To identify and impose sanctions with respect to persons who are responsible for or complicit in abuses toward dissidents on behalf of the Government of Iran.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. Toomey (for himself, Mr. Cardin, and Ms. Rosen) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To identify and impose sanctions with respect to persons who are responsible for or complicit in abuses toward dissidents on behalf of the Government of Iran.

1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,
3
4 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.
5 This Act may be cited as the “Masih Alinejad Har-
6 assment and Unlawful Targeting Act of 2021” or the
7 “Masih Alinejad HUNT Act”.
8
9 SEC. 2. FINDINGS.
10 Congress finds that the Government of the Islamic
11 Republic of Iran surveils, harasses, terrorizes, tortures,
abducts, and murders individuals who peacefully defend human rights and freedoms in Iran, and innocent entities and individuals considered by the Government of Iran to be enemies of that regime, including United States citizens on United States soil, and takes foreign nationals hostage, including in the following instances:

(1) In 2021, Iranian intelligence agents were indicted for plotting to kidnap United States citizen, women’s rights activist, and journalist Masih Alinejad, from her home in New York City, in retaliation for exercising her rights under the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. Iranian agents allegedly spent at least approximately half a million dollars to capture the outspoken critic of the authoritarianism of the Government of Iran, and studied evacuating her by military-style speedboats to Venezuela before rendition to Iran.

(2) Prior to the New York kidnapping plot, Ms. Alinejad’s family in Iran was instructed by authorities to lure Ms. Alinejad to Turkey. In an attempt to intimidate her into silence, the Government of Iran arrested 3 of Ms. Alinejad’s family members in 2019, and sentenced her brother to 8 years in prison for refusing to denounce her.
3

(3) According to Federal prosecutors, the same Iranian intelligence network that allegedly plotted to kidnap Ms. Alinejad is also targeting critics of the Government of Iran who live in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United Arab Emirates.

(4) In 2021, an Iranian diplomat was convicted in Belgium of attempting to carry out a 2018 bombing of a dissident rally in France.

(5) In 2021, a Danish high court found a Norwegian citizen of Iranian descent guilty of illegal espionage and complicity in a failed plot to kill an Iranian Arab dissident figure in Denmark.

(6) In 2021, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) appealed to the United Nations to protect BBC Persian employees in London who suffer regular harassment and threats of kidnapping by Iranian government agents.

(7) In 2021, 15 militants allegedly working on behalf of the Government of Iran were arrested in Ethiopia for plotting to attack citizens of Israel, the United States, and the United Arab Emirates, according to United States officials.

(8) In 2020, Iranian agents allegedly kidnapped United States resident and Iranian-German journalist Jamshid Sharmahd, while he was traveling to
India through Dubai. Iranian authorities announced they had seized Mr. Sharmahd in “a complex operation”, and paraded him blindfolded on state television. Mr. Sharmahd is arbitrarily detained in Iran, allegedly facing the death penalty. In 2009, Mr. Sharmahd was the target of an alleged Iran-directed assassination plot in Glendora, California.

(9) In 2020, the Government of Turkey released counterterrorism files exposing how Iranian authorities allegedly collaborated with drug gangs to kidnap Habib Chabi, an Iranian-Swedish activist for Iran’s Arab minority. In 2020, the Government of Iran allegedly lured Mr. Chabi to Istanbul through a female agent posing as a potential lover. Mr. Chabi was then allegedly kidnapped from Istanbul, and smuggled into Iran where he faces execution, following a sham trial.

(10) In 2020, a United States-Iranian citizen and an Iranian resident of California pleaded guilty to charges of acting as illegal agents of the Government of Iran by surveilling Jewish student facilities, including the Hillel Center and Rohr Chabad Center at the University of Chicago, in addition to surveilling and collecting identifying information
about United States citizens and nationals who are critical of the Iranian regime.

(11) In 2019, 2 Iranian intelligence officers at the Iranian consulate in Turkey allegedly orchestrated the assassination of Iranian dissident journalist Masoud Molavi Vardanjani, who was shot while walking with a friend in Istanbul. Unknownst to Mr. Molavi, his “friend” was in fact an undercover Iranian agent and the leader of the killing squad, according to a Turkish police report.

(12) In 2019, around 1,500 people were allegedly killed amid a less than 2 week crackdown by security forces on anti-government protests across Iran, including at least an alleged 23 children and 400 women.

(13) In 2019, Iranian operatives allegedly lured Paris-based Iranian journalist Ruhollah Zam to Iraq, where he was abducted, and hanged in Iran for sedition.

(14) In 2019, a Kurdistan regional court convicted an Iranian female for trying to lure Voice of America reporter Ali Javanmardi to a hotel room in Irbil, as part of a foiled Iranian intelligence plot to kidnap and extradite Mr. Javanmardi, a critic of the Government of Iran.
(15) In 2019, Federal Bureau of Investigation agents visited the rural Connecticut home of Iran-born United States author and poet Roya Hakakian to warn her that she was the target of an assassination plot orchestrated by the Government of Iran.

