EIB World Trade Headlines

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June 1, 2025 - Volume 20, Issue 9

Federal trade court blocks Trump's emergency tariffs, saying he overstepped authority

A federal court on Wednesday struck down many of the tariffs Trump imposed this term, including sweeping worldwide tariffs that unsettled consumers and sent stock markets plummeting.

The judgment from the Court of International trade rules the tariffs Trump imposed on April 2 on most countries are illegal. Trump already moved to temporarily scale those tariffs back to 10 percent. The ruling also strikes down separate tariffs Trump imposed on China, Canada, and Mexico, which the administration justified as a reaction to fentanyl trafficking.

In their ruling, the court's three-judge panel wrote that Trump's worldwide tariffs had exceeded his power under the International Economic Emergency Powers Act, or IEEPA, which the Trump administration cited in imposing those tariffs. "Because of the Constitution's express allocation of the tariff power to Congress…we do not read IEEPA to delegate an unbounded tariff authority to the President," the court wrote. The White House responded by rejecting the court's authority.

"It is not for unelected judges to decide how to properly address a national emergency," White House spokesman Kush Desai said in a statement. "President Trump pledged to put America First, and the Administration is committed to using every lever of executive power to address this crisis and restore American Greatness." He did not answer directly when asked if the administration planned to appeal the ruling. IEEPA, the law at the heart of the case, had never been used to impose tariffs until President Trump did so. As the name suggests, the law gives a president broad economic powers during a national emergency. The judgment came in a case brought against the administration by 12 states and five businesses. While the court found Trump had exceeded his authority by imposing broad worldwide tariff, the three-judge panel made a different argument in ruling against the fentanyl tariffs. In that case, the court found that the president's argument – that the tariffs will create leverage to get other countries to crack down on drug trade – invalidates the tariffs. Under IEEPA, the judges wrote, a tariff must directly "deal with" the emergency a president cites when imposing the tariff. The fentanyl tariffs do not directly address the drug trade, the judges wrote, but instead merely attempt to create economic pressure within other countries. The three judges were appointed by three separate presidents: Barack Obama, Ronald Reagan, and Trump himself. In a statement, Oregon Attorney General Dan Rayfield – one of the state attorneys general who brought the case – celebrated the ruling. "The court's ruling is a victory not just for Oregon, but for working families, small businesses, and everyday Americans," he said. "President Trump's sweeping tariffs were unlawful, reckless, and economically devastating."

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NEWSLETTER NOTES

United States Welcomes Norway's Signing of the Artemis Accords

Media Note - May 15, 2025

Norway became the 55th signatory of the Artemis Accords at a ceremony at the Norwegian Space Agency in Oslo, Norway today. Minister of Trade and Industry Cecilie Myrseth signed the Artemis Accords on behalf of the Government of Norway in the presence of representatives of the U.S. Government and the Director General of the Norwegian Space Agency.

The United States and Norway have a longstanding relationship in space. Collaboration stretches back to 1962, when NASA supported the first civilian suborbital rocket launch mission above the Arctic Circle from Andøya Space. Norway is now pursuing advanced cooperation in space with the United States and has engaged with the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), U.S. Space Force, U.S. Space Command, the U.S. defense industry, and others in complementary efforts to increase space domain capability. Norway's signing of the Artemis Accords further demonstrates its willingness to join a shared vision of peaceful exploration and use of outer space.

The United States and seven other countries established the Artemis Accords in 2020 to serve as a set of practical principles to guide responsible space exploration. Norway joins the United States and 53 other nations – Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, the Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and Uruguay – in affirming the Accords' principles for sustainable civil space activity. The Department of State and NASA lead the United States' outreach and implementation of the Accords.

For more information, please visit the Artemis Accords page. For media inquiries, please contact **OES-Press@state.gov**.

