

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

District of Minnesota

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

v.

Case No. 17MJ098 (SER)

SEYED SAJJAD SHAHIDIAN

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the undersigned Complainant, being duly sworn, state the following is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

COUNT ONE

(Wire Fraud)

On or about July 15, 2015, in the State and District of Minnesota and elsewhere, the defendant, SEYED SAJJAD SHAHIDIAN, having devised a scheme to defraud, and for the purpose of executing a scheme to defraud and to obtain property by means of false or fraudulent pretenses, knowingly transmitted and caused to be transmitted by means of wire communications in interstate and foreign commerce an interstate wire communication; specifically, a payment of for the purchase of computer software from a PayPal account controlled by the defendant to Digital River, a payment processing company located in Minnetonka, Minnesota, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1343.

COUNT TWO

(Conspiracy to Commit Wire Fraud)

From on or about February 1, 2009 until one or about February 5, 2017, in the State and District of Minnesota and elsewhere, the defendant, SEYED SAJJAD SHAHIDIAN, conspired with others to commit the crime of wire fraud, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1349.

COUNT THREE

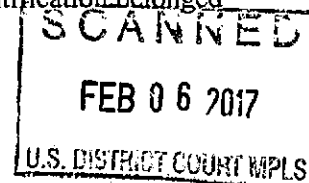
(Aggravated Identity Theft)

On or about December 30, 2013, in the State and District of Minnesota and elsewhere, the defendant, SEYED SAJJAD SHAHIDIAN, did knowingly use, without lawful authority, a means of identification of another person during and in relation to a felony violation enumerated in 18 U.S.C. § 1028A(c), to wit, wire fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1343, and conspiracy to commit wire fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1349, knowing that the means of identification belonged to another actual person, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1028A(a)(1).

COUNT FOUR

(Conspiracy to Smuggle)

From on or about February 1, 2009 until on or about February 5, 2017, in the State and District of Minnesota and elsewhere, the defendant, SEYED SAJJAD SHAHIDIAN, conspired with others to fraudulently cause or attempt to cause exports from the United States of merchandise, articles, or objects contrary to laws and regulations of the United States,



knowing the exportation to be contrary to any law or regulation of the United States, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 371 and 544.

COUNT FIVE
(Conspiracy to Violate IEEPA and ITSR)

From on or about February 1, 2009 until one or about February 5, 2017, in the State and District of Minnesota and elsewhere, the defendant, SEYED SAJJAD SHAHIDIAN, conspired with others to knowingly and intentionally commit an offense against the United States, specifically to knowingly and willfully export, attempt to export, and cause to be exported goods from the United States to Iran, and evaded and avoided, had the purpose of evading and avoiding, caused violations of, and conspired to violate, the regulations governing trade and exports from the United States to Iran, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 371, 50 U.S.C. § 1705(c), 31 C.F.R. § 560.203, and 31 C.F.R. § 560.204.

I further state that I am a(n) Special Agent and that this complaint is based on the following facts:

SEE ATTACHED AFFIDAVIT

Continued on the attached sheet and made a part hereof: Yes No


Complainant's signature

Beth Theirl Creed, FBI Special Agent
Printed name and title

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence.

Date: 5 Feb 2017

City and State: St. Paul, MN


Judge's Signature

Honorable Steven E. Rau, U.S. Magistrate Judge
Printed Name and Title

17mj 098 (KMM)

STATE OF MINNESOTA) SS. AFFIDAVIT OF BETH THEIRL CREED
COUNTY RAMSEY)

I, Beth Theirl Creed, being first duly sworn, hereby depose and state as follows:

1. I am a Special Agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”), United States Department of Justice, and have been so employed since March 2012. I am currently assigned to the Minneapolis Field Division, Cyber Squad, which is responsible for the investigation of, among other things, Internet and computer intrusion offenses.

2. During my career as a Special Agent of the FBI, I have participated in numerous investigations involving computer-related offenses, and assisted in the service of search warrants involving searches and seizures of computers, computer equipment, software, electronically stored information, and instrumentalities of computer intrusion. In addition, I have worked closely with other law enforcement agents with over 20 years of combined experience in investigating violations of U.S. export laws and regulations including the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (“IEEPA”) and the Iranian Transactions and Sanctions Regulations, as well as computer and fraud investigations. I have received training regarding computer fraud, forensics and hacking, and have been investigating complex cybercrimes for four years.

3. I am an investigative or law enforcement officer of the United States within the meaning of Title 18, U.S.C. Section 2510(7), in that I am empowered by law to conduct investigations and to make arrests for federal felony offenses.

4. I make this affidavit in support of a Complaint charging **SEYED SAJJAD SHAHIDIAN**, a/k/a “Soheil Shahidi,” with wire fraud, in violation of Title 18, United

States Code, Section 1343; conspiracy to commit wire fraud, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1349; aggravated identity theft, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1028A; smuggling, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 554; conspiracy to engage in smuggling, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 371; and violations of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, Title 50, United States Code, Section 1705.

5. The facts set forth in this affidavit are based upon my personal observations, my training and experience, and information obtained from witnesses and other law enforcement agents experienced in violations of U.S. cyber and export law violations. This affidavit is intended to show merely that there is sufficient probable cause for the Complaint and does not purport to set forth all of my knowledge of or investigation into this matter. Unless specifically indicated otherwise, all conversations and statements described in this affidavit are related in substance and in part only.

