



*The people of Iran are bravely protesting against their corrupted and brutal regime, courageously facing down violence, persecution, jail, torture, and even death. We are with you, and we will always be with you." – President Donald J. Trump (10/09/2022)*

### **Officials of the Islamic Republic (IRI), Not the Iranian People, Should Be the Subject of Any Travel Ban**

President Trump has recognized that the people of Iran—among the most pro-American population in the Middle East—are bravely protesting a corrupt, brutal regime. Should the Trump Administration consider reinstating a travel ban that would affect Iranian nationals, Iranian Americans encourage him to targets officials of the IRI and their dependents, not ordinary Iranians. Banning the latter undermines the President's message to the people of Iran and plays into the Islamic regime's hands by giving them a propaganda point that the U.S. does not support their cause or care about them.

### **Iranian Americans are a Dynamic and Highly Educated Community That Contributes Significantly to U.S. Economy, National Security, and Society**

As individuals and families constituting the fabric of American society, Iranian Americans encourage President Trump to maintain his messaging to the Iranian people: the U.S. has long supported and welcomed them. Iranian Americans, in turn, have made [significant contributions](#)<sup>1</sup> to the U.S. economy in all fields. They are leaders in biotechnology, manufacturing, finance, IT, real estate development, medicine, and law. Because of their prominent roles in American business, Iranian Americans help the U.S. maintain its position as a global leader in innovation and in the world economy. They have held or hold pivotal roles at Google, Intel, Tesla, X, Dropbox, eBay, Intuit, Yahoo, YouTube, Uber, Expedia, SBE Entertainment, Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan Chase, Citigroup, and Coinbase, among others. They also play a prominent role in small business: according to the [Small Business Administration](#)<sup>2</sup>, among immigrant groups, Iranian Americans have one of the highest rates of business ownership. Significant numbers serve as faculty members in America's most prestigious universities, particularly in medicine, engineering, and tech. They serve as government, [military](#)<sup>3</sup>, and [law enforcement](#)<sup>4</sup> officials, upholding the Constitution and safeguarding national security. Banning ordinary Iranians plays into the regime's hands about U.S.'s reliability as an ally and helps stymie American economic and technical prowess.

### **The Iranian People Are Natural Allies of the U.S. in the Middle East**

[Polling](#)<sup>5</sup> consistently shows that Iranians—particularly younger generations—are pro-American, oppose their government's policies, and support democratic governance. U.S. policy should recognize their aspirations and engage them as an asset in countering Tehran's authoritarian influence. Congress has recognized this by supporting the Iranian people's [access to the internet](#)<sup>6</sup> free from government censorship. Indeed, [as Newsweek recently reported](#)<sup>7</sup>, many Iranians have been using Starlink (provided by Mr. Musk) to defy government restrictions on internet access.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://paaia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/One-Pager.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://paaia.org/CMS/sba-report-iranians-with-one-of-highest-rates-of-immigrant-owned-businesses.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.amazon.com/Full-Battle-Rattle-Longest-Serving-Team/dp/1250121159>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2015/12/03/health/san-bernardino-swat-doctor-profile/index.html>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202302036145>

<sup>6</sup> <https://paaia.org/CMS/paaia-applauds-legislation-promoting-internet-freedom-in-iran-passing-the-u-s-house-and-senate.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.newsweek.com/starlink-usage-iran-skyrockets-break-internet-law-rebel-restrictions-2011111>



### **Current Visa Granting Processes Safeguard U.S. Security**

Currently, the average Iranian applying for a visa to visit the U.S. undergoes a stringent [national security review](#).<sup>8</sup> This includes personal interviews and extensive background checks. These processes have been and should remain sufficient to safeguard American security.

[Per EO 14161](#)<sup>9</sup>, a policy requiring adversarial countries like Iran to share data on their citizens as a condition for entry into the U.S. could be risky. Expecting the Islamic Republic to cooperate in providing accurate data creates security risks and heightens the potential for human rights abuses. Such a policy could be exploited for surveillance, targeting dissidents, and [the growing issue of transnational repression and crimes](#)<sup>10</sup>.

### **Conclusion: A Strategic Approach**

As the Trump Administration considers the nature and extent of a travel ban, to the extent Iranian nationals are being considered as subjects of such a ban, it should—consistent with President Trump's message—focus on defining U.S. policy to support the people of Iran. American policy should punish the brutal regime, not the Iranian people. The IRI would like nothing more than to isolate Iranians from American influence and falsely claim that the U.S. is biased against and opposes them, something that is squarely contradicted by President Trump's messaging. A strategic approach that best advances American interests is one that focuses on prohibiting regime officials and their families—those responsible for repression, anti-American propaganda, and regional destabilizing activities—from entering the U.S. while allowing opportunities for ordinary Iranians to visit.

**ABOUT PAAIA:** *The Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonsectarian organization that serves the interests of Iranian Americans and represents the community before U.S. policymakers and the American public at large. Learn more at [paaia.org](http://paaia.org).*

---

<sup>8</sup> <https://ir.usembassy.gov/faqs-for-iranian-applicants/#:~:text=The%20applicant%20will%20have%20an,or%20Consulate%20issues%20a%20visa.>

<sup>9</sup> <https://public-inspection.federalregister.gov/2025-02009.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> [https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/TransnationalRepressionReport2022\\_CaseStudy\\_United\\_States\\_NEW.pdf](https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/TransnationalRepressionReport2022_CaseStudy_United_States_NEW.pdf)