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Treasury Disrupts Financial Facilitation Network Supporting Hizballah Terrorists

May 15, 2025

Sanctions Targeting Senior Hizballah Officials and Financial Facilitators in Lebanon and Iran

WASHINGTON —Today, the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is targeting two senior Hizballah officials and two financial facilitators for their roles in coordinating financial transfers for Hizballah. These individuals, based in Lebanon and Iran, work closely with Hizballah leadership to send money to the group from overseas donors. These donations are a significant portion of the terrorist group's overall budget. In addition to managing and processing funding for Hizballah within Lebanon, one of these individuals is responsible for overseeing financial activity for Hizballah-aligned groups around the world.

(*Continued On The Following Column)

"Today's action underscores Hizballah's extensive global reach through its network of terrorist donors and supporters, particularly in Tehran," said Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Michael Faulkender. "As part of our ongoing efforts to address Iran's support for terrorism, Treasury will continue to intensify economic pressure on the key individuals in the Iranian regime and its proxies who enable these deadly activities."

Today's action maintains pressure on Hizballah financing as it attempts to reconstitute in the aftermath of the October-November 2024 conflict with Israel, building on several recent actions targeting Hizballah illicit finance networks involved in oil sales and other commercial enterprises. Today's action is being taken pursuant to the counterterrorism authority Executive Order (E.O.) 13224, as amended. Hizballah was designated by the Department of State as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) pursuant to E.O. 13224 on October 31, 2001. This action is in furtherance of Treasury's implementation of National Security Presidential Memorandum 2 (NSPM-2), instituting a campaign of maximum economic pressure on Iran and its terrorist proxies.

HIZBALLAH FINANCIAL FACILITATORS

Mu'in Daqiq Al-'Amili (Al-'Amili) is a senior Hizballah representative in Qom, Iran with ties to senior Hizballah operatives and the Hizballah Foreign Relations Department dating back to at least 2001. Al-'Amili was involved in coordinating the delivery of cash payments from Iran to senior Hizballah finance officials in Lebanon working directly for the late Hizballah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah's office. One of these officials, Jihad Alami (Alami), was responsible for receiving and distributing the funding. Following Hamas' brutal attack on October 7 and during the ensuing conflict in Gaza in late 2023 and early 2024, Al-'Amili coordinated the delivery of at least $50,000 to Alami in Lebanon, which was collected from Iran likely for onward transfer to Gaza.

Fadi Nehme (Nehme) is an accountant and business partner of the Chief of Hizballah's Central Finance Unit, Ibrahim Ali Daher (Daher), who was designated by OFAC on May 11, 2021, for his role overseeing Hizballah's overall budget and spending, including the group's funding of its terrorist operations and malign activity. Nehme is also a part owner of Auditors for Accounting and Auditing, which was designated by OFAC on December 1, 2022, for being owned or controlled by Daher, and which also provides financial services to Hizballah. Senior Hizballah financial official Naser Hasan Neser (Neser) also owns a stake in the company; Neser was designated by OFAC on December 1, 2022, for acting for or on behalf of Auditors for Accounting and Auditing.

Senior Hizballah official **Hasan Abdallah Ni'mah** (Ni'mah) facilitates funding and networking opportunities for Hizballah across Africa, including the management of millions of dollars in transactions for Hizballah. As of August 2022, Ni'mah coordinated the delivery of hundreds of thousands of U.S. dollars to the Hizballah-aligned Islamic Movement of Nigeria. Ni'mah has had longstanding connections with senior Hizballah leaders, including the now-deceased Hizballah Secretary General Nasrallah.

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Al-'Amili, Alami, and Nehme are being designated pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended, for having materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services to or in support of, Hizballah.

Ni'mah is being designated pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended, for having acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, Hizballah.

SANCTIONS IMPLICATIONS

As a result of today's action, all property and interests in property of the designated or blocked persons described above that are in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons are blocked and must be reported to OFAC. In addition, any entities that are owned, directly or indirectly, individually or in the aggregate, 50 percent or more by one or more blocked persons are also blocked. Unless authorized by a general or specific license issued by OFAC, or exempt, OFAC's regulations generally prohibit all transactions by U.S. persons or within (or transiting) the United States that involve any property or interests in property of designated or otherwise blocked persons.

