



The Cyrus Cylinder استوانه کوروش or Cyrus Charter منشور کوروش was discovered under the foundation of a Babylonian palace in 1879, making it perhaps the oldest time capsule on record. It commemorates Cyrus' victory over Babylonia in 539 BC and sets out the rights of subjects in his expanding empire. It is often commemorated as the oldest charter of human rights in the world.

Contents of September 2023 Advocacy Bulletin

- **Steps Forward and Back in Iran Diplomacy, Paul Barker**
- **Prisoner Release**
- **Letter from PCIA Board to President Biden**
- **Diplomacy**
- **Nuclear News**
- **Missile and Drone News**
- **Region**
- **Sanctions**
- **Humanitarian Implications of Trump/Biden Sanctions on Iran, Tom Nelson**
- **Economy**
- **Protest**
- **Human Rights**
- **Environment**
- **Media**
- **Advocacy Action**
- **History, Geography**

Steps Forward and Back in Iran Diplomacy

Note from the Editor, by Paul Barker

On 18 September 2023 many months of quiet diplomacy in Qatar culminated in the release from prison of five Iranian Americans who had been wrongfully detained in Iran for years. Diplomacy entails trade-offs and opponents of diplomacy with Iran have been outspoken in their criticism of the arrangements underpinning the deal, yet they have offered no more effective or credible way forward. They also fail to acknowledge that similar tradeoffs were behind prisoner releases negotiated in the past under the Trump, Reagan and Carter administrations. This would be a good time for Western governments to work together on [policies, laws and actions to fight the arbitrary detention](#) of their citizens.

Sending mixed signals on their nuclear program, Iran greatly slowed its enrichment of uranium to 60%, but then imposed new restrictions on IAEA technical access to its nuclear sites. Sending similar mixed signals, the US ended sanctions ambiguity and facilitated the transfer \$6 billion in Iranian frozen assets to a Qatari bank, while also imposing new sanctions on Iran. The apparent rolling implementation of an unwritten and unsigned understanding between Iran and the US continues with predictable hiccups.

16 September 2023 marked the one-year anniversary of Mahsa Amini's death in police custody. While the diaspora solemnly marked the anniversary, the Iranian government

took a hardline approach to prevent memorial marches or other overt forms of mass protest and remembrance. Academics who spoke out about freedom of speech were fired.

Over the past year the Iranian regime has executed seven and killed up to 500 protestors. The situation remains tense and could blow up any time when there is another trigger event.

The PCIA Board of Directors has written a letter to President Biden appreciating his efforts to release wrongfully detained Americans. The PCIA board hopes that the model of successful diplomacy will secure progress in again containing Iran's nuclear program; will eventually promote travel, tourism and other exchanges between our countries; and will ultimately restore diplomatic relations between Iran and the USA. The letter appears below. We encourage you to send copies to your Representative and Senators and urge them to publicly support successful diplomacy with Iran. Letters to the Editor of your local papers would also be a strong way to show support for diplomatic resolution of conflicts.

Prisoner Release

[House Subcommittee Hearing: "A Dangerous Strategy: Examining the Biden Administration's Failures on Iran", Stimson Center, 2023/9/15](#)

Distinguished Fellow Barbara Slavin testified (@ minutes 39, 51, 102, 115, 119, 121, 135) to the House Oversight and Accountability hearing on National Security, the Border, and Foreign Affairs.

[Barbara Slavin comments on Iran hostage deal, Iran International, 2023/9/14](#)

[Iran, US hail prisoner exchange amid hopes of renewed diplomacy, Amwaj 2023/9/18](#)

[5 Americans held in Iran for years are back in the U.S. following prisoner exchange, Barbara Slavin, Leila Fadel, NPR, 2023/9/19](#)

[Iran Prisoner Release FAQ, J-Street, 2023/9/19](#)

OFAC Guidance on Humanitarian Channel in Qatar

- [What is the humanitarian channel in Qatar?](#)
- [How can companies participate in the humanitarian channel in Qatar to export humanitarian goods to Iran?](#)

Statements Regarding Prisoner Release:

- [Swiss Government](#)
- [Iran Project Statement on the Release of Americans Unjustly Held in Iran](#)
- [Win Without War](#)
- [J-Street](#)
- [NIAC](#)
- [Foreign Policy For America](#)
- [FCNL](#)
- [Joe Biden](#)



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September 19, 2023

Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Subject: Praise for Successful Diplomacy with Iran

Dear President Biden,

The Board of Directors of the Peace Corps Iran Association (PCIA) acknowledges and praises your difficult yet successful diplomacy with the government of Iran which has resulted in the return home of five Americans who had been wrongfully detained in Iran. Diplomacy is difficult and necessarily entails tradeoffs, yet diplomacy is the only tool for peacefully changing the problematic behavior of the Iranian government.

