

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 14, 2026

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write to emphasize the urgency of the ongoing protests across Iran and the authoritarian Iranian regime's escalating communications blackout. The scale and intensity of these demonstrations, coupled with the regime's use of force to violently quell peaceful protests and isolate the Iranian people from the outside world, warrant immediate attention.

Around December 28, 2025, peaceful protests began emerging across Iran, driven in part by severe inflation and economic freefall.<sup>1</sup> Starting in Tehran, they quickly spread to more than 185 cities across all 31 of Iran's provinces, with large crowds calling for political change.<sup>2</sup> Like previous waves of unrest, including the 2022 protests following the death of Mahsa Amini, the Iranian regime has responded the only way they know how – violently.<sup>3</sup> According to Reuters and the U.S.-based Human Rights Activist News Agency, at least 2,000 people have been killed and over 16,784 have been arrested since the protests began.<sup>4</sup> Making matters worse, the regime imposed a nationwide internet shutdown on January 8, 2026, cutting mobile data, restricting cellular networks, and attempting to block access to satellite-based services like Starlink.<sup>5</sup> In moments of national upheaval, access to independent information is not a luxury but a matter of life and death. The current blackout is designed to isolate Iranians at the precise moment when communication is most critical, which only underscores the need for the United States to strengthen its capacity to support secure, resilient communications for the Iranian people.

<sup>1</sup> Joe Walsh, Tucker Reals, Haley Ott, Emmet Lyons, *Iran protests are the biggest in years to challenge the regime. Here's what to know.*, CBS NEWS (Jan. 11, 2026) available at <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/iran-protests-biggest-in-years-against-ayatollah-what-to-know/>.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> David Gritten, *Huge anti-government protests in Tehran and other Iranian cities, videos show*, BBC (Jan. 8, 2026) available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cg7y0579lp8o>.

<sup>4</sup> Susan Heavy & Elwely Elwelly, *Iran official says 2,000 people have been killed in unrest*, REUTERS (Jan. 13, 2026), available at <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/iranian-mp-warns-greater-unrest-urging-government-address-grievances-2026-01-13/>; Tucker Reals, Elizabeth Palmer, Ramy Inocencio, & Joanne Stocker, *Over 12,000 feared dead after Iran protests, as video shows bodies lined up at morgue*, CBS NEWS (Jan. 13, 2026), available at <https://www.cbsnews.com/amp/news/iran-protest-death-toll-over-12000-feared-higher-video-bodies-at-morgue/>.

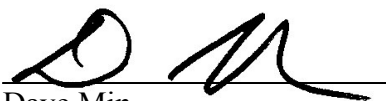
<sup>5</sup> Jomana Karadsheh and Hira Humayun, *Iran enters fourth day of internet blackout*, CNN WORLD (Jan. 11, 2026), available at <https://www.cnn.com/world/live-news/iran-protests-01-11-26>.

Members of Congress, including several of us, have introduced bipartisan, bicameral bills, including H.R. 6469 (the FREEDOM Act) to expand U.S. capacity to support internet-freedom technologies for the Iranian people.<sup>6</sup> While Congress works to advance legislation like this through regular order, we are confident that the executive branch has the ability—and responsibility—to immediately begin interagency coordination, resume and leverage the Department of State’s collaboration with the Open Technology Fund, harness existing technologies like Virtual Private Networks, and fully assess emerging technologies such as direct-to-cell networks.

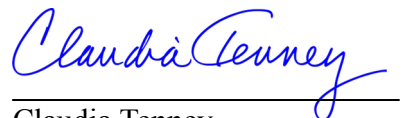
Your strong support for measures like these are critical to helping the Iranian people bypass regime-controlled terrestrial communications infrastructure and providing them with a lifeline to the outside world at a time when the regime is cutting off access to traditional communication channels. These small steps, which are consistent with your clear statements that your administration is ready and willing to help the Iranian protesters, would be invaluable in promoting freedom in Iran.<sup>7</sup>

We respectfully urge you to begin the necessary research, planning, and technical assessments immediately. The United States cannot find itself unprepared to assist when timely action could make a meaningful difference in Iran’s struggle for democracy. The Iranian people deserve the same access to the tools that enable them to speak, organize, and participate in their own future as we have here in the United States. We stand ready to support your efforts in this regard.

Sincerely,



Dave Min  
Member of Congress



Claudia Tenney  
Member of Congress

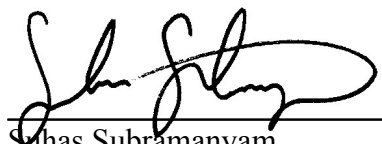
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<sup>6</sup> Press Release, *Rep. Dave Min, Reps. Dave Min, Claudia Tenney and Sens. Jacky Rosen, Dave McCormick Introduce Bipartisan Legislation to Support Internet Freedom in Iran* (Dec. 4, 2025), available at <https://min.house.gov/media/press-releases/rebs-dave-min-claudia-tenney-and-sens-jacky-rosen-dave-mccormick-introduce>.

<sup>7</sup> Barak Ravod, *Trump says U.S. is ready to help Iranians get freedom*, AXIOS (Jan. 10, 2026), available at <https://www.axios.com/2026/01/10/trump-iran-protests-freedom>.



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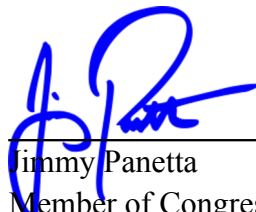
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Member of Congress



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Josh Gottheimer  
Member of Congress



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Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress



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Deborah K. Ross  
Member of Congress



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Mike Levin  
Member of Congress

CC. The Honorable Marco Rubio, Secretary of State