



PRESS RELEASE

Justice Department Files Civil Forfeiture Complaint Against \$300 Million Superyacht

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For Immediate Release

Office of Public Affairs

Complaint Seeks Forfeiture on Grounds of Sanctions Evasion and Money Laundering for Superyacht Amadea Owned by Sanctioned Russian Oligarch

The United States today filed a civil forfeiture complaint in the Southern District of New York against the motor yacht Amadea – a 348-foot luxury vessel reportedly worth more than \$300 million and beneficially owned by sanctioned Russian oligarch Suleiman Kerimov – which was [seized in 2022](#) at the request of the United States.

Today’s filing alleges that the superyacht was improved and maintained in violation of applicable sanctions against Kerimov and those acting on his behalf. According to the complaint, the Amadea is forfeitable based on violations of U.S. law, including the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) and money laundering violations. The burden to prove forfeitability in a civil forfeiture proceeding is upon the government, and proceedings involving this property and its claimants remain ongoing.

“The United States brings this action today after a careful and painstaking effort to develop the necessary evidence showing Suleiman Kerimov’s clear interest in the Amadea and the repeated misuse of the U.S. financial system to support and maintain the yacht for his benefit,” said Task

Force KleptoCapture co-director Michael Khoo. “Getting to this point required extensive cooperation across the U.S. government and with foreign partners. It underscores our resolve to undertake challenging, cross-border investigations and to send a message to Russian oligarchs and their enablers: if you flout the rule of law, you can expect to pay real and meaningful consequences.”

“The filing of this complaint exemplifies that the United States takes sanction evasion seriously and will use all tools at its disposal to ensure that sanctioned individuals are held accountable for their crimes,” said U.S. Attorney Damian Williams for the Southern District of New York. “I thank our partners with Task Force KleptoCapture as well as the dedicated prosecutors of this office for their important work holding Russian oligarchs responsible and aiding our allies in Ukraine.”

According to court documents, on April 6, 2018, the Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated Kerimov as a Specially Designated National (SDN) under IEEPA in connection with its finding that the actions of the Government of the Russian Federation in Ukraine constituted an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. In imposing sanctions, OFAC determined that Kerimov was an official of the Government of the Russian Federation. As alleged, Kerimov never sought a license from OFAC authorizing any transactions including any transactions in connection with expenditures related to the yacht. On or about Sept. 30, 2022, OFAC redesignated Kerimov as an SDN.

In September 2021, following Kerimov’s designation by OFAC, Kerimov arranged to purchase the superyacht Amadea, contracting with the seller to receive use rights to the vessel even before he completed payment or obtained title to the vessel. Kerimov gained beneficial ownership of the vessel in or about September 2021 through a series of transfers between shell companies designed to conceal his ownership of the yacht. Beginning in October 2021 through its seizure, Kerimov and/or his family members took multiple trips aboard the Amadea, planned extensive renovations to the Amadea, made long-term plans for the Amadea’s travel schedule, and assumed all liability and responsibility for the Amadea’s upkeep.

During that time, individuals or entities acting on Kerimov’s behalf accrued U.S. dollar-denominated costs for the Amadea’s upkeep and sent or caused to be sent through the U.S. financial systems, payments in violation of applicable sanctions.

The Amadea is currently under the control of the U.S. government in San Diego, pursuant to a seizure warrant issued by the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, which was enforced by a court order issued by the Republic of Fiji following a mutual legal assistance request from the United States. The United States is deeply grateful to the Fijian police and prosecutors whose perseverance and dedication to the rule of law made this action possible.

Acting Assistant Attorney General Nicole M. Argentieri of the Justice Department’s Criminal Division, Assistant Attorney General Matthew G. Olsen of the Justice Department’s National Security Division, U.S. Attorney Damian Williams for the Southern District of New York, and Task Force KleptoCapture co-directors Michael W. Khoo and David H. Lim made the announcement.

The FBI New York Field Office’s Eurasian Organized Crime Task Force is investigating the case. The Justice Department’s Office of International Affairs, as well as the U.S. Marshals Service, U.S. Embassy Suva, and the Diplomatic Security Service, provided valuable assistance and cooperation in this investigation.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Sarah Mortazavi for the Southern District of New York and Trial Attorneys Joshua L. Sohn of the Criminal Division’s Money Laundering and Asset Recovery Section and Andrew D. Beaty of the National Security Division’s Counterintelligence and Export Control Section are litigating the case.

This case was coordinated through the Justice Department’s Task Force KleptoCapture, an interagency law enforcement task force dedicated to enforcing the sweeping sanctions, export controls, and economic countermeasures that the United States, along with its foreign allies and partners, has imposed in response to Russia’s unprovoked military invasion of Ukraine. Announced by the Attorney General on March 2, 2022, and under the leadership of the Office of the Deputy Attorney General, the task force will continue to leverage all of the Department’s tools and authorities to combat efforts to evade or undermine the collective actions taken by the U.S. government in response to Russian military aggression.

A civil forfeiture complaint is merely an allegation that money or property was involved in or represents the proceeds of a crime. These allegations are not proven until a court awards a judgment in favor of the United States.

[Amadea civil forfeiture complaint](#)

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