



# PRESS RELEASE

## Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation *Chief Richard Weber*

Date: November 21, 2016

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IRS – Criminal Investigation

CI Release #: CI-2016-11-21-A

### **Consultant to Iranian Mission to the United Nations Pleads Guilty to Filing False Income Tax Return and Conspiring to Violate Sanctions Laws**

Ahmad Sheikhzadeh, 60, a U.S. citizen and resident of New York City, New York, pleaded guilty to filing a false income tax return that substantially understated the amount of cash salary the defendant received from Iran's Permanent Mission to the United Nations (IMUN) and conspiring to facilitate the transfer of funds to Iran without the required license from the Treasury Department in violation of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA).

The announcement was made by Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security Mary B. McCord, U.S. Attorney Robert L. Capers for the Eastern District of New York, Assistant Director in Charge William F. Sweeney, Jr. for the FBI's New York Field Office and Special Agent in Charge Shantelle Kitchen for the IRS Criminal Investigation Division in New York. The plea proceeding took place before U.S. District Judge Pamela K. Chen in federal court in Brooklyn.

According to court filings and facts presented during the plea proceeding, beginning in January 2008, Sheikhzadeh was employed as a consultant to the IMUN and received a regular salary, in cash, approximately once per month, through an intermediary who was an official at the IMUN. Sheikhzadeh was not a declared IMUN official. From 2008 through 2012, Sheikhzadeh filed personal income tax returns that substantially understated the amount of income he received from his work for the IMUN. In addition, distinct from his work for the IMUN, Sheikhzadeh provided money remitting ("hawala") services to co-conspirators in the U.S. to facilitate investments in Iran and to direct disbursements from Iranian bank accounts. Sheikhzadeh engaged in these money transfers without a license from the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control in violation of IEEPA.

Sheikhzadeh will be sentenced on March 30, 2017. When sentenced, the defendant faces up to 23 years in prison. The defendant has agreed to pay over \$147,000 in restitution and forfeiture. The maximum statutory sentence is prescribed by Congress and is provided here for informational purposes, as the sentencing of the defendant will be determined by the court based on the advisory Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Tali Farhadian and Peter Baldwin from the Office's Public Integrity and National Security and Cybercrime Sections, and Brian Morris from the Asset Forfeiture Section. Assistance was also provided by Trial Attorney David Recker of the National Security Division's Counterintelligence and Export Control Section.

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