SonarPulse

AI-POWERED FINANCIAL CRIME SURVEILLANCE

WEEK OF 17 – 23 NOVEMBER 2026

Financial Crime Weekly Digest

Global enforcement actions, regulatory moves & intelligence from the world of AML & financial crime.

STORY OF THE WEEK

OFAC targets the Comanchero motorcycle gang and the 'Ndrangheta for helping cartels, and one designated associate's entry lists the UAE

ENFORCEMENT

OFAC hits a Hizballah charity and gold-and-cash network · New Southeast Asia scam-centre designations · An FCA laundering charge and two finfluencer sentences

REGULATORY

FinCEN proposes changes to the CDD rule · ADGM's FSRA warns about Nour Partners · Morocco's AMMC warns about WhatsApp "VIP clubs" and DIROVEX

STORY OF THE WEEK · UNITED STATES / AUSTRALIA / CANADA / ITALY

Cartels Do Not Operate Alone. OFAC Hits the Comancheros and 'Ndrangheta

500+

individuals and entities targeted in nearly 40 Treasury actions coordinated with the Homeland Security Task Force since the beginning of 2025, Treasury says

On **19 November** OFAC sanctioned two international drug trafficking organisations under E.O. 14059: the Australia-headquartered **Comanchero Outlaw Motorcycle Gang** and the Italy-based **'Ndrangheta**. Treasury says the Comancheros have partnered with US-sanctioned cartels, including the Sinaloa Cartel, CJNG, Clan del Golfo and Los Choneros, and facilitated multi-hundred-kilogram shipments of cocaine from South America to the United States, Australia and Europe. OFAC designated the gang's Spain-based World Commander and Australia-based World President, the national president of its New Zealand chapter and his brother, and an associate, Marco Francis Coffen, who Treasury says supplied Australian criminal organisations, including the Comancheros, with encrypted communication platforms that shielded them from police phone taps. **Coffen's SDN entry lists Italy and the United Arab Emirates.**

The 'Ndrangheta, designated under the Kingpin Act on 30 May 2008, is now also designated under E.O. 14059. Treasury says it operates in over 80 countries, and cites estimates that almost 80 percent of the European cocaine trade is controlled by it. OFAC designated leaders of its Toronto faction, which Treasury says uses the US and Canadian financial systems to launder illicit proceeds, and the corporate network of senior member Luigi Vescio Sr.: funeral homes in Ontario and a Toronto-based luxury limousine rental business, together with his wife and two children for owning and operating the funeral homes on his behalf.

- OFAC worked with the Australian Federal Police, New Zealand Police, Italy's Guardia di Finanza, and Canada's Royal Canadian Mounted Police and York Regional Police
- The existing 'Ndrangheta SDN entry was amended: it now reads 'NDRANGHETA, Target Type Criminal Organization, with the ILLICIT-DRUGS-EO14059 tag added to SDNTK
- Regional link: Coffen's entry gives Italy and the United Arab Emirates as locations, Australian nationality, and passports issued by Mexico and Vanuatu

WHY IT MATTERS FOR COMPLIANCE TEAMS

The businesses named this week are funeral homes and a limousine service, and one designated associate is described as a supplier of encrypted communications. These are the fronts and service providers a bank or payment firm actually sees, and the UAE appears in an entry about an Australian gang. Three questions for this week. **Does your screening match on every identifier in an entry (each location, the nationality and each passport), not just the name? Has your list provider loaded the amended 'Ndrangheta entry? And do you know which of your customers run cash-handling businesses owned or operated by family members?**

ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

Law Enforcement Strikes This Week

OFFICE OF FOREIGN ASSETS CONTROL · UNITED STATES / LEBANON / TÜRKIYE

SDGT

OFAC Targets a Hizballah-Affiliated Charity and a Gold and Cash Smuggling Network

On **18 November**, under Operation Economic Outcast, OFAC designated **Wa Ta'awanu Association**, a Lebanon-based charity Treasury says is Hizballah-affiliated and channels outside donor funds toward Hizballah's terrorist activities, and its founder. It also designated members of a Lebanon- and Türkiye-based gold and cash smuggling network run by Hizballah and the IRGC-Qods Force. Treasury says Lebanese money changer Hassan Khechen and his brother Ibrahim have transferred significant funds from the IRGC-QF to Lebanon on behalf of Hizballah, using Hassan's Lebanon-based Gold Global Company and couriers carrying cash across borders; Istanbul-based Sankari Gold, also controlled by Hassan, helps move gold bullion and cash from Africa. A related courier was arrested in February 2025 at Beirut airport with **$2.5 million** in his hand luggage. All designations are under E.O. 13224, as amended. We found no address in our six jurisdictions in the new entries.