I. OVERVIEW

6. Based on my investigation, there is probable cause to believe that **SHAHIDIAN**, a citizen and resident of Iran, devised and executed a scheme to defraud the United States, including businesses in the United States, by causing U.S.-based businesses to export U.S.-origin goods to **SHAHIDIAN** while concealing from the U.S.-based businesses that **SHAHIDIAN** intended to ship those U.S.-origin goods to Iran. **SHAHIDIAN** accomplished this fraud in part by making material misrepresentations and omissions regarding the destination of the U.S.-origin goods, representing to the U.S.-based businesses that the goods were going to the United Arab Emirates (“UAE”). In

furtherance of his scheme to defraud, **SHAHIDIAN** provided the U.S.-based businesses with false documents of residency. Also in furtherance of his scheme to defraud, and in order to accomplish the transactions with the U.S.-based businesses, **SHAHIDIAN** obtained payment processing accounts from U.S.-based companies using false residency information, fraudulent passport documents, and other residency documentation, including documents fabricated using the identity and personally identifiable information of another person. There is also probable cause to believe that **SHAHIDIAN** engaged in, and conspired to engage in, the smuggling of goods from the United States into Iran and the intentional violation of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act and the Iranian Transactions and Sanctions Regulations.

II. RELEVANT LEGAL PROVISIONS

A. Wire Fraud

7. Title 18, United States Code, Section 1343, provides that “[w]hoever, having devised or intending to devise any scheme or artifice to defraud, or for obtaining money or property by means of false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises, transmits or causes to be transmitted by means of wire, radio, or television communication in interstate or foreign commerce, any writings, signs, signals, pictures, or sounds for the purpose of executing such scheme or artifice, shall be” guilty of the crime of wire fraud.

B. Conspiracy to Commit Wire Fraud

8. Title 18, United States Code, Section 1349, provides that “[a]ny person who attempts or conspires to commit any offense under this chapter [which includes wire fraud] shall be” guilty of the crime of attempt or conspiracy to commit that offense.

C. Aggravated Identity Theft

9. Title 18, United States Code, Section 1028A(a)(1), provides that “[w]hoever, during and in relation to any felony violation enumerated in subsection (c) [which includes wire fraud], knowingly transfers, possesses, or uses, without lawful authority, a means of identification of another person” shall be guilty of the crime of aggravated identity theft.

D. The International Emergency Economic Powers Act (“IEEPA”) and the Iranian Transactions and Sanctions Regulations (“ITSR”)

10. Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (“IEEPA”), 50 U.S.C. §§ 1701 – 1707, the President of the United States has the authority to deal with unusual and extraordinary threats to the national security, foreign policy and economy of the United States. Under IEEPA, the President may declare a national emergency through Executive Orders that have the full force and effect of law.

11. Beginning in 1995, by Executive Orders and pursuant to the authority in IEEPA, the President of the United States imposed sanctions on Iran. Executive Orders authorized the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, “to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, as may be necessary to carry out the purposes” of the Executive Orders. Pursuant to this authority, the Secretary of the Treasury has promulgated the Iranian Transactions and Sanctions Regulations (“ITSR”), 31 C.F.R. Part 560, implementing the sanctions imposed by Executive Orders. These sanctions have been in effect at all times relevant to this affidavit.

12. Under the Iranian Transactions and Sanctions Regulations, 31 C.F.R. Part 560:

a. Section 560.204 provided that no goods, technology or services may be exported, re-exported, sold, or supplied to Iran, directly or indirectly from the United States or by a United States person, wherever located, without authorization.

b. Section 560.203 prohibited any transaction by any United States person or within the United States that evaded or avoided, or had the purpose of evading or avoiding, or that attempted to violate any of the prohibitions set forth in Part 560. Section 560.203 further prohibited any attempt to violate the prohibitions contained in Part 560.203.

13. The prohibition or exportation, re-exportation, sale or supply of services to Iran also applies to service provided to any person in Iran if such services are performed:

a. In the United States; or

b. Outside the United States by a United States person, including by an overseas branch of an entity located in the United States, *see* 31 C.F.R. Part 560.410(a).

14. In 2010, a general license was issued with respect to certain Internet-related personal communications services (the "Personal Communications License"). Specifically, the Personal Communications License authorized, among other things, providing "from the United States or by U.S. persons, wherever located, to persons in Iran of services incident to the exchange of personal communications over the Internet, such as instant messaging, chat and email, social networking, sharing of photos and movies, web browsing, and blogging, provided that such services are publicly available at no cost to the user." *See* C.F.R. Part 560.410(a)(1).

15. The Personal Communications License did not, however, authorize, among other things, “[t]he direct or indirect exportation of web-hosting services that are for purposes other than personal communications (*e.g., web-hosting services for commercial endeavors*) or of domain name registration services.” *See* C.F.R. Part 560.540(b)(4) (emphasis added). Rather, an individual or entity seeking to provide such services to Iranian individuals or businesses must obtain a specific license from the Office of Foreign Assets Control (“OFAC”). *See* C.F.R. Part 560.540(c).

16. On July 14, 2015, the United States, Iran, the European Union, and five other nations entered into the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (“JCPOA”), which, in substance, places limits on Iran’s nuclear program in return for sanctions relief. On January 16, 2016, which is known as “Implementation Day,” the JCPOA went into effect. The JCPOA, however, does not authorize U.S. persons to engage in most transactions with persons in Iran without permission from OFAC.

