

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 27, 2026

Secretary Scott Bessent
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20220

Attorney General Pamela Bondi
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Secretary Bessent and Attorney General Bondi:

We write to express our concern with illicit finance risks presented by the digital asset firm Binance Holdings Ltd. (Binance). Recent reports raise serious concerns about the strength of illicit finance guardrails at Binance's digital asset exchange, as well as its adherence to 2023 settlements for apparent violations of sanctions rules and breaches of anti-money laundering laws. We urge you to conduct a prompt, comprehensive review of sanctions compliance on the platform to ensure that it is not once again violating the law and threatening U.S. national security.

According to reporting, last year, Binance compliance personnel obtained evidence that \$1.7 billion in digital assets had been funneled through Binance to Iranian entities tied to terrorism, including both the Iran-backed Houthis and Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.¹ In one instance, evidence suggested that one of Binance's own vendors routed \$1.2 billion in funds to Iran-linked entities.² Investigators also learned that Iranians were able to access more than 1,500 Binance accounts, and that the platform may have been used in connection with Russian attempts to evade sanctions.³ Binance subsequently fired several of these staff.⁴

In addition, the reports describe a broader deterioration in Binance's compliance functions. Compliance officials at Binance have departed or been dismissed beyond those who uncovered the links to Iranian entities.⁵ According to law enforcement, Binance has grown markedly less cooperative with requests for information about customers as well.⁶

¹ Patricia Kowsmann, Angus Berwick & Ben Foldy, *Binance Fired Staff Who Flagged \$1 Billion Moving to Sanctioned Iran Entities*, WALL ST. J. (Feb. 23, 2026), <https://www.wsj.com/finance/currencies/binance-iran-sanctions-financing-staff-b1648133>; David Yaffe-Bellany & Michael Forsythe, *Binance Employees Find \$1.7 Billion in Crypto Was Sent to Iranian Entities*, N. Y. TIMES (Feb. 23, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/23/technology/binance-employees-iran-firings.html>.

² Yaffe-Bellany & Forsythe, *supra* note 1.

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*; Kowsmann, Berwick & Foldy, *supra* note 1; Leo Schwartz & Ben Weiss, *Binance Fires Top Investigators Who Claim to Have Uncovered Evidence of Iranian Sanctions Violations*, FORTUNE (Feb. 13, 2026), <https://fortune.com/2026/02/13/binance-investigators-fired-iran-sanctions-potential-violations/>.

⁵ See Schwartz & Weiss, *supra* note 4.

⁶ Kowsmann, Berwick & Foldy, *supra* note 1 ("[L]aw-enforcement officials said that, over the past year, Binance has started cooperating far less with their requests to obtain financial information about its hundreds of millions of

These allegations raise grave concerns that poor illicit finance controls at Binance remain a significant threat to national security. Our illicit finance controls are dangerously compromised if enormous sums can flow through Binance to terrorist groups or sanctions evaders. The firm controls the world’s largest digital asset exchange; it is essential that bad actors cannot benefit from its platform. Moreover, the reports suggest the alarming possibility that Binance may be pushing out compliance staff who uncover illicit transactions on the exchange. Were it to do so, Binance would be reopening the door to widespread illicit activity on the platform.

In 2023, Binance committed to sweeping reforms to its illicit finance program under a plea agreement with the Department of Justice and related settlement agreements with the Department of the Treasury and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. But the recent reports call into question Binance’s adherence to these promises.

For example, in Binance’s agreement with the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), the company committed to implementing controls that “enable [it] to clearly and effectively identify [and] interdict . . . transactions and activity that may be prohibited by OFAC.”⁷ The exchange cannot “clearly and effectively” block transactions with sanctioned persons if it permits \$1.7 billion in digital assets to flow through its platform to Iranian entities.

Likewise, Binance’s plea agreement with the Justice Department requires its senior leadership to “provide strong, explicit, and visible support and commitment to its Compliance Programs” amidst a “culture of ethics and compliance with the law.”⁸ It is plainly inconsistent with such requirements to retaliate against sanctions compliance personnel or to resist law enforcement requests.