PCIA represents the more than 1,700 Americans who served in the Peace Corps in Iran between 1962 and 1976. Our organization is committed to increasing peace and understanding between the peoples of the United States and Iran.

It is our hope that the prisoner release will open more diplomacy with Iran resulting in the containment of Iran's nuclear program, greater travel and tourism between our countries, and eventually restorations of diplomatic relations.

Sincerely,

Charles Kaminski
President
Peace Corps Iran Association

cc: Anthony J. Blinken, Secretary of State

Peace Corps Iran Association advances peace and understanding between Americans and Iranians through education, outreach and advocacy, and upholds the legacy of the Peace Corps in Iran.

Diplomacy

[Arbitrary detention: The US-Iranian prisoner swap as a catalyst for a new approach](#), Esfandyar Batmanghelidj & Ellie Geranmayeh, European Council on Foreign Relations, 2023/9/19

[Freedom for Five Americans Doesn't End Flash Points with Iran](#), Robin Wright, New Yorker, 2023/9/19

[BRICS is doubling its membership. Is the bloc a new rival for the G7?](#) Atlantic Council, 2023/8/24

At its summit on Thursday in Johannesburg, the BRICS group of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa announced that its membership is more than doubling. Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Saudi Arabia have been invited to join the group in January. A formidable rival to the Group of Seven (G7) democratic powers could reshape geoeconomics and geopolitics across a range of issues, from Russia's war in Ukraine to the status of the US dollar as the world's reserve currency.

[What can Iran achieve from BRICS membership?](#) Javad Heiran-Nia, Stimson Center, 2023/8/30

Membership in BRICS and the SCO strengthens the "Look East" camp in Iran but it remains to be seen what tangible benefits membership can provide given Western economic sanctions.

[The Implications of Iran's Inclusion in BRICS](#), Shahir Shahidsaless, Stimson Center, 2023/8/31

Iran stands to benefit on two fronts from a future inclusion in BRICS –increased legitimacy despite domestic unrest and more trade with growing economies.

[Inside the saga of the State Department's missing Iran envoy](#), Josh Rogin, WAPO, 2023/9/6

Nuclear News

[Joint Statement by the US, France, Germany, and the UK on Iran's De-Designation of Experienced IAEA Inspectors](#), 2023/9/18

[IAEA Director General's Statement on Verification in Iran](#), Rafael Mariano Grossi, 2023/9/16

[IAEA Joint Statement](#), Agenda Item 7d – NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ambassador Christian Grønbech-Jensen, 2023/9/13

63 countries signed on. It calls upon Iran to "act immediately" to address three safeguards related issues: the presence of uranium at undeclared locations (related to pre-2003 program), a discrepancy in accounting for materials, and to provide notification to the IAEA about new facilities by implementing Code 3.1 of its safeguards agreement.

[UN nuclear watchdog report seen by AP says Iran slows its enrichment of near-weapons-grade uranium](#), Stephanie Liechtenstein, AP 2023/9/4

[Iran's Shift in Nuclear Strategy: Dilution of Uranium Reserves and the Path to U.S. Dialogue](#), Iran Unfiltered, 2023/8/17

[Bibi Isn't Serious About Preventing a Regional Nuclear Arms Race](#), Azriel Bermant, Foreign Policy, 2023/8/24

Benjamin Netanyahu has long warned of the perils of a nuclear Middle East. Now he seems willing to allow Saudi nukes in exchange for normalization.

[The U.S. double standard on nuclear power is dangerous](#), Mitchell Plitnick, Mondoweiss, 2023/8/24

A potential component of Saudi-Israeli normalization would allow the U.S. to help Saudi Arabia develop a nuclear program. In contrast, U.S. hostility to Iranian nuclear capabilities shows a dangerous double standard.

