

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 5, 2018

The Honorable Rex Tillerson
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Steven T. Mnuchin
Secretary of the Treasury
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Secretary Tillerson and Secretary Mnuchin:

I am writing to express my support for the thousands of peaceful Iranians who have taken to the streets to demand their fundamental human rights and a better life for their families. I believe it is both in our national and moral interests to support these protesters and their desire for a free, democratic, and transparent Iranian government that doesn't needlessly waste Iran's resources on foreign adventurism that has resulted in massive human rights abuses, funding of terrorist organizations, and the deaths of American soldiers.

I was troubled to see reports of internet censorship, including the blocking of social media and apps to stymie coordination by those demonstrating. Press reports indicate that U.S. technology firms are able to provide workarounds for protesters, but have declined to do so for fear of violating U.S. laws and regulations. I encourage the Department of the Treasury and the Department of State to work with U.S. technology firms to ensure that protesters have access to the tools they need to let their voices be heard. Assuring U.S. technology companies that they are not violating U.S. sanctions would go a long way towards ensuring that Iranians are able to freely protest their government.

I also strongly urge the State Department to instruct all U.S. missions in democratic countries, especially those in Europe, to ask their host government counterparts to issue strong statements of support for the protesters' right to peacefully demonstrate. Such statements would show enormous international support for their efforts to hold the mullahs in Tehran accountable and, by shining a global light on the situation, may lessen the violent crackdown by the Iranian regime.

These protests are showing the world that average Iranians are tired of the repressive policies of their government. The State Department and USAID have, in the past, worked to support democracy and human rights in Iran through foreign assistance. Now that we are once again seeing tangible proof of the need for continued support for democracy and human rights programs in Iran, I request a year-by-year summary of any such funding since 2009, including assistance that has been appropriated but remains unspent.

The people of Iran are calling out for their fundamental human rights and it is imperative that America support their call.

Thank you for your attention to this important and timely matter.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'M. Rubio', written in a cursive style.

Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Robert Menendez', written in a cursive style.

Robert Menendez
U.S. Senator