

# **Treasury Sanctions Senior Iranian Intelligence Officers Involved in the Abduction and Detention of Robert Levinson**

December 15 2020 9:21 AM



**WASHINGTON** – Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury designated two senior officials of Iran’s Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS), who were involved in the abduction of Robert A. “Bob” Levinson on Iran’s Kish Island on or about March 9, 2007. For 13 years, the Iranian government, which continues to take foreigners and dual-nationals hostage as political leverage, has denied knowledge of Mr. Levinson’s whereabouts or condition. However, senior Iranian officials authorized Levinson’s abduction and detention and launched a disinformation campaign to deflect blame from the Iranian regime. The individuals designated today, Mohammad Baseri and Ahmad Khazai, acted in their capacity as MOIS officers in the abduction, detention, and probable death of Mr. Levinson.

“The abduction of Mr. Levinson in Iran is an outrageous example of the Iranian regime’s willingness to commit unjust acts,” said Secretary Steven T. Mnuchin. “The United States will always prioritize the safety and security of the American people and will continue to aggressively pursue those who played a role in Mr. Levinson’s detention and probable death.”

“The government of Iran pledged to provide assistance in bringing Bob Levinson home, but it has never followed through. The truth is that Iranian intelligence officers — with the approval of senior Iranian officials — were involved in Bob’s abduction and detention,” said FBI Director Christopher Wray. “While no one should be as cruelly treated as Bob was, this situation is personal because Bob served as a special agent for 22 years and will always be a part of the FBI family. We will never waver from our commitment to find out more about Bob’s long captivity, to give the Levinson family the answers they deserve, and to finally bring Bob home.”

The MOIS has been designated pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13553 for being complicit in the commission of serious human rights abuses against the Iranian people since June 12, 2009, as well as previously designated as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist pursuant to E.O. 13224.

### **Mohammad Baseri and Ahmad Khazai**

Mohammad Baseri is a high-ranking MOIS officer involved in counterespionage activities in and outside of Iran, who has been involved in sensitive investigations related to Iranian national security issues. Baseri has worked directly with intelligence officials from other countries in order to harm U.S. interests. Ahmad Khazai is a high-ranking member of the MOIS who, in his role as a senior official of the MOIS, has led MOIS delegations to other countries to assess the security situation.

Mohammad Baseri and Ahmad Khazai, acting in their capacity as MOIS officers, were involved in the abduction, detention, and probable death of Mr. Levinson.

OFAC is designating Baseri and Khazai pursuant to E.O. 13553 for acting for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, Iran’s MOIS.

### **Sanctions Implications**

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. OFAC’s regulations generally prohibit all dealings by U.S. persons or within (or transiting) the United States that involve any property or interests in property of blocked or designated persons.

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