Missile and Drone News

[Amid escalating shadow war with Israel, Iran unveils new combat drone](#), Amwaj, 2023/8/24

Region

[Egypt, Jordan follow Saudi Arabia in pursuing openings with Iran](#), Amwaj, 2023/9/13

[After decades of hostility, is an Iran-Israel rapprochement even possible?](#) Leila Pifko, Stimson Center, 2023/8/15

While conflict between Iran and Israel seems intractable, historical examples of cooperation and Track II dialogues may ease future tensions.

[Will Iranian-Saudi détente bring Hezbollah closer to the Kingdom?](#) Giorgio Cafiero, Amwaj, 2023/9/6

[Qatar to host Iran-US prisoner exchange, foot bill for asset conversion](#), AMWAJ, 2023/8/14

[Saudis flirt with 'de-dollarization' to get Washington's attention](#), Nader Habibi, Stimson Center, 2023/9/6

Saudi threats of making oil contracts in non-dollar currencies might be a component of a multifaceted bargaining strategy with the US

[Alone together: How the war in Ukraine shapes the Russian-Iranian relationship](#), Ellie Geranmayeh and Nicole Grajewski, ELN, 2023/9/6

[Will IRGC pressure on Kurds backfire on Tehran?](#) Amwaj, 2023/9/14

Sanctions

[U.S. Seized Iranian Oil Over Smuggling Incident That Escalated Tensions in Gulf](#), Charlie Savage and Ronen Bergman, NYT, 2023/9/6

[Iran's Released Assets: A Complex Tale of Non-Sanctioned Goods, Diplomatic Agreements, and Devaluation](#), Iran Unfiltered, 2023/8/17

[UK, France and Germany refuse to lift sanctions on Iran under nuclear deal](#), Patrick Wintour, The Guardian, 2023/9/14

Humanitarian Implications of Trump/Biden Sanctions on Iran

Tom Nelson, Gonabad, 30 August 2023

I wanted to share with you an unprecedented situation in which the U.S. has illegally imposed sanctions on humanitarian aid to Iran, resulting in excruciating pain for children and over 600 deaths so far. We are seeking your non-monetary support.

To date, the Western press has not acknowledged that, when President Trump reimposed economic sanctions on Iran in November 2018, he for the first time ever extended those sanctions to include humanitarian aid to the people of Iran. It also has not been reported that previously Congress, in 2000, had prohibited *any* new sanctions on humanitarian aid *anywhere* unless Congress first specifically reviews and approves those sanctions, nor has it been reported that Congress *twice* specifically and categorically prohibited the President from imposing *any* sanctions on humanitarian aid to Iran. Legal citations supporting these statements are contained in the attached "Fact Sheet." President Trump's new sanctions violated these three prohibitions. On the positive side, the press has reported that the new U.S. sanctions have caused more than 640 deaths of Iranian patients who, suffering from the genetic blood disease thalassemia, had their access to life-saving drugs cut off by the new sanctions, and also that scores of Iranian children afflicted with a genetic skin disease, epidermolysis bullosa ("EB" or "the butterfly disease"), have suffered excruciating pain as their fragile skin was torn off their open wounds because the U.S. sanctions cut off their access to the only adequate wound dressings.

In August 2022, two Iranian NGOs that represent the thalassemia and EB patients referred to above, filed a lawsuit in Federal District Court in Oregon asking that the court enjoin the President, acting through the Office of Foreign Assets Control ("OFAC"), from illegally imposing economic sanctions on humanitarian aid to Iran. The two NGOs initially requested a preliminary injunction, which the court denied, and then the United States moved to dismiss the complaint on the grounds that the two NGOs lacked "standing" – a sufficient interest in the legal matter – to pursue the claim. The district court granted that dismissal last May and the two NGOs filed an appeal with the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Yesterday, on August 29, the NGOs filed their Opening Brief, a PDF copy of which is attached to this email, along with the documents in the "Excerpts of Record." The brief details the legal arguments involved in the case and is highly recommended for a full understanding of the situation. The United States will file a response to the appeal in about a month, after which the Ninth Circuit will probably schedule oral argument before a three-judge panel. Again, the parameters of the appeal and details regarding our arguments are set forth in the Opening Brief, attached.

