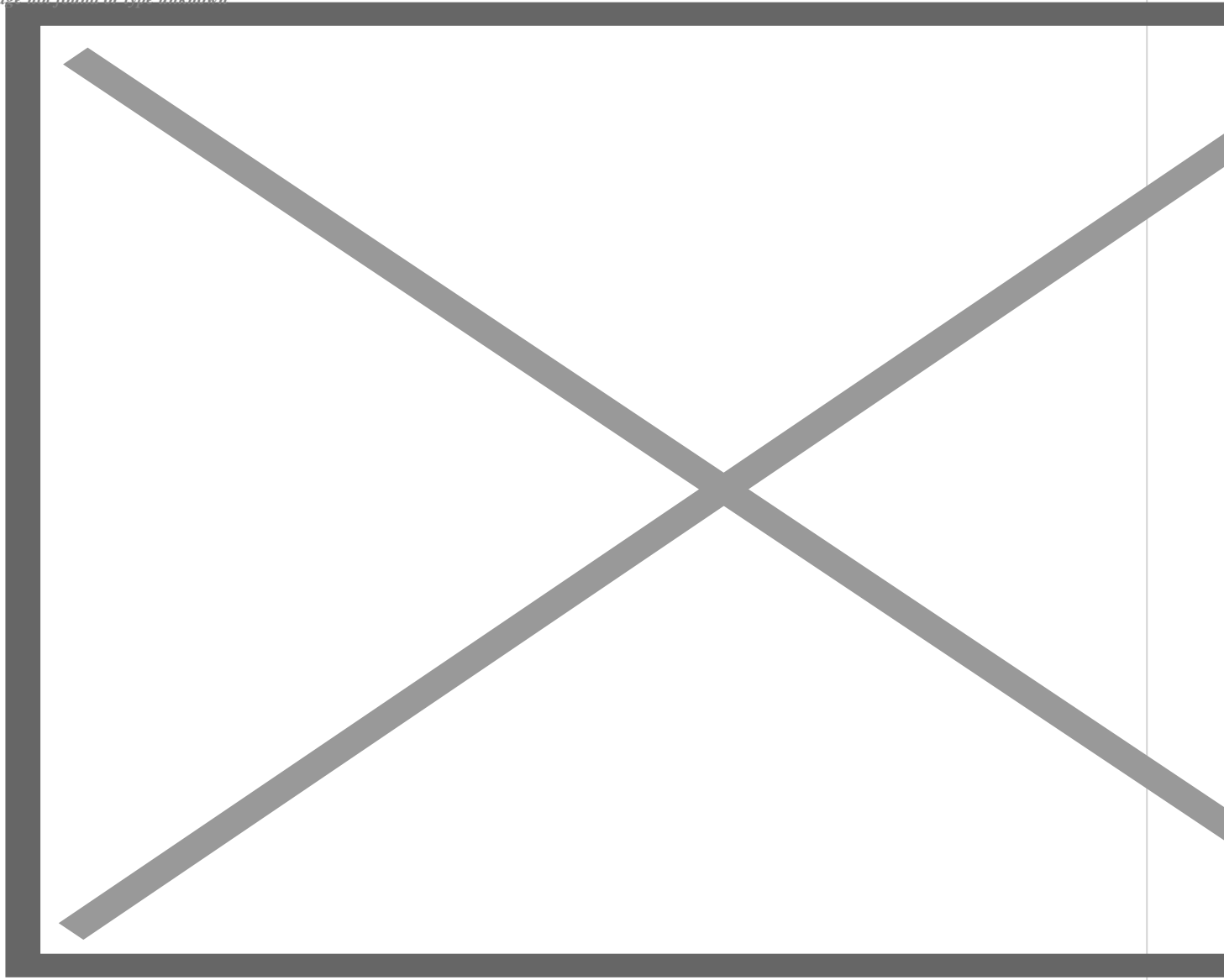


Iran imposes sanctions on Trump and senior U.S. officials

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Iran's sanctions include a travel ban and a freeze of financial assets they may hold in Iran.

Tehran, January 19 (RHC)-- Iran's foreign ministry has sanctioned outgoing United States President Donald Trump and nine other current and former senior officials of his administration.

The individuals were blacklisted for “their role and participation in terrorist and anti-human rights acts against the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iranian nationals”, according to a statement by foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh on Tuesday.

In addition to Trump, who leaves office on Wednesday, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, former defence secretary Mark Esper, acting Defense Secretary Christopher Miller, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, and CIA director Gina Haspel were sanctioned.

The former national security adviser, John Bolton, former U.S. Special Representative for Iran Brian Hook, his replacement Elliot Abrams, and Director of the Office of Foreign Assets Control Andrea Gacki round up the list. The sanctions include a travel ban and a freeze of financial assets they may hold in Iran.

Iran maintains that since 2018, when Trump unilaterally reneged on Iran’s 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, his administration has pursued a “maximum pressure” campaign of harsh economic sanctions which Tehran has labelled “economic and medical terrorism”.

Most recently, Iran affirmed that U.S. sanctions prevented it from using funds held abroad to buy COVID-19 vaccines from COVAX, a global coalition under the World Health Organization (WHO). “Unilateral sanctions – and unilateral bullying – are egregious violations of fundamental international rights enshrined in the United Nations charter,” Khatibzadeh added. “Based on this, Iran maintains the right to take necessary measures to counter the US’s internationally violating acts in all regards.”

The U.S. has been introducing new sanctions on Iran every week since the US elections last November. President-elect Joe Biden has promised to revitalise the nuclear deal he helped negotiate under former President Barack Obama.

In addition to the sanctions, the foreign ministry said its blacklisting of US officials was due to the assassinations of its top general, Qasem Soleimani, and top nuclear scientist, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, US support for Israel and “suppressive regimes in the region”, and US funding and training of “terrorist groups.”

Earlier this month, Iran’s judiciary said it requested an Interpol “red notice” for Trump and 47 other US officials who played a role in Soleimani’s assassination.

Last June, Iran had requested an international arrest warrant for Trump and dozens of US officials, which was rejected by France-based Interpol due to its political nature. Top Iranian officials have also discussed the prospect of prosecuting Trump after he leaves the White House.

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