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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Treasury Sanctions Iranian Officials and Companies Connected to Repression in Advance of the Anniversary of Mahsa “Zhina” Amini’s Death

September 15, 2023

WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is designating 29 individuals and entities in connection with the Iranian regime’s violent suppression of nationwide protests following the death of Mahsa “Zhina” Amini in custody of its ‘Morality Police,’ and the regime’s continued efforts to detain dissenting voices and restrict access to a free and open internet. OFAC’s action targets: 18 key members of the regime’s security forces, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and the Law Enforcement Forces (LEF); the head of Iran’s Prisons Organization; three individuals and one company in connection with the regime’s systematic censorship and blocking of access to the internet; and three IRGC and regime-controlled media outlets–– Fars News, Tasnim News and Press TV––and three senior officials. Today’s action is taken in coordination with partners from the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and other partners who are also imposing sanctions on those involved in the Iranian regime’s repression.

“As we approach one year since Mahsa Amini’s tragic and senseless death in the custody of Iran’s so-called ‘Morality Police,’ we recall that the movement of men and women across Iran, inclusive of different faiths and ethnic groups, was met with horrific violence, mass incarceration, and systemic internet disruption by the Iranian regime,” said Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, Brian Nelson. “The United States, alongside the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and our other international allies and partners, will continue to take collective action against those who suppress Iranians’ exercise of their human rights.”

Today’s sanctions are OFAC’s 13th round of designations in connection with the protests that began in September 2022 and are taken pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13553, which imposes sanctions on certain persons with respect to serious human rights abuses by the Government of Iran; E.O. 13846, which authorizes sanctions on persons who engage in

censorship or other activities with respect to Iran; and the counterterrorism authority E.O. 13224, as amended.

Concurrently, the Department of State is imposing visa restrictions on 13 Iranian officials and other individuals for their involvement in the detention or killing of peaceful protestors or inhibiting their rights to freedom of expression or assembly, including through censorship via a country-wide internet shutdown in Iran. Since Mahsa Amini’s death and the protests that followed, the Department of State has imposed visa restrictions on 40 Iranian officials and other individuals for their involvement in acts targeting peaceful protestors.

LEADERS OF IRAN’S SECURITY FORCES

Iran’s security forces cracked down on the peaceful protests that began in September 2022 with horrific violence, killing more than 500 and injuring many more. LEF, commonly referred to as Iran’s national police, have historically played a key role in the regime’s brutal crackdown on protests, including those following the disputed 2009 presidential election and the nationwide protests in November 2019 that followed a gasoline price hike, which resulted in the deaths of more than 1,500 protestors. The LEF has been linked to serious human rights abuses, such as the use of lethal force against peaceful protestors, including women and children, and the torture of detainees. The LEF has also led the crackdown on women and girls who have resisted Iran’s mandatory hijab laws and expanded an intimidation campaign against businesses and companies for allegedly not enforcing these laws. The LEF was designated pursuant to E.O. 13553 on June 9, 2011 for being responsible for or complicit in serious human rights abuses in Iran since the June 2009 disputed presidential election.

Saeed Montazerolmehdi (Montazerolmehdi)is Social Deputy and Spokesperson of the LEF. Montazerolmehdi has directly participated in the planning and announcement of strict LEF policies against women who disobey compulsory hijab rules.

Hossein Amjadian (Amjadian) commands the LEF Special Unit in Tehran and previously commanded the LEF Special Unit in Isfahan Province from 2016 to 2019. The LEF Special Units are the regime’s primary protest suppression force and have been responsible for serious human rights abuses throughout the country, including in November 2019 when security forces killed hundreds of Iranian protesters. The LEF Special Units were designated pursuant to E.O. 13553 on December 7, 2021 for being persons acting on behalf of the Government of Iran responsible for or complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling,

or otherwise directing, the commission of serious human rights abuses against persons in Iran or Iranian citizens or residents, or the family members of the foregoing, on or after June 12, 2009, regardless of whether such abuses occurred in Iran.

Abbasali Mohammadian (Mohammadian) is the LEF Commander of Tehran Province.

Hassan Shahrestani (Shahrestani) is the LEF Commander of Mazandaran Province and was previously the head of Iran's Morality Police. Shahrestani reportedly instructed his subordinates to "break the neck of anyone" violating Iran's hijab rules, and reportedly warned that businesses whose employees removed their headscarves in the workplace face closure.

