



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3222

March 1, 2023

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Janet Yellen
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Blinken and Secretary Yellen:

We write with regard to the deteriorating state of human rights in Iran, particularly the increasing series of unlawful executions carried out by the Islamic Republic of Iran. In response to this tragic destruction of life and clear violation of human rights, we urge you to take further actions – and encourage international partners to join us – to impose much clearer costs on the Iranian regime for the execution of protesters.

Since September 2022, at least 519 protesters have been killed by the regime, and more than 19,000 individuals have been arrested.¹ Of those arrested, at least 109 Iranians currently in detention have been already sentenced to death in grossly unfair trials or face trumped up charges that typically result in capital punishment.² Four Iranian protestors have been executed, and reports indicate that further executions are imminent. Innocent lives hang in the balance, and there is an urgent need to deter the perpetrators of these murders from committing further violence. We strongly encourage the Departments of State and the Treasury to levy further sanctions against Iranian officials and institutions involved in this brutal campaign of intimidation and extermination.

As a start, sanctions are warranted against the Iranian *Majles* (parliament) and 227 of its members, who in November 2022, signed an open statement calling for the Iranian government and judiciary to “show no leniency” toward protesters and compared them to ISIS terrorists.³ The Islamic Republic of Iran lacks democratic legitimacy, and the members of its parliament are not true democratic representatives of the Iranian people. More than half of all candidates for the *Majles*’ 2020 election were disqualified by the Guardian Council, an antidemocratic body whose

¹ https://twitter.com/HRANA_English/status/1612589346531540993

² <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/1/10/iran-executions-amount-to-state-sanctioned-killing-un-says>

³ <https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/06/middleeast/iran-lawmakers-judiciary-letter-protests-intl-hnk/index.html>

12 members are appointed directly and indirectly by Supreme Leader Khamenei.⁴ The only candidates who passed the Guardian Council's vetting to become parliamentarians are regime loyalists selected by other regime insiders. Thus, their shameful statement was not about ensuring law and order, but about advancing and legitimizing an apparatus of terror and repression.

The statement by the Iranian *Majles* members further undermined the rights originally assured to Iranians under the Islamic Republic of Iran's 1979 constitution. For example, Article 27 of the Iranian constitution states that "public gatherings and marches may be freely held." Further, Article 32 states that "no one may be arrested except by the order and in accordance with the procedure laid down by law." Article 34 states that citizens have the right to "seek justice by recourse to competent courts." And, finally, Article 38 states that "all forms of torture for the purpose of extracting confessions or acquiring information are forbidden."⁵ These rights, and many others, have been systematically trampled upon by the Islamic Republic and its judiciary – with the support of the *Majles* and a majority of its members.

In March 2022, the Department of the Treasury sanctioned the Russian State Duma and 339 of its members for their support of Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine. We now urge the Biden Administration to apply the same pressure against the Iranian *Majles* and its members for its support of Khamenei's brutal killing and execution of Iranians.

While imposing sanctions against the *Majles* members is important, it is also necessary to extend those sanctions to their family members who may seek to study, work, or acquire property in the United States. Congress had the foresight for this need, and enacted legislative provisions such as Section 105 of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010, the Global Magnitsky Act and section 7031(c) of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 provide the Secretary of State the authority to identify officials of foreign governments, and their immediate family members who are involved in a "gross violation of human rights," as ineligible for entry into the United States. We believe the deadly rhetoric and policies advanced by these *Majles* members meet that criterion. Also, Presidential Proclamation 9932, which bars entry into the United States of senior Iranian government officials and their families is also applicable. In this case, and pursuant to the clear text of the proclamation, it is well within the purview of the Secretary of State to determine that members of the *Majles* fall under the category of "senior officials of the government of Iran" for the purposes of imposing visa restrictions on members of the *Majles* and their family.

Should you come to the determination that neither Section 7031(c) or Presidential Proclamation 9932 confer the needed authorities, we ask that you provide us with sufficient justification for such a determination. Further, we ask that you immediately consult with Congress on any legislative remedy to ensure that the Executive Branch has all necessary legal tools to sanction these members of the Iranian regime and impose costs on their family.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

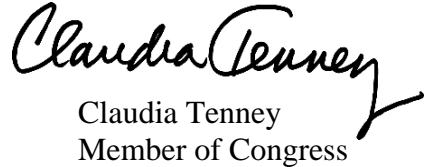
⁴ <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/iransource/factbox-the-outcome-of-irans-2020-parliamentary-elections/>

⁵ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Iran_1989.pdf

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator



Claudia Tenney
Member of Congress



Ben Cardin
U.S. Senator



Katie Porter
Member of Congress



Roger Wicker
U.S. Senator



Joe Wilson
Member of Congress



Jacky Rosen
U.S. Senator



Wiley Nickel
Member of Congress



John Hoeven
U.S. Senator



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



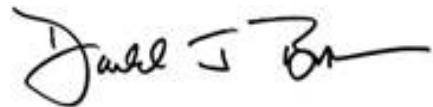
Marsha Blackburn
U.S. Senator



Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



James Lankford
U.S. Senator



Donald J. Bacon
Member of Congress



Rick Scott
U.S. Senator



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Lindsey O. Graham
U.S. Senator



Abigail Spanberger
Member of Congress



Michelle Steel
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Ted W. Lieu
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Nancy Mace
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Jennifer Wexton
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Maria Elvira Salazar
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Bradley S. Schneider
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