17. At all times relevant to the instant Affidavit, the President has continued the national emergency with respect to Iran and Executive Orders 13059, 12959, and 12957, given that the actions and policies of Iran continue to threaten national security and foreign policy and economy of the United States. The most recent continuation of this national emergency was on March 9, 2016. *See* 80 Fed Reg. 13469 (March 10, 2016).

18. Title 50, United States Code, Section 1705(a) and (c), provides that “[i]t shall be unlawful for a person to violate, attempt to violate, conspire to violate, or cause a violation of any license, order, regulation, or prohibition issued under this chapter [which includes ITSR]” and “[a] person who willfully commits, willfully attempts to commit, or

willfully conspires to commit, or aids or abets in the commission of, [such] an unlawful act” shall be guilty of a crime – in this case the crime of violating the ITSR.

E. Smuggling

19. Title 18, United States Code, Section 554, provides that “[w]hoever fraudulently or knowingly exports or sends from the United States, or attempts to export or send from the United States, any merchandise, article, or object contrary to any law or regulation of the United States, or receives, conceals, buys, sells, or in any manner facilitates the transportation, concealment, or sale of such merchandise, article or object, prior to exportation, knowing the same to be intended for exportation contrary to any law or regulation of the United States,” shall be guilty of the crime of smuggling.

F. Conspiracy to Engage in Smuggling and Violate the ITSR

20. Title 18, United States Code, Section 371, provides that “[i]f two or more persons conspire either to commit any offense against the United States [including smuggling and violation of the ITSR], or to defraud the United States, or any agency thereof in any manner or for any purpose, and one or more of such persons do any act to effect the object of the conspiracy,” they shall be guilty of the crime of conspiracy to commit that offense.

III. STATEMENT OF PROBABLE CAUSE FOR COMPLAINT

A. SEYED SAJJAD SHAHIDIAN’s Business Operations

21. **SEYED SAJJAD SHAHIDIAN** is the owner of PAYMENT24, a business located in Tehran, Iran. PAYMENT24 operates a website with a domain name of www.payment24.ir. Based on my training and experience, I know .ir is the internet country

code top-level domain for Iran. I have reviewed a verbatim translation from Farsi to English of screenshots taken on or about April 26, 2016 of the website www.payment24.ir. The website indicates that PAYMENT24 was founded approximately six years ago in order to offer Iranians online payment options via PayPal and credit cards. The website states that PAYMENT24 meets the need of Iranians to purchase items outside of the country following the international sanctions imposed on Iran, and specifically to circumvent “American sanctions.” According to the website, PAYMENT24 offers a way for Iranians to purchase items online or collect wages earned in foreign currencies. It claims PAYMENT24 has brought more than \$500,000 of US dollars into Iran’s economy.

22. On its website, PAYMENT24 sells a package to assist its Iranian clients with circumventing restrictions implemented pursuant to IEEPA and ITSR. PAYMENT24 charges approximately \$245.00 in US dollars for the package, which includes a PayPal account, with an “ID card and address receipt,” one remote IP address from the United Arab Emirates, and a Visa gift card for PayPal verification purposes. The PAYMENT24 website states that “as long as the American sanctions continue to be in place, it is always advisable to create your accounts with a foreign identity.” An entry on the website payment24.ir provided instructions to PAYMENT24 clients about how to avoid restrictions on foreign websites. PAYMENT24 advises clients not to use any “Iranian identity and mailing address to register on any foreign websites,” and to “never attempt to log into those sites with an Iranian IP address.”

23. I performed open source queries for the domain “payment24.ir,” which listed the e-mail account star.soheil@yahoo.com within the domain’s “start of authority” record

as the person responsible for “payment24.ir.” Open source WHOIS records for “payment24.ir” as of February 4, 2016 indicate that the registrant is Seyed Sajjad Shahidian, with the address of XXX¹ Ave - XXXXXXXX St, Shiraz, Fars, Iran; the telephone number “+98 XXXXXXXX6915” (“+98” is the country code for Iran); and the e-mail address “nama_host@yahoo.com.” While the domain’s creation date was not specified, it was last updated on September 14, 2015 and is set to expire on December 25, 2019. The authoritative name servers for “payment24.ir” are “ns1.starsoheil.com” and “ns2.starsoheil.com.”

B. SEYED SAJJAD SHAHIDIAN opens Payoneer, Inc. account using false residency information and provides Payoneer, Inc. fabricated official documents purporting to show that SHAHIDIAN was a resident of the United Arab Emirates

24. I have reviewed documents provided by Payoneer, Inc., a US-based payment processing company located in New York. Payoneer identified account “XXX1890” as belonging to “Seyedsajjad Shahidian,” with an address Souq Al Kabir St., Dubai, 2108, United Arab Emirates, and e-mail address starsoheil@gmail.com. Payoneer reported that account “XXX1890” was registered on December 16, 2013 and that “Seyedsajjad Shahidian” provided Iranian passport number XXXXX8084 as proof of identity on December 22, 2013 in order to open an account. I reviewed a copy of this passport

¹ Throughout this affidavit, I have replaced actual addresses, phone numbers, dates of birth, and financial account numbers, in whole or in part, with a block of uppercase Xs, redacted to protect personally identifiable information. With respect to each instance, your Affiant has identified and knows the actual addresses, phone numbers, dates of birth, and financial account numbers that have been redacted.

provided to me by Payoneer and determined that it listed the name of SeyedSajjad Shahidian, Date of Birth XX/XX/1987 and Domicile of Islamic Republic of Iran.

25. Based on my investigation, **SEYED SAJJAD SHAHIDIAN** has never lived in, or been a resident of, the United Arab Emirates.