(16) In 2019, the Government of Denmark accused the Government of Iran of directing the assassination of Iranian Arab activist Ahmad Mola Nissi, in The Hague, and the assassination of another opposition figure, Reza Kolahi Samadi, who was murdered near Amsterdam in 2015.

(17) In 2018, German security forces searched for 10 alleged spies who were working for Iran’s al-Quds Force to collect information on targets related to the local Jewish community, including kindergartens.

(18) In 2017, Germany convicted a Pakistani man for working as an Iranian agent to spy on targets including a former German lawmaker and a French-Israeli economics professor.

(19) In 2012, an Iranian American pleaded guilty to conspiring with members of the Iranian military to bomb a popular Washington, D.C., restaurant with the aim of assassinating the ambassador of Saudi Arabia to the United States.
(20) In 1996, agents of the Government of Iran allegedly assassinated 5 Iranian dissident exiles across Turkey, Pakistan, and Baghdad, over a 5-month period that year.

(21) In 1992, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom expelled 2 Iranians employed at the Iranian Embassy in London and a third Iranian on a student visa amid allegations they were plotting to kill Indian-born British American novelist Salman Rushdie, pursuant to the fatwa issued by then supreme leader of Iran, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

(22) In 1992, 4 Iranian Kurdish dissidents were assassinated at a restaurant in Berlin, Germany, allegedly by Iranian agents.

(23) In 1992, singer, actor, poet, and gay Iranian dissident Fereydoun Farrokhzad was found dead with multiple stab wounds in his apartment in Germany. His death is allegedly the work of Iran-directed agents.

(24) In 1980, Ali Akbar Tabatabaei, a leading critic of Iran and then president of the Iran Freedom Foundation, was murdered in front of his Bethesda, Maryland, home by an assassin disguised as a postal courier. The Federal Bureau of Investigat-
tion had identified the “mailman” as Dawud Salahuddin, born David Theodore Belfield. Mr. Salahuddin was working as a security guard at an Iranian interest office in Washington, D.C., when he claims he accepted the assignment and payment of $5,000 from the Government of Iran to kill Mr. Tabatabaei.

(25) Other exiled Iranian dissidents alleged to have been victims of the Government of Iran’s murderous extraterritorial campaign include Shahriar Shafiq, Shapour Bakhtiar, and Gholam Ali Oveissi.

(26) Iranian Americans face an ongoing campaign of intimidation both in the virtual and physical world by agents and affiliates of the Government of Iran, which aims to stifle freedom of expression and eliminate the threat Iranian authorities believe democracy, justice, and gender equality pose to their rule.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ADMISSION; ADMITTED; ALIEN.—The terms “admission”, “admitted”, and “alien” have the meanings given those terms in section 101 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101).
(2) **Appropriate Congressional Committees.**—The term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(A) the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Financial Services and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives.

(3) **Correspondent Account; Payable-Through Account.**—The terms “correspondent account” and “payable-through account” have the meanings given those terms in section 5318A of title 31, United States Code.

(4) **Foreign Financial Institution.**—The term “foreign financial institution” has the meaning of that term as determined by the Secretary of the Treasury pursuant to section 104(i) of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (22 U.S.C. 8513(i)).

(5) **Foreign Person.**—The term “foreign person” means any individual or entity that is not a United States person.

(6) **United States Person.**—The term “United States person” means—
(A) a United States citizen or an alien law-
fully admitted for permanent residence to the
United States; or

(B) an entity organized under the laws of
the United States or any jurisdiction within the
United States, including a foreign branch of
such an entity.

SEC. 4. REPORT AND IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS WITH RE-
SPECT TO PERSONS WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE
FOR OR COMPLICIT IN ABUSES TOWARD DIS-
SIDENTS ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT
OF IRAN.

(a) REPORT REQUIRED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 45 days after
the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
of State, in consultation with the Secretary of the
Treasury, the Director of National Intelligence, and
the Attorney General, shall submit to the appro-
priate congressional committees a report that—

(A) includes a detailed description and as-
essment of—

(i) the state of human rights and the
rule of law inside Iran, including the rights
and well-being of women, religious and eth-
nic minorities, and the LGBTQ community in Iran;

(ii) actions taken by the Government of Iran during the year preceding submission of the report to target and silence dissidents both inside and outside of Iran who advocate for human rights inside Iran;

(iii) the methods used by the Government of Iran to target and silence dissidents both inside and outside of Iran;

and

(iv) the means through which the Government of Iran finances efforts to target and silence dissidents both inside and outside of Iran;

(B) identifies foreign persons working as part of the Government of Iran or acting on behalf of that Government (including members of paramilitary organizations such as Ansar-e-Hezbollah and Basij-e Mostaz'afin), that the Secretary of State determines, based on credible evidence, are knowingly responsible for, complicit in or involved in ordering, conspiring, planning or implementing the surveillance, harassment, kidnapping, illegal extradition, impris-
onment, torture, killing, or assassination of citizens of Iran (including citizens of Iran of dual nationality) or citizens of the United States inside or outside Iran who seek—

(i) to expose illegal or corrupt activity carried out by officials of the Government of Iran;

(ii) to obtain, exercise, defend, or promote internationally recognized human rights and freedoms, such as the freedoms of religion, expression, association, and assembly, and the rights to a fair trial and democratic elections, in Iran; or

(iii) to obtain, exercise, defend, or promote the rights and well-being of women, religious and ethnic minorities, and the LGBTQ community in Iran; and

(C) includes, for each foreign person identified subparagraph (B), a clear explanation for why the foreign person was so identified.