Violations of U.S. sanctions may result in the imposition of civil or criminal penalties on U.S. and foreign persons. OFAC may impose civil penalties for sanctions violations on a strict liability basis. OFAC's Economic Sanctions Enforcement Guidelines provide more information regarding OFAC's enforcement of U.S. economic sanctions. In addition, financial institutions and other persons may risk exposure to sanctions for engaging in certain transactions or activities with designated or otherwise blocked persons. The prohibitions include the making of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services by, to, or for the benefit of any designated person, or the receipt of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services from any such person.

Furthermore, engaging in certain transactions with the persons designated today entails risk of secondary sanctions pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended. Pursuant to these authorities, OFAC can prohibit or impose strict conditions on opening or maintaining, in the United States, a correspondent account or a payable-through account of a foreign financial institution that knowingly conducts or facilitates any significant transaction on behalf of a Specially Designated Global Terrorist.

Exports, reexports, or transfers of items subject to U.S. export controls involving persons included on the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons (SDN) List pursuant to E.O. 13224, as amended, may be subject to additional restrictions administered by the Department of Commerce, Bureau of Industry and Security. See 15 C.F.R. section 744.8 for additional information.

The power and integrity of OFAC sanctions derive not only from OFAC's ability to designate and add persons to the SDN List, but also from its willingness to remove persons from the SDN List consistent with the law. The ultimate goal of sanctions is not to punish, but to bring about a positive change in behavior. For information concerning the process for seeking removal from an OFAC list, including the SDN List, please refer to OFAC's Frequently Asked Question 897 here, and to submit a request for removal, click here. Click here for more information on the persons designated today.

The Tech Hubs program was established with broad bipartisan support by the 2022 CHIPS and Science Act and has awarded more than $541 million in appropriated funding through grants. To date, the program has designated 31 Tech Hubs in a Phase 1 competition and awarded 12 of those designated Hubs a total of $504 million via Implementation grants in a Phase 2 competition. Being designated as a Tech Hub in Phase 1 of the competition was a prerequisite for participation in Phase 2 of the competition and for receiving large Implementation grants. Tech Hub applicants were instructed via the Phase 2 NOFO to develop a portfolio of interconnected projects investing in Hub governance, infrastructure, workforce development, business and entrepreneur development, and technology development and maturation.

The FY25 National Defense Authorization Act, which was signed on December 23, 2024, included up to $500 million in additional funding for EDA's Tech Hubs program using proceeds from a future spectrum auction by the FCC. The first $220 million of this funding comes in the form of a loan from Treasury which Secretary Lutnick approved, and EDA executed in March 2025. While efforts are currently underway to remove the requirement to pay interest on the borrowed funds, should EDA be required to repay this loan with interest, EDA's only option is to set aside a portion of the $220 million loan for interest payments.

On January 14, 2025, the agency notified 6 Hubs (comprising 15 projects total) that they had been selected and would receive Phase 2 Implementation funding ranging from approximately $22 million to $48 million per Hub and announced these selections publicly. The announcement and decision to use existing Phase 2 applications resulted in some criticism from those Tech Hubs that did not receive awards and their Members of Congress. Since the announcement, EDA staff have internally reviewed selected project files for budget and programmatic changes necessary to ensure compliance with various legal requirements, including recent Executive Orders (EOs), but have not yet communicated those required adjustments to the selected Tech Hubs, pending Secretary Lutnick's guidance.

Secretary Lutnick directed EDA to run a new competition with the $220 million loan. With his approval, EDA would execute the engagement plan outlined above and publish the statement to notify Members of Congress, the Tech Hubs, and the public of a new competition. EDA will then draft and publish a new notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) that will outline the terms of the competition, including:

- Add requirements to the NOFO for applicants to present information on how this project will be a bargain to taxpayers which will be used to evaluate and select awards.
- Tech Hubs that have not received implementation awards to date will be eligible to compete in the competition. This is 19 of the 31 designated Tech Hubs and includes the 6 that were notified and publicly announced that they would receive awards and now will have to compete again for them.
- Remove references to policy priorities of the previous administration including those that contradict with President Trump's Executive Orders on diversity, equity, and inclusion and energy. References prioritizing unions and the Good Jobs Principles will also be removed.
- Provide the 6 Tech Hubs that were announced as receiving awards but will now need to compete again for them with heightened consideration by reviewing these applications first in the investment review committee and preferencing these applications through a selection factor.