26. Payoneer identified another account – Payoneer account “XXX8538” – listing the same physical address in the United Arab Emirates as account “XXX1890,” and the e-mail address starsoheil@gmail.com. Account “XXX8538” was registered with Payoneer on 01/16/2013. The name listed on account “XXX8538” is “Seyedhesam Shahidian,” which I believe, based on my investigation, is the name of **SEYED SAJJAD SHAHIDIAN**’s father. On the Iranian passport for “Seyedsajjad Shahidian,” used to open account “XXX1890,” listed after the identifier “Father’s name” is “Seyedhesam,” indicating that “Seyedhesam Shahidian” is the father of **SEYED SAJJAD SHAHIDIAN**.

27. The payment24.ir website listed “Soheil Shahidi” as the CEO and founder and “Vahid Vali” as the COO and co-founder of PAYMENT24. The website also had photographs purporting to be “Soheil Shahidi” and “Vahid Vali.” The photograph for “Soheil Shahidi” on the website closely resembles the passport photograph for “Seyedsajjad Shahidian” on the passport provided to Payoneer to open account “XXX1890.” Based on my investigation, I believe that “Soheil Shahidi” is an alias for “Seyedsajjad Shahidian,” the CEO and founder of PAYMENT24.

28. Documents provided by Payoneer, Inc., identified accounts connected to those owned by “Seyedhesam Shahidian” and “Seyedsajjad Shahidian.” One of those accounts – Payoneer account “XXX5723” – was owned by “Vahid Vali” and reported a site

user name and e-mail address of decenthelp@gmail.com. Payoneer account “XXX5723” used the same physical address in the United Arab Emirates as accounts “XXX1890” and “XXX8538.” Therefore, I believe that Vahid Vali is the user of the e-mail address decenthelp@gmail.com and is the co-founder of PAYMENT24.

29. On October 4, 2016, a warrant to search the e-mail account, star.soheil@yahoo.com, belonging to **SEYED SAJJAD SHAHIDIAN**, was issued by the United States District Court for the District of Minnesota. In reviewing the results of the search warrant, I identified e-mail messages related to **SEYED SAJJAD SHAHIDIAN** providing fraudulent documents to Payoneer to demonstrate, falsely, that **SEYED SAJJAD SHAHIDIAN**, resided in the United Arab Emirates. The star.soheil@yahoo.com email account also contained evidence that, when considered in connection with other information obtained in my investigation and described in this affidavit, **SEYED SAJJAD SHAHIDIAN** created Payoneer account “XXX8538” using the name of his father, “Seyedhesam Shahidian,” and that he provided fraudulent documents to Payoneer to demonstrate, falsely, that “Seyedhesam Shahidian” resided in the United Arab Emirates.

30. On or about December 29, 2014 star.soheil@yahoo.com received an email from Payoneer Customer Support (customersupport@payoneer.com) having the subject “Message from Payoneer Customer Support [Reference Number: 141229-001010].” The body of the e-mail stated that “Following a routine review of your account, and adhering to Payoneer’s Security policy we ask that you provide us with proof of residence for the address with which you registered the account. Acceptable forms of proof of residence are government issued ID with your name and this address, or a copy of a recent utility bill

that has your name and this address.” The e-mail stated that the information requested needed to be provided in 5 business days and could be scanned and attached as a reply to the e-mail.

31. On or about December 31, 2014 at 20:08:44 UTC, star.soheil@yahoo.com sent an e-mail to decenthelp@gmail.com. The subject of the email was written in English and stated “doc for payoneer.” The body of the e-mail was written in Farsi. The e-mail asked the recipient, decenthelp@gmail.com, to create a “billing” for SeyedHesam Shahidian listing the address “Souq Al Kabir St, Deira 2108.” The sender, star.soheil@yahoo.com, stated that “the date must be current; I want it for Payoneer.” The signature of the e-mail listed the following “Soheil Shahidi, C.E.O., Email: star.soheil@yahoo.com, Mobile: +98 XXX XXX 8850, FaceBook: Facebook.com/StarSoheil, Linkedin: Linkedin.com/in/StarSoheil, website: http://payment24.ir/.” As noted above, “Soheil Shahidi” is an alias of **SEYED SAJJAD SHAHIDIAN**, whom I believe to be the sender of the e-mail.

32. On or about December 31, 2014 at 21:33:26 UTC, decenthelp@gmail.com sent an e-mail to star.soheil@yahoo.com having the subject “bill” in English. The body of the e-mail did not contain any text; however, a file was attached to the e-mail named “SEYED hesam shahidian.jpg.” The file attachment contained what appeared to be a utility bill from the Dubai Electricity & Water Authority. The name on the bill was listed as “SEYEDHESAM SHAHIDIAN” and the address was “Souq Al Kabir St, Deira, POST BOX: 2108, Dubai.” The bill stated it was an Invoice for the Month of November 2014 and listed the dates covered as October 8 2014 – November 5 2014. The Contract Account

No. was 2018768395 and the invoice was for United Arab Emirates dirham ("AED") \$222.10. Based on my investigation, the address listed on the water bill does not appear to be a valid address.

33. On or about January 1, 2015 at 05:17:54 UTC, star.soheil@yahoo.com sent an e-mail to Payoneer Customer Support at customersupport@payoneer.com having the subject "Re: Message from Payoneer Customer Support [Reference Number: 141229-001010]." The e-mail appeared to be a reply to the message detailed above from December 29, 2014. The body of the e-mail contained the following text: "Happy new year to you & your team also. I attached the utility bill for you due to your request. Kindly please check it. Regards SeyedHesam Shahidian." A file was attached to the e-mail entitled "SEYED hesam shahidian.jpg." The file appeared to be the same utility bill from Dubai Electricity & Water Authority that was created by decenthelp@gmail.com and sent to star.soheil@yahoo.com, as described in paragraph 32.

