



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.

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## To Snapback or Not to Snapback

By Paul Barker, Bidokht, Shiraz, Tehran 1971-76

While it has substantially slipped out of headline news, the threat of another round of Israel-Iran fighting is substantial, as well as the likelihood that America would again be drawn in to the ensuing mud and dust. There is much speculation but little confirmed knowledge about the disposition of Iran's supply of advanced centrifuges and its highly enriched uranium. Adding urgency and tension, there is a very real deadline approaching at the end of August for European signatories of the JCPOA to decide whether or not to force the snapback of UN sanctions against Iran. If they do not snapback those sanctions, the Europeans would lose much of their negotiating leverage. If they do snapback the UN sanctions, Iran would likely follow through on its threats and leave the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. In the confusion and implied threat of such a move, Israel might feel compelled to, or might feel that there is a golden opportunity to, launch renewed massive attacks on Iran.

Wars create great suffering, and great diversions. One thing Iran's leaders cannot afford to ignore is the cumulative impact of five years of drought and over-exploitation of Iran's groundwater reserves. Reservoirs, qanats and wells are running dry. Tehran is

particularly hard hit. If we could get beyond nuclear and military posturing, there is a lot that could be gained through cooperation and development assistance. Israel and states in the western US share with Iran the dilemmas caused by extreme water scarcity.

Four PCIA members built on the language and cultural skills gained in the Peace Corps in Iran to pursue diplomatic careers in the US State Department. One of these, Barry Rosen, was the Press Attaché at the US Embassy in Tehran in 1978-79 and shares insights and experiences below.

**October 6,7 Iran Advocacy in Washington, D.C.** If you are participating in the PCIA Conference in Washington D.C. October 3-5, you should seriously consider staying a couple more days to lobby your Senators and Members of Congress on two themes: 1) the importance of adequately funding and fully staffing Peace Corps globally and 2) the urgency of using diplomacy rather than war to influence Iranian policies and behavior. If you are interested, contact Paul Barker at [paul@peacecorpsiran.org](mailto:paul@peacecorpsiran.org), with a copy to Brad Hanson at [brad@peacecorpsiran.org](mailto:brad@peacecorpsiran.org).

## Peace Corps Iran and My Diplomatic Career

Barry Rosen, Tehran 1967-69

From the first day I arrived in Iran in May of 1967 to the time I was freed on January 20, 1981 after 444 days of captivity by the Islamic Republic, my Peace Corps service was invaluable not only in navigating my way through my TEFL experience at the National Police Academy in Teheran and as the last U.S. Press Attaché in Iran. But, more importantly, beginning with my training in Brattleboro, Vermont, to my attending Farsi classes with working class Iranians in the "War against Illiteracy" class, I began to feel that I was getting the skills of language and also a sense of purpose about living and working--- but more importantly, a passion about Iranian culture and history, which could one day find me walking South to the Grand Bazaar, bargaining over a rug on Ferdowsi Street or traveling to see other volunteers, for example, with the ulterior motive of seeing the Oljeitu's mausoleum in Soltanieh, not far from Qazvin.

My official position as a Peace Corps Volunteer was as a TEFL instructor at the National Police Academy, located across the street from the notorious Qasr Prison, where I taught English to new Police Academy cadets, the soon-to-be officer corps of the National Police of Iran. It was there that I not only learned *Ta'arof* (performative politeness) when the Police Academy's General, Rahimi Larijani, offered me first choice at eating *Kaleh Pache* (sheep head and foot stew), a traditional Iranian breakfast, that was not what I expected with my first bite. It was at the Police Academy where I learned much about *Abru* (honor) and understood that every one of my students worked "cooperatively" so no one lost honor in any test score.

When I returned to Iran, ten years later, it was not the same country I had left, with many of its police on bicycles. I felt that while chaos reigned in the streets, I was linguistically prepared, with some assistance from the Foreign Service Institute, and as a former Peace Corps Volunteer, ready to perform my duties as the US Press Attaché. While it might have seemed both within Washington and at the Embassy that the Shah's edifice was impenetrable, it was quite evident to me that we were heading toward a revolution and ill-prepared to face the reality that the shah was destined to fall.

