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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Treasury Sanctions Iranian Officials and Entities Responsible for Ongoing Crackdown on Protests and Internet Censorship

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WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is designating 10 Iranian officials for the brutal ongoing crackdown on nationwide protests in Iran, as well as two Iranian intelligence actors and two Iranian entities involved in the Iranian government's efforts to disrupt digital freedom. Today's action comes 40 days after 22-year-old Mahsa Amini's arrest and death in the custody of Iran's Morality Police and the ongoing brutal crackdown on peaceful protests in Iran, and follows OFAC designations on September 22 and October 6, 2022, which targeted key Iranian organizations and officials involved in the Iranian regime's ongoing repression and its denial of the fundamental freedoms and universal rights of its citizens. These sanctions, coupled with additional initiatives such as the release of Iran General License D-2, which expands and clarifies the range of U.S. software and internet services available to Iranians under OFAC's sanctions program, demonstrate the United States' commitment to support the Iranian people's call for accountability and justice, as well as their right to freely exchange information, including online.

"Forty days after the tragic death of Mahsa Amini, Iranians continue to bravely protest in the face of brutal suppression and disruption of internet access," said Under Secretary of the Treasury Brian E. Nelson. "The United States is imposing new sanctions on Iranian officials overseeing organizations involved in violent crackdowns and killings, including of children, as part of our commitment to hold all levels of the Iranian government accountable for its repression."

Today's actions are taken pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13553, which authorizes 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 E.O. 13606, which authorizes sanctions with respect to grave human rights abuses by the Governments of Iran and Syria via information technology.

The State Department is also concurrently sanctioning Mohammad Reza Mirheydary, Mohammad Reza Ostad, and Iran's Bushehr Prison pursuant to the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) for their roles in human rights abuses.

ISLAMIC REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS CORPS (IRGC) LEADERSHIP

As Commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Intelligence Organization (IRGC IO), **Mohammad Kazemi** (Kazemi) oversees one of the regime's most brutal security services with a long record of internal repression. Since becoming Commander of the IRGC IO in June 2022, Kazemi has overseen a heightened crackdown on civil society across the country. Recently, the IRGC IO has broadened its scope, and is responsible for thwarting perceived political subversion, coordinating and managing the repression of protests, surveilling and throttling the use of the internet, and arresting dissidents. The IRGC and its Basij militia have used lethal force against protesters and is an essential element of the regime's aggressive use of violence against the Iranian people.

Abbas Nilforushan (**Nilforushan**), the Deputy Commander for Operations of the IRGC, is responsible for the IRGC's Operations Command, one of the security organizations directly in charge of protest suppression, which has played a critical role in arresting protest leaders during previous protests. Nilforushan is an experienced IRGC commander who also served as a military adviser in the Syrian Civil War.

Kazemi and Nilforushan are both being designated pursuant to E.O. 13553 for having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, the IRGC.

SISTAN AND BALUCHISTAN PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS

Hossein Modarres Khiabani (**Khiabani**) is the governor of Sistan and Baluchistan province, site of some of the worst violence in the latest round of protests. On September 30, 2022, after Friday prayers in the provincial capital, Zahedan, security forces fired live ammunition, tear gas, and metal pellets at protesters and bystanders, killing at least 80 people, including several children. Hundreds more were injured. Khiabani, in his role as governor, had responsibility for oversight of Iranian security forces' violent response to those protests.

Khiabani is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13553 for being an official of the Government of Iran and being 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.

Ahmad Shafahi (**Shafahi**) is the commander of Salman Corps, the IRGC military unit in Sistan and Baluchistan. Shafahi has attacked free and open communications, labelling satellite television stations that are not under the control of the Iranian regime as "tools of the enemy." He also had direct control of IRGC and Basij forces responsible for violent actions against peaceful protestors during the recent crackdown in Sistan and Baluchistan.

Shafahi is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13553 for having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, the IRGC.

IRANIAN PRISON OFFICIALS

Hedayat Farzadi (**Farzadi**) operates one of Iran's most notorious prisons as the warden of Evin Prison. Numerous protestors have been sent to Evin Prison during the latest round of protests where they have been subjected to torture and other forms of physical abuse.

Farzadi was an infamous figure in the Iranian prison system even before assuming the leadership of Evin Prison. During his tenure at Dizel Abad Prison in western Iran, which lasted 10 years, Farzadi was known to organize public amputations of criminals convicted of petty crimes. As director of Greater Tehran Penitentiary, also known as Fashafouyeh Prison, Farzadi oversaw the torture and maltreatment of numerous prisoners, including political prisoners and members of religious minority groups. Several prisoners under his responsibility are known to have died from lack of medical treatment. Some, including political prisoners and members of religious minority groups, were killed by prison guards. Farzadi himself was known to personally carry out executions.

