

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Southern District of Ohio

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, October 24, 2019

Columbus man sentenced to prison for illegally exporting goods to Iran

Defendant used Dublin shell company to export oil industry parts

COLUMBUS, Ohio – A Central Ohio man was sentenced in U.S. District Court today for exporting gas and oil pipeline parts to Iran for more than a decade in deliberate violation of a U.S. embargo and trade sanctions.

Behrooz Behroozian, 64, of Columbus, was sentenced to 20 months in prison.

Benjamin C. Glassman, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio; Joseph M. Deters, Acting Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Cincinnati Division; and Douglas R. Hassebrock, Acting Assistant Secretary for Export Enforcement, Bureau of Industry and Security, U.S. Department of Commerce, announced the sentence handed down today by Senior U.S. District Judge James L. Graham.

Behroozian was born in Iran in 1955 and entered the United States in 1976. He became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1987.

According to the sentencing memorandum filed in this case, Behroozian used an intermediary company, Sumar Industrial Equipment, to attempt to cover-up that he was illegally supplying industrial equipment to Iran in violation of the Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA).

Behroozian exported manifolds, valves and connectors used for industrial pipelines in the gas and oil refinement industry to Iran via Sumar and profited \$35,000 to \$40,000 per year. This violated embargo and trade sanctions, which have been imposed upon Iran by the United States since May 1995.

In November 2006, Behroozian became the owner and operator of a computer parts supplier in Dublin, Ohio called Comtech International. Comtech had no storefront and made no domestic sales. It seldom exported computer parts. Instead, Comtech primarily exported industrial equipment to Sumar in the United Arab Emirates for further exportation to Iran.

“Behroozian profited financially by strengthening the economy of one of the world’s most infamous state sponsors of terrorism,” U.S. Attorney Glassman said. “The parts obtained by Behroozian benefited the Iranian gas and petrochemical industry. Not only did Behroozian’s crimes diminish the effectiveness of American trade sanctions, but they also undermined America’s national security.”

“Behrooz Behroozian willfully violated export control laws by sending dual-use items to Iran, furthering their military and economic capabilities,” stated FBI Cincinnati Acting Special Agent in Charge Joseph M. Deters. “The sentencing today is an example of the FBI's commitment to partnering with other U.S. government agencies to vigorously enforce laws designed to keep sensitive items out of the hands of nations and individuals hostile to the U.S. The FBI will continue these efforts to protect our national security and stop the illegal export of protected information and technology.”

“For over a decade, Behrooz Behroozian repeatedly violated export control laws and aided Iranian entities in procuring controlled components that have both commercial and military uses in deliberate violation of a U.S. embargo and trade sanctions. With this sentence, he will be held accountable for circumventing critical U.S. laws designed to protect our national security interests,” said Acting Assistant Secretary for Export Enforcement Douglas R. Hassebrock.

U.S. Attorney Glassman commended the cooperative investigation by the FBI and U.S. Department of Commerce, as well as Assistant United States Attorneys Douglas W. Squires, Timothy J. Prichard and S. Courter Shimeall and Department of Justice National Security Division Trial Attorney Will Mackie, who are representing the United States in this case.