
US Sanctions 20 Iranian, Iraqi Entities Despite Virus Outbreak

By: Telesur
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Despite the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the U.S. has continued its economic pressure campaign by sanctioning several Iranian and Iraqi entities over alleged links to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

The U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) announced on Thursday that they had sanctioned 20 Iranian and Iraqi companies, officials, and business associates over their alleged support to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

"The U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated 20 Iran- and Iraq-based front companies, senior officials, and business associates that provide support to or act for or on behalf of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps-Qods Force (IRGC-QF) in addition to transferring lethal aid to Iranian-backed terrorist militias in Iraq such as Kata'ib Hizballah (KH) and Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH)," the statement said.

The statement accused these entities of "smuggling through the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr; money laundering through Iraqi front companies; selling Iranian oil to the Syrian regime; smuggling weapons to Iraq and Yemen; promoting propaganda efforts in Iraq on behalf of the IRGC-QF and its terrorist militias; intimidating Iraqi politicians; and using funds and public donations made to an ostensibly religious institution to supplement IRGC-QF budgets."

"Iran employs a web of front companies to fund terrorist groups across the region, siphoning resources away from the Iranian people and prioritizing terrorist proxies over the basic needs of its people," said Treasury Secretary Steven T. Mnuchin. "The United States maintains broad exceptions and authorizations for humanitarian aid including agriculture commodities, food, medicine, and medical devices to help the people of Iran combat the coronavirus"

This decision to sanction these entities came at the same time that U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo continued his attacks against the Iranian government. Pompeo has accused Iran of harming its people during the coronavirus outbreak, while also criticizing Tehran for refusing the U.S.' aid offer.

In turn, Iran has demanded that the U.S. end their sanctions against the Islamic Republic, as the blockade has created serious humanitarian issues. Despite previously stating that they would ease the sanctions against Iran, the U.S. government has intensified their blockade and sanctioned several Iranian entities.