(2) Updates of report.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall be updated, and the updated version submitted to the appropriate congressional committees, during the 10-year period following the date of the enactment of this Act—
(A) not less frequently than annually; and

(B) with respect to matters relating to the identification of foreign persons under paragraph (1)(B), on an ongoing basis as new information becomes available.

(3) FORM OF REPORT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Each report required by paragraph (1) and each update required by paragraph (2) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may include a classified annex.

(B) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The Secretary of State shall post the unclassified portion of each report required by paragraph (1) and each update required by paragraph (2) on a publicly available internet website of the Department of State.

(b) IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS.—In the case of a foreign person identified under paragraph (1)(B) of subsection (a) in the most recent report or update submitted under that subsection, the President shall—

(1) if the foreign person meets the criteria for the imposition of sanctions under subsection (a) of section 1263 of the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (subtitle F of title XII of Public
(2) if the foreign person does not meet such criteria, impose the sanctions described in subsection (c).

(c) SANCTIONS DESCRIBED.—The sanctions to be imposed under this subsection with respect to a foreign person are the following:

(1) BLOCKING OF PROPERTY.—The President shall exercise all powers granted to the President by the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) to the extent necessary to block and prohibit all transactions in all property and interests in property of the person if such property and interests in property are in the United States, come within the United States, or are or come within the possession or control of a United States person.

(2) INELIGIBILITY FOR VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—

(i) VISAS, ADMISSION, OR PAROLE.—

An alien described in subsection (a)(1)(B) is—
(I) inadmissible to the United States;

(II) ineligible to receive a visa or other documentation to enter the United States; and

(III) otherwise ineligible to be admitted or paroled into the United States or to receive any other benefit under the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.).

(ii) Current Visas Revoked.—

(I) In General.—The visa or other entry documentation of an alien described in subsection (a)(1)(B) shall be revoked, regardless of when such visa or other entry documentation is or was issued.

(II) Immediate Effect.—A revocation under subclause (I) shall—

(aa) take effect immediately;

and

(bb) automatically cancel any other valid visa or entry documentation that is in the alien’s possession.
(d) **TERMINATION OF SANCTIONS.**—The President may terminate the application of sanctions under this section with respect to a person if the President determines and reports to the appropriate congressional committees, not later than 15 days before the termination of the sanctions that—

1. credible information exists that the person did not engage in the activity for which sanctions were imposed;
2. the person has been prosecuted appropriately for the activity for which sanctions were imposed; or
3. the person has—
   1. credibly demonstrated a significant change in behavior;
   2. has paid an appropriate consequence for the activity for which sanctions were imposed; and
   3. has credibly committed to not engage in an activity described in subsection (a) in the future.
SEC. 5. REPORT AND IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS WITH RESPECT TO FOREIGN FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS CONDUCTING SIGNIFICANT TRANSACTIONS WITH PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR OR COMPPLICIT IN ABUSES TOWARD DISSENTENTS ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT OF IRAN.

(a) Report Required.—

(1) In general.—Not earlier than 30 days and not later than 60 days after the Secretary of State submits to the appropriate congressional committees a report required by section 4(a), the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that identifies any foreign financial institution that knowingly conducts a significant transaction with a foreign person identified in the report submitted under section 4(a).

(2) Form of report.—

(A) In general.—Each report required by paragraph (1) shall be submitted in unclassified form but may include a classified annex.

(B) Public availability.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall post the unclassified portion of each report required by paragraph (1)
on a publicly available internet website of the
Department of the Treasury.

(b) IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS.—The Secretary of
the Treasury may prohibit the opening, or prohibit or im-
pose strict conditions on the maintaining, in the United
States of a correspondent account or a payable-through
account by a foreign financial institution identified under
subsection (a)(1).

SEC. 6. EXCEPTIONS; WAIVERS; IMPLEMENTATION.

(a) EXCEPTIONS.—

(1) EXCEPTION FOR INTELLIGENCE, LAW EN-
FORCEMENT, AND NATIONAL SECURITY ACTIVI-
TIES.—Sanctions under sections 4 and 5 shall not
apply to any authorized intelligence, law enforce-
ment, or national security activities of the United
States.

(2) EXCEPTION TO COMPLY WITH UNITED NA-
TIONS HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT.—Sanctions
under section 4(c)(2) shall not apply with respect to
the admission of an alien