



*Office of Inspector General*

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## PRESS RELEASE

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<http://oig.usaid.gov/>

### **12 Debarred Over Role in Syria Humanitarian Aid Fraud Scheme**

*USAID Inspector General Investigation Leads to 5-Year Ban*

Washington, D.C.—The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Office of Inspector General (OIG) announced the debarment of 12 companies and individuals over their participation in a fraud scheme affecting humanitarian aid in Syria. USAID officials made the decision in April barring Orhan Senkardes, the Senkardes Company, and certain related individuals and companies from future business with the U.S. Government for 5 years.

USAID OIG, which has been investigating corruption in cross-border humanitarian aid programs in Syria since 2015, provided information that led to USAID's debarment action. "OIG's pursuit of corrupt actors in Syria and the surrounding region remains as critical as ever as we work to protect life-saving aid programs from fraud, waste, and abuse," said Ann Calvaresi Barr, USAID Inspector General. "I commend our special agents for their tenacity, insight, and continued dedication to our investigative efforts and recognize USAID's willingness to take decisive action to protect taxpayer resources based on OIG's work." The OIG's investigation is open and ongoing.

USAID's debarment of the 12 companies and individuals applies across the U.S. Government. OIG's investigative work contributed to the decision, establishing that Orhan Senkardes, the Senkardes Company, and Mr. Senkardes' affiliated companies or personnel participated in a procurement fraud scheme with corrupt nongovernmental organization staff, including Luan Meraku, who implemented USAID-funded programs. Further, investigative results revealed that although the Senkardes Company, Selkas, Forvet, and Yigit Motorlu companies were all under Mr. Senkardes' control, they bid against each other for U.S.-funded procurements under the appearance of fair and open competition. The debarred companies and affiliated individuals are:

Senkardes Gida San ve Tic Ltd.  
Forvet  
Selkas  
Yigit Motorlu  
Orhan Senkardes  
Luan Meraku

Selcuk Benli  
Ismet Kalin  
Hecran Kalin  
Zerrin Nalbanoglu  
Erol Senkardes  
Erdal Senkardes

The U.S. Government's System for Award Management (SAM), [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov), provides further information on each of the debarred entities and individuals, which are currently excluded from transactions with U.S. Government departments, agencies, and contractors.

To date, OIG's investigations in Syria and the surrounding region have identified a network of commercial vendors and nongovernmental organizations employees who colluded to engage in bid-rigging and multiple kickback schemes related to Syrian humanitarian aid awards. The investigations to date have led to \$239 million in suspended program funds; 35 agency suspension or debarment decisions; 19 personnel resignations, terminations, or suspensions; and \$19.6 million in savings for USAID.

Throughout the course of investigations, OIG coordinates closely with USAID's Bureau for Management, Office of Management Policy, Budget, and Performance, Compliance Division. The division is responsible for making recommendations on potential suspension and debarment actions to the agency.

Protecting humanitarian operations from organized crime is a top priority for USAID OIG's Office of Investigations. In addition to aggressively investigating allegations, USAID OIG has also published a fraud awareness handbook and is actively engaged in providing fraud awareness training within the industry. The handbook, *Compliance and Fraud Prevention: A Pocket Guide for the Middle East Crisis Humanitarian Response*, can be found on OIG's web site.

Anyone with information about suspected fraud, waste, or abuse in USAID programs in Syria and around the world is urged to contact USAID OIG directly.

**Telephone**

+1 (800) 230-6539 or +1 (202) 712-1023

**Email**

Syria Investigations Team: [syriaoiginv@usaid.gov](mailto:syriaoiginv@usaid.gov)  
General: [ig.hotline@usaid.gov](mailto:ig.hotline@usaid.gov)

**Online, via OIG's public web site**

<https://oig.usaid.gov/content/oig-hotline>

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