

US imposes sanctions on spyware group members

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US authorities announced sanctions Tuesday on parties associated with Intellexa Consortium, citing their role in making and distributing commercial spyware used to target US officials, journalists and others.

Commercial surveillance tools "increasingly present a [security risk](#) to the United States and our citizens," said Treasury Under Secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence Brian Nelson.

In particular, the Intellexa Consortium was founded in 2019 and served as a "marketing label" for companies offering commercial spyware and surveillance tools.

The tools, the Treasury Department said, are packaged as a suite under the brand-name "Predator" spyware, able to infiltrate devices without user interaction.

"The Predator spyware has been deployed by foreign actors in an effort to covertly surveil US government officials, journalists, and policy experts," the Treasury said.

Among those targeted on Tuesday were Intellexa Consortium founder Tal Jonathan Dilian and Sara Aleksandra Fayssal Hamou, who has provided managerial services to the group.

Five companies were also hit with [sanctions](#), over activities such as exporting Intellexa's surveillance tools to authoritarian regimes and working as a developer of the Predator spyware.

In July last year, Washington blacklisted Greece- and Ireland-incorporated units of Intellexa.

They were placed on the Commerce Department's Entities List, which tightly restricts Americans from doing business with them.

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