

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 12, 2021

His Excellency Josep Borrell Fontelles
High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and
Vice-President of the European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

Dear High Representative Borrell Fontelles,

We write to you today to express deep concern over your decision to send a senior European Union official to attend the inauguration of the Islamic Republic of Iran's new president, Ebrahim Raisi. Raisi, who has an abhorrent human rights record, was elected in a sham election that prohibited the Iranian people from expressing their God-given democratic rights. In addition, he is currently designated as a specially designated national by the United States Department of the Treasury.

The Iranian people have been deprived of a real choice at the ballot box for more than 40 years, and this presidential election was no different. The regime's clerics oversee an electoral process that silences the voices of the Iranian people and limits their political participation. Raisi's rise to the presidency was orchestrated entirely by the regime's elite officials. Religious minorities, women, and those with opposing political views were kept from even participating. This process is a sham. It is neither free nor fair. The fact that the European Union would seek to legitimize this election by sending a senior representative to Raisi's inauguration is as baffling as it is irresponsible. An institution like the European Union, which purportedly seeks to uphold democratic ideals, should be condemning this election, not legitimizing the sham process.

We do not just take issue with your legitimizing this fraudulent election. The attendance of a senior European Union official whitewashes Raisi's brutal history. As Chief of the Iranian Judiciary, Ebrahim Raisi oversaw some of the most violent crimes in Iran's past, including the extrajudicial executions of thousands of political prisoners in 1988. Raisi was a member of the "death commission" following the Iranian Revolution, which extrajudicially executed thousands of political dissidents in Gohardasht and Evin prisons. In addition, under Raisi's watch, the judiciary granted impunity to security forces and government officials responsible for the violent crackdowns on protesters during the protests of November 2019, in which more than 1,000 people were killed. These grave human rights abuses are indisputably crimes against humanity. The European Union's attendance minimizes the gravity of these heinous crimes.

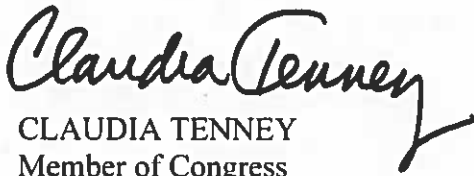
Furthermore, the decision to send a senior level European Union official to the inauguration ceremony came just days after the Iranian regime carried out a fatal drone strike on an oil tanker in the Persian Gulf. As this regime escalates its malign activity and continues to pose a major threat to freedom of navigation, maritime security, and international law, your decision to have a senior official attend the ceremony is once again misguided and irresponsible.

These destabilizing attacks confirm that the regime lacks the necessary legitimacy and ability to be considered a reliable and trustworthy member of the international community.


It is disgraceful and extraordinarily disheartening that the European Union continues to tout its support of human rights and democratic principles abroad, yet simultaneously honors a murderer who has killed thousands of his own people and came to power in an election that was neither free nor fair. The Iranian people oppose this regime's brutality, and they deserve the opportunity to express their views without being massacred and oppressed by their leaders. Your actions minimized the Iranian people's struggle for freedom and legitimized their oppressors.


We urge the European Union to uphold its moral high ground and human rights principles in its relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran and Raisi's administration. It is critical that the international community investigates the regime's crimes against humanity, rather than honoring those who have directed those crimes. Under your leadership, the European Union must stand up for its democratic commitments and support the brave Iranian people, who have been oppressed by the Iranian regime for long enough.

Sincerely,

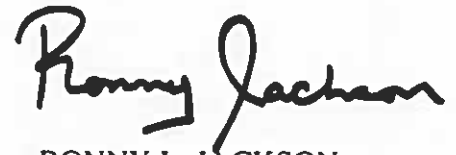

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