

ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.
PENNSYLVANIA

COMMITTEES:
FINANCE

FOREIGN RELATIONS

HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

JOINT ECONOMIC

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 7, 2013

The Honorable Jacob Lew
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Lew:

On June 14, Iranians will go to the polls to elect their next president. I am writing to express my deep concern about the candidates, which Iran's Guardian Council recently approved to contest these elections. I urge you to investigate allegations that these presidential candidates committed human rights violations and consider designating them as "Specially Designated Nationals" under Executive Order 13553. These candidates' history of brutally repressing dissent is a threat to the safety and security of the Iranian people.

One of the leading candidates, Mr. Qalibaf, has allegedly admitted to personally committing and overseeing the commission of grave violations of human rights on numerous occasions, including after the Presidential elections in 2009. Another high-profile candidate, Mr. Jalili, oversaw security forces that were responsible for the violence perpetrated against peaceful protestors. The other six candidates have all held positions of authority in the Iranian government over the past two decades, during which time the Iranian people have suffered substantial violence and repression at the hands of their government.

The upcoming elections mark the eleventh presidential election in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Massive election fraud during the 2009 presidential election prompted large but peaceful protests that were brutally suppressed by the Iranian regime and its security forces. According to Human Rights Watch, many reformist politicians, protesters and voters have been placed in jail or under house arrest as the 2013 election approaches, while reformist parties have been banned from participating. The Iranian people deserve to actively participate in the electoral process without fear of reprisal, and the international community should continue to support their aspirations for a government that is legitimately representative of their interests.

The Guardian Council of Iran recently announced that eight of the 600 registered presidential candidates are approved to contest the upcoming presidential election. Two of the approved candidates, Mr. Qalibaf and Mr. Jalili, held key positions of power during and after the 2009 elections. During these protests and the subsequent crackdown in Tehran, news reports indicated the government used force, including batons, tear gas and automatic weapons, to suppress demonstrators. At least one individual, Neda Agha-Soltan, died as a result of the suppression of these protests. Her tragic death remains emblematic of the daily struggle of Iranian human rights and democracy activists.

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

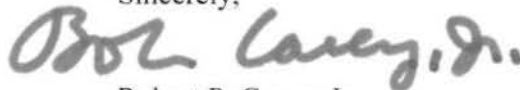
I am especially concerned with the cases of Mr. Jalili and Mr. Qalibaf, both of whom are considered to be frontrunners in the current contest. As Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council in 2009, Mr. Jalili was complicit in the use of force against Iranian citizens. He worked closely with the commanders of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps, the country's main security apparatus, and the armed forces, which authorized the use of force against civilians. Reports suggest that he was a key player in the "control room" during the protests, leading the forceful response to the dissent and authorizing actions that took the lives of numerous protestors. During the protests, the Supreme National Security Council was responsible for announcing the daily death toll, which reached ten on the deadliest day, June 20.

While serving as Mayor of Tehran during the 2009 elections, Mr. Qalibaf oversaw the violent suppression of reform-minded protestors in the capital city. In addition to his actions in 2009, Mr. Qalibaf allegedly perpetrated human rights violations while serving as Commander of the Revolutionary Guards Air Force. In a letter sent to President Mohammad Khatami in July 1999, Mr. Qalibaf joined other commanders in threatening to respond militarily to protestors, if the President refused to take action. An audiotape, alleged to be of Mr. Qalibaf addressing a group of Iranian hardliners earlier this year, is currently circulating on the Internet. In it, the speaker claims responsibility for directly participating in human rights violations during protests in 1999, by beating student protestors with clubs to clear them from the streets. The speaker also says, referencing protests in 2003, "I went to the National Security Council meeting [...] and I told them as head of the Police, I will demolish anyone who would show up tonight on the campus to protest." Mr. Qalibaf was serving as Chief of the Iranian Police Forces at the time.

Pursuant to Executive Order 13553, Section 1(a)(ii)(A), an individual acting as an official of the Government of Iran may have sanctions brought against him if he is responsible for or complicit in directing human rights abuses against Iranian citizens after June 12, 2009. Following the 2009 presidential elections, both Mr. Jalili and Mr. Qalibaf oversaw the use of brutal force against Iranian citizens protesting election results around the country, resulting in grave human rights violations. The remaining six candidates served in senior advisory positions during periods of violence and repression.

Sanctioning candidates for Iran's highest political office would signal to the Iranian regime that the United States will not cooperate with human rights violators. Further, it would demonstrate our resolve to stand with the Iranian people, who are victims of this brutal regime. I respectfully request that you investigate allegations of these candidates' commission of human rights violations and consider designating them as "Specially Designated Nationals." Should your assessment indicate otherwise, I request that you reply to me explaining your determination for each individual. I am grateful for your efforts to enforce sanctions on human rights abusers in Iran and look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator