

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 12, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Dear Mr. President,

We request that you reconsider officially engaging Iraqi Minister of Oil and Acting Minister of Finance, Ihsan Abdul-Jabbar Ismail, in any formal capacity when he visits the US in the coming days. Key Iraqi officials, and its oil sector continue to play an instrumental role in Iran's ability to evade and weather economic sanctions and to advance its regional terrorism campaign. Under Iraq's Oil Minister, Iraq's State Oil Marketing Organization (SOMO), has a track record of business dealings with Iran, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and Iranian-backed terrorist organizations Asa'ib ahl al-Haq (AAH), and Katai'b Hezbollah (KB). The Oil Minister is known also to have facilitated illegal oil exports on behalf of Iran. United Against a Nuclear Iran (IANI) has conducted tanker tracking analysis to determine that SOMO facilitate the blending of Iranian oil with Iraqi oil for the purpose of obscuring the Iranian origin. Additionally, the Wall Street Journal has reported how a commercial affiliate of SOMO and owned by the Iraqi Ministry of Oil, Al-Iraqia Shipping Services and Oil Trading FZE (AISSOT) was also facilitating the illicit and sanctions evading oil blending practices.

Iraq's Oil Minister is suspected of widescale corruption to accept bribes for the award of contracts and oil operations in Iraq. He is currently being charged with 29 corruption cases in the al-Karkh Investigation court. He is also suspected of accepting bribes from the IRGC Quds Force (IRGC-QF) and international oil companies. As Acting Finance Minister, Ishan Abdul-Jabbar Ismael oversees the receipt of U.S. federal dollar transfers to the Central Bank of Iraq and the Ministry of Finance in turn funds the Popular Mobilization Commission, which is comprised of three US-designated terrorist groups (AAH, KH, Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba – HAN).

As members of Congress, we are committed to investigating your administration's weak foreign policy towards Iran and its proxies in the region. We request answers to the following questions by October 28th, 2022 at 5:00 PM:

- Who is the individual responsible for granting Ishan Abdul-Jabbar Ismael a US visa and why was this visa granted?
- Are you aware that Minister Ishan is alleged to have engaged in widespread corruption in both his current role and previously as the Director General of the Basra Oil Company? Are

you aware that this individual has been instrumental in leading Iraq's Oil Ministry and its sub-entities to implement Iraq's Federal Supreme Court decision which was directed by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps-Quds Force (IRGC-QF) to dismantle the Kurdistan Region's oil exports, and thereby its economy and ability to serve as a bulwark to Iranian regional terrorism? Are you aware that he along with a range of Iraqi officials are suspected of systemic corruption, largely through the oil operations of the Iraqi state, and business relationships with existing designated terrorist groups, and facilitating the illicit export of Iranian oil and fuel products?

- Does the US Department of State and the Department of Treasury determine that this individual, the Ministry of Oil, and its sub-entities have engaged in significant transactions with designated foreign terrorist groups, or entities designated under Executive Order 13224 as specially designated global terrorists, including the Iran-backed, Iraqi funded militias, Asa'ib Ahl Haq (AAH)¹ and Kata'ib Hezbollah² (KH)³ and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC)?
- Have you determined whether this individual and the Ministry of Oil has or continued to engage and/or supported Iran-backed militias which attacked the US Embassy in Baghdad on December 31, 2019, including AAH, KH, and the Badr Corps?
- Has the US Department of State and Department of Treasury determined whether this individual meets the criteria for sanctions under the Global Magnitsky Act as “a government official, or a senior associate of such an official, that is responsible for, complicit in, ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, acts of significant corruption, including the expropriating of private or public assets for personal gain, corruption related to government contracts or the extraction of natural resources, bribery, or the facilitation or transfer of the proceeds of corruption to foreign jurisdiction?”
- Has the Department of State determined that the Minister of Oil meets the criteria to be banned of a visa under Sec. 7031(c) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2019 (SFOPs; P.L. 116-6; 8 U.S.C. 1182 note) which makes foreign officials and their immediate family members ineligible for U.S. entry if there is credible evidence that such individuals “have been involved in significant corruption, including corruption related to the extraction of natural resources, or a gross violation of human rights?”
- Have you determined whether the Minister of Oil has violated Executive Order 13438 (EO 13438), *Blocking Property of Certain Persons Who Threaten Stabilization Efforts in Iraq*?

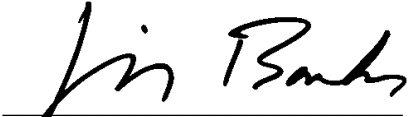
¹ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/01/10/2020-00244/designation-of-asaib-ahl-al-haq-as-a-specially-designated-global-terrorist>

² <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2009/07/16/E9-16877/designation-of-one-individual-and-one-entity-pursuant-to-executive-order-13438>

³ https://diyaruna.com/en_GB/articles/cnmi_di/features/2019/02/13/feature-01;
https://almashareq.com/en_GB/articles/cnmi_am/features/2021/08/17/feature-02

- Have you examined why the US Department of Treasury continues to transfer the Iraqi Finance Ministry U.S. banknotes, while the Iraqi Treasury continues to fund Iraqi militias which are backed by Iran, and are designated by the US as terrorist organizations?

Thank you and we are looking forward for your response,



Jim Banks
Member of Congress



Michael Waltz
Member of Congress



Joe Wilson
Member of Congress