What do we want? The purpose of this email is to solicit support. We are not looking for financial support or funds; we have those covered. What we need is political and legal support in the form of publicity and perhaps such additional efforts as the filing in the Ninth Circuit of *amicus* briefs – "friends of the court" – on behalf of the two NGOs. Or anything else that can provide some comfort, assistance, and support to the thousands of innocent Iranian victims of U.S. impunity.

Please let me know if you have any questions or desire additional information, and thanks!

Thomas H. Nelson, Attorney at Law
Oregon State Bar No. 783150
Zigzag, Oregon 97049

Economy

[Iranian Government's Annual Borrowing Reaches 30% Of GDP](#), Mardo Soghom, Iran International, 2023/9/4

Protest

[Mahsa Amini's Death Still Haunts the Iranian Regime](#), Karim Sadjadpour, TIME, 2023/9/12

The Islamic Republic of Iran has thus far proved too ideologically rigid to reform and too ruthless to collapse. As in the late stages of the Soviet Union, however, the foundations decay in plain sight. Outside their homeland, women of Iranian origin become world-class mathematicians and astronauts; inside Iran, the ruling clerics debate whether women should be allowed to ride bicycles.



Schoolgirls flipping off a photograph of Iran's two supreme leaders

[A year after the death of Mahsa Amini, has anything changed in Iran?](#) The Newsmakers, 2023/9/14

[A Year on from the Mahsa Amini Protests: Where Iran is headed and the Implications for Western Policy](#), Ellie Geranmayeh, ECFR, 2023/9/11

[Iran One Year After the Death of Mahsa Amini](#), Panel discussion with Barbara Slavin, Kelsey Davenport, Negar Mortazavi, Farnaz Fassihi, and Nader Hashemi, Stimson Center, 2023/9/11

[Protests Anniversary: Resistance to the Hijab](#), Jasmin Ramsey, USIP, 2023/9/6] Many Iranian women have opposed the Islamic dress code since it was made mandatory in 1981. Why did the issue reach an inflection point in 2022?

[Change and continuity in Iran, one year into the 'Woman, Life, Freedom' uprising](#), Ryan Costello, Stimson Center, 2023/9/11

Iranians have found subtler ways to exercise their freedom even as the state escalates its efforts to re-establish compliance of the hijab

[Protests Anniversary: One Year Later](#), Kouros Ziabari, USIP, 2023/9/6

[Letters from women protesters inside Iran: One year after #MahsaAmini's death](#), Khosro Sayeh Isfahani, Atlantic Council, 2023/9/13

[Iran's 'gender apartheid' bill could jail women for 10 years for not wearing hijab](#), Deepa Parent, The Guardian, 2023/9/13

[Iran's Khuzestan: Thirst and Turmoil](#), International Crisis Group, 2023/8/21

Episodes of unrest in Iran often unfold similarly: the government nods to public concerns, but then resorts to repression, setting the stage for another confrontation between state and society. The pattern is clearest in peripheral provinces like Khuzestan, where a pressing grievance is water scarcity.

[Comment on impact of fundamentalism](#), Arash Aziz, 2023/9/5

Unironic fact: the Islamic Republic in Iran has been the greatest driver of people away from Islam. So many Iranians of my generation now hate any mention of Islam -- something that never happened under the Pahlavi dynasty and its alleged (occasional) anti-clericalism

How Iranian women are transforming their roles in families and society

[While Iran is characterized by economic sanctions and religious conservatism, its women are adopting entrepreneurial and progressive lifestyles](#), Maryam Rezaei Zadeh, Stimson Center. 2023/9/5

Human Rights

[Iran's Year of Defiance and Repression: How One Woman's Death Sparked a Nationwide Uprising](#), Miaan Group and 46 human rights groups, 2023/9/18

[Baha'i Arrests in Iran: Allegations, Discrimination, and Sentences](#), Iran Unfiltered, 2023/8/17

[Johan Floderus: EU confirms official from Sweden detained in Iran](#), David Gritten, BBC, 2023/9/5

[Death Threats, Cancellations, and Disinformation Campaigns Do Not Honor Iran's Women, Life, Freedom Movement](#), Washington State Representative Darya Farivar, 2023/9/14

[Suppression of Baha'is Continues with Sealing of 12 Educational and Sports Centers in Babol](#), NIAC, 2023/9/14

[Human Rights Tracker](#), NIAC

Continuously updated site with articles on Human Rights cases in Iran.