Joint Statement on the U.S.-Türkiye Syria Working Group
Media Note - May 20, 2025

The text of the following statement was released by the Governments of the United States and the Republic of Türkiye.

Begin Text:
The United States and Türkiye are committed to increasing cooperation and coordination on stability and security in Syria as outlined by President Trump and President Erdoğan.

The United States hosted Türkiye for a new round of the Syria Working Group in Washington, D.C. U.S. and Turkish interagency delegations were led by Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Nuh Yılmaz. U.S. Ambassador to Türkiye Thomas Barrack Jr. and Turkish Ambassador to the United States Sedat Önal also participated.

The delegations discussed shared priorities in Syria, including sanctions relief according to President Trump's directive and combatting terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. The United States and Türkiye share a vision for Syria that is stable and at peace with itself and its neighborhood, which will also allow millions of displaced Syrians to return home.

The United States and Türkiye recognize the importance of maintaining the territorial integrity of Syria. A stable and united Syria, which does not offer a safe haven for terrorist organizations, will support regional security and prosperity.
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, May 20, 2025
Media Contact: Office of Public Affairs, publicaffairs@doc.gov
Record-Breaking 11th SelectUSA Investment Summit Concludes

WASHINGTON – Last week, the U.S. Department of Commerce held the 11th SelectUSA Investment Summit which was the largest Investment Summit in its history with over 5,500 attendees spanning over a record 100+ international markets and over 1,100 economic developers representing 54 U.S. states and territories and catalyzing nearly $1 billion in new investment announcements.

"We are seeing a resurgence in foreign direct investment like never before because this administration is putting American businesses first," said U.S. Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick. "Last week, investors at the SelectUSA Investment Summit committed over $1 billion in new investments for businesses across the country. The time to invest in America is now."

The Investment Summit attracted several high-level Trump Administration officials, including White House National Economic Council Director Kevin Hassett, Secretary of Labor Lori Chavez-Deremer, United States Administrator of the Small Business Administration Kelly Loeffler, and Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau.

There were also 11 participating Governors and 14 Chiefs of Mission, along with dozens of speakers, moderators, panelists, sponsors, exhibitors, and attendees who contributed to the resounding success of the 2025 SelectUSA Investment Summit.

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The 2025 SelectUSA Investment Summit by the Numbers:

- 5,500+ attendees
- 1,100+ economic development organization representatives attended
- 2,700+ international delegates
- 54 U.S. states and territories represented
- 100+ international markets represented
- 14 U.S. Ambassadors and Chiefs of Mission, along with accompanying foreign delegations
- 11 U.S. state and territory Governors (Alaska, Delaware, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, and Virginia)
- 5 White House and Cabinet representatives (NEC, Commerce, Labor, Small Business Administration, and State)
- POTUS video remarks
- 160+ speakers

Lastly, Commerce Secretary Lutnick announced that the 2026 SelectUSA Investment Summit will be held May 3-6, 2026.
For media related inquiries including interview requests please email: Rachel David (Rachel.David@trade.gov).

About SelectUSA
Housed within the U.S. Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration, SelectUSA promotes and facilitates business investment into the United States by coordinating related federal government agencies to serve as a single point of contact for investors and raises awareness of the critical role that economic development plays in the U.S. economy. SelectUSA assists U.S. economic development organizations to compete globally for investment by providing information, a platform for international marketing, and high-level advocacy. SelectUSA also helps foreign companies find the information they need to make decisions, connect to the right people at the local level, navigate the federal regulatory system, and find solutions to issues related to the federal government. For more information, visit www.trade.gov/selectusa.
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U.S. Findings on Iran Pursuant to the Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act (IFCA) of 2012

