IRGC] [IFSR] (Linked To: ISLAMIC REVOLUTIONARY GUARD CORPS (IRGC)-QODS FORCE; Linked To: VALADZAGHARD, Mohammadreza Khedmati).

VALADZAGHARD, Mohammadreza Khedmati; DOB 05 Apr 1986; POB Tehran, Iran; Additional Sanctions Information - Subject to Secondary Sanctions; Gender Male; Passport N35635875; National ID No. 0081798301; Birth Certificate Number 11770 (individual) [SDGT] [IRGC] [IFSR] (Linked To: ISLAMIC REVOLUTIONARY GUARD CORPS (IRGC)-QODS FORCE).

The following entities have been added to OFAC's SDN List:

JAHAN ARAS KISH, No. 5 Jam Tower, Unit 31, 6th Floor, Bidar Street, Elahieh, Tehran, Iran; No. 716 Sarina Tower 1, 7th Floor, Kish, Iran; Additional Sanctions Information - Subject to Secondary Sanctions; Registration ID 10877 (Iran) [SDGT] [IRGC] [IFSR] (Linked To: ISLAMIC REVOLUTIONARY GUARD CORPS (IRGC)-QODS FORCE; Linked To: NAJAFPUR, Sa'id).

JOINT PARTNERSHIP OF MOHAMMADREZA KHEDMATI AND ASSOCIATES (a.k.a. KHEDMATI AND COMPANY JOINT PARTNERSHIP); Additional Sanctions Information - Subject to Secondary Sanctions; National ID No. 14006467155 (Iran); Registration ID 503586

(Iran) [SDGT] [IRGC] [IFSR] (Linked To: VALADZAGHARD, Mohammadreza Khedmati;
Linked To: KHODA'I, Mohammad Hasan).

RASHED EXCHANGE (a.k.a. SARAFI RASHED); Website www.Rashedexchange.com;
Additional Sanctions Information - Subject to Secondary Sanctions; National ID No.
14006467155 (Iran); Registration ID 503586 (Iran); Commercial Registry Number
0411518776478 (Iran) [SDGT] [IRGC] [IFSR] (Linked To: VALADZAGHARD,
Mohammadreza Khedmati).