

ment of Iran to jam or otherwise deny international satellite broadcasting signals;

(10) expand worldwide United States embassy and consulate programming for and outreach to Iranian dissident communities;

(11) expand access to proxy servers for democracy activists in Iran; and

(12) discourage telecommunications and software companies from facilitating Internet censorship by the Government of Iran.

(Pub. L. 112-158, title IV, § 414, Aug. 10, 2012, 126 Stat. 1256.)

§ 8754a. Strategy and grant program to promote internet freedom in Iran

(a) Strategy

(1) In general

Not later than 90 days after December 23, 2024, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the heads of other Federal agencies, as appropriate, shall develop a strategy to support and enhance access to information by civil society in Iran.

(2) Elements

The strategy required in subparagraph (A)¹ shall include the following elements:

(A) An evaluation of the use of virtual private networks by civil society in Iran.

(B) An assessment of the level of internet access for Iranians who do not use virtual private networks, including levels of reliable connectivity, bandwidth, and coverage, as well as censorship, surveillance, and other limitations on internet access.

(C) A strategy to increase the accessibility of virtual private networks in Iran.

(D) An assessment of alternatives to virtual private networks that are capable of circumventing restrictions on open internet access imposed by the Government of Iran.

(E) An assessment of how companies providing Iranian civilians with technology and other tools to overcome technical and political obstacles are able to access the open internet.

(F) An assessment of the ability of the Government of Iran to cut off all access to the internet in Iran.

(G) A strategy to circumvent internet blackouts for Iranian civil society.

(3) Initial update

Not later than 120 days after December 23, 2024, the Secretary, in consultation with the heads of other Federal agencies, as appropriate, shall submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate an updated version of the strategy required in paragraph (1).

(4) Periodic review and updates

The Secretary, in consultation with the heads of other Federal agencies, as appropriate, shall—

(A) not less frequently than twice each year, review the strategy required in paragraph (1); and

(B) if the results of such review indicate that modifications to such strategy are required to more effectively promote internet freedom and access to information for civil society in Iran, submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate an updated version of such strategy.

(5) Form

Each strategy required to be submitted under this subsection shall be submitted in unclassified form, but may include a classified annex.

(b) Grant program and contract authority

(1) In general

The Secretary of State, in consultation with the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development and the President of the Open Technology Fund, as appropriate, may award grants and enter into contracts to private organizations to support and develop programs in Iran that promote or expand—

(A) an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet; and

(B) the online exercise of internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms of civil society in Iran.

(2) Program goals

The goal of each program developed with a grant funds awarded pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be to—

(A) support unrestricted access to the internet in Iran;

(B) increase the availability of internet freedom tools to overcome technical and political obstacles to internet access in Iran;

(C) increase the distribution of such technologies and tools throughout Iran;

(D) conduct research on repressive tactics that undermine internet freedom in Iran;

(E) ensure that information regarding digital safety is available to civil society in Iran; or

(F) engage private industry, including e-commerce firms and social networking companies, regarding the importance of preserving unrestricted internet access in Iran.

(3) Grant award requirements

The Secretary shall award grants authorized in paragraph (1) to recipients through an evidence-based process.

(4) Security audits

The Secretary shall conduct a comprehensive security audit of each new technology developed using grant funds distributed pursuant to paragraph (1) to ensure that each such technology is secure and has not been compromised in a manner detrimental to—

(A) the interests of the United States; or

(B) an individual or organization benefiting from a program supported by such funding.

(5) Authorization of appropriations

(A) In general

There is authorized to be appropriated for the Open Technology Fund established under

¹ So in original. Probably should be “paragraph (1)”.

section 6208a of this title \$15,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2025 and 2026 to carry out the grant program authorized under this subsection.

(B) Availability

Amounts appropriated pursuant to the authorization in subparagraph (A) are authorized remain available until expended.

(Pub. L. 118–159, div. E, title LI, §5124, Dec. 23, 2024, 138 Stat. 2431.)

Editorial Notes

CODIFICATION

Section was enacted as part of the Servicemember Quality of Life Improvement and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2025, and not as part of the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act of 2012 which comprises this chapter.

§ 8755. Statement of policy on political prisoners

It shall be the policy of the United States—

(1) to support efforts to research and identify prisoners of conscience and cases of human rights abuses in Iran;

(2) to offer refugee status or political asylum in the United States to political dissidents in Iran if requested and consistent with the laws and national security interests of the United States;

(3) to offer to assist, through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, with the relocation of such political prisoners to other countries if requested, as appropriate and with appropriate consideration for the national security interests of the United States; and

(4) to publicly call for the release of Iranian dissidents by name and raise awareness with respect to individual cases of Iranian dissidents and prisoners of conscience, as appropriate and if requested by the dissidents or prisoners themselves or their families.

(Pub. L. 112–158, title IV, §415, Aug. 10, 2012, 126 Stat. 1257.)

§ 8756. Secretary of State assistance for prisoners in Islamic Republic of Iran

(a) Statement of policy

It is the policy of the United States that—

(1) the Islamic Republic of Iran should allow the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran unimpeded access to facilitate the full implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Special Rapporteur, including—

(A) investigating alleged violations of human rights that are occurring or have occurred both within prisons and elsewhere;

(B) transmitting urgent appeals and letters to the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding alleged violations of human rights; and

(C) engaging with relevant stakeholders in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the surrounding region;

(2) the Islamic Republic of Iran should immediately end violations of the human rights of political prisoners or persons imprisoned for

exercising the right to freedom of speech, including—

(A) torture;

(B) denial of access to health care; and

(C) denial of a fair trial;

(3) all prisoners of conscience and political prisoners in the Islamic Republic of Iran should be unconditionally and immediately released;

(4) all diplomatic tools of the United States should be invoked to ensure that all prisoners of conscience and political prisoners in the Islamic Republic of Iran are released, including raising individual cases of particular concern; and

(5) all officials of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran who are responsible for human rights abuses in the form of politically motivated imprisonment should be held to account, including through the imposition of sanctions pursuant to the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (22 U.S.C. 10101 et seq.) and other applicable statutory authorities of the United States.

(b) Assistance for prisoners

The Secretary of State is authorized to continue to provide assistance to civil society organizations that support prisoners of conscience and political prisoners in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including organizations that—

(1) work to secure the release of such prisoners;

(2) document violations of human rights with respect to such prisoners;

(3) support international advocacy to raise awareness of issues relating to such prisoners;

(4) support the health, including mental health, of such prisoners; and

(5) provide post-incarceration assistance to enable such prisoners to resume normal lives, including access to education, employment, or other forms of reparation.

(c) Definitions

In this section:

(1) The term “political prisoner” means a person who has been detained or imprisoned on politically motivated grounds.

(2) The term “prisoner of conscience” means a person who—

(A) is imprisoned or otherwise physically restricted solely in response to the peaceful exercise of the human rights of such person; and

(B) has not used violence or advocated violence or hatred.

(Pub. L. 117–263, div. E, title LV, §5592, Dec. 23, 2022, 136 Stat. 3384.)

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, referred to in subsec. (a)(5), is subtitle F (§§1261–1264) of title XII of div. A of Pub. L. 114–328, Dec. 23, 2016, 130 Stat. 2533, which is classified generally to chapter 108 (§10101 et seq.) of this title. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 10101 of this title and Tables.

CODIFICATION

Section was enacted as part of the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year