



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

**ENF 37759**

**JAN 17 2012**

Haytham Faraj  
Law Firm of Puckett and Faraj, PC  
835 Mason Street, Suite 150-A  
Dearborn, MI 48124

Re: STE Ellissa Group-associated Blocked Vehicles

Dear Mr. Faraj:

The Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control ("OFAC") is in receipt of your letter, dated October 13, 2011. As you are aware, OFAC designated Ellissa Holding as a Specially Designated Narcotics Trafficker ("SDNT") on January 26, 2011, pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act, 21 U.S.C. §§ 1901-1908, 8 U.S.C. § 1182. As a result of the designation, all property and interests in property of Ellissa Holding, and of entities owned or controlled by Ellissa Holding, including STE Ellissa (collectively "Ellissa"), which was in, or thereafter came into, the United States, or under the custody or control of a U.S. person, became blocked pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Sanctions Regulations (the "Regulations"), 31 C.F.R. part 598. U.S. persons cannot deal in blocked property without authorization from OFAC.

This designation affected many vehicles at numerous ports in the United States. OFAC has worked diligently with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection ("CBP") to provide guidance in the identification of blocked vehicles. OFAC continues to review license requests for their disposition.

Your letter asserts that Ellissa, while performing necessary functions related to their transfer at the Port of Cotonou, Benin, holds no interest in the vehicles at issue. OFAC has previously considered this position, and found it would be inconsistent with current U.S. sanctions policy to authorize the release and exportation of property in which an SDNT has an interest. The Regulations make no distinction between an interest in services and an interest in tangible goods. Rather, the Regulations define "blocked property" broadly to include any account or property in which an SDNT has an interest, direct or indirect, present, future, or contingent. The consignment of vehicles to Ellissa constitutes a "present, future, or contingent" property interest of an SDNT in the vehicles. Further, the Regulations draw no distinction between direct and indirect interests; either suffices to create a blockable property interest in the vehicles themselves. Accordingly, any Ellissa interest in the vehicles, no matter the nature, is blocked and cannot be dealt in by any U.S. person. (See §§ 598.202 and 203(a) of the Regulations).

Among the factors OFAC has considered in identifying blocked vehicles is any consignment to Ellissa in the Electronic Export Information ("EEI") submitted to CBP by exporters. Such a consignment demonstrates a property interest of Ellissa that makes the vehicles blocked property, regardless of whether a subsequent EEI submission attempted to consign the vehicles to a different party. In fact, any subsequent submission of export information and attempted re-consignment of a blocked vehicle, made after Ellissa's designation on January 26, 2011, would

appear to be a dealing in blocked property, which is prohibited by the Regulations unless authorized by OFAC. Multiple EEI submissions and other conflicting information regarding vehicles submitted for export are among the challenges CBP and OFAC have faced in identifying blocked property.

On May 20, 2011, OFAC sent a *Notice Regarding Blocked Property* (a copy is enclosed) to exporters and other parties (the "Blocking Notices"). The Blocking Notices informed interested parties that OFAC licenses would be required to retrieve or export blocked vehicles. The Blocking Notices further stated that OFAC would consider issuing licenses unblocking the vehicles and allowing them to be sold, transferred, or exported to, or to be otherwise dealt in by, any party not on the SDN list, upon receipt of proof that funds equivalent to the value of each vehicle, are placed in a blocked account. Alternatively, the Blocking Notices stated that OFAC would consider issuing licenses authorizing retrieval of the vehicles so that they may be transported and stored as blocked property, on the condition that they not be sold, transferred, exported, or otherwise dealt in without additional authorization from OFAC, upon receipt of certain information requested therein. (Please see the enclosed copy of a Blocking Notice for details of these options.)

OFAC's Licensing Division has received numerous license applications since that date, and has been reviewing and responding to them. We understand that the Licensing Division has been in direct contact with you since your letter of October 13, 2011, and is currently reviewing new applications from you received in December 2011. Questions about specific license applications should be made directly to our Licensing Division at (202) 622-2480.

Any questions concerning this correspondence or the attached copy of a Blocking Notice with respect to the blocked vehicles may be directed to OFAC's Office of Enforcement at (202) 622-2430.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T Feddo', with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

Thomas Feddo  
Assistant Director for Enforcement  
Office of Foreign Assets Control

Enclosure



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

**NOTICE REGARDING BLOCKED PROPERTY**

**ENF 23477**

May 20, 2011

The Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control ("OFAC") has reason to believe that you are a party with an interest in certain motor vehicles that have been detained by U.S. Customs and Border Protection ("CBP") under the authority of the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Sanctions Regulations (the "Regulations"), 31 C.F.R. part 598. These vehicles are blocked pursuant to the Regulations because Ellissa Holding, or an entity controlled by Ellissa Holding, including but not limited to Ellissa Group SA and STE Ellissa, appears to have an interest in them.

As you may be aware, OFAC designated Ellissa Holding as a Specially Designated Narcotics Trafficker ("SDNT") on January 26, 2011, pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (the "Kingpin Act"), 21 U.S.C. §§ 1901-1908, 8 U.S.C. § 1182. A press release regarding the designation, which provides a more complete description of this action and the names of additional individuals and entities designated on this date, is enclosed. Further information concerning OFAC's economic sanctions programs and a complete list of all individuals and entities designated ("SDN list") may be viewed at our Web site: [www.treasury.gov/ofac](http://www.treasury.gov/ofac).

OFAC is authorizing CBP to release from detention any vehicle that is being held as blocked property pursuant to the Regulations as a result of the designation described above. **However, these vehicles remain blocked and cannot be sold, transferred, exported, or otherwise dealt in without additional authorization, in the form of a license, from OFAC.**

OFAC will consider issuing licenses unblocking the vehicles and allowing them to be sold, transferred, or exported to, or to be otherwise dealt in by, any party not on the SDN list, upon receipt of proof that funds equivalent to the value of each vehicle, based on the documented auction or other purchase price for the vehicle, are placed in one of the following blocked accounts: Wells Fargo account number 9842180888, routing number 091000019, under the name "Ellissa Group Designation - OFAC License FNK-795 - OFAC Blocked Account"; or Citibank NA account number 36937081, routing number 021000089, under the name "Ellissa Group Designation, OFAC License FNK-794." Deposits in these accounts should reference OFAC License No. FNK-795 for deposits into the Wells Fargo account or License No. FNK-794 for deposits into the Citibank NA account, to prevent blocking of the funds by the originating banks. In addition to providing documentary evidence of the vehicle's value, and placement of funds into one

of the identified accounts, license requests must include the year, make, model and vehicle identification number (“VIN”) of each vehicle.

OFAC will alternatively consider issuing licenses authorizing retrieval of the vehicles so that they may be transported and stored as blocked property, on condition that they not be sold, transferred, exported, or otherwise dealt in without additional authorization from OFAC. For each vehicle to be retrieved, the request must include: the year, make, model, and VIN of the vehicle; the identity of the vehicle’s owner; the destination of the vehicle; the intended date of retrieval of the vehicle; the name and address of the retrieving party; and the intended custodian, along with the name and telephone number of a contact person from whom further information can be obtained.

**A party seeking to engage in these or any other transactions involving these blocked vehicles must obtain a license and should refer to the licensing procedures set forth in the Reporting, Procedures and Penalties Regulations (the “Reporting Regulations”), 31 C.F.R. §§ 501.801-802.** Requests for specific licenses must be made in writing to the U.S. Department of the Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control, Attn: Licensing Division, 1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20220. License applications and related correspondence may be sent via facsimile to (202) 622-1657, with the original document sent by mail. For additional details on making a license request, please contact OFAC at the phone number provided above. Please note that, under 18 U.S.C. § 1001, knowingly and willfully falsifying or concealing a material fact in your license request may result in criminal fines, imprisonment, or both.

Any storage costs charged by any carrier, custodian, or warehouse or other storage facility, are the responsibility of the exporter. With respect to vehicles for which no communication is received by OFAC within **30 calendar days** of the date of this Notice, OFAC may consider licensing any parties holding a lien or other claim to the vehicles to exercise their rights with respect to the vehicles, including to initiate and conduct any necessary proceedings, and to execute any judgments against the vehicles. However, neither receipt of this Notice nor any subsequent OFAC license is intended to imply superior title to a vehicle.