Whatever Scott Anderson writes in [King of Kings](#) about Ambassador Sullivan's ill-advised treatment of Mike Metrisko, former Peace Corps Volunteer and US Consul in Tabriz, who early on concluded the demise of the Shah, Sullivan's cable "Thinking the Unthinkable", sent on November 9, 1978, was a move in the right direction and his bravery on February 14, 1979 only three days after the success of the revolution, was also amazingly heroic. I was in Ambassador Sullivan's office on the 14<sup>th</sup> and speaking to him about sending home the remains of the LA Times journalist who had been shot and killed in a crossfire on February 11, when an RPG came barreling through the Ambassador's window, blowing a massive hole in the wall above his desk and throwing me against his oak doors. While under his desk he barked orders to Embassy officers and marines, through his walkie-talkie.

Thereafter, we were sent back home. Then, in-mid-March Henry Precht, the Iran Desk Officer, urged me to return to Iran with the same purpose and passion that I had as a Peace Corps Volunteer. Unfortunately, a few months later the embassy was taken over and we were held hostage for 444 days because of a 25-year policy that wedded us to the fate of a shallow dictator.

### **Peace Corps Iran and Diplomacy**

Some Peace Corps Iran volunteers followed careers in which distinguished themselves as linguists, historians and diplomats. Three PCIA members had the distinction of working at the US Embassy in Tehran at the time when it was taken over by students "following the line of the Imam": John Limbert, Michael Matrisko and Barry Rosen.

[Is the Iranian Revolution Key to U.S. Missteps in the Middle East? A review of KING OF KINGS: The Iranian Revolution: A Story of Hubris, Delusion and Catastrophic Miscalculation, by Scott Anderson.](#) Anderson argues that America's failure to predict and understand the 1979 revolution has hamstrung foreign policy ever since. Mark Bowden, NYT, 2025/8/2. Former PC Iran volunteer, Michael Metrisko, is cited for his efforts to raise awareness and alarms over developments in Iran, warnings that were not heeded till it was too late.

### **European Policy**

[Is a Diplomatic Agreement Still Possible?](#) Oliver Meier, European Leadership Network, 2025/7/21. Iran-Europe relations approaching the point of no return. Iran's discontent with Russia's stance during the 12 day war.

[A decade after its landmark deal, Europe faces a defining test in Iran.](#) Having helped forge the Iran nuclear deal, the bloc must decide if it will once again take the diplomatic lead or be swayed by the illusion that might makes right. Sahil Shah, Politico, 2025/7/25

### **Sanctions Snapback or Extension?**

[E3-Iran Nuclear Diplomacy Resumes Post-Strikes](#), Arms Control Association, 2025/7/31

[Snap out of it: Europe, Iran and the nuclear negotiations](#), Ellie Geranmayeh, European Council on Foreign Relations, 2025/7/21

[Coordinated pressure on Iran: “The division of roles” among the U.S., Israel, and Europe](#), ELN, 2025/8/1

[Iran and the UN “Snapback” Deadline](#), NIAC, 2025/8/7

## Israel-US-Iran War

[The Next Israel-Iran War Is Coming](#). Both countries’ strategic calculus suggests it will be even more violent. Trita Parsi, Foreign Policy, 2025/8/11

[Israel Is Not an Ally—It’s a Liability](#), Sina Toosi, The American Conservative, 2025/8/10

[Iran’s Grand Strategy](#), Vali Nasr interviewed by RPCV Stephen Sound, Commonwealth Club, 2025/8/7

[Assessing the Fallout of Israel-U.S. Strikes on Iran](#), NIAC, 2025/8/1

[2 US citizens among Jewish community members arrested in Iran](#). The two men were visiting family when war with Israel broke out last month; efforts underway to secure their release, along with three local Jews also held. Times of Israel, 2025/7/28

