

APRIL 02, 2026

Wyden Presses Treasury Department on Political Interference in Prosecution of Turkish State-Owned Bank Accused of Laundering Money for Iran

Washington, D.C. – Senate Finance Committee Ranking Member Ron Wyden, D-Ore., pressed the Department of the Treasury on whether political interference played a role in the Trump Administration’s recent decision to give a pass to a Turkish state-owned bank that was charged with facilitating Iran’s evasion of U.S. sanctions as part of a vast money-laundering scheme.

While officials at the bank, *Türkiye Halk Bankası A.Ş. (Halkbank)*, admitted to evading sanctions and funneling Iranian oil profits, the Department of Justice (DOJ) recently paused its years-long prosecution of Halkbank and struck a deal that would allow Halkbank to get off without even acknowledging criminal wrongdoing or paying fines.

“This favorable agreement, which still needs to be approved by the court, comes as Iran and its proxies terrorize the Middle East and threaten Americans at home,” Wyden wrote to Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent. **“That this Administration has chosen to wage war on the**

Iranian regime, while at the same time abandoning prosecution of an entity that materially aided that same regime is nothing short of rank incompetence.”

Turkish officials have repeatedly pressed the Trump Administration to dismiss charges against Halkbank, according to news reports, including in meetings between Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Trump. Trump has earned millions in royalties from Trump Towers Istanbul over the course of his two presidential terms.

Wyden began his investigation of political interference in the Halkbank prosecution in 2019, continuing to push for answers through the Biden administration.

To better understand the Treasury Department's role in enforcing U.S. sanctions, among other trade and banking laws, Wyden demands that Secretary Bessent respond to the following questions by April 15, 2026:

1. Did the Treasury Department make any recommendation to the DOJ that Halkbank should or should not pay a fine as part of the disposition of the criminal case against Halkbank?
2. Did the Treasury Department formally initiate an investigation or commence work towards determining a fine for Halkbank? If so, when did the Department begin this process?
3. Did the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) come to any conclusions of fact or make recommendations to the Department's leadership regarding the figure for a potential regulatory fine for Halkbank?

4. Did you or any other Treasury officials have any meetings or other communications with Turkish officials since January 20, 2025? If so, please describe the number and substance of these communications.
5. Did you or any other Treasury officials have any meetings or other communications with Turkish officials or Halkbank representatives since January 20, 2025? If so, please describe the number and substance of these communications.
6. Did you or any other Treasury officials have any meetings or other communications with the President or White House officials regarding Halkbank? If so, please describe the number and substance of these communications.

The text of the letter is [here](#).

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