



The Hon. Antony J. Blinken
Secretary of State

The Hon. Jake Sullivan
National Security Advisor

The Hon. Brett McGurk
NSC Coordinator, Middle East and North Africa

The Hon. Robert Malley
State Department Special Envoy for Iran

November 29, 2021
Sent via Email

Dear Messrs. Blinken, Sullivan, McGurk, and Malley,

Last week secret police of the Islamic Republic in Iran once again opened fire on peaceful protesters in the ancient city of Isfahan, Iran. Images from the protests show significant bloodshed. More alarmingly, on the second anniversary of the 2019 Aban massacre in which 1,500+ protesters were killed under cover of an Internet blackout, we are receiving reports that the regime is again shutting off the Internet. We, and countless others even from inside Iran, have written before to warn you of impending bloodshed caused by a regime crackdown on pro-democracy protests. Thus far, you have ignored those warnings. Now is the time to act.

First, we call on you to hold an immediate roundtable of Iranian-Americans including pro-democracy activists, dissidents, and experts to discuss the unfolding situation in Iran and how the United States can help. Thus far our multiple attempts to meet with Mr. Malley have been unsuccessful.

Second, we call on you to restart efforts to provide Internet access to the people of Iran initiated by the previous administration. This potential tool can be a critical tool in American foreign policy to aid people around the world struggling against totalitarianism.

Third, we call on you to steadfastly enforce all current human rights-related sanctions. Furthermore, you must investigate the regime's violence against protesters in the Isfahan and Chahrmahal and Bakhtiari province and sanction all authorities responsible for the maiming and murdering of peaceful protesters.



Finally, we call on you to walk out of this week's Vienna negotiations unless the Islamic Republic accepts human rights and the wellbeing of Iranian protesters as agenda items.

Engaging representatives of the regime that, just last week, shot live ammunition at peaceful protesters without insisting that human rights be a core component of the dialogue would be an insult to the people of Iran and would lead the regime to believe that the United States does not care. That would be true.

Under your collective leadership, Iran has been reduced to a mere nuclear file. The ongoing crimes against humanity and the Iranian people's widespread campaign for freedom have been roundly ignored. Spokesperson Ned Price's statement on the protests, though appreciated as a bare minimum, refused to condemn the regime for its use of brute force against peaceful protesters.

Pursuing human rights and democracy in Iran is not in conflict with protecting America's national security and will not disrupt efforts to pursue American interests. It is the only way to effectively do so. For four decades Republicans and Democrats have looked to engage this regime, in different ways. You have tried for nearly a year to engage this regime. All efforts have failed. The only path forward, the path that abides by our values and secures our interests, is supporting the people of Iran, not their oppressors.

After the Obama administration ignored the Iranian people's pleas for solidarity in 2009, many of your former colleagues have since expressed regret at the bloodshed their inaction helped cause. As the regime opens fire on peaceful protesters in Isfahan, we hope you will not have the same regrets. You have all said that President Biden's foreign policy would be centered on human rights and democracy. When it comes to Iran policy, you have abjectly failed in that aim. We hope to work with you to right the course. There is still time.

Cameron Khansarinia
Policy Director, NUFDI