[Spies Like Us](#). A growing number of Israelis are spying on behalf of Iran, tempted to betray their country for cash, for love, and sometimes just out of social alienation. Dan Raviv and Yossi Melman, Airmail News, 2025/8/2

[The Islands That Can Solve the Iran Crisis](#), Anchal Vohra, Foreign Policy, 2025/8/4

[Iranian Americans are demanding peace, not war](#), Jamal Abdi, The Hill, 2025/8/4

[The Perils of Middle East Triumphalism](#). Iran, Israel, and the Ghosts of History, Hussein Agha and Robert Malley, Foreign Policy, 2025/6/23

## Iran Policy

[Shift Is Now. Former Iranian foreign minister outlines path for diplomacy](#). Mohammad Javad Zarif, Foreign Policy, 2025/8/15

[In Iran, Reformist call for broad policy U-turn sparks fierce backlash](#), Amwaj, 2025/8/19

[Iran’s Dangerous Desperation](#). What Comes After the 12-Day War? Suzanne Maloney, Foreign Affairs, 2025/8/6

[Pezeshkian’s defense of diplomacy, fealty to Khamenei muddies waters in Iran](#), Amwaj, 2025/8/11

[After the War, Iranians Demand a New Social Contract](#). In the face of growing external pressure, the government may have no choice but to offer more concessions to its own people in order to preserve internal unity. Mohammad Mazhari, The Stimson Institute, 2025/7/31



An Iranian crosses a street next to a billboard bearing the portrait of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei with a quote that reads “Sing ‘Oh Iran’” at Enqelab Square in Tehran on July 9. AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

[Iran's Leaders Turn to a New Brand of Nationalism After Israeli and U.S. Attacks](#), The theocratic government is repurposing folklore and patriotic anthems as it seeks to channel national outrage into increasing its support at home. Erika Solomon, Sanam Mahoozi, NYT, 2025/7/22

[In this time of rancour, fear and war, peaceful nuclear cooperation in the Middle East is still possible](#), Javad Zarif, The Guardian, 2025/7/31

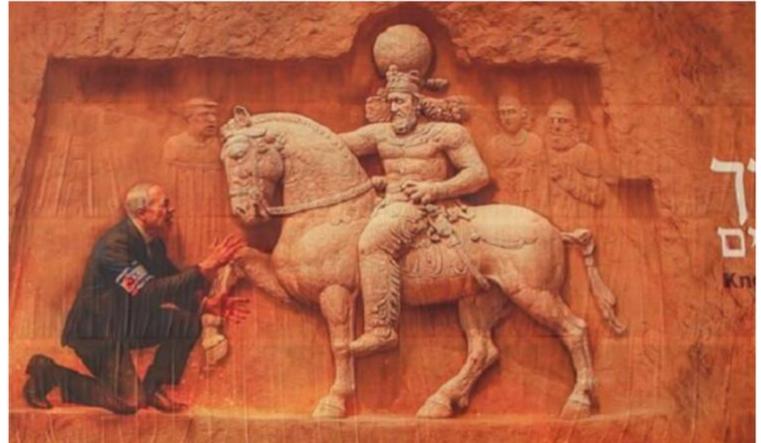
[Iran Faces a new Phase of Isolation if Europe Reimposes Sanctions for its Nuclear Program](#), Mohammad Eslami and Ibrahim Al-Marashi, Informed Comment, 2025/7/23

[History repeats again: Netanyahu kneels before Iranians](#), MNA 2025/7/1

[What the West misunderstands about Iran](#). After decades of diplomatic whiplash, even moderates in Tehran have stopped trusting Western promises, Emad Khatami, 2025/7/21

[Push for political change intensifies as post-war Iran considers paths forward](#), Amwaj. 2025/7/24

[How Close Was Iran to a Nuclear Deal Before They Were Bombed? At least two diplomatic pathways were available](#). Ted Snider, The American Conservative, 2025/7/24



TEHRAN, Jul. 01 (MNA) —After Israel's failed 12-day war against Iran, a massive billboard appeared in Shiraz — showing Netanyahu bowing before Iran's ancient emperor, Shapur I.