34. On or about January 9, 2015 at 09:45:30 UTC, Payoneer Customer Support customersupport@payoneer.com sent an e-mail to star.soheil@yahoo.com with the subject "Message from Payoneer Payment Department [Reference Number: 141126-000886]." The body of the e-mail stated "Thank you for replying with the requested document. Unfortunately, the Proof of Residence you have provided is not acceptable. Please send us a copy of your ID issued in the United Arab Emirates."

35. On or about January 9, 2015 at 10:53:59 UTC, star.soheil@yahoo.com sent an e-mail to shahbazi.shahram@gmail.com having the subject in English "Passport Edit." The body of the e-mail was written in Farsi. Translated into English, it stated: "Do you

see the upper portion of mehdi bostani's passport? I want you to replace it with the portion in SeyedHesam Shahidian's passport, meaning, where the Soheil Shahidi's residency in the UAE is entered." A signature was included in the body of the e-mail that listed "Soheil Shahidi, C.E.O." that contained the same information as the signature described above in the December 31, 2014 e-mail from star.soheil@yahoo.com to decenthelp@gmail.com. Two files were attached to the e-mail, entitled "Hesam.jpg" and "Mehdi-pass.jpeg." "Hesam.jpg" appeared to be a scanned passport from the Islamic Republic of Iran for SEYEDHESAM SHAHIDIAN, Passport No: XXXXX3309, with a "Domicile" listed as IRAN and the "Place of Issue" listed as THE PASSPORT-POLICE OF IRAN. The file "mehdi-pass.jpeg" appeared to be a scanned passport from the Islamic Republic of Iran for MXXXX BXXXXXX, Passport No: XXXXX2425, with the "Country of Residence" listed as the United Arab Emirates and the "Place of Issue" listed as ABU DHABI.

36. On or about January 9, 2015 at 13:56:38 UTC, shahbazi.shahram@gmail.com sent an e-mail back to star.soheil@yahoo.com having the subject "Re: Passport edit." The body of the e-mail did not contain any text. There was one attachment to the e-mail named "SCAN.jpg." The attached file appeared to be the same scanned passport for SEYEDHESAM SHAHIDIAN, Passport No: XXXXX3309. However, the top portion of the passport listed "Country of Residence: United Arab Emirates" and "Place of Issue" as "ABU DHABI." I believe the top portion of this scanned passport was altered electronically to change the Country of Residence to United Arab Emirates from IRAN and the Place of Issue to ABU DHABI from THE PASSPORT-POLICE OF IRAN.

37. On or about January 9, 2015 at 19:09:19 UTC, star.soheil@yahoo.com sent a reply e-mail to customersupport@payoneer.com having the subject "Re: Message from Payoneer Payment Department [Reference Number: 141126-000886]." The body of the message stated the following in English: "As you know UAE government do not issue resident cards for those who are not a permanent resident. We can only ask our country's embassy in UAE to issue a separate passport for us, it's mentioned there that we are a resident in that country. If you still need more proof, I can send you the screenshot of my banking account statement. Anyway I attached my passport that shows I'm residence in UAE". The email was signed "Regards Seyedhesam Shahidian." Attached to the e-mail was a file named "SeyedHesam-Pass.jpg." The file appeared to be the electronically altered scanned passport for SEYEDHESAM SHAHIDIAN, Passport No: XXXXX3309 described in paragraph 36. The top section of the passport listed the Country of Residence as United Arab Emirates and the Place of Issue as ABU DHABI.

38. On or about January 10, 2015 at 12:25:46 UTC, shahbazi.shahram@gmail.com sent an e-mail to star.soheil@yahoo.com having the subject "Re: Passport edit." The body of the e-mail contained an email signature that stated "Shahram Shahbazi, Web & Graphic Designer www.shahram.me." No additional text was included in the e-mail; however, there was one attachment to the e-mail entitled "ID.jpg." The file "ID.jpg" appeared to be a scanned Resident Identity Card from the United Arab Emirates. The following information was listed on the Resident Identity Card: "ID Number: 784-1980-2930954-3;" "Name: Seyedhesam Shahidian;" and "Nationality: Iran,

Islamic Republic of.” The photograph appears to match the photograph of the male on the passport described in the above paragraph.

39. On or about January 11, 2015 at 1:15:04 UTC, customersupport@payoneer.com sent an e-mail to star.soheil@yahoo.com having the subject “Message from Payoneer Payment Department [Reference Number: 141126-00086].” The body of the e-mail stated “Dear Seyedhesam, We appreciate your explanation and understand where you are coming from. However, we still need to receive an official unaltered document issued by UAE on your name showing that you are a resident there.”

