

Summit For Free Iran

The Imperative to Sanction and Hold the Regime to Account Washington, DC, Friday, September 18, 2020

With the U.S. Capitol dome in the backdrop, Organization of Iranian American Communities (OIAC), in collaboration with its member organizations from across 41 states, hosted a summit titled, “The Imperative to Sanction and Hold the Regime to Account” to support a Free Iran.

Bipartisan members of the United States Congress, as well as prominent political dignitaries and national security experts addressed the gathering. The summit speakers and participants commemorated the 32nd anniversary of the massacre of 30,000 political prisoners during the summer of 1988 as well as the indiscriminate murder of over 1500 pro-democracy protesters in Iran. In person, via video link, and in written messages, many of the speakers called on the international community to hold Iranian regime accountable for its egregious human rights record while others also demanded re-imposition of broad sanctions on the regime in Tehran.

In her opening remarks, event’s keynote speaker, President Elect of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), **Mrs. Maryam Rajavi** said, “Let us all applaud Navid Afkari, this champion of our people’s uprisings.” “The people of Iran want this regime punished through a comprehensive boycott,” reminding the international community that in facing “executions and massacres, the people of Iran urge the United Nations, and the UN Security Council in particular, to restore snapback sanctions stipulated in the six UN resolutions against the clerical regime in Iran. Otherwise, Khamenei will continue to ravage the nation as his regime's survival depends on murder and suppression. If Khamenei were to stop executions, he would lose control of the situation and uprisings simmering in the depths of Iranian society would erupt and overthrow the mullahs’ religious fascism.” Speaking to ongoing anti-regime protests in Iran, Mrs. Rajavi asserted, “Today, the regime is at its weakest point ever. In such circumstance, giving assistance to the mullahs will only increase the pain and suffering of the people of Iran, but of course, would not be able to save the regime from its certain downfall.”

<https://youtu.be/OaEbDVEpMjQ>

Senator Roy Blunt (R-MO), Chairman, Republican Policy Committee;
Chairman, Rules Committee, and member of the Senate Select Committee

on Intelligence said, “We need to be concerned about the daily attacks on the people of Iran who, through their uprisings, their protests and strikes, have been seeking regime change. And we really see an escalation of those protests in the last two years. People carry on that fight. And no matter how brutal the regime gets, no matter how much physical or psychological torture, no matter how harsh the sentence, how many political prisoners are executed, activists and journalists abused in every single daily activity, but you continue to lead in that fight. We have to listen to the message of the Iranian people as they chant down the dictators. Iranians deserve a secular government that respects the rule of law, freedom of speech and ethnic and religious differences.”

<https://t.co/W03iux0X8s?amp=1>

Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL), Acting Chairman, Select Committee on Intelligence; and member, Foreign Relations Committee addressed the event and added, “There’s a huge gap and an enormous difference between the people who govern Iran, the clerics who govern the country, and the millions of people who live there... Now it’s governed by a radical clerical regime who wants not simply to continue to sponsor terrorism but to continue to terrorize their neighbors. So this battle, your battle, our battle is not simply to keep Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, not simply to keep Iran from continuing to sponsor terrorism. This is all very important. The real battle is to give Iran back to the Iranian people so they can reclaim the greatness of an extraordinary civilization and once again be the home of a peaceful country, in which people from all different backgrounds live together and contribute to the world once again.”

<https://t.co/6CCFKMah40?amp=1>

In his remarks, Recently, **Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX)**, member, Foreign Relations Committee & Committee on The Judiciary Committee reminded, “It is an absolute necessity that we hold the officials of the Iranian regime accountable for their torture, their human rights abuses and their crimes against humanity. Since the United States rightly withdrew from the deal, I’ve continued to fight, pushing for an end to the oil waiver successfully as well as an end to the civil nuclear waivers. I’m thankful that the Trump administration has rightly invoked the snapback mechanism, which is a final step to terminate this disastrous deal.... By using our existing authority to invoke the snapback sanctions mechanism, we have taken a necessary step to counter Iran’s aggression, to deny the regime resources and to slow significantly the development and deployment of Iran’s nuclear program. ... I remain committed, as I know you are, to ensuring that ... this Iranian regime is ultimately brought down.”