**Any unauthorized transactions or dealings in any property in which an SDNT has an interest is a violation of the Kingpin Act and the Regulations and may be punishable, in the case of an individual, by criminal penalties ranging up to 10 years in prison. Any officer, director, or agent of any entity who knowingly participates in a violation of the Kingpin Act may be subject to a maximum of 30 years in prison and fines up to \$5,000,000. OFAC may also impose a civil penalty up to \$1,075,000 per violation of the Kingpin Act. The Regulations also prohibit any transaction that evades or avoids, or that has the effect of evading or avoiding, and any conspiracy to violate, the prohibitions in the Regulations. Further, the release or transfer of these vehicles under any license that may be issued by OFAC does not discharge any criminal or civil liability under the laws of the United States.**

Any questions concerning this Notice or obligations with respect to the blocked vehicles may be directed to OFAC's Office of Enforcement at (202) 622-0172.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dale Thompson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dale Thompson  
Acting Assistant Director  
Enforcement Division I  
Office of Foreign Assets Control

Enclosure

## Treasury Targets Major Lebanese-Based Drug Trafficking and Money Laundering Network

1/26/2011

**WASHINGTON** – The U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) today designated Lebanese narcotics trafficker Ayman Joumaa, as well as nine individuals and 19 entities connected to his drug trafficking and money laundering organization as Specially Designated Narcotics Traffickers (SDNTs) pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (Kingpin Act).

Ayman Joumaa has coordinated the transportation, distribution, and sale of multi-ton shipments of cocaine from South America and has laundered the proceeds from the sale of cocaine in Europe and the Middle East, according to investigations led by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Operating in Lebanon, West Africa, Panama and Colombia, Joumaa and his organization launder proceeds from their illicit activities – as much as \$200 million per month – through various channels, including bulk cash smuggling operations and Lebanese exchange houses. As a result of today's designations, U.S. persons are prohibited from conducting financial or commercial transactions with these individuals and entities and any assets the designees may have under U.S. jurisdiction are frozen.

"Ayman Joumaa runs a complex money laundering scheme moving hundreds of millions of dollars of illicitly derived proceeds through businesses operated by him and his associates," said OFAC Director Adam J. Szubin. "By exposing this international drug trafficking and money laundering organization, today's action will disrupt this network and obstruct their access to the international financial system."

Three Lebanon-based money exchanges used by Ayman Joumaa and his organization to launder illicit proceeds were also designated today: the Hassan Ayash Exchange Company, the Ellissa Exchange Company, and New Line Exchange Trust Co. OFAC also targeted Hassan Ayash, Hassan Mahmoud Ayache, Jamal Mohamad Kharoubi, Ali Mohammed Kharroubi, Ismael Mohammed Youssef, and Ziad Mohamad Youssef for their roles in these money exchanges. Ali Mohammed Kharroubi owns Ellissa Holding, which was designated today. Ellissa Holding controls nine companies in Lebanon, Benin and the Democratic of Congo, including Ellissa Group SA, the subsidiary of Ellissa Holding in Benin involved in the sale of used cars in Africa.

Joumaa's brothers Akram Saied Joumaa, Anwar Saied Joumaa and Mohamad Said Joumaa were designated for their involvement in the drug trafficking or money laundering activities of the Joumaa organization. Akram Saied Joumaa is the CEO and general manager of Caesar's Park Hotel, also designated today, which the organization uses as a location to broker drug trafficking and money laundering activities.

Lebanon-based company Phenicia Shipping Offshore SARL, Panama-based companies Goldi Electronics S.A. and Zona Libre International Market S.A., and Colombia-based companies Almacen Junior, Almacen Junior No. 2 and Commercial Planeta were all designated today for being owned or controlled by members of the Ayman Joumaa organization.

Today's action, supported by the DEA's investigation of the Joumaa organization, is part of ongoing efforts under the Kingpin Act to apply financial measures against significant foreign narcotics traffickers worldwide. Internationally, more than 950 businesses and individuals linked to 87 drug kingpins have been designated pursuant to the Kingpin Act since June 2000. Penalties for violations of the Kingpin Act range from civil penalties of up to \$1.075 million per violation to more severe criminal penalties. Criminal penalties for corporate officers may include up to 30 years in prison and fines up to \$5 million. Criminal fines for corporations may reach \$10 million. Individuals face up to 10 years in prison and fines pursuant to Title 18 of the United States Code for criminal violations of the Kingpin Act.

### Recent OFAC Actions

1/26/2011

The following individuals have been added to OFAC's SDN list:

AYACHE, Hassan Mahmoud (a.k.a. AYACH, Hassan; a.k.a. AYACHE, Hassan Mohamad; a.k.a. AYASH, Hassan; a.k.a. AYASH, Hassan Muhammad; a.k.a. AYASH, Hassane), Beirut, Lebanon; DOB 01 May 1963; POB Beirut, Lebanon; citizen Lebanon; nationality Lebanon; Passport RL0361632 (Lebanon) (individual) [SDNTK]

AYASH, Hassan (a.k.a. AYACHE, Mahmoud Hassan), Beirut, Lebanon; DOB 1943; POB Miziara, Lebanon; nationality Lebanon (individual) [SDNTK]

JOUMAA, Akram Saied (a.k.a. JOMAA YOUSSEF, Akram Saïd), Lebanon; DOB 07 Jun 1956; POB Al Karouan, Lebanon; nationality Lebanon; Passport 11869936 (Venezuela); RUC # 3-NT-1-6255 (Panama) (individual) [SDNTK]

JOUMAA, Anwar Saied (a.k.a. JOMAA, Anmar; a.k.a. JOMAA, Anwar Saïd), Lebanon; POB Al Karouan, Lebanon; nationality Lebanon; Cedula No. 84072009 (Colombia); Passport 392065 (Panama) (individual) [SDNTK]

JOUMAA, Ayman Saied (a.k.a. JOMAA KHARFAN, Aïman Saïd; a.k.a. JOMAA, Aymen; a.k.a. JOMAA, Aymen Saïd; a.k.a. JOUMAA, Aïman; a.k.a. JOUMAA, Eïman; a.k.a. JOUMHA, Aymen), Lebanon; Maicao, Colombia; Medellin, Colombia; DOB 21 Jun 1964; alt. DOB 15 Jun 1976; POB Al Karouan, Lebanon; alt. POB Barranquilla, Colombia; citizen Lebanon; alt. citizen Colombia; nationality Lebanon; alt. nationality Colombia; Cedula No. 84075050 (Colombia); Passport RL 0235074 (Lebanon); alt. Passport P013331 (Colombia) (individual) [SDNTK]

JOUMAA, Mohamad Saïd (a.k.a. JOMAA, Mohamed Saïd), Lebanon; DOB 06 Apr 1977; POB Lala, Lebanon; Cedula No. 84076630 (Colombia) (individual) [SDNTK]

KHAROUBI, Jamal Mohamad, Lebanon; DOB 01 Nov 1976; POB Saïda, Lebanon; citizen Lebanon; Passport RL0068313 (Lebanon) (individual) [SDNTK]

KHARROUBI, Ali Mohamed (a.k.a. KHAROUBI, Ali), c/o SOLMAR, Lebanon; c/o ELLISSA HOLDING, Lebanon; c/o ELLISSA GROUP SA, Benin; c/o AGROPHEN, Benin; c/o ELLISSA SHIPPING, Benin; c/o YAMEN BENIN SARL, Benin; c/o ELLISSA PARC COTONOU, Benin; c/o ELLISSA MEGASTORE, Benin; c/o SOCIETE ELLISSA GROUP CONGO, Congo, Republic of the; c/o ELLISSA EXCHANGE COMPANY, Lebanon; DOB 8 Jul 1970; citizen Lebanon; nationality Lebanon; Passport RL0603911 (Lebanon) (individual) [SDNTK]

YOUSSEF, Ismael Mohammed (a.k.a. YOUSSEF ABDALLAH, Ismael; a.k.a. YOUSSEF, Ismail Mohammad), Lebanon; DOB 12 Sep 1979; POB Santa Marta, Colombia; alt. POB Lebanon; citizen Colombia; nationality Colombia; alt. nationality Lebanon; Cedula No. 17900973 (Colombia); Passport AF038564 (Colombia); alt. Passport AK037837 (Colombia) (individual) [SDNTK]