OFFICE OF FOREIGN ASSETS CONTROL · UNITED STATES / CAMBODIA / BURMA

3 + 2

More Scam-Centre Designations: a Compound Operator and Two Armed Group Commanders

On **19 November** OFAC sanctioned **three individuals** involved in operating and facilitating cyber scam centres in Southeast Asia, as well as **two affiliated companies**. Treasury says Zhao Hui, a Cambodian national, leased a scam centre owned by the OFAC-designated Prince Group TCO, paid protection fees to its leader Chen Zhi, and owned a separate scam compound in Cambodia that primarily targeted Americans and Europeans; the two Phnom Penh companies he chairs were designated with him. OFAC also designated the commander-in-chief of the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA), General Saw Shwe Wah, and Colonel Saw A One, who oversees security at Three Pagodas Pass near the Thai border, where Treasury says new buildings intended for telecom scam operations have expanded. Zhao's entry lists Tokyo, Japan, and Cambodian and Chinese nationality; we found no address in our six jurisdictions.

FINANCIAL CONDUCT AUTHORITY · UNITED KINGDOM

£1.42m

A Laundering Charge Over Investment Scam Proceeds, and Two Finfluencers Sentenced

On **17 November** the FCA charged Raymond Fieldhouse with money laundering, contrary to section 327 of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002. He is accused of laundering **over £1.42m** made from investment scams between 1 June 2017 and 1 August 2018. He did not enter a plea at Stockport Magistrates' Court and was remanded in custody until a plea and trial preparation hearing on 22 December 2026 at Southwark Crown Court; this is a charge, not a conviction. On **19 November** reality TV star Aaron Chalmers, who has more than 2 million Instagram followers, and finfluencer Jason Agbodza were fined £3,072 and £1,173 respectively, plus costs, after pleading guilty to illegally promoting an unauthorised foreign exchange trading scheme, through contracts for difference, on social media.

REGULATORY DEVELOPMENTS

Regulatory Moves
Reshaping the Compliance Landscape

UNITED STATES

FinCEN Proposes Changes to the Customer Due Diligence Rule

On **17 November** FinCEN issued a **proposed rule** to amend the customer due diligence requirements at 31 C.F.R. 1010.230, as part of Treasury's implementation of Executive Order 14406. It would: explicitly allow covered financial institutions to obtain additional information about beneficial owners of a legal entity customer to mitigate risk or address supervisory concerns; codify FinCEN's exceptive relief (FIN-2026-R001), so beneficial owners would be identified when a legal entity customer first opens an account, when facts reasonably call earlier information into question, and as needed under risk-based ongoing due diligence, rather than at each new account; and specify the information to obtain about each beneficial owner, largely the same as the current optional Appendix A form. The fact sheet says an ITIN would not be an acceptable substitute for a Social Security number, and that institutions may obtain information from a third-party source. Comments close **60 days after publication in the Federal Register**. The OCC welcomed the proposal.

UAE / ADGM

ADGM's FSRA Warns About Nour Partners

On **20 November** the FSRA alerted the public to false and misleading claims made by an entity or purported entity named **Nour Partners** on the website nourpartners.ae. The FSRA says the website purports to offer an institutional platform for investment fund structures, which may fall under the Regulated Activity of Managing a Collective Investment Fund, and makes representations that may fall under Acting as the Administrator of a Collective Investment Fund. The FSRA says Nour Partners is not, and has never been, granted Financial Services Permission to carry on any Regulated Activity in or from ADGM, and is not, and has never been, incorporated in ADGM or licensed for any commercial activity there. It points the public to the FSRA Public Register and the Registration Authority's Public Register.

MOROCCO

Morocco's AMMC Warns About WhatsApp "VIP Clubs" and the DIROVEX Platform

On **19 November** Morocco's capital markets authority, the AMMC, warned the public that the WhatsApp groups called "Alliance Décisive YEM" and the platform called "DIROVEX" hold no authorisation for any activity linked to the Moroccan capital market. Based on reports it received, the AMMC says the groups present themselves as VIP investor clubs or free trading-signal channels on Casablanca-listed stocks, then push members to open a DIROVEX account and send money by bank transfer for supposed block trades in listed shares at a steep discount with "risk-free" gains; the AMMC says these operations are fictitious. DIROVEX fraudulently uses the visual identity of the AMMC and other public authorities, and members are rewarded for recruiting others. Trades in Casablanca-listed securities, including block trades, can only go through licensed brokerage firms. (Translation from French is ours.)

ON OUR RADAR

Watch This Space

SANCTIONS · IRAN OIL · UNITED STATES / IRAN

OFAC Targets Iran's "Oil Trustees"

On **20 November**, under Operation Economic Outcast, OFAC designated Mohammad Javad Bavand and Majid Taj under E.O. 13902 for operating in the petroleum sector of the Iranian economy. Treasury describes them as part of a network of regime insiders tasked with obtaining cash by selling Iranian oil and recouping oil funds located in third countries, with members owing billions of dollars to the regime from previous sales. OFAC also designated, under E.O. 13224, as amended, Mohammadhossein Servati, for supporting the US-designated front company Sepehr Energy Jahan Nama Pars, and Mojtaba Arabnejad, for supporting Mahan Air. Servati's entry lists a Dominica passport alongside an Iranian one; we found no address in our six jurisdictions in the four entries.

