

Congressman Brad Sherman (D-CA)

Hello. I'm Congressman Brad Sherman from California's best-named city, Sherman Oaks.

Iran is the home to humanity's first human rights document, the Cyrus Cylinder. But today the Iranian people are forced to live under an autocratic and corrupt regime that targets its own people and is the chief state sponsor of terrorism internationally from Syria to Lebanon to Gaza to Europe to South America and across the globe. We must not forget what this regime is and what it has been capable of doing.

The world should not forget the mass murders carried by the Iranian regime in 1988. It was in July of that year that Ayatollah Khomeini issued the bloody order to annihilate the enemies of Islam immediately. Executions of thousands continued for months with hundreds of people hanged each and every day before being buried in mass unmarked graves. Today we know that as many as 30,000 political prisoners had their lives taken from them. They lost their lives because they supported the dream of a free Iran.

I am a lead democratic sponsor of House Resolution 118, a resolution supporting the people of Iran and their desire for a democratic secular and nonnuclear future. This resolution also condemns the current Iranian regime's systematic human rights violations and its state sponsor of terrorist acts against America, Iranian dissidents and others.

In addition to that resolution, in February Congressman McClintock and I led a letter addressed to President Biden, urging him to work with our allies, including particularly our partners in Albania and other Balkan countries, where Iran has expanded its presence, and to hold the regime accountable for breaching its diplomatic privileges and to call on nations to work to prevent the malign activities of the Iranian regime's diplomatic missions. The regime of Tehran uses violence and espionage to target its own people at home and abroad. A prosperous Iran must begin with a peaceful Iran, where the Iranian people's freedom and human rights are restored. We must work toward a secular, nonnuclear and democratic Iran where these goals can become realities.

But there is some hope that the regime will soon be on its last legs. We saw how the Iranian people boycotted the recent elections. They were not fooled by the desperate attempt to distract them from the regime's corruption. There are so many around the world who stand in solidarity with the Iranian people and who are working for a new chapter in that great nation's history. This new chapter will be written by Iranians, not Americans. Democracy will come to Iran from Iran, not from foreign military intervention. But we must support the Iranian people as they fight for democracy.

I want also to take this opportunity to recognize the inspiring work of Madame Rajavi. She has shown her unwavering support for democracy, for women's rights and minority rights in Iran. All human beings are born with equal and inalienable rights and fundamental freedoms. These rights are not limited to just some of us. They belong to everyone including the people of Iran. I remain dedicated to helping those who are trying to achieve democracy in Iran.

I'm Congressman Brad Sherman.