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Treasury Sanctions Entities Owned By Drug Kingpin Mohamed Bachir Suleman

Treasury Action Targets Narcotics Trafficking Network in Mozambique, Builds on President Obama's Drug Kingpin Identification

WASHINGTON – On the heels of President Obama's identification today of Mozambican drug kingpin Mohamed Bachir Suleman pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (Kingpin Act), the U.S. Department of the Treasury designated three businesses in his narcotic trafficking network. Also pursuant to the Kingpin Act, Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated Grupo MBS Limitada, Grupo MBS – Kayum Centre, and Maputo Shopping Centre as Specially Designated Narcotics Traffickers for being owned or controlled by Suleman. Today's action freezes any assets the three entities may have under U.S. jurisdiction and prohibits U.S. persons from conducting financial or commercial transactions with them.

"Mohamed Bachir Suleman is a large-scale narcotics trafficker in Mozambique, and his network contributes to the growing trend of narcotics trafficking and related money laundering across southern Africa," said OFAC Director Adam J. Szubin. "Today's designation builds upon the President's identification of Suleman by exposing three of his businesses and applying further financial sanctions against his narcotics trafficking network."

Suleman leads a well-financed narcotics trafficking and money laundering network in Mozambique that is centered on his family-owned business conglomerate Grupo MBS Limitada, which includes a retail store named Grupo MBS – Kayum Centre and a shopping mall named Maputo Shopping Centre, all three of which are being designated today.

Mozambique is increasingly becoming a transit country for the shipment of narcotics and precursor chemicals, according to the U.S. Department of State's 2010 *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*. Mozambique serves as a transshipment point for such narcotics as hashish, herbal cannabis, cocaine, heroin, and mandrax (methaqualone), most of which are consumed either in Europe and South Africa. Also according to the report, a combination of porous borders, inadequately trained and equipped law enforcement agencies, and high-level corruption within the government provide a permissive environment for narcotics traffickers to operate in Mozambique.

Today's action is part of OFAC's ongoing efforts pursuant to the Kingpin Act to apply financial and economic sanctions against significant foreign narcotics traffickers worldwide. OFAC has designated more than 700 individuals and entities worldwide that are linked to 87 drug kingpins 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. Other 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.

For a complete list of individuals and entities designated by OFAC under the Kingpin Act, please visit:
<http://www.treasury.gov/offices/enforcement/ofac/programs/narco/drugs.pdf>.

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