40. On or about January 11, 2015 at 13:24:56 UTC, star.soheil@yahoo.com sent an e-mail reply to customersupport@payoneer.com having the subject “Re: Message from Payoneer Payment Department [Reference Number 141126-000886].” The body of the e-mail contained text in English that stated “Hello, I have attached another ID Card & my bank statement that shows my postal code for you. Hope it helps. Pass for pdf file: shsh2002.” Attached to the e-mail were two files, “Hesam-UAE ID.jpg” and “4920-XXXX-XXXX-4488_07072014.pdf.” The file “Hesam-UAE ID.jpg” appeared to be the same as the file “ID.jpg” sent from shahbazi.shahram@gmail.com to star.soheil@yahoo.com on January 10th, a scanned version of a United Arab Emirates Resident Identity Card for Seyedhesam Shahidian, ID Number 784-1980-2930954-3. The file “4920-XXXX-XXXX-4488_07072014.pdf” was a copy of a purported Credit Card Statement from “Emirates NBD” addressed to “S H Shahidian, P.O. Box 2108, SHIRA 2 FARS, DUBAI.”

41. Payoneer blocked Account IDs XXX8538 and XXX1890 on January 1, 2015, based on the suspicion that the account holders had provided falsified residency documentation, including the utility bill, passport, and residency card described above.

C. SEYED SAJJAD SHAHIDIAN opens PayPal account using false residency information purporting to show that SHAHIDIAN was a resident of the United Arab Emirates

42. On or about April 25, 2016, I reviewed documents provided by PayPal, Inc., an online payment system company located in California, regarding accounts associated with star.soheil@yahoo.com and starsoheil@gmail.com. PayPal reported that two accounts, XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX3995 ("-3995") and XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX0324 ("-0324"), were associated with the e-mail address star.soheil@yahoo.com and one account XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX5089 ("-5089") was associated with starsoheil@gmail.com. Based on my training and experience and my review of records produced by PayPal, I know that PayPal allows its users to send payments to one another electronically. To register for an account, a user must supply PayPal with certain identifying information, including an e-mail account that will be linked to the PayPal account. The e-mail associated with a PayPal account is a way that the PayPal account can be identified to other PayPal users. For example, if a PayPal user wanted to send a payment to another PayPal user, the sender could identify the recipient by his or her e-mail address.

43. PayPal account "-3995" was a Canadian verified account registered to a "Mahdi Hajian," DOB XX/XX/1983, but was closed by PayPal in April 2010 after the user logged into the account from two IP addresses that resolved to Iran: 89.165.63.238 and 89.165.63.101. PayPal verified the account with a TD Canada Trust bank account, however

there were no physical addresses provided at account registration. PayPal flagged the account as a potential OFAC violation after those two logins. Account “-3995” listed e-mail account star.soheil@yahoo.com as one of the account’s confirmed e-mail addresses. Therefore, I believe that Shahidian was also a user of PayPal account “-3995.” Account “- 3995” had received USD \$127,885.74 from the creation of the account in February 1, 2009, through the account closure on April 29, 2010.

44. As stated above, PayPal account “-0324” also utilized star.soheil@yahoo.com as its primary e-mail address. The email account star.soheil@yahoo.com was used by **SEYED SAJJAD SHAHIDIAN**. PayPal account “- 0324” was opened on November 17, 2010 and was registered to “SeyedHesam Shahidian” as a “Premier Emirati” (United Arab Emirates) account. PayPal verified the account via a VISA credit card obtained in United Arab Emirates (AED) currency. The home address listed for the account was “Souq Al Kabir St, Dubai, Dubai, 2108, United Arab Emirates,” the same address used on the fabricated water bill referenced in paragraphs 32 and 33, above. Based on my investigation, this address does not appear to be valid. The “-0324” account was an active open account as of February 29, 2016. Since the account has been opened, it has received USD \$3,868,961.02 and it has sent USD \$3,681,341.20.

45. PayPal account “-5089” utilized starsoheil@gmail.com as its primary e-mail address. The account was opened on April 11, 2011 and was registered to “SeyedSajjad Shahidian” as a Premier Emirati” (United Arab Emirates) account. PayPal verified the account via credit card obtained in the UAE. The home address listed for the account was “Deire St, Dubai, DUBAI, 2107, United Arab Emirates.” Based on my investigation, this

address does not appear to be valid. The “-5089” account was an active open account as of May 25, 2016. Since the account has been opened, it has received USD \$890,579.76 USD and it has sent USD \$978,268.94.

46. On at least five separate occasions, PayPal account “-5089” sent payments to MyCommerce, Inc., an e-commerce company owned by DigitalRiver and headquartered in Minnetonka, MN. The name identified for these purchases was “SeyedSajjad Shahidian” and the address was “Deire St, Dubai, DUBAI, 2107, United Arab Emirates,” the same address used previously by **SHAHIDIAN** and referenced in paragraph 45. These purchases appeared to be for digital downloads of computer software and software licenses, or for other computer related products, and took place on June 16, 2014, July 15, 2015, September 14, 2015, September 15, 2015, and December 31, 2015.

47. On or about February 2, 2017, I reviewed documents provided by MyCommerce and identified at least seven (7) purchases associated with the name “SeyedHesam Shahidian,” the e-mail address star.soheil@yahoo.com, and a physical address purporting to be “Souq Al Kabir St, Dubai, 2108, United Arab Emirates,” the same address used previously by **SHAHIDIAN** and referenced in paragraphs 24, 31, 32, and 44. These purchases appeared to be for computer related products, and took place on December 16, 2013, December 30, 2013, February 21, 2014, January 27, 2015, June 24, 2015, and February 7, 2016.

48. According to records provided by U.S. Company B (“USCB”), a seller of refurbished computer servers and networking infrastructure, on or about June 9, 2016, purchases of refurbished servers were made by or associated with star.soheil@yahoo.com

or "Soheil Shahidi." Eight (8) invoices totaling approximately USD \$89,981.64 were identified. Items purchased included servers and computer hard drives. These items were shipped to addresses in the U.S. and UAE. The invoices were paid for via PayPal, including PayPal accounts associated with star.soheil@yahoo.com and starsoheil@gmail.com, both of which are controlled by **SEYED SAJJAD SHAHIDIAN**.