## US Policy

[Trump, Europe, and the 'Snapback' Showdown with Iran](#). The West should play for time to create an opportunity for diplomacy with Tehran. Ryan Costello, The American Conservative, 2025/8/10

[We're All Palestinians Now: How Trump is Middle-Easternizing the United States](#), Juan Cole, Informed Comment, 2025/7/25

[Trump Threatens 'Stupid' Iran](#), Amir Daftari, Newsweek, 2025/7/28

[Iran has taken more U.S. citizens hostage. It's time to shred the regime's playbook](#), Holly Dagues, Washington Institute, 2025/8/8

[Remaking the Middle East: Israel vs. Iran](#), Jennifer Robinson, KPBS, 2025/7/23

[Israel Secretly Recruited Iranian Dissidents to Attack Their Country From Within](#), Yossi Melman and Ean Ravi, ProPublica, 2025/9/10

[Our Man for Tehran](#), The U.S.- and Israel-backed campaign positioning Reza Pahlavi, son of the Shah, for regime change in Iran. Alex Shams, Boston Review, 2025/8/6. Hardly anything could be more damaging to Iran's pro-democracy movements than making this unpopular, deposed monarch with ties to Israel and U.S. neocons the face of opposition.

## Advocacy

[A Three-point Plan for Consolidating the Israel-U.S.-Iran Ceasefire.](#) The Middle East seems yet again to have dodged what could have been devastating all-out war. But the ceasefire between Iran, on one side, and the duo of Israel and the U.S. is tenuous. To shore it up, the parties must reach a deal. International Crisis Group, 2025/7/21

**October 6,7 Iran Advocacy in Washington, D.C.** If you are participating in the PCIA Conference in Washington D.C. October 3-5, you should seriously consider staying a couple more days to lobby your Senators and Members of Congress on the importance of funding advocating for and fully staffing Peace Corps and using diplomacy rather than war to change Iranian government policies and behavior. If you are interested, contact Paul Barker at [paul@peacecorpsiran.org](mailto:paul@peacecorpsiran.org), with a copy to Brad Hanson at [brad@peacecorpsiran.org](mailto:brad@peacecorpsiran.org).

## Region

[The Middle East's New Intermediaries. Can the Gulf States Broker Peace Between America, Iran, and Israel?](#) Hasan Alhasan and Emile Hokayem, Foreign Policy, 2025/8/4

[Pressure to Disarm Hezbollah Spikes Iran-Lebanon Tensions,](#) Iran Unfiltered, 2025/8/8

[Surge in attacks just inside Iran's borders highlights security challenges,](#) Amwaj, 2025/7/29

[Israel War Erodes Iran's Relations with Azerbaijan.](#) Iranian officials probe Israel's alleged use of Azerbaijani airspace to hit Iranian targets. Fuad Shahbazov, The Stimson Center, 2025/7/25

[How Iran's strike on Qatar's Al-Udeid Base is changing regional dynamics,](#) Amwaj, 2025/7/27

[Debate over PMU reform sharpens as the US threatens sanctions,](#) Amwaj, 2025/7/29

[Afghans caught in mass deportations in Iran face an uncertain future at home,](#) NPR, 2025/7/29. Of the roughly 6 million Afghans living in Iran, 2 million are without legal status. . . . The government campaign has also targeted Afghans' housing, employment and banking.

