

## Syrian president, top officials, businessmen hit by EU sanctions

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Syria's president, its vice-president, a top adviser, a slew of security officials and several businessmen loyal to the regime were officially banned on Tuesday from travelling to the European Union, with any assets they may hold in the bloc frozen, DPA reported.

The names of the 10 new individuals targeted in the EU's second round of Syrian sanctions were published in its official journal, marking their entry into force.

The bloc had faced criticism for not targeting al-Assad during the first round of Syrian sanctions it issued two weeks ago, which had applied to several of his family members.

Officials said they had wanted to offer al-Assad an opportunity to end violence against anti-regime protesters.

The journal now identifies the Syrian leader as the "person authorizing and supervising the crackdown on demonstrators."

Also listed for involvement in the crackdown are Vice President Farouq al-Sharaa, Deputy Vice President Muhammad Nasif Khayrbik, presidential advisor Bassam al-Hassan and armed forces chief of staff Dawud Rajiha, among others.

Two businessmen with links to regime allies targeted in the first round of sanctions were also included in the second list for providing funds that are helping to fuel the crackdown.

The official journal on Tuesday also published expanded sanctions against additional individuals and companies in Libya and Belarus due to ongoing opposition repression and in Iran due to its contentious nuclear programme.

In Libya, a colonel in the Revolutionary Guard and the state-owned Afriqiyah Airways are now subject to sanctions, while in Belarus seven judges, four prosecutors, a school director who fired a regime opponent and a government official responsible for monitoring telecommunications were targeted.

In Iran, an additional five people and 72 companies involved in activities involving nuclear or ballistic missiles have been hit with travel bans and asset freezes, including companies with locations in Germany, Belarus, Malaysia, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, Hong Kong, Malta, Cyprus and the Isle of Man. dpa