49. Based on my training and experience as well as information gathered from other law enforcement agents, I know that a common way to send prohibited shipments to Iran is by transshipment through the UAE.

50. On or about July 12, 2016, najian@gmail.com sent an e-mail to star.soheil@yahoo.com. No text was within the email; however, a file was attached to the email entitled "star_soheil.pdf." The file appeared to be a catalog for Star Soheil Network and Server Equipment. The catalog was written mostly in Farsi and after a Summary Translation Request, I determined that the catalog states that Star Soheil Company has 9 months of experience in importing servers and network equipment for companies, organizations and datacenters in Iran. It further states that it has imported a number of DELL servers from the United States which it was offering for sale in Iran. The description of the DELL servers appears to be the same as the DELL servers associated with the PayPal accounts star.soheil@yahoo.com and starsoheil@gmail.com ordered through USCB in California and shipped to the UAE, indicating that the shipment to the UAE was used to disguise the true destination of the DELL servers, which was in fact Iran.

D. SEYED SAJJAD SHAHIDIAN obtains fabricated residency documents for PAYMENT24 PayPal account using false residency information purporting to show that SHAHIDIAN was a resident of the United Arab Emirates

51. On or about August 19, 2015 at 12:58 AM, star.soheil@yahoo.com sent an e-mail to atingraphic@gmail.com with the subject: "Photo id." The body of the e-mail contained the text "UAE Hesamoddin Razi XXXXXXXX XX.XX.1987." The e-mail contained the same signature described previously for "Soheil Shahidi C.E.O."

52. On or about August 19, 2015 at 4:24 AM, atingraphic@gmail.com replied to the e-mail. In the body of the e-mail, atingraphic@gmail.com indicated that "Iran" was used for nationality and asked if it should be changed to "UAE." Two files were attached to the e-mail including "ID12A.jpg" and "ID12B.jpg." The file "ID12A.jpg" appeared to be a scanned United Arab Emirates Resident Identity Card. The following information was listed on the Resident Identity Card: "ID Number: 724-7152-6382755-7;" "Name: Hesamoddin Razi XXXXXXXX;" and "Nationality: Iran, Islamic Republic of." The File "ID12B.jpg" appeared to be the back of the scanned UAE Resident Identity Card, listing the following information: "Sex: M;" "Date of Birth: XX/XX/1987;" "Card Number: 059275483;" and "Expiry: 19/07/2016."

53. On or about August 19, 2015 at 6:55 AM, star.soheil@yahoo.com forwarded the email from atingraphic@gmail.com to decenthelp@gmail.com; the email contained the same two files, "ID12A.jpg" and "ID12B.jpg." The body of the e-mail, translated from Farsi to English, stated, "This one is for the fellow's PayPal." The e-mail also contained the signature for "Soheil Shahidi C.E.O." Based on my investigation, it appears that **SHAHIDIAN** was working with the user of atingraphic@gmail.com to create fraudulent

residency documents to be used to obtain a PayPal account, one of the services offered for sale on PAYMENT24's website.

E. SEYED SAJJAD SHAHIDIAN uses fraudulently obtained PayPal account to purchase U.S.-based goods and ship them to Iran through reshipping company in Oregon

54. I reviewed emails from e-mail account bn.cisco@live.com, obtained by search warrant from Microsoft, Inc. The user of bn.cisco@live.com is **INDIVIDUAL A**. I identified e-mail messages showing evidence of potential violations of U.S. export laws by **INDIVIDUAL A**, **SHAHIDIAN**, and others. Evidence of these transactions are summarized below.

55. I reviewed multiple e-mail exchanges between star.soheil@yahoo.com and bn.cisco@yahoo.com. As noted above, based on the context of the e-mails and signatures contained within the e-mails, I believe that **SEYED SAJJAD SHAHIDIAN**, also known as "Soheil Shahidi," is the user of star.soheil@yahoo.com.

56. On March 17, 2014, **SHAHIDIAN**, utilizing PayPal account star.soheil@yahoo.com, purchased two Dell PowerEdge C1100 servers for USD \$1675.98 from USCB, the seller of refurbished servers described in paragraph 48 above. The servers were shipped in **INDIVIDUAL A**'s name to an address associated with USCD, the package forwarding company located in Portland, Oregon.

57. On April 23, 2014, **INDIVIDUAL A** informed **SHAHIDIAN** that the last server he purchased for **SHAHIDIAN** was out of stock, but the same company had the same server, but with a stronger CPU and a one Terabyte hard drive, and it was USD \$30 more in price. **INDIVIDUAL A** recommended purchasing the server with the hard drive,

otherwise **SHAHIDIAN** would have to look for a hard drive in Iran. **INDIVIDUAL A** detailed the cost to ship the server to the UAE, and informed that if **SHAHIDIAN** preferred, **INDIVIDUAL A** could get clearance for the servers by sending them through FedEx. **INDIVIDUAL A** informed **SHAHIDIAN** he could send the servers four at a time to Iran or send 10-15 of them to Iran through Qatar Air or with Iran Air Cargo, a foreign freight airline headquartered in Iran.