Ahmad Taheri (Taheri) commanded LEF forces in Sistan and Baluchistan province from October 2020 to November 2022. During his tenure, Taheri was the commander of LEF forces involved in the September 30, 2022 massacre of protesters and civilians in Zahedan, the capital of Sistan and Baluchistan Province, now known as "Bloody Friday." On that day, the LEF and other security forces opened fire on protesters, killing by varying estimates between 60 and 100 people, including children, and wounding at least 350 others.

Ahmad Naderian (Naderian) is the Deputy LEF Commander of Sistan and Baluchistan Province and was the deputy LEF Commander during Bloody Friday.

Seyyed Khalil Safavi (Safavi) has commanded LEF forces in Rezvanshahr city in Gilan Province since February 2022. During his previous tenure as the LEF Commander of the city of Rasht in Gilan Province, forces under his command reportedly killed at least three individuals and injured several others during a September 21, 2022 demonstration.

Delavar Alghasi-Mehr (Alghasi-Mehr) is the LEF Commander of East Tehran Province. He was previously the LEF Commander of Shiraz city from 2016 to 2019 and then the LEF Commander of Ilam Province.

Mohammad Mozzami Goudarzi (Goudarzi) is the Commander of the Prevention Police of Tehran, a specialized branch of the LEF. During his previous tenure as Deputy LEF Chief of Karaj city in Alborz Province, Goudarzi was responsible for the brutal suppression of the November 2019 protests in Karaj. Goudarzi commanded forces who used lethal force resulting in the deaths of at least ten protesters.

Roham Bakhsh Habibi (Habibi) is the LEF Commander of Fars Province. During his previous tenure as LEF Commander in Fars Province, forces under Habibi's control reportedly participated in the violent suppression of protests in November 2019.

Montazerolmehdi, **Amjadian**, **Mohammadian**, **Shahrestani**, **Taheri**, **Naderian**, **Safavi**, **Alghasi-Mehr**, **Goudarzi**, and **Habibi** are being designated pursuant to E.O. 13553 for having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, Iran's LEF.

The IRGC has also played a critical role in the regime's efforts to violently suppress protests. IRGC units have used lethal force against peaceful protestors, subjected political opponents of the regime to beatings and electrocutions, prevented medical equipment and aid from reaching the wounded in hospitals, and committed numerous other heinous acts against the people of Iran. Treasury designated the IRGC pursuant to E.O. 13553 on June 9, 2011, and E.O. 13606 on April 23, 2012, in connection with the IRGC's human rights abuses.

Khodarahm Sarani (Sarani) is the IRGC Commander in Zahedan. In February 2021, IRGC forces under Sarani's command reportedly used lethal force against unarmed protesters in Zahedan, resulting in the deaths and injuries of a number of protesters, including a 13-year-old child. The IRGC also opened fire on fuel couriers protesting the IRGC-directed closing of a border crossing, killing at least 10 couriers.

Mazaher Majidi (Majidi) is the IRGC Commander in Hamedan Province and oversees units involved in protest suppression. Security forces in the province have used lethal force against protestors. Majidi publicly announced that in October 2022 alone, over 700 protestors were arrested in Hamedan Province.

Bahman Reyhani (Reyhani) is the IRGC Commander of Kermanshah Province and the Nabi Akram Corps. Reyhani commanded unitsreportedly tasked with suppressing dissent and protests, which they did brutally during the November 2019 protests throughout Iran; 1,230 people were reportedly arrested in Kermanshah during the November 2019. He also reportedly commanded IRGC units that attacked civilians protesting in Javanroud following the death of Mahsa Amini.

Jamal Shakarami (Shakarami) is an IRGC Commander in Ilam Province, an area where the IRGC has played a crucial role in suppressing dissidents and protests. On June 1, 2023, at least 20 people were injured in Ilam Province when security forces opened fire on crowds protesting the mysterious death of an individual after he was released from prison.

Mohammad Abdollahpour (Abdollahpour) is the Commander of Gilan Quds Brigade, a provincial branch of the IRGC. Abdollahpour participated in the enforcement of harsh police policies against women who disobeyed Iran's mandatory hijab rules. He also reportedly supervised the IRGC's suppression of protests following the death of Mahsa Amini.