[Iran's Mass Deportations Are Fueling Regional Instability.](#) Refugees returning to Afghanistan face economic hardship and uncertain futures. Jagoda Grondecka, Foreign Policy, 2025/7/31

[Cooler Heads Prevail in the Gulf—for Now.](#) Qatar and the Gulf chose to prioritize peace in the aftermath of Iranian strikes. Tehran shouldn't take that for granted. Mina al-Oraibi, Foreign Policy, 2025/7/29

[Tehran's Wake-Up Call for Beijing,](#) The sudden U.S. attack on Iran could complicate China's Taiwan calculus. Grant Rumley, Foreign Policy, 2025/7/31

[The “Trump Bridge” Could Lead To Russia’s Expulsion From the South Caucasus](#), Yves Smith, Naked Capitalism, 2025/8/6

[Moscow, Tehran push to complete Rasht–Astara railway](#). The Cradle, 2025/8/16

[The politics and people behind Balochistan, Pakistan’s internet shutdowns](#).

The province faces annual blackouts during August due to a surge in militant activity. Ramna Saeed and Nabeel Armaan, 2025.8/18

## **Nuclear Issues**

[Nuclear terrorists wear suits: How Iran could build a nuclear weapon without state approval](#). Matt Caplan, Vesal Razavimaleki, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, July 31, 2025

[Iran Should be Considered an Undeclared Nuclear State](#), Theodore Postol, MIT, 2025/7. The video also includes clear drawings, diagrams and explanations of technical issues relevant to understanding technical issues of nuclear enrichment and bomb making.

[There’s More Than One Way to Build a Bomb](#). Iran doesn’t need to rebuild its damaged facilities to sprint for a nuclear weapon. James Acton, Foreign Policy, 2025/7/25

[Iran to receive IAEA tech team, considering new talks with US](#). Iran cooperation with the IAEA will change after the Israeli/US bombing of Iran nuclear sites, & an IAEA technical team will come to Iran to discuss the modalities in the next 2-3 weeks. Laura Rozen, 2025/7/23

[The Genius of Stephen Colbert](#). What a comedian can teach us about nuclear weapons. Joe Cirincione, Substack, 2025/7/23

[Atomic Testament: Yoshito Matsushige and the first photos of Hiroshima’s nuclear toll](#), David A. Wargowski, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 2025/8/7

[On the Hunt for Spies, Iran Executes a Nuclear Scientist](#). After the war with Israel, Iranian authorities have swept up hundreds of people deemed suspected infiltrators. But the arrest and hanging of the nuclear scientist Roozbeh Vadi was a rare move. Farnaz Fassihi, NYT, 2025/8/6

[Eighty Year Ago: “The flying start of an unlimited armaments race.”](#) Scientists warned about what would happen if we dropped atomic bombs on Japan. They were right. Joe Cirincione, Strategy & History, 2025/8/8

## **Environment**

[The World Is Entering a Dark New Era of Hydroterrorism](#), International institutions need to start treating water as a national security flashpoint., Abdoulie Ceesay, Foreign Policy, 2025/7/18. The article focusses on the Gambia, but the implications for Iran and the Middle East are equally clear.

[Tehran Is at Risk of Running Out of Water Within Weeks.](#) After a five-year drought and decades of mismanagement, a water crisis is battering Iran. Farnaz Fassihi, Sanam Mahoozi and Leily Nikounazar, NYT, 2025/7/26

[Iran's water crisis is a mirror,](#) Nik Kowsar, Gettysburg Times, 2025/7/29

[Iran's Nature is under Threat – here's how better environmental Stewardship can save it,](#) Shooka Bidarian and Mark Maslin, Informed Comment, 2025/8/17

[Iran's Taps Are Nearly Empty.](#) After five straight years of drought, the country is running dry. Nik Kowsar, Foreign Policy, 2025/8/7

[Satellite Photos Reveal Iran's Devastating Water Crisis,](#) Newsweek, 2025/8/13

[Three Environmental Volunteers Killed Battling Wildfire in Iran's Abidar Region,](#) NIAC, 2025/7/29

## **Economy**

[Why Oil Sanctions No Longer Work.](#) Oil sanctions have failed to deliver results with Iran and Russia. It would be a mistake to try them with China. Gregory Brew, Foreign Policy, 2025/7/23