<https://www.pscp.tv/w/1ZkJzmNWOXXGv?t=1h57m55s>

Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Ranking Member, Foreign Relations Committee said, “I’m pleased to see that you are joined today by many of your compatriots in Albania. Your safety and security prove that dedicated advocacy and fighting for your cause can improve your situation and hope that all Iranian people may someday be able to live in safety, dignity and freedom.” Referring to expansive and bipartisan support for the Iranian resistance and the need to address human rights violations in Iran, Senator Menendez said, “you have friends in Congress and throughout the United States government, as well as a host of international NGOs, who will continue to shine a light on these abuses and continue to press for accountability.”

In her remarks, **Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)**, member, Foreign Relations Committee; and Armed Services Committee, said, “Iranian support for terrorist organizations and likeminded oppressive regimes has destabilized countries and prevented peace across the region. At home, the regime denies its people the right to freedom of assembly, expression and association.” Highlighted S.Res.539 she noted, “I’m an original sponsor of legislation that expresses support for the rights of the people of Iran to determine their own future and condemns the Iranian regime for its crackdown against legitimate protests.” The United States, Senator Shaheen said, “must stand up for human rights everywhere and condemn injustice anywhere.”

<https://t.co/kVKvu0l2Lv?amp=1>

Senator Rob Portman (R-OH), Chairman, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; Member, Foreign Relations Committee in his remarks to the Iranian Americans, said, “The people of Iran deserve better than a government that spends its scarce resources on proxy forces and terrorism instead of domestic priorities. The recent execution of the wrestler, Navid Afkari, on manufactured charges is just one more example of a corrupt regime that does not care for the basic human rights of its people.

https://www.pscp.tv/iran_policy/1ZkJzmNWOXXGv?t=2h13m49s

Senator Ron Johnson (R-WI) lamented Iranian regime crackdown on dissenters and peaceful protestors and said, “Navid Afkari is one of the latest victims of Iran’s brutal regime. The United States condemns his execution and continues to stand with the people of Iran.”

<https://t.co/SNKfzzHNKQ?amp=1>

Senator Martha McSally (R-AZ), Member, Armed Services Committee, in part of her remarks added, “I have joined other senators to cosponsor many bills this year alone that will help hold Iran responsible for their malevolent actions. The U.S. and the international community must continue to hold Iran accountable for its human rights violations and reprehensible behavior. We must endeavor to end their dangerous proliferation of nuclear weapons, terrorism and the repression of their own citizens. Our world cannot be stable while the number one sponsor of terror continues to operate.”

New York **Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)**, member, Armed recognized Iranian American community members for their dedication, “towards a free and democratic, non-nuclear Iran and said, “Today, we recognize the work of all those speaking truth to power, in advancing human rights, gender equality, and religious and ethnic tolerance in Iran.”

https://www.pscp.tv/iran_policy/1ZkJzmNWOXXGv?t=2h19m5s

In his message to the people of Iran, **Chairman Eliot Engel (D-NY)** said, “we stand with you, we join you in your fight. And we look forward to a day when our countries can work together, when our peoples can get to know one another and build a more peaceful and prosperous world.”
https://studio.youtube.com/video/_iU1iI0pyAk/edit

Congressman Tom McClintock (R-CA) said in his remarks, “Today’s Iran is full of impassioned citizens who are demanding liberty, justice and fundamental human rights. But if we fail to hold this rogue regime accountable, there’s no telling what it may decide to do next about those who long for such basic freedoms.” Mr. McClintock referenced House Resolution 374 and added, “I have introduced a resolution condemning Iran’s terrorist acts and its nuclear aspirations and supporting the Iranian people’s desire for a democratic, secular and nonnuclear republic. That resolution now has gone to have 221 cosponsors, a strong bipartisan majority of the chamber.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0jZzQQA4-qc>

Congresswoman Shiela Jackson Lee (D-TX) called on the international community, “to support the fighters in Iran for human rights, and to stand with those like Madam Rajavi, who want human rights and the fights against the abuses, the horrible abuses that people are facing in Iran who just simply want justice, equality and human rights.” “How stunning and shocking that a champion wrestler Navid Afkari was killed simply because he was participating in a peaceful protest,” the Congresswoman added. “We must have the United Nations investigate these human rights abuses,” she said.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ayY2QN98CfU>