Gholamhossein Gheib-Parvar (Gheib-Parvar) is the Deputy Commander of the IRGC in the Central Security headquarters of Imam Ali Security base.

Ali Akbar Pourjamshidian (Pourjamshidian) is the Commander of Hamzeh Seyyed al-Shohada Base of the IRGC Ground Forces and was previously the deputy coordinator of the IRGC Ground Forces.

Abdolreza Abedzadeh (Abedzadeh) is the newly appointed Commander of the U.S.-designated Khatam ol Anbia Gharargah Sazandegi Nooh (Khatam al-Anbiya Construction Headquarters), an IRGC-controlled construction conglomerate that undertakes multi-billion-dollar projects in the oil, petrochemical, and various infrastructure sectors, generating revenue for the IRGC and expanding its control across multiple industries.

Abdollahpour, **Gheib-Parvar**, **Sarani**, **Pourjamshidian**, **Shakarami**, **Reyhani**, and **Majidi**are being designated pursuant to E.O. 13553 having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, the IRGC. **Abedzadeh** is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended, for having acted for or on behalf of Khatam ol Anbia Gharargah Sazandegi Nooh.

MASS DETENTION, TORTURE, OTHER ILL-TREATMENT, AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN IRAN'S PRISONS

In addition to the use of lethal force by security forces, the Iranian regime's response to the nationwide protests included mass arrests and detention, with protestors subject to various forms of mistreatment and abuse within Iran's prison system. Tens of thousands of people, including children as young as 12, have been arrested, with many enduring brutal treatment while in custody. Detainees have been subjected to beatings, rape, and torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment. More recently, in anticipation of the anniversary of Mahsa Amini's death, Iranian authorities have proactively arrested activists in an effort to dissuade others from resuming anti-government protests.

Gholamali Mohammadi (Mohammadi)heads Iran's Prisons Organization, a role in which he oversees the administration of all affairs related to Iran's prisons and jails. Under his leadership, serious human rights abuses have occurred throughout Iranian prisons, including the use of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, detainment and physical abuse of political dissidents and religious minorities, sexual violence and coercion against female prisoners, including rape, and the abuse and torture of children. Under Mohammadi's leadership, Iranian prison authorities have deliberately denied

lifesaving healthcare to political prisoners, causing or contributing to deaths in custody, and have refused to investigate or provide any accountability for the deaths.

Mohammadi is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13553 for being an official of the Government of Iran or a person acting on behalf of the Government of Iran who is responsible for or complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, the commission of serious human rights abuses against persons in Iran or Iranian citizens or residents, or the family members of the foregoing, on or after June 12, 2009, regardless of whether such abuses occurred in Iran.

INTERNET DISRUPTION AND CENSORSHIP

Another pillar of the regime’s strategy for protest suppression has been the widespread disruption of internet access. In addition to longstanding media censorship, Iranian authorities have responded to protests with widespread internet shutdowns, throttling connection speeds, and increasing the use of Internet filtering, such as blocking websites and Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) to limit communication and the sharing of information. Iran has also used digital technology to spy on and harass journalists and regime dissidents.

Alireza Abedinejad is the CEO of Douran Software Technologies (Douran), a leading company in Iran assisting the government in censorship and filtering of the Internet. Douran was designated pursuant to E.O. 13628 in 2014 for engaging in censorship or other activities that limit Iranians’ ability to exercise their freedom of expression and right to peaceful assembly since the June 2009 election. In coordination with the Committee to Determine Instances of Criminal Content (CDICC) — also known as the Iranian Filtering Committee — Douran blocks VPNs in Iran for the regime and acts as a “filtering contractor” for government agencies. A Douran subsidiary is also one of the leading providers of software in the development of Iran’s intranet, also known as the National Information Network (NIN). **Amer Najafianpour** and **Soheila Kasaei** are the Chair and Vicechair of Douran’s Board of Directors, respectively. Under their leadership, Douran has expanded its operations and played a critical role in the government’s censorship operations, specifically in blocking VPNs and other internet circumvention tools.

Abedinejad, **Najafianpour**, and **Kasaei** are being designated pursuant to E.O. 13846 for having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, Douran Software Technologies.

Like Douran, Iran’s **Yaftar Pazhohan Pishtaz Rayanesh** (Yaftar) works with the CDICC to design and implement tools to “crawl” through the world’s leading search engines to identify and censor video and textual content that the CDICC deems criminal. Yaftar has also worked with the Iranian Attorney General’s Office to block VPNs.