05/21/2025 09:19 AM EDT
Office of the Spokesperson
U.S. Findings on Iran Pursuant to the Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act (IFCA) of 2012
Fact Sheet - May 21, 2025

Pursuant to Section 1245 of the Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act (IFCA) of 2012, the Department of State has made two findings with sanctions implications:

- identifying 10 strategic materials as being used in connection with the nuclear, military, or ballistic missile programs of Iran
- identifying Iran's construction sector as being controlled directly or indirectly by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)

Specifically, the Department of State in consultation with the Department of the Treasury, has determined that the following certain types of additional materials are used in connection with the nuclear, military, or ballistic missile programs of Iran:

- Austenitic nickel-chromium alloy
- Magnesium ingots
- Sodium perchlorate
- EDM-11
- EDM-14A
- EDM-15
- Tungsten copper
- AA2024-T351 aluminum sheets and/or tubes
- ISO-68
- ISO-69

Any person that knowingly sells, supplies, or transfers, directly or indirectly, these materials to or from Iran (regardless of end-use or end-user) will now be subject to mandatory sanctions.

In addition, the Department of State, in consultation with the Department of the Treasury, has determined that the construction sector of Iran is controlled directly or indirectly by the IRGC.

Any person that knowingly sells, supplies, or transfers, directly or indirectly, to or from Iran, raw and semi-finished metals, graphite, coal, and software for integrating industrial purposes will be subject to mandatory sanctions if those materials are to be used in connection with the Iranian construction sector.

The United States will continue to impose maximize economic pressure on the Iranian regime to end Iran's nuclear threat, curtail its ballistic missile program, and stop its support for terrorist groups.
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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C.
OFFICE OF FOREIGN ASSETS CONTROL

Syrian Sanctions Regulations
31 CFR part 542

Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferators Sanctions Regulations
31 CFR part 544

Iranian Financial Sanctions Regulations
31 CFR part 561

Global Terrorism Sanctions Regulations
31 CFR part 594

Foreign Terrorist Organizations Sanctions Regulations
31 CFR part 597

*(*Continued On The Following Column)*

Executive Order 13574 of May 23, 2011
Authorizing the Implementation of Certain Sanctions Set Forth in the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996, as Amended

GENERAL LICENSE NO. 25

Authorizing Transactions Prohibited by the Syrian Sanctions Regulations or Involving Certain Blocked Persons (a) Except as provided in paragraph (c) of this general license, all transactions prohibited by the Syrian Sanctions Regulations, 31 CFR part 542 (SySR), other than transactions involving blocked persons, are authorized.

(b) Except as provided in paragraph (c) of this general license, all transactions that are prohibited by the SySR, the Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferators Sanctions Regulations, 31 CFR part 544, the Iranian Financial Sanctions Regulations, 31 CFR part 561, the Global Terrorism Sanctions Regulations, 31 CFR part 594, the Foreign Terrorist Organizations Sanctions Regulations, 31 CFR part 597, or Executive Order 13574 involving the following blocked persons are authorized:

(1) the Government of Syria, as defined by 31 CFR § 542.308, as in existence on or after May 13, 2025;

(2) any blocked person listed in the Annex to this general license; or

(3) any entity in which one or more of the blocked persons listed in the Annex own, directly or indirectly, individually or in the aggregate, a 50 percent or greater interest.

Note to paragraph (b)(1). The Government of Syria includes Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa and his government.

(c) This general license does not authorize:

(1) Any transactions involving any individual or entity identified on the Office of Foreign Assets Control's List of Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons (SDN) that is not listed in the Annex of this general license, as well as any entity in which one or more of such SDNs own, directly or indirectly, individually or in the aggregate, a 50 percent or greater interest, unless separately authorized;

(2) The unblocking of any property or interests in property blocked pursuant to any part of 31 CFR chapter V as of May 22, 2025; or
(3) Any transactions for or on behalf of the Government of the Russian Federation, the Government of Iran, the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), or related to the transfer or provision of goods, technology, software, funds, financing, or services to or from Iran, Russia, or the DPRK.

Note to General License No. 25. Nothing in this general license relieves any person from compliance with any other Federal laws or requirements of other Federal agencies, including the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) administered by the Department of State and the Export Administration Regulations (EAR) administered by the Department of Commerce.

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Providing Sanctions Relief for the Syrian People
Press Statement - May 23, 2025

In accordance with the President's promise to deliver sanctions relief to Syria, I have issued a 180-day waiver of mandatory Caesar Act sanctions to ensure sanctions do not impede the ability of our partners to make stability-driving investments, and advance Syria's recovery and reconstruction efforts. These waivers will facilitate the provision of electricity, energy, water, and sanitation, and enable a more effective humanitarian response across Syria.

In addition, the Department of the Treasury issued Syria General License (GL) 25 to authorize transactions by U.S. persons previously prohibited by the Syrian Sanctions Regulations, effectively lifting sanctions on Syria. The GL will allow for new investment and private sector activity consistent with the President's America First strategy. The Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) is providing exceptive relief to permit U.S. financial institutions to maintain correspondent accounts for the Commercial Bank of Syria.

Today's actions represent the first step in delivering on the President's vision of a new relationship between Syria and the United States. President Trump is providing the Syrian government with the chance to promote peace and stability, both within Syria and in Syria's relations with its neighbors. The President has made clear his expectation that relief will be followed by prompt action by the Syrian government on important policy priorities.

The sanctions waiver is issued pursuant to section 7432(b)(1) of the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019 (22 U.S.C. 8791 note). More information on the Syria sanctions waiver can be found here. For GL25, please see the Department of the Treasury's press release. The Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) action can be found here.
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Secretary Rubio's Meeting with Venezuelan Opposition Figures
Readout - May 23, 2025

The below is attributable to Spokesperson Tammy Bruce:

Secretary of State Marco Rubio met today with five Venezuelan democratic opposition figures who escaped from the Argentine ambassador's residence in Caracas, where they had been forced to shelter under the protection of the Brazilian government to avoid persecution from the illegitimate Maduro regime. The Secretary commended these leaders for their bravery in the face of Maduro's relentless repression and tyranny. He expressed his gratitude to all involved in this operation and recognized the tenacity of Maria Corina Machado who remains in Venezuela. Secretary Rubio expressed his concern following the unjustified and arbitrary arrest of opposition leader Juan Pablo Guanipa and over 70 individuals amid a new wave of repression from the Maduro regime. He also reaffirmed the United States' support for the restoration of democracy in Venezuela and the release of all political prisoners, as well as the safe return of arbitrarily detained Americans and other foreign nationals in Venezuela.

Trump's tariffs can remain in place for now, appeals court says, temporarily pausing a trade court ruling that found them illegal

The Trump administration had asked the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit to make a ruling. Most of the White House's "reciprocal" tariffs will remain in effect as litigation proceeds.
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Hong Kong:
New National Security Subsidiary Legislation Further Intensifies Repression New 'national security' measures strengthen Beijing's stranglehold on freedoms - Fortify Rights

(BANGKOK, May 30, 2025)—New national security measures announced in Hong Kong two weeks ago further intensify the crackdown on freedom of expression, association, assembly, and other basic human rights in the city and undermine the rule of law, judicial independence, and Hong Kong's promised autonomy, Fortify Rights said today. A new "Safeguarding National Security Regulation" came into effect on May 13, 2025, fast-tracked through the city's Legislative Council just one day after the Hong Kong Security Bureau published proposals for subsidiary legislation.

"These new measures intensify Hong Kong's continuing slide into authoritarianism," said Benedict Rogers, Senior Director at Fortify Rights. "*Further alignment of Hong Kong's judicial system with Beijing's is deeply concerning given the latter's complete lack of judicial independence and widespread use of torture, arbitrary detention, and enforced disappearance."*

The new regulations strengthen measures adopted under the draconian National Security Law (NSL) imposed on Hong Kong by Beijing on June 30, 2020, and an additional domestic security law enacted by the Beijing-controlled Legislative Council under Article 23 of the Basic Law, Hong Kong's mini-constitution, on March 23, 2024. In particular, the new subsidiary legislation strengthens and details procedures for mainland China's ability to exercise jurisdiction over national security cases in Hong Kong, as set out in Article 55 of the 2020 NSL, allowing for prosecutions and trials to take place in the mainland itself.

The new measures also designate six sites in Hong Kong – including four hotels–as prohibited locations, because they are bases for the national security bureau. These include the Metropark Hotel Causeway Bay, the City Garden Hotel in North Point, the Island Pacific Hotel in Sai Wan, a China Travel Service hotel in Hung Hom, and two locations along Hoi Fan Road in Tai Kok Tsui.

Under the additional regulations, anyone disclosing information about the activities of the Office for Safeguarding National Security in Hong Kong, which is under the direct control of the central government in Beijing, would face a prison sentence of up to seven years.

The impact of the security laws imposed by Beijing over the past five years has led to an almost complete dismantling of civil society. The laws apply to the crimes of treason, sedition, secession, subversion, and state secrets, including "collusion" with foreign forces—vaguely defined terms that have been used imprison pro-democracy activists and shutdown civil society activities. ***(*Continued On The Following Page)***

Over the past six years, an estimated 1,000 political prisoners have been jailed, including those arrested during the 2019 pro-democracy protests. These include former democratically elected legislators, journalists, lawyers, and human rights defenders.

Among the most prominent political prisoners are the media entrepreneur Jimmy Lai, founder of the pro-democracy *Apple Daily* newspaper, and human rights lawyer Chow Hang-tung.

Chow Hang-tung, 40, has been imprisoned since 2021 for her role leading an annual vigil to commemorate the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, serving multiple sentences. She is charged with inciting subversion under the NSL and has been detained for more than 1,000 days.

Jimmy Lai, 77, a British citizen, has been in solitary confinement for more than 1,600 days, held for more than 23 hours a day with no natural light and permitted less than an hour a day for physical exercise. He has been denied the right to independent medical treatment and his first choice of legal counsel, and his international legal team at Doughty Street Chambers have been subjected to rape and death threats and harassment.

Jimmy Lai has been arbitrarily detained by the Hong Kong authorities on several occasions, including for 13 months for simply lighting a candle and saying a prayer at a vigil commemorating the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. He is currently on trial under Hong Kong's draconian NSL, imposed by Beijing in 2020, and could face life imprisonment.

The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has ruled that both Jimmy Lai and Chow Hang-tung are human rights defenders who have been arbitrarily detained and should be immediately released. Last week, 22 former political prisoners, hostages, and their relatives sent an open letter to the British prime minister Keir Starmer urging him to act to secure Jimmy Lai's release. Fortify Rights' Senior Director Benedict Rogers attended the press conference at which several of the signatories released the letter.

The Safeguarding National Security Regulation may result in further violations of human rights, in addition to the violations of the rights to freedom of expression, association, assembly and other freedoms already perpetrated under the 2020 NSL and the 2024 Safeguarding National Security Ordinance. If the Chinese authorities prosecute, convict and imprison Hong Kong national security cases in mainland China, the right of defendants to fair trial, and to freedom from arbitrary arrest or disappearance, torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, forced labor, as set out in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), will be significantly undermined. Although China is not a party to the ICCPR, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's Basic Law and Bill of Rights incorporate the ICCPR into Hong Kong law and therefore these new regulations violate Hong Kong's obligations under its own domestic law and international law.

"There is a grave risk that Jimmy Lai could die in jail," said Benedict Rogers. *"The international community, particularly the United Kingdom, has a responsibility to act urgently to secure his release. We urge world leaders to increase pressure on China to free Jimmy Lai, and to spell out the consequences for the authorities in Beijing and Hong Kong if they refuse to do so."*

MISSION STATEMENT:

Given the geopolitical state of affairs with China, Russia, and Crimea, the Occupied territories of UKRAINE, Donetsk and Luhansk Oblast, embargoed countries and other specific threatening end users and entities, located in the United States and around the globe;

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