

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

September 22, 2022

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

Dear Secretary Yellen,

The Islamic Republic of Iran is once again violently suppressing peaceful protests, with reports that several protesters have already been killed by security forces. As Iran moves to squash dissent even further by restricting the Iranian people's access to the Internet and cutting off communications services, we ask that the U.S. Department of the Treasury take every step possible within its power to clarify existing guidance regarding general licenses for the provision of technology-related communications services to the Iranian people. Further, we ask that you expedite any related license requests from companies providing communication services that can better connect Iranians with the outside world, including from Starlink.

It remains the policy of the United States Government to facilitate the free flow of information to individual Iranian citizens. General License (GL D-1) was issued by the Treasury Department in 2014 and authorizes, "certain services, software, and hardware incident to personal communications." As the license states, this includes fee-based services and software incident to the exchange of personal communications over the Internet as well as consumer-grade Internet connectivity services. As Iran takes steps to severely curtail the Iranian people's access to the Internet and personal communications devices and software, including Instagram, we urge the Treasury Department to take every necessary step to clarify guidance related to existing general licenses as proactively and publicly as possible. Further, we urge the Department to issue any necessary "comfort letters" to entities may seek to provide communications services under GL D-1.

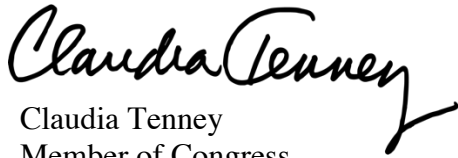
In addition, we ask the Treasury Department to expeditiously review and approve any license requests related to internet and communications services to the Iranian people. Doing so would be fully consistent with the Statement of Licensing Policy adopted by the Department in 2012, which established a favorable licensing policy for services and software that benefit the ability of the Iranian people to communicate. As you may be aware, Elon Musk, founder of SpaceX, recently stated that SpaceX would seek a license to provide its satellite based Starlink Internet service to Iran. If such a license request is submitted, we urge you to approve it immediately.

Thousands of Iranians are currently protesting their government, utilizing their right to freedom of expression, and the United States must uphold our commitment to ensuring they have access to communications services and technologies. Time is of the essence: with Internet access and services under threat in Iran today, we must act now to ensure critical services continue to be provided to the Iranian people uninterrupted.


As such, we request that you submit to Congress the following: (1) a detailed report of all requests for guidance or comfort letters your Department receives related to the provision of Internet, communications services, cloud software, or other software to the Iranian people beginning now and extending to the end of the calendar year; (2) a detailed report of all licensing requests your Department receives related to the provision of Internet, communications services, cloud software, other software Internet or communications services or software to the Iranian people beginning now and extending to the end of the calendar year; and finally, (3) a detailed report of all licensing requests that are denied by your Department related to the provision of Internet, communications services, cloud software, or other software to the Iranian people beginning now and extending to the end of the calendar year, in addition to an explanation as to why such requests were not approved.


We thank you in advance for your attention to this issue and look forward to your immediate response.


Sincerely,



Claudia Tenney
Member of Congress


Tom Malinowski
Member of Congress


Michael T. McCaul
Ranking Member
House Foreign Affairs Committee


Elise M. Stefanik
Member of Congress


Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress


Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



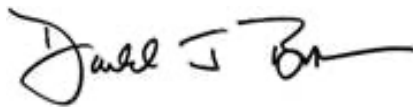
Joe Wilson
Member of Congress



Maria Elvira Salazar
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Nicole Malliotakis
Member of Congress



Don Bacon
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Guy Reschenthaler
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Joaquin Castro
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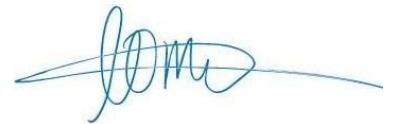
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