Farzadi was eventually dismissed from Fashafouyeh Prison after the death of a political prisoner, but the Iranian prison system and security establishment, to include the IRGC, continues to protect him. Despite his record of abuse, after being dismissed from Fashafouyeh, Farzadi was named the director of the inspection department of Iran's prison organization.

Seyyed Heshmatollah Hayat Al-Ghaib (**Al-Ghaib**) serves as the Director-General of Tehran Province Prisons, a role which gives him oversight of Evin, Fashafouyeh, and other notorious prisons in the region. During his tenure, Al-Ghaib has repeatedly dismissed concerns from

prisoners and Iranian officials regarding poor conditions at the prisons he administered. Under his administration, Tehran's prisons continue to be known for their brutality and maltreatment of prisoners.

Heidar Pasandideh (**Pasandideh**), the warden of Sanandaj Central Prison in Kurdistan province, has overseen the detention and daily torture of prisoners arrested during the ongoing protests in Iran. Under his administration, Sanandaj Central Prison has been the site of arbitrary executions of prisoners.

Murad Fathi (**Fathi**) serves as the Director-General of Prisons in Kurdistan Province. Prisons under his control have held and tortured prisoners, including protestors. Several Iranian Kurdish prisoners have died in prisons under Fathi's control from torture or lack of medical care.

Morteza Piri (**Piri**), the warden of Zahedan Prison, is known in Sistan and Baluchistan by prisoners and their families for his brutality toward prisoners. Under his watch, Zahedan Prison has conducted numerous executions, a disproportionate number of them targeted at Iran's Baluchi minority group.

Mohammad Hossein Khosravi (Khosravi) is the Director-General of Sistan and Baluchistan Province Prisons and former warden of Zahedan Prison. Under his administration, Zahedan Prison was infamous for torture and poor conditions, including a lack of medical care and the mistreatment of prisoners by staff.

Farzadi, Al-Ghaib, Pasandideh, Fathi, Piri, and Khosravi are being designated pursuant to E.O. 13553 for being officials of the Government of Iran or persons acting on behalf of the Government of Iran (including members of paramilitary organizations) who are 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.

MOIS CYBER ACTORS

Seyed Mojtaba Mostafavi (**Mostafavi**), a member of Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS), was directed by the MOIS to train and recruit hackers. Together with another MOIS member, **Farzin Karimi** (**Karimi**), they co-founded the **Ravin Academy**. The Ravin Academy is a school that trains individuals in cyber security and hacking, and recruits from

among these trainees for the MOIS. In addition to training and recruitment, Ravin Academy assists the MOIS with a variety of cyber services, including information security training, threat hunting, cyber security, red team, digital forensics, malware analysis, security auditing, penetration testing, network defense, incident response, vulnerability analysis, mobile penetration testing, reverse engineering, and security research.

Ravin Academy is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13606 for having materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, the MOIS.

Mostafavi and Karimi are being designated pursuant to E.O. 13606 for having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, Ravin Academy.

Iranian company **Samane Gostar Sahab Pardaz Private Limited Company** (**Sahab Pardaz**) is one of the main operators of social media filtering services in Iran. Sahab Pardaz actively provides censorship, surveillance, and espionage tools to the Government of Iran by using big data analysis to analyze the private data of Iranian citizens. The company collects raw internet records from Iranians to build its filtering system. Sahab Pardaz executes its filtering activities by manufacturing and providing technical support for policy enforcer filtering tools for the Iranian government, and by using Deep Packet Inspection (DPI) tools to aid the regime in logging, blocking, and detecting various types of internet traffic. In 2016, Sahab Pardaz signed a contract worth millions of dollars with Iran's Telecommunication Infrastructure Company, affiliated with the Ministry of Communication and Technology, for the creation of a system of cultural and social protection.

Sahab Pardaz 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, including the facilitation or support of intentional frequency manipulation by the Government of Iran that would jam or restrict an international signal.

SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS

As a result of today's action, all property and interests in property of these persons that are in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons must be blocked and reported to OFAC. In addition, any entities that are owned, directly or indirectly, 50 percent or more by one or more blocked persons are also blocked. OFAC regulations 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 persons designated today may themselves be exposed to sanctions or subject to an enforcement action. Furthermore, unless an exception applies, any foreign financial institution that knowingly facilitates a significant transaction or provides significant financial services for any of the persons designated today could be subject to U.S. sanctions.

The power and integrity of OFAC sanctions derive not only from OFAC's 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. For detailed information on the process to submit a request for removal from an OFAC sanctions list.

For identifying information on the persons designated today.

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