

Trump administration imposes more sanctions on Syria



Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. (Photo: Reuters)

Washington, December 23 (RHC)-- The administration of U.S. President Donald Trump has imposed a new round of sanctions to ramp up pressure on the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad before U.S. president-elect Joe Biden takes office in January.

Syria's Central Bank, high-ranking figures and economic entities supportive of Damascus were targeted in the fresh U.S. Treasury's sanctions. "The US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) sanctioned a high-ranking official in the Syrian government; her husband, a member of the Syrian People's Assembly; and their business entities," read a statement released on Tuesday by the U.S. Treasury Department.

Among those blacklisted in Washington's Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) and Blocked Persons List were Asma al-Assad, the British-born wife of the Syrian president, several members of her family, Lina

Mohammed Nazir al-Kinayeh, one of Assad's key advisers; her husband, Syrian parliamentarian Mohammed Hammam Mohammed Adnan Masouti; several government affiliated businesses; and General Kifah Moulhem, commander of Syria's Military Intelligence organization.

"In total, OFAC added two individuals, nine business entities, and the Central Bank of Syria to the SDN List, pursuant to Syria sanctions authorities," OFAC said in its released statement. The fresh sanctions freeze any U.S. assets of those blacklisted and generally ban Americans to do business with those blacklisted by the U.S. Treasury.

Non-Americans who engage in certain transactions with the individuals and entities targeted in the U.S. sanctions may also be targeted with punitive measures, the US Treasury added. The fresh sanctions on Syria was part of a continued effort to cut off funds for Assad's government.

Previous sanctions, which had also targeted Assad's British-born wife and were imposed on Syria earlier this year, marked another round in a US-led attempt to pressure Assad's government negotiate with anti-Damascus forces to end the country's nearly decade-long war.

"The United States will continue to seek accountability for those prolonging this conflict," US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a separate statement on Tuesday.

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