These reports arise against the backdrop of increasingly risky activities at Binance. Earlier this month, for instance, the company launched cards in parts of the former Soviet Union that permit users to pay for transactions with digital assets, functioning much like a debit card.⁹ Similar cards have become increasingly used as a tool to allow Russians to bypass U.S. sanctions on the Russian financial system.¹⁰ And last fall, Binance partnered with Kyrgyzstan to launch a stablecoin and digital currency, despite the country’s ties to Russian sanctions evasion.¹¹

users.”)

⁷ *Settlement Agreement Between Office of Foreign Assets Control and Binance Holdings, Ltd.*, U.S. DEP’T OF TREASURY 7 (Nov. 21, 2023), https://ofac.treasury.gov/system/files/2023-11/20231121_binance_settlement.pdf.

⁸ Plea Agreement at Attachment C 1–2, *United States v. Binance Holdings Ltd., d/b/a Binance.com*, NO. 23-178RAJ (W.D. Wash. Nov. 21, 2023), <https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/media/1326901/dl?inline>.

⁹ See Anka Tsintsadze (@AnkaTsintsadze), X (Feb. 12, 2026 at 1:32pm), <https://x.com/AnkaTsintsadze/status/2022015920387109371> (describing launch in “several CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] countries” of Binance Card).

¹⁰ See Aaron Krolik, *How a Cryptocurrency Helps Criminals Launder Money and Evade Sanctions*, N.Y. TIMES (Dec. 7, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/12/07/technology/how-a-cryptocurrency-helps-criminals-launder-money-and-evade-sanctions.html>.

¹¹ Aigerim Turgunbaeva, *Kyrgyzstan Launches National Stablecoin in Partnership with Binance*, REUTERS (Oct. 25, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/kyrgyzstan-launches-national-stablecoin-partnership-with-binance-2025-10-25/>.

In light of these issues, we are deeply troubled by the prospect that Binance may once again be prioritizing profits over its compliance obligations. Not long ago, Binance’s own employees joked that the company should post the “banner ‘is washing drug money too hard these days – come to [B]inance.’”¹² We cannot permit the exchange to return to open disregard for the guardrails that protect our national security.

We accordingly urge Treasury and the Justice Department to conduct a timely, thorough inquiry into Binance’s sanctions compliance functions, including into possible retaliation against Binance compliance personnel and the company’s observance of its 2023 settlement agreements. Binance’s long-established role in illicit finance around the world means it is critical to remain vigilant about risks at the exchange. We believe that a review of the allegations above is necessary and appropriate at this time.

We recognize, of course, that Binance has made numerous business decisions that have helped President Trump and his family profit from their crypto ventures. The exchange has repeatedly pushed users to purchase USD1, the stablecoin issued by the Trump family’s World Liberty Financial, including through interest payments on USD1 holdings on the exchange.¹³ It also assisted with technology for USD1 and accepted a \$2 billion investment made in the token.¹⁴ Last fall, despite claiming he had “no idea who he is,” President Trump pardoned Changpeng Zhao, Binance’s billionaire founder and former chief executive who had pleaded guilty to failing to establish an effective anti-money laundering program for the platform and was sentenced to four months in prison.¹⁵

If Binance has begun to ignore its illicit finance obligations, the risks are grave and nonpartisan, and we hope that the Trump Administration will faithfully carry out its obligations to administer our nation’s illicit finance laws. Please respond to this letter by March 13, 2026, and describe any steps you have taken to review Binance’s conduct and the allegations we have described.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Ruben Gallego
United States Senator

¹² Plea Agreement at Attachment A 17, *Binance* NO. 23-178RAJ (W.D. Wash. Nov. 21, 2023).

¹³ David Yaffe-Bellany, *Binance Gives Trump Family’s Crypto Firm a Leg Up*, N.Y. TIMES (Feb. 7, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/07/business/binance-trump-crypto.html>.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ Oliver Milman, *Trump Says He Doesn’t Know Who Crypto Tycoon Is Despite Having Pardoned Him*, GUARDIAN (Nov. 3, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/nov/03/trump-changpeng-zhao-cz-pardon-crypto>. Binance’s reported removals of compliance personnel came just “weeks” after the pardon of Mr. Zhao. Kowsmann, Berwick & Foldy, *supra* note 1.



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