Yaftar is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13846 for having engaged in censorship or other activities with respect to Iran on or after June 12, 2009, that prohibit, limit, or penalize the exercise of freedom of expression or assembly by citizens of Iran, or that limit access to print or broadcast media.

STATE-CONTROLLED MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS

Iran’s state-controlled media has played a key role in the regime’s suppression of protests, including those following the death of Mahsa Amini. Many of these organizations work in tandem with Iranian security and intelligence services, blurring the lines between government and media and extending the regime’s oppressive reach.

Press TV is the English language channel for the state broadcaster of the Iranian government, Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), which was designated by the United States in 2013 for participating in censorship. Press TV has broadcasted scores of forced confessions and derogatory programs about Iranian activists, in many cases broadcasting forced confessions before detainee trials. Press TV has also been used by Iranian intelligence services to recruit sensitive assets, including U.S. persons.

Press TV is being designed pursuant to E.O. 13846 for being owned or controlled by, directly or indirectly, the IRIB.

Tasnim News Agency (Tasnim) is a news outlet founded by two IRGC commanders, **Majid Gholizadeh** and **Hamidreza Moghadam Far**, who continue to serve as Tasnim executives and exert control over Tasnim on behalf of the IRGC. Tasnim has supported the IRGC and other instruments of the regime in various ways, including suppressing dissent by helping the IRGC, Iran’s Ministry of Intelligence and Security, and LEF to crowdsource the identities of protestors. Majid Gholizadeh, a former IRGC Commander, is Tasnim’s CEO, an important spokesperson for the news agency, and IRGC propagandist. Hamidreza Moghadam Far is the head of the Tasnim board of directors and an IRGC Commander. Hamidreza Moghadam Far has held multiple prominent roles in the IRGC, including as an advisor to IRGC Commander-in-Chief Hossein Salami and the Cultural Deputy of the IRGC.

Tasnim is being designated pursuant to E.O 13553 for being owned or controlled by, or having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, the IRGC. Hamidreza Moghadam Far is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13553 for acting or purporting to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, the IRGC. Majid Gholizadeh is being designated for having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, Tasnim News Agency.

Fars News Agency is closely affiliated with the IRGC and has provided special intelligence reports to Hossein Salami. Fars News Agency closely coordinated with the Basij Resistance Force (Basij) deputy commander on ongoing Iranian domestic concerns. The Basij, a paramilitary force subordinate to the IRGC, was designated pursuant to E.O. 13553 on June 9, 2011 for its involvement in the violent crackdowns and serious human rights abuses occurring in Iran following the disputed June 2009 presidential election. Fars News Agency was also founded by Hamidreza Moghadam Far, and its board of directors is chaired by Mohammad Mehdi Sayyari Zahan, the U.S.-designated deputy head of the IRGC Intelligence Organization. **Payam Tirandaz** is the CEO of Fars News Agency, a former member of the Basij, and a former employee of IRIB. Payam Tirandaz plays a pivotal role in Fars News Agency's support to the IRGC's malign activities.

Fars News Agency is being designated pursuant to E.O 13553, for being owned or controlled by, or having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of the IRGC. Payam Tirandaz is being designated for having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, Fars News Agency.

SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS

As a result of today's action, all property and interests in property of the individuals and entities that are in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons must be blocked and reported to OFAC. OFAC's sanctions generally prohibit all dealings by U.S. persons or within the United States (including transactions transiting the United States) that involve any property or interests in property of blocked or designated persons.

In addition, persons that engage in certain transactions with the individuals or entities designated today may themselves be exposed to designation. Furthermore, any foreign financial institution that knowingly facilitates a significant transaction or provides significant financial services for any of the individuals or entities designated today could be subject to U.S. correspondent or payable-through account sanctions.

The power and integrity of OFAC sanctions derive not only from its ability to designate and add persons to the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List (SDN List), but also from its willingness to remove persons from the SDN List consistent with the law. The ultimate goal of sanctions is not to punish, but to bring about a positive change in behavior. For information concerning the process for seeking removal from an OFAC list, including the SDN List, please refer to OFAC’s Frequently Asked Question 897.

Click here for identifying information on the individuals and entities designated today.

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