



PRESS RELEASE

President of Metalhouse LLC Pleads Guilty to Conspiracy to Launder Over \$150 Million to Promote Russian Sanctions Violations

Tuesday, October 3, 2023

For Immediate Release

Office of Public Affairs

John C. Unsalan Agrees to Forfeit Over \$160 Million in Criminal Proceeds

John Can Unsalan, aka Hurrem Can Unsalan, 41, of Orlando, the president of Metalhouse LLC, pleaded guilty today to engaging in a conspiracy to commit money laundering to promote violations of U.S. sanctions by conducting transactions to acquire over \$150 million in metal products from companies owned by Sergey Kurchenko, a sanctioned oligarch.

According to court documents, Kurchenko was sanctioned by the Department of the Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) in 2015 for his role in misappropriating state assets of Ukraine or of an economically significant entity in Ukraine.

On April 13, a grand jury in the Middle District of Florida returned a 22-count indictment charging Unsalan with one count of conspiring to violate and evade U.S. sanctions, in violation of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA); 10 counts of violating IEEPA; one count of conspiring to commit international money laundering; and 10 counts of international money laundering. As set forth in court filings, between July 2018 and October 2021, Unsalan conspired with others to transfer over \$150 million to Kurchenko and sanctioned companies controlled by Kurchenko. Unsalan engaged in trade with these sanctioned individuals and entities to procure steelmaking equipment and raw material despite knowing that Kurchenko and his companies were subject to U.S. sanctions that prohibited Unsalan from doing business with them. Unsalan and his business associates received tens of thousands of tons of metal products from the companies and agreed to share profits from these unlawful transactions. No licenses from OFAC were applied for or issued for these payments or transfers.

Unsalan pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Wendy W. Berger in Orlando, Florida, to one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering to promote violations of the IEEPA, which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. Unsalan also agreed to forfeit \$160,416,948.56 in proceeds that he obtained as a result of the conspiracy. Pursuant to the terms of a plea agreement between Unsalan and the United States, the government agreed to dismiss the remaining counts of the indictment. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

On Sept. 13, co-conspirator Sergey Karpushkin [pleaded guilty](#) and agreed to forfeit over \$4.7 million in criminal proceeds.

The FBI Tampa and Washington Field Offices are investigating the case, with valuable assistance provided by U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Chauncey A. Bratt for the Middle District of Florida, Trial Attorney Sean O'Dowd of the Criminal Division's Money Laundering and Asset Recovery Section, and Trial Attorney Emma Ellenrieder of the National Security Division's Counterintelligence and Export Control Section are prosecuting the case.

The investigation 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.

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Topic

EXPORT CONTROL

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