

Administration Takes Additional Steps to Hold the Government of Syria Accountable for Violent Repression Against the Syrian People

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(Archived Content)

WASHINGTON – Today, President Obama signed an Executive Order (E.O.) imposing sanctions against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and six other senior officials of the Government of Syria in an effort to increase pressure on the Government of Syria to end its use of violence against its people and begin transitioning to a democratic system that protects the rights of the Syrian people.

Also today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury announced the designation of 10 individuals and entities pursuant to E.O. 13572 – signed by President Obama on April 29, 2011 – targeting Syrian officials and others responsible for human rights abuses, including repression against the Syrian people, as well as a set of companies tied to Syrian corruption.

The United States continues to strongly condemn the Syrian government’s use of violence and intimidation against its people and urges President al-Assad and his regime to answer the calls of the Syrian people for a more representative government and embark upon the path of meaningful democratic reform.

“The actions the Administration has taken today send an unequivocal message to President Assad, the Syrian leadership, and regime insiders that they will be held accountable for the ongoing violence and repression in Syria,” said Acting Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David S. Cohen. “President al-Assad and his regime must immediately end the use of violence, answer the calls of the Syrian people for a more representative government, and embark upon the path of meaningful democratic reform.”

New Executive Order

In signing this Executive Order, the President has provided the United States with additional tools to pressure senior Syrian government officials and has imposed sanctions on the following individuals listed in the Annex to the Order:

- **Bashar al-Assad:** President of the Syrian Arab Republic
- **Farouk al-Shara:** Vice President of the Syrian Arab Republic
- **Adel Safar:** Prime Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic

- **Mohammad Ibrahim al-Shaar:** Minister of the Interior of the Syrian Arab Republic
- **Ali Habib Mahmoud:** Minister of Defense of the Syrian Arab Republic
- **Abdul Fatah Qudsiya:** Head of Syrian Military Intelligence
- **Mohammed Dib Zaitoun:** Director of Political Security Directorate

As a result of this action, any property in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons in which the individuals listed in the Annex have an interest is blocked, and U.S. persons are generally prohibited from engaging in transactions with them.

The President has authorized the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to take actions to block the property and interests in property of senior Syrian Government officials; agencies and instrumentalities of the Syrian Government, persons owned or controlled by the Syrian Government, or by officials of the Syrian Government; persons that have provided material support to those blocked pursuant to this Order; and, those that are owned or controlled by, or that have acted for or on behalf of persons pursuant to in this Order.

Executive Order 13572 Designations

Exposing further the complicity of Syrian government officials in the human rights abuses and repression of the Syrian people, Treasury designated today the following individuals and entities pursuant to E.O. 13572:

- **Hafiz Makhluf:** a cousin of President al-Assad and senior official of the Syrian General Intelligence Directorate (GID), the overarching civilian intelligence service in Syria listed in the Annex to E.O. 13572. Makhluf was given a leading role in responding to protests in Syria, and was heavily involved in the Syrian regime's actions in Dar'a, where protesters were killed by Syrian security forces. Makhluf was previously designated by Treasury in November 2007 pursuant to E.O. 13441, which targets persons undermining the sovereignty of Lebanon or its democratic processes and institutions.
- **Syrian Military Intelligence (SMI):** One of the four major branches of Syria's security forces. During the recent civil unrest in Syria the SMI has used force against and arrested demonstrators participating in the unrest.
- **Syrian National Security Bureau (NSB):** An element of the Syrian Ba'ath Party. The Syrian National Security Bureau (NSB) directed Syrian security forces to use extreme force against demonstrators.
- **Syrian Air Force Intelligence (SAFI):** In late April 2011, security forces including personnel from SAFI fired tear gas and live ammunition to disperse crowds of demonstrators who took to the streets in Damascus and other cities after noon prayers, killing at least 43 people.
- **Qasem Soleimani:** Commander of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force (IRGC-QF), the conduit for Iranian material support to the GID. The IRGC-QF was listed in the Annex to E.O. 13572.
- **Mohsen Chizari:** A senior IRGC-QF officer who serves as the Commander of IRGC-QF Operations and Training.

E.O. 13572 authorizes the United States to sanction any person that is owned or controlled by, or acts for or on behalf of any person designated pursuant to E.O. 13460. Included in today's action are three companies and one corporate official for ties to public corruption in Syria. The targets are **Cham Holding** and its Chairman **Nabil Rafik al Kuzbari, Bena Properties, and Al Mashreq Investment Fund**, all of which are owned or controlled by, or acting for or on behalf of Rami Makhlouf. Makhlouf, a powerful Syrian businessman and regime insider, was designated by Treasury in February 2008 under E.O. 13460 for improperly benefitting from and aiding the public corruption of Syrian regime officials.