58. On July 14, 2014, **SHAHIDIAN** purchased 15 Dell PowerEdge C1100 servers from USCB. The servers were shipped to a warehouse and cargo storage facility located in Portland, OR. Based on the e-mail exchange between **SHAHIDIAN** and **INDIVIDUAL A**, I believe these servers were destined for Iran.

59. On or about July 20, 2014, **SHAHIDIAN**, using star.soheil@yahoo.com, informed **INDIVIDUAL A** that he needed to purchase five optomechanical components from U.S. Company C ("USCC"), an optical equipment company headquartered in New Jersey. **SHAHIDIAN** included the following parts' specifications:

DET1B; DET Power Adapter & Power Supply Kit, 120 VAZ
Quantity: 2 / Total: USD 242.76

DET08CFC/M5; GHz InGaAs FC/PC-Coupled Photodetector, 850–
1700nm, M4 Tap
Quantity: 2 / Total: USD 650.00

GH25-24V; VIS Reflective Holographic Grating, 2400/mm, 25mm x 25mm
Quantity: 1 / Total: USD 127.30

EBS2; 50:50 (R:T) Economy Beamsplitter, O2", AOI=45"
Quantity: 1 / Total: USD 68.00

LED1550E; Epoxy-Encased LED, 1550nm, 2.0 mW, T-1 ¾

60. On July 21, 2014, INDIVIDUAL A replied to SHAHIDIAN, at star.soheil@yahoo.com, advising that the purchase from USCC had been made, totaling USD \$1152.57, and informing INDIVIDUAL A that it had been shipped using FedEx in his name to the Portland-based address associated with U.S. Company D (“USCD”), a shipment forwarding company located in Oregon. The subject line of the e-mail includes “Sharif University.” Based on an Open Source Internet search, Sharif University of Technology is a public research university in Tehran, Iran known for engineering and physical sciences. Based on my training and experience as well as information gathered from other law enforcement agents, package forwarding companies serve customers living outside of the U.S. by allowing them to order from U.S. suppliers using the package forwarding company’s address. After the package forwarding company receives the shipment from the U.S. supplier, it exports the package to an address in another country as directed by the customer. Package forwarding companies are typically used by foreign customers to purchase ordinary consumer goods, including well known U.S. brands, but they can also facilitate the illegal export of export-controlled items from the U.S. Domestic sales and shipments of export-controlled items generally do not receive a high degree of scrutiny from U.S. Suppliers. Based on records provided by USCB, purchases made after 2014 did not go through U.S. package forwarding companies but rather were shipped directly to the UAE.

61. Based on my training and experience as well as information gathered from other law enforcement agents, I know that the optomechanical components would require a license from OFAC for export to Iran. Law enforcement agents checked with OFAC, the

organization tasked with issuing licenses pursuant to the ITSRs. The checks revealed that OFAC has not granted any licenses to USCC, USCD, INDIVIDUAL A, or **SEYED SAJJAD SHAHIDIAN** in connection with the transactions described above.

62. During this investigation, law enforcement agents determined that the Dell PowerEdge C1100 servers, described above did not appear on the U.S. Department of Commerce Control List (CCL) and were classified as 4A994 by the manufacturer. Based on my training and experience as well as information gathered from other law enforcement agents, I know these items would require a license from OFAC for export to Iran. In addition, these servers are not covered by OFAC's General License D-1 as these items are not considered hardware items incident to personal communications. Law enforcement agents checked with OFAC, the organization tasked with issuing licenses pursuant to the ITSRs. The checks revealed that OFAC has not granted any licenses to USCB, INDIVIDUAL A, or **SEYED SAJJAD SHAHIDIAN** in connection with the transactions described above.

63. On or about December 22, 2014, **SHAHIDIAN**, using star.soheil@yahoo.com, informed INDIVIDUAL A that in light of the Government of Iran's policy on ending the use of foreign datacenters, the need to establish domestic servers and network equipment had increased. **SHAHIDIAN** stated that due to the sanctions, domestic competition was at its minimum. **SHAHIDIAN** predicted the potential to import large volumes of Dell servers into Iran.

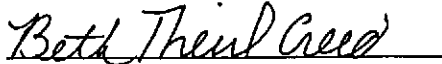
CONCLUSION

64. Based on the facts set forth above, there is probable cause to believe that **SHAHIDIAN**, a citizen and resident of Iran, devised and executed a scheme to defraud businesses in the United States by causing those businesses to export U.S.-origin goods to **SHAHIDIAN** while concealing from the businesses in the United States that **SHAHIDIAN** intended to ship those U.S.-origin goods to Iran. **SHAHIDIAN** accomplished this fraud in part by making material misrepresentations and omissions regarding the destination of the U.S.-origin goods, representing to the U.S.-based businesses that the goods were going to the United Arab Emirates (“UAE”). In furtherance of his scheme to defraud, **SHAHIDIAN** provided the U.S.-based businesses with false documents of residency. Also in furtherance of his scheme to defraud, and in order to accomplish the transactions with the U.S.-based businesses, **SHAHIDIAN** obtained payment processing accounts from U.S.-based companies using false residency information, fraudulent passport documents, and other residency documentation, including documents fabricated using the identity and personally identifiable information of another person. There is also probable cause to believe that **SHAHIDIAN** engaged in, and conspired to engage in, the smuggling of goods from the United States into Iran and the


violation of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act and the Iranian Transactions and Sanctions Regulations.

Further your affiant sayeth not

Dated:


Beth Theirl Creed
Special Agent
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Sworn and subscribed to before me
this 5 day of February 5, 2017


The Honorable Steven E. Rau,
United States Magistrate Judge