

Department of Justice
Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, September 3, 2019

Turkish Businessman Sentenced to 27 Months Imprisonment for Conspiracy to Violate U.S. Sanctions by Exporting Marine Equipment from the United States to Iran

Resit Tavan, a Turkish Businessman and owner of the Istanbul-based Turkish business Ramor Dis Ticaret Ltd. (also known as the “Ramor Group”) was sentenced on Thursday, Aug. 29, 2019, in Federal District Court in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to 27 months imprisonment in connection with his conviction for conspiracy to violate U.S. sanctions by exporting specialized marine equipment from the United States to Iran between 2013 to 2015.

On April 2, 2019, Tavan, a Turkish citizen, had pleaded guilty to a conspiracy to violate U.S. sanctions on Iran under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act by using his Turkish based company, the Ramor Group, to acquire a range of marine related equipment that had been manufactured in Wisconsin by U.S. companies, including high powered outboard engines, marine power generators and power boat propulsion equipment known as surface drives, on behalf of the Iran-based Qeshm Madkandalou Shipbuilding Cooperative (Madkanadalou). Evidence introduced in Court showed that Tavan had worked in cooperation with Iranian officers associated with Madkandalou to use some of this U.S. origin marine equipment to support the construction and development of a prototype high-speed missile attack boat for the Iranian military or naval forces. From early 2013 through 2015, Tavan and the Ramor Group had worked in concert with Iranian officials to procure U.S. origin marine equipment and illegally export it to Iran by using the Ramor Group in Turkey to receive the goods and thereafter re-export it to Madkandalou in Iran, in violation of U.S. sanctions.

At the sentencing hearing, the District Court Judge indicated that this conspiracy to violate U.S. sanctions by procuring marine equipment for military purposes represented a serious threat to U.S. national security. The Judge also found that Tavan’s role in the offense should be considered in connection with the overall direction and control of the project by higher ranking Iranian officials.

At no time did anyone involved in these transactions obtain permission from the U.S. Department of Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control or the U.S. Department of Commerce to export any U.S.-origin marine equipment from the United States to Iran.

A co-defendant charged in the same Indictment, Fulya Kalafatoglu Oguzturk, a Turkish citizen, remains at large as a fugitive.

Assistant Attorney General Demers and U.S. Attorney Matthew Krueger praised the outstanding investigative work of the FBI and the U.S. Department of Commerce, and thanked the U.S. Department of Justice’s National Security Division and Office of International Affairs, and the U.S. Marshals Service, for their contributions to this case. The Office of International Affairs of the Justice Department’s Criminal Division provided significant support with the defendant’s extradition from Romania in 2017.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Paul Kanter and Keith Alexander, and by Trial Attorney Will Mackie from the Counterintelligence and Export Control Section of the National Security Division.