TERRORIST FINANCING · CRYPTO ATMs · UNITED STATES

Georgia Man Charged With Sending Crypto to ISIS-Linked Recipients

Announced **19 November**: a Lavonia, Georgia, resident has been charged by criminal complaint with international money laundering and destruction of evidence. The DOJ says he is alleged to have sent more than $26,000 to individuals and groups affiliated with ISIS, including $16,807 between December 2025 and June 2026 through cryptocurrency transactions using multiple phone numbers and accounts intended to conceal his identity, and approximately $9,206 in 11 transactions between December 2021 and April 2022. The release shows images of him captured by cryptocurrency ATMs. A criminal complaint is merely allegations; he is presumed innocent.

FRAUD · UAE LINK · UNITED KINGDOM / UAE

Eight Charged Over Fake Covid Vaccination Records, One Living in Dubai

On **18 November** the NCA said eight people have been charged in a joint NCA and NHS England investigation into the making of **4,280 fraudulent Covid 19 vaccination records** at a health centre in Roehampton, south west London, between March 2021 and November 2021, which generated £257,565. The charges relate to alleged offences under the Computer Misuse Act and Fraud Act. The NCA lists one of the eight as residing in Dubai, formerly of Beckenham, London. All eight were bailed until a hearing at Southwark Crown Court on 15 December.

SCAM ALERT · IMPERSONATION · UAE / DIFC

DFSA Warns That a DIFC Firm Is Being Impersonated

On **17 November** the DFSA alerted the public to a scam in which a legitimate DFSA Authorised Firm in the DIFC, **Exotix Advisory Ltd**, has been impersonated. The scammers created a website that fraudulently claims the platform is operated by Exotix Advisory Ltd, states that it is "authorised and regulated by the DIFC", and refers to the firm's DIFC registration number and office address. They also set up fraudulent Telegram groups to send unsolicited communications to investors. The DFSA confirms that Exotix Advisory Ltd has no relation whatsoever with the scammers, and that the scammers have never been authorised by the DFSA to provide financial services in or from the DIFC. It points consumers to the DFSA's Public Register.

This Week's 3 Key Takeaways

01 Screen the Facilitators, Not Just the Cartel

This week's OFAC action names a supplier of encrypted communications, funeral homes, a limousine business and the family members who own and run them. Treasury says cartels rely on other criminal organisations to move drugs and launder illicit proceeds. Check that your screening matches every identifier in an entry, including secondary locations and foreign passports, and that amended entries such as the 'Ndrangheta's reach your lists the same day.

02 Read the CDD Proposal as a Proposal

FinCEN's 17 November text would codify relief from re-identifying beneficial owners at each new account, and would expressly allow more information to be collected where risk warrants it. Nothing changes until a final rule. If you operate in the US, map the three proposed identification triggers against your current procedures, decide whether to comment within 60 days of Federal Register publication, and keep following the current rule in the meantime.

03 Our Six: Three Warnings and Two UAE Links

In-week items from our region: ADGM's FSRA warned about Nour Partners (20 November), Morocco's AMMC about the DIROVEX platform and its WhatsApp groups (19 November), and the DFSA about scammers impersonating a DIFC firm, Exotix Advisory Ltd (17 November). Scanning every designation entry, we found UAE links in OFAC's 19 November Comanchero action (Coffen's entry) and in the NCA's 18 November charges (one defendant living in Dubai), and none in OFAC's 18 and 20 November Iran-related or 19 November scam-centre entries. From Mauritius, Saudi Arabia and Qatar we found no in-week financial crime item among the pages we could reach; several of those sites block automated access.

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500+

INDIVIDUALS AND ENTITIES TARGETED WITH THE HSTF SINCE 2025

Treasury · 19 Nov · "nearly 40 actions"

$2.5M

CASH IN ONE HIZBALLAH-LINKED COURIER'S HAND LUGGAGE

Treasury · 18 Nov · Beirut airport, Feb 2025

60 days

TO COMMENT ON FINCEN'S CDD PROPOSAL

FinCEN · 17 Nov · from Federal Register publication

£1.42m

ALLEGEDLY LAUNDERED FROM INVESTMENT SCAMS

FCA · 17 Nov · a charge, not a conviction

#FinancialCrime #AML #Sanctions #KYC #CDD #ScamCentres #Compliance #SonarPulse

Sources: US Treasury / OFAC · FinCEN · OCC · US Department of Justice · FCA · NCA · ADGM FSRA · AMMC