



The United States Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LEBANESE BUSINESSMAN TIED BY TREASURY DEPARTMENT TO HEZBOLLAH IS SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR MONEY LAUNDERING SCHEME INVOLVING THE EVASION OF U.S. SANCTIONS

WASHINGTON – The operator of a network of businesses in Lebanon and Africa whom the U.S. Department of the Treasury designated as a financier of Hezbollah, the Lebanon-based terrorist group, was sentenced to five years in prison and ordered to forfeit \$50 million by U.S. District Judge Reggie B. Walton of the District of Columbia.

Kassim Tajideen, 63, had previously [pleaded](#) guilty to one count of conspiracy to launder monetary instruments in furtherance of violating the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA). In 2009, the U.S. Department of the Treasury designated Tajideen as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist based on his tens of millions of dollars of financial support of Hezbollah. The designation prohibited Tajideen from being involved in, or benefiting from, transactions involving U.S. persons or companies without a license from the Department of the Treasury.

“This defendant knowingly violated sanctions and put our nation’s security at risk,” said Assistant Attorney General Brian A. Benczkowski of the Criminal Division. “His sentencing and the \$50 million forfeiture in this case are just the latest public examples of the Department of Justice’s ongoing efforts to disrupt and dismantle Hezbollah and its support networks.”

“Today’s sentencing highlights our efforts to prosecute those who violate sanctions meant to stem the flow of money to terrorists groups,” said U.S. Attorney Jessie K. Liu for the District of Columbia. “Our message to those who

violate sanctions is that you will be found, and you will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.”

“This is the latest example of DEA’s success against Hezbollah’s global criminal support network and our commitment to interagency collaboration in combatting the overall threat posed by this transnational criminal organization,” said Acting Special Agent in Charge of DEA’s Special Operations Division Michael J. Machak.

According to the statement of facts signed by Tajideen in conjunction with his plea, after his designation, Tajideen conspired with at least five other persons to conduct over \$50 million in transactions with U.S. businesses that violated these prohibitions. In addition, Tajideen and his co-conspirators knowingly engaged in transactions outside of the United States, which involved transmissions of as much as \$1 billion through the United States financial system from places outside the United States.

Tajideen’s case falls under DEA’s Project Cassandra, which targets Hezbollah’s global criminal support network, which operates as a logistics, procurement and financing arm for Hezbollah. This investigation and others are part of the Department of Justice’s Hezbollah Financing and Narcoterrorism Team (HFNT). The HFNT was formed in January 2018 to ensure an aggressive and coordinated approach to prosecutions and investigations, including Project Cassandra cases, targeting the individuals and networks supporting Hezbollah. Comprised of experienced international narcotics trafficking, terrorism, organized crime, and money laundering prosecutors and investigators, the HFNT works closely with partners like the DEA, the Department of the Treasury, and the FBI, among others, to advance and facilitate prosecutions of Hezbollah and its support network in appropriate cases.

This case was investigated by DEA SOD’s Counter Narcoterrorism Operations Center (CNTOC) and the DEA New Jersey Field Division, with support from the CPB’s National Targeting Center/Counter Network Division, the U.S. Treasury Department’s Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) and Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), the Criminal Division’s Office of International Affairs, and the Counterintelligence and Export Control Section of the National Security Division.

The case was prosecuted by Trial Attorney Joseph Palazzo of the Money Laundering and Asset Recovery Section and Assistant U.S. Attorneys Thomas A. Gillice, Luke Jones, Karen Seifert and Deborah Curtis and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Jacqueline L. Barkett of the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia.

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