Environment

[Iran, Russia, and the Caspian environmental crisis: A need for collaboration](#), Henna Moussavi, MEI, 2023/8/31

Media

[VPN business – much of it government-owned](#), Mohammad Salami, Stimson Institute, 2023/8/22

The lucrative nature of the VPN business has fed speculation about the involvement of influential people and institutions in Iran

[Naked and Deviant, Diary of an Iranian Protester](#), Hannah Kaviani and Michael Scollon, 2023/9/15

Advocacy Action

[Urge the U.S. Senate to Pass S.Con.Res.2 to support internet freedom and targeted human rights sanctions in solidarity with the Iranian people](#)

[Urge the State Department to expedite visa and refugee processing for Iranians](#)

[Urge the Biden Administration to enable Iranian Americans to be able to send remittances to their families in Iran](#)

[Urge U.S. Technology Companies to Allow Iranians to Access Communications Tools and Services](#)

History, Geography

[Protests in Iran 1979-2023, USIP](#)

[The Middle East is Once Again West Asia – Chas W. Freeman, Jr., Middle East Forum of Falmouth, 2023/8/6](#)

[Imperial Hubris: 70 Years ago, the CIA overthrew the Parliamentary Gov't of Mosaddegh in Iran, and Washington has been Complaining about Iran ever Since, Fariba Amini, 2023/8/18](#)

[It's been 70 yrs since the CIA-assisted coup in Iran, Sina Azodi, Responsible Statecraft, 2023/8/16](#)

Relations between Washington and Tehran were never the same as before Eisenhower approved 'Operation Ajax' in 1953.

ADVOCACY MISSION STATEMENT

Peace Corps Iran Association advances peace and understanding between Americans and Iranians through education, outreach and advocacy, and upholds the legacy of the Peace Corps in Iran.

ADVOCACY COMMITTEE PURPOSE STATEMENT

Peace Corps Iran Association advocates for peace and understanding through education, outreach, and cultural diplomacy.

PRINCIPLES: The Board of Peace Corps Iran Association has adopted the following Guiding Principles for our advocacy efforts toward improving relationships between Iran and the United States, and their peoples.

1. Understanding and acceptance of other people and cultures are the building blocks of friendship, inclusiveness and world peace. As citizens of a world power, Americans bear a special responsibility.
2. Tolerance and mutual respect form the foundation for peaceful interactions between countries and their citizens.
3. Bringing countries and their citizens into the global community through cultural and economic ties reinforces international cooperation and reduces the likelihood of armed conflict.
4. Negotiation and diplomacy are essential to resolving international issues.
5. Force is rarely justified in dealing with conflicts. Peace is built and sustained through voluntary agreement and consent.

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1. The Advocacy Bulletin is an opt-out email publication for PCIA members interested in this subject. It is a way to share ideas, information, and opportunities for action. The Bulletin is archived on the website.
2. PCIA members are invited to share articles for publication. The editor decides which articles are selected for publication. Some pieces, particularly when not aligned with PCIA's Mission, Values, and Guiding Principles, or which do not relate to the current state of Iran advocacy issues, may be posted in PCIA's Facebook group.
3. Articles should be addressed to AdvocacyBulletin@peacecorpsiran.org and the release question answered, "I consent/do not consent to the release of my writing beyond the Advocacy Bulletin distribution and PCIA archives." If consent is given, statements issued to the public will be identified as coming from the author, and not PCIA, the Advocacy Committee, or Board.
4. Writers are encouraged to include action recommendations and reference information to help readers understand issues.
5. The Advocacy Bulletin is not an academic journal, but it does aspire to be fact-based. Whenever possible citations and links to web-based articles should be included in the articles.
6. Opinions and ideas from members expressed in the Bulletin do not represent Board positions. However, members of the Advocacy Committee may present a position to the Board and request endorsement. Positions adopted by the Board to be posted in the Advocacy Bulletin will be identified as such.

The opinions in this issue are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the board of PCIA. Contributions to the Advocacy Bulletin are most welcome and may be submitted to the editor at Advocate@peacecorpsiran.org

Donations to PCIA Welcome: In order to support the advocacy and other work of the Peace Corps Iran Association, please consider [making a donation](#).

