

PRESS RELEASE

Iranian Company and Two Iranian Nationals Charged with Conspiring to Provide Material Support to Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and for Scheme to Procure U.S. Technology for Iranian Attack Drones

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<https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/iranian-company-and-two-iranian-nationals-charged-conspiring-provide-material-support>

Concurrent Action with Department of the Treasury Targets Illicit Iranian Weapons Procurement Network

A criminal complaint was unsealed today charging Hossein Akbari, 63, and Reza Amidi, 62, both of Iran, and an Iranian company, Rah Roshd Company (Rah Roshd), with conspiring to procure U.S. parts for Iranian Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs, also known as drones), conspiring to provide material support to the IRGC – a designated foreign terrorist organization – and conspiring to commit money laundering.

Akbari is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Rah Roshd. Amidi is the company's commercial manager and was previously the commercial manager of Qods Aviation Industries (QAI), an Iranian state-owned aerospace company. They are both citizens of Iran and remain at large.

"Today's charges lay bare how U.S.-made technology ended up in the hands of the Iranian military to build attack drones," said Sue J. Bai, head of the Justice Department's National Security Division. "The Justice Department will continue to put maximum pressure on the Iranian regime. We will relentlessly dismantle illicit supply chains

funneling American technology into the hands of Iran's military and terrorist organizations and pursue those complicit in operations that threaten our country."

"As alleged in the complaint, the defendants conspired to obtain U.S.-origin parts needed to manufacture drones for military use in Iran and send those parts to Iran in violation of export control laws," said U.S. Attorney John J. Durham for the Eastern District of New York. "The charges filed today demonstrate the commitment by my office and our law enforcement partners to dismantle illicit supply chains and prosecute those who unlawfully procure U.S. technology in support of a foreign terrorist organization. The IRGC and QAI have been core players in the Iranian military regime's production of drones, which threaten the lives of civilians, U.S. personnel and our country's allies. These charges should serve as a warning to those who violate U.S. export control laws and who unlawfully seek to aid Iran's drone program."

"The allegations in this case demonstrate the lengths Iranian companies take to evade U.S. sanctions, victimize U.S. businesses, and support the IRGC's production of drones," said Assistant Director Roman Rozhavsky of the FBI's Counterintelligence Division. "The FBI and our partners will use all authorities to stop those who seek to evade sanctions and engage in money laundering schemes that support terrorist activities and threaten the lives and interests of Americans and our allies."

According to court documents, Akbari and Amidi operate Rah Roshd which procures and supplies advanced electronic, electro-optical and security systems to the Government of Iran and designs, builds, and manufactures ground support systems for UAVs. Rah Roshd's clients include the IRGC and several Iranian state-owned aerospace companies and drone manufacturers, including QAI, Iran's Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics (MODAFL), Shahed Aviation Industries Research Center (SAIRC) and Shahid Bakeri Industrial Group (SBIG).

Between January 2020 and the present, Amidi and Akbari used Rah Roshd in furtherance of a scheme to evade U.S. sanctions and procure U.S.-origin parts for use in Iranian-manufactured UAVs, including the Mohajer-6 UAV. At least one of those parts was manufactured by a Brooklyn, New York-based company (Company-1). In September 2022, the Ukrainian Air Force shot down an Iranian-made Mohajer-6 drone used by the Russian military in Ukraine. The drone recovered by the Ukrainian Air Force contained parts made by several U.S. companies, including Company-1)

To facilitate their scheme, Amidi and Akbari falsely purported to represent companies other than Rah Roshd, including a company based in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (Company-2) and a company based in Belgium (Company-3). The defendants used a "spoofed" email address, containing a misspelled version of Company-2's name, to

communicate regarding the procurement of parts, including parts manufactured by U.S. companies. The defendants also used various “front” or “shell” companies to pay for UAV parts and to obfuscate the true end destination and the true identities of the sanctioned end users, including QAI and the IRGC, which were acquiring U.S.-made parts through Rah Roshd. Amidi and Akbari also used aliases to obfuscate their true identities in furtherance of the scheme.

Additionally, the defendants conspired to provide material support to the IRGC by providing goods and services, including constructing military shelters, providing cameras and drone field hangers and conspiring to procure drone parts as well as parts to operate drones, including servo motors, pneumatic masts, and engines, for the benefit of the IRGC’s military campaign. The investigation uncovered correspondence from the IRGC, signed by the head of the UAV Command for the IRGC’s Aerospace Force, thanking Rah Roshd for its work on behalf of the IRGC and praising Rah Roshd’s achievements in designing and manufacturing “servo motors” for defense equipment. The letter also included a quote from the Supreme Leader of Iran regarding the importance of self-sufficiency and domestic production to strengthen Iran’s economy and “disappoint the enemies of the Islamic Republic.” The letter also noted continued efforts of Rah Roshd “in strengthening the defensive capabilities of the Islamic Republic of Iran.” Both Amidi and Akbari possessed documents indicating that they had purchased servo motors for delivery to Iran, including a servo motor contained in the Mohajer-6 drone. Akbari also emailed supplier companies located in the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and noted that he was purchasing parts for drones to be shipped to Iran.

Finally, Amidi and Akbari conspired to commit money laundering. They used at least three shell companies, which were all based in the UAE, to pay a PRC-based company that sent invoices to Rah Roshd for the sale of motors. Those payments were processed through U.S.-based correspondent bank accounts. The defendants also used two of these shell companies to pay a separate PRC-based company for the sale of pneumatic masts, which are a component of the operation of the Mohajer-6 drone.

Concurrent with today’s criminal complaint, the Department of Treasury [announced sanctions](#) targeting a network of six entities and two individuals based in Iran, the UAE, and the PRC responsible for the procurement of UAV components on behalf of QAI — a leading manufacturer for Iran’s UAV program. According to the Treasury, this network has also facilitated procurement for other entities in Iran’s military-industrial complex, including Iran Aircraft Manufacturing Industrial Company (HESA) and SBIG. Today’s action marks the second round of sanctions targeting Iranian weapons proliferators

since the President issued [National Security Presidential Memorandum 2](#) on Feb. 4, ordering a campaign of maximum pressure on Iran.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Nina C. Gupta and Lindsey R. Oken for the Eastern District of New York are prosecuting the case, with the assistance of Paralegal Specialist Rebecca Roth, Trial Attorney Scott Claffee of the National Security Division's Counterintelligence and Export Control Section, and Trial Attorney Charles Kovats of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section.

Today's actions were coordinated through the Justice and Commerce Departments' Disruptive Technology Strike Force. The Disruptive Technology Strike Force is an interagency law enforcement strike force co-led by the Departments of Justice and Commerce designed to target illicit actors, protect supply chains, and prevent critical technology from being acquired by authoritarian regimes and hostile nation states.

A criminal complaint is merely an allegation. All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.