

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 6, 2020

Jack Dorsey
Chief Executive Officer, Twitter, Inc.
1355 Market Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Mr. Dorsey,

In general American citizens and entities are prohibited from providing goods and services to the Government of Iran, pursuant to the President's use of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) (50 U.S.C. §§ 1701 et seq.) and as described in the Iranian Transactions and Sanctions Regulations (31 C.F.R. § 560).

On February 7, 2014 the Obama administration published General License D-1 (GL D-1), which created an exception for services and software incident to Internet-based communications including "instant messaging, chat and email, social networking," licensing the Iranian regime to propagandize over American social media platforms such as Twitter (see 31 C.F.R. § 560.540(a)). Ironically and infuriatingly, the regime does not allow its own people access to such platforms.

However, even GL D-1 expressly "does not authorize [the]... provision, directly or indirectly, of the services, software, or hardware" described by the license "to any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to any part of 31 C.F.R. chapter V, other than persons whose property and interests in property are blocked solely pursuant to Executive Order 13599 as the Government of Iran," e.g. to any Iranian government official designated as a Specially Designated National (SDN) by the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) for reasons other than being an Iranian government official.

On June 24, 2019, the President invoked his IEEPA powers through Executive Order 13876 (E.O. 13876), blocking the property of "the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic [Ali Khamenei] of Iran and the Iranian Supreme Leader's Office" and well as persons who act or purport to act on the Supreme Leader's behalf. On July 31, 2019, OFAC designated Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif pursuant to E.O. 13876. All Americans – including you and Twitter – are prohibited from "the making of any contribution or provision of . . . goods[] or services" to them.

Note that in addition to the general prohibition on Americans providing services to SDNs, Section 1(a)(2)(C) of E.O. 13876 makes it a sanctionable offense for "any person" to have "provided... technological support for, or goods or services to" persons designated pursuant to that E.O.

Twitter continues to provide Internet-based communications services to Khamenei and Zarif. Twitter is aware of these accounts and their links to the Iranian regime. The Supreme Leader's English-language account, @khamenei_ir, has had tweets removed for advocating murder. The account follows less than 10 other accounts, including his office's Twitter feeds in Urdu, Arabic, French, Spanish, and Persian, which are straightforward to identify and locate. Zarif's account, @JZarif, is verified.

While the First Amendment protects the free speech rights of Americans – and Twitter should not be censoring the political speech of Americans – the Ayatollah enjoys zero protection from the United States Bill of Rights. And, as the leader of the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism – directly responsible for the murder of hundreds of U.S. citizens – the Ayatollah and any American companies providing him assistance are entirely subject to U.S. sanctions laws.

A Twitter account is a service. Neither GL D-1 nor any other authority exempts Twitter from American sanctions. We therefore call on you to comply with those sanctions by ceasing the provision of services to Khamenei, Zarif, and any other designated Iranian entity.

We will provide a copy of this letter to President Trump, Secretary Mnuchin, Attorney General Barr, and U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of California Anderson.

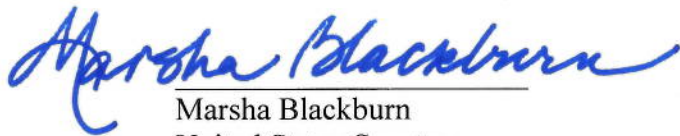
Sincerely,



Ted Cruz
United States Senator



Tom Cotton
United States Senator



Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator



Marco Rubio
United States Senator