In his remarks at 2020 Human Rights Summit, **Congressman Tom Emmer (R-MN)** said, “In Congress, I’ve worked to spread democracy across the globe, especially to the people of Iran. Last Congress I was proud to support imposing sanctions on Iran to hold them accountable for their human rights abuses. I am also encouraged by the January passage of a measure which supports the rights of the people of Iran to free expression and condemns the Iranian regime for its crackdown on legitimate protests.”

https://youtu.be/_FDaK5tLtaw

In his remarks, **Congressman Paul Gosar (R-AZ)** stressed, “the common bond we share in fighting for a free Iran” and said, “My colleagues in the administration have reiterated this commitment in recent weeks by triggering the steps necessary to enact the snapback mechanism allowed to them under U.N. Security Council Resolution 2231.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQgp373Z7is>

Congressman Raul Ruiz, MD (D-CA) denounced, “The continued violence, the oppression, the internet blackouts, the large-scale incarcerations, the executions, these egregious human rights violations” in Iran and in remarks directed towards its people added, “To the people of Iran, I stand with you, the United States Congress stands with you, and the American people stand with you in your pursuit of liberty and democracy.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQgp373Z7is>

Representative Lance Gooden (R-TX) expressed his support for, “the 10-point plan that Madam Rajavi” has introduced and said, “I want to encourage you and just let you know that you have friends in the U.S. that are supporting your efforts. We believe that you are making progress and we’re making progress alongside you.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mttuMCqXtY4>

Representative Ted Yoho (R-FL) called on all to, “remember those who have given their lives in the past for a free Iran and a better future for their children, especially the 30,000 political prisoners who lost their lives in the 1988 massacre.” Directing his remarks at the people of Iran, Mr. Yoho said, “please know that America stands with you in wanting to provide a better life, free from oppression and fear.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wXj-ssn7jcY>

Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) voiced the need, “to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons and other weapons of war...and isolate the Iranian regime diplomatically and we must support activists inside Iran working to secure a better and more peaceful Iran.” She added, “I will continue to fight to hold the Iranian regime accountable and work toward the day that Iran is free, secure and democratic. And that day will come States Congress also stands with you.”

https://studio.youtube.com/video/Fy21J_Ko5S8/edit

Congressman Dan Crenshaw (R-TX) reminded the audience of, “the unjust and unreasonable execution of Navid Afkari, who had been tortured into making a confession” and added, “We know about Navid because he was an athlete. But how many executions happen that we don’t know about?” “We support the Iranian people not just because we oppose the Ayatollah,” Mr. Crenshaw noted, “but because we know the Iranian people.” He called on the international community to, “recognize the brutality of the Ayatollah and his regime and instead of staying silent and hoping things get better,... proudly and openly stand with the brave Iranian people who are standing up and demanding to be recognized, who are demanding their God-given freedom and respect for their human rights.”

<https://studio.youtube.com/video/6pHiI7u3r64/edit>

Representative Robert Aderholt (R-AL) denounced the atrocities committed against thousands of political prisoners during the massacre of 1988 in Iran and said, “These innocent men and women were kidnapped, killed and their bodies dumped into mass graves simply because they disagreed with the government...It is extremely important that we stand with the people of Iran and for them to know that they are not alone.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KKRexwpIaZs>

In her message, **Congresswoman Lori Trahan (D-MA)** expressed concern about the lack of accountability for human rights abuses in Iran and said, “As we observe the 32nd anniversary of the 1988 massacre of political prisoners, I continue to be reminded of the egregious human rights violations committed by the Iranian Government for more than 40 years. It’s shameful and infuriating that to this day, no Iranian official has been held accountable for their crimes.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3U9wAdqLns>

“Just this past year, the whole world watched as the Iranian people took to the streets, risking their lives to stand up to a murderous regime and demand accountability,” **Congressman David Joyce (R-OH)** told the gathering participants. As many as 1500 protesters, he said, were killed and countless others were detained.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3U9wAdqLns>

In his message, **Congressman Brad Schneider (D-IL)** advocated for the U.S. government to hold Iran accountable for its abysmal human rights record and its treatment of political opposition. “It is incredibly important that we memorialize the thousands of Iranians who lost their lives in the 1988 massacre of political dissidents, Rep. Schneider added.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4lsRnisnxA>

The horrific nature of the mullahs was on full display to the world with the arrest torture and execution of 27-year-old Navid Afkari, **Congressman French Hill (R-AR)** said in his remarks.

Rep. Hill expressed outrage that, “despite international efforts as well as those by President Trump, the Iranian regime executed Navid, a wrestling champion whose only charge was his participation in a 2018 nationwide protest against the clerical authoritarians.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=31TL2fyeQio>

Congresswoman Kathleen Rice (D-NY) urged, “the United Nations Human Rights Council to condemn the ongoing human rights violations perpetrated by the Iranian regime and establish a mechanism by which the United Nations Security Council can monitor such violations. Iranians in every corner of the country have been protesting and rallying in support of a free Iran.” Their continued struggle for basic human rights, Mrs. Rice added, “calls for nothing less than our unwavering support.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tk7Kzblb6pk>

Congressman Don Bacon (R-NE) said the problem is with the Iranian regime, not its people. “It’s not about the people of Iran. We want peace. It’s really the regime. In the regime, the mullahs endanger the neighbors. It’s intolerable. But even beyond that, what the regime does to its people is even worse,” Mr. Bacon noted.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLOb09oLN-g>

Representative Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) called Iranian regime, “a destabilizing and antagonizing force in the Middle East for far too long” and which “continues to wage a campaign of terror against those who only wish for a free society.” The regime’s attacks on those advocating for democratic reform, he said, “should shock all Americans and freedom-loving people around the world.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5cNAABx5rcc>

Congressman Tom Emmer (R-MN) recalled the painful anniversary of the 1988 massacre of political prisoners in Iran and said, “Little peace exists for the families of these prisoners who were dumped in unmarked graves. The Iranian government has refused to acknowledge the killings and destroyed burial sites, forbidding commemorations for the victims.” He then added, “This anniversary doesn’t just call us to mourn those killed for their convictions, it reminds us just how brutal a government can become in order to suppress free expression. “

https://youtu.be/_FDaK5tLtaW

Congressman Glenn Grothman (R-WI) expressed his hope that, “we can meet at a time in which we know that all of your relatives back in Iran are living in a free republic in which they have the ability to worship who they want, talk about who they want, move about wherever they want.

<https://youtu.be/yYVD4y-BRWg>

Representative Mikie Sherrill (D-NJ) said, “As a member of the House of Representatives, I am constantly working with my colleagues, both Republicans and Democrats, to advance human rights around the world, including in Iran. Iranians must be afforded the same foundational rights as Americans are -- to vote for their leaders, to speak their minds freely without fear of retaliation, and to determine the course of their country’s future. I will continue to seek justice for the victims of human rights violations, and will always advocate for a free and prosperous Iran.”

<https://youtu.be/p3U9wAdqLns>

“Our thoughts and prayers for all those who were affected by the 1988 Iran prisoners massacre. There must be accountability and justice for the victims. Our hearts go out to the Iranian people and we strongly condemn the appalling human rights violations and ongoing crimes against humanity by the Iranian regime.”, said **Congressman Rick Allen (R-GA)**.

<https://youtu.be/31TL2fyeQio>

Congressman Doug LaMalfa (R-CA) addresses the 1988 Massacre and said, “Peace and stability in Iran are possible and Iranians are justified in their calls to restore their freedoms. There’s no room for a regime that organizes, trains and equips terrorists to wreak havoc across the world. Congress has taken action to condemn the abhorrent actions of 1988 but there’s more to be done to end the systematic human rights violations Iranians are experiencing today.”

<https://youtu.be/dEQta5KeAF4>

Bi-Partisan prominent dignitaries such as Rudy Giuliani, Joseph Lieberman, Gen. James Jones, Newt Gingrich, Gen. Jack Keane, Giulio Terzi, and David Jones, British MP and former Secretary of State for Wales, British MP Bob Blackman, former Italian Foreign Minister and Moslem Eskandar-Filabi, Chairman of the NCRI Sports Committee, former Iranian wrestling champion and winner of 17 Gold, Silver and Bronze medals in national and international competitions highlighted the importance of adopting a firm policy vis-à-vis Iran and put away with, once and for all, the appeasement policy that the Iranian regime has prospered from for over four decades now.