YOUSSEF, Ziad Mohamad, Lebanon; DOB 22 Sep 1976; POB West Bekaa, Baaloul, Lebanon; citizen Lebanon; nationality Lebanon (individual) [SDNTK]

The following entities have been added to OFAC's SDN list:

AGROPHEN (a.k.a. AGRO-PHEN), 01 BP 6269, Cotonou, Benin [SDNTK]

ALMACEN JUNIOR NO. 2, Calle 10 No. 12-46, Maicao, Colombia; Matricula Mercantil No 00008712 (Colombia) [SDNTK]

ALMACEN JUNIOR, Carrera 13 No. 11-24, Maicao, Colombia; Matricula Mercantil No 00002911 (Colombia) [SDNTK]

CAESAR'S PARK HOTEL (a.k.a. CEASAR'S PARK HOTEL; a.k.a. CEASERS PARK HOTEL), Madame Curie St., Beirut, Lebanon [SDNTK]

COMERCIAL PLANETA, Carrera 12 No. 12-13, Maicao, Colombia; Matricula Mercantil No 00072179 (Colombia) [SDNTK]

ELLISSA EXCHANGE COMPANY (a.k.a. ELESSA EXCHANGE; a.k.a. ELISSA EXCHANGE), Sarafand, Lebanon [SDNTK]

ELLISSA GROUP SA (a.k.a. "ELESSA GROUP"), 01 BP 6269, Cotonou, Atlantique, Benin; C.R. No. 03-B-1620 [SDNTK]

ELLISSA HOLDING (a.k.a. ELLISSA SAL (HOLDING)), Atrium Building, Weygand Street, Central District, Beirut, Lebanon [SDNTK]

ELLISSA MEGASTORE (a.k.a. ELLISSA MEGA STORE), Quartier SCOA GBETO, Carre 148, Cotonou, Benin; 01 BP 6269, Cotonou, Benin [SDNTK]

ELLISSA PARC COTONOU, 01 BP 6269, Cotonou, Benin [SDNTK]

ELLISSA SHIPPING, 01 BP 6269, Cotonou, Benin [SDNTK]

GOLDI ELECTRONICS S.A., Colon, Panama; RUC # 1476422-1-642962 (Panama) [SDNTK]

HASSAN AYASH EXCHANGE COMPANY (a.k.a. AYASH EXCHANGE COMPANY SARL; a.k.a. AYASH XCHANGE CO.; a.k.a. HASSAN AYACH EXCHANGE; a.k.a. HASSAN AYAS PARTNER EXCHANGE CO; a.k.a. HASSANE AYASH EXCHANGE CO. SARL; a.k.a. MAKDESSI SAYRAFI COMPANY), Madame Curie St., Hamra St., Beirut, Lebanon [SDNTK]

JOUMAA MONEY LAUNDERING ORGANIZATION / DRUG TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATION (a.k.a. "JOUMAA MLO/DTO"), Beirut, Lebanon; Maicao, Colombia [SDNTK]

NEW LINE EXCHANGE TRUST CO., 2901 Omar and Khaled Richani Building, Beirut, Lebanon; 2901 Icaria, Ras Beirut, Lebanon [SDNTK]

PHENICIA SHIPPING OFFSHORE SARL, Beirut, Lebanon [SDNTK]

SOCIETE ELLISSA GROUP CONGO (a.k.a. ELLISSA GROUP CONGO; a.k.a. ELLISSA GROUP SA CONGO; a.k.a. ELLISSA PARC CONGO), Avenir Lassy Zephyr, Immeuble Socotra, Pointe Noire, Congo, Republic of the; C.R. No. 07B233 (Congo, Democratic Republic of the) [SDNTK]

SOLMAR, Atrium Building, Weygand Street, Central District, Beirut, Lebanon [SDNTK]

YAMEN BENIN SARL, 01 BP 6269, Cotonou, Benin [SDNTK]

ZONA LIBRE INTERNATIONAL MARKET S.A., Colon, Panama; RUC # 66161-20-363386 (Panama) [SDNTK]