[Iran Turns to Turkey and Azerbaijan Amid Energy Shortages.](#) Without a significant push toward renewable energy and substantial renovation of domestic infrastructure, Iran's growing power deficit is unsustainable. Umud Shokri, The Stimson Institute, 2025/7/22

[An Economic Weapon of Mass Destruction.](#) The economic weapon is a very deadly weapon, and it kills innocent people in huge numbers. Daniel Larison, Eunomia, 2025/8/7. Sanctions are not an alternative to war. Governments that use them are launching attacks on other countries. Sanctions are lethal. They are arguably more dangerous than military action because their human costs are more easily ignored or blamed on something else. I suspect that is why they are so often the weapon of choice to be used against other countries. That makes it much easier for governments to use this weapon against other countries, and that makes the use of the weapon much more common.

[Iran Seeks New Trade Routes with China.](#) A pivot to Asia would allow the Islamic Republic to reduce Western economic pressure while also minimizing the effect of a potential closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Emil Avdaliani, Stimson Center, 2025/8/7

[Iran's Crude Builds as Tankers Drift in Limbo.](#) Natalia Katona, OilPrice.com, 2025/8/8. Iranian crude builds up offshore as over 30 million barrels float near Malaysia, the highest in more than five years. Trump's sanctions hit Chinese refiners, slashing Iranian oil imports and shaking up trade flows. Iranian oil trades at steep discounts — tempting Chinese buyers despite rising U.S. pressure.

## Human Rights

[Death Sentence Upheld for Labor Activist Sharifeh Mohammadi](#), NIAC, 2025/8/20

[What Iranians Lost When Israel Bombed Its Most Notorious Prison](#), Sahar Delijani, NYT, 2025/7/26. If there's anything symbolic in Israel's bombing of Evin Prison, it is the false and dangerous narrative that wars help those fighting to bring democracy to Iran. . . . I was born in Evin Prison in 1983. My parents were secular leftist activists who fought to overthrow the Shah, and after the 1979 revolution continued their activism against the newly established Islamic Republic.

[Father arrested by ICE while dropping off child at preschool in Oregon](#), Lucia I Suarez Sang, CBS, 2025/7/18

[Iran Executes Eight More Prisoners in Weekend Death Penalty Surge](#), IranWire, 2025/7/21

['Flashbacks to Tehran': Iranian pastor urges Trump to protect persecuted Christians, not deport them](#), Christian Post, 2025/8/1

## Media

[Iranian controls on the media](#), Kian Sharifi, The Farda Briefing, 2025/8/1

## PCIA Reunion and Conference in Washington, 3-5 October

Our opening night reception speaker: [A Kennedy Toils in Mississippi, Tracing His Grandfather's Path](#). Joe Kennedy III, the grandson of Senator Robert F. Kennedy, says there is work to do in red states. He also has a few things to say about his uncle, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Robert Draper, NYT, 2025/7/26

## History

[Meeting Khamenei and Other Tales from a Life in Diplomacy](#), Jeffrey Feltman, MEI, 2025/8/15

[Is the Iranian Revolution Key to U.S. Missteps in the Middle East?](#) In a new book, the journalist Scott Anderson argues that America's failure to predict and understand the 1979 revolution has hamstrung foreign policy ever since. Mark Bowden, NYT, 2025/8/2.

[The Genius Design of the Ancient Persian Yakhchal | 2500 Year Old Freezers in the Deserts of Iran](#), YouTube

[A Jewish Sassanian King](#), Marvin Tameanko, Shekel, - Vahran V, 420-438, pp 14-20

[Understanding Iranian Foreign Policy - The Case Of Iranian Nuclear Program](#), Emir Hadžikadunić, Epiphany, Vol.7, No. 2, 2014

[FitzGerald's Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám](#), Juan Cole, Informed Comment, 2025/8/6

[Truman never ordered the use of the atomic bombs—but he did order atomic bombings to be stopped](#). Alex Wellerstein, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 2025/8/10

[Tehran, Iran 1944](#). Color video, rather resembling Kabul Afghanistan in the 1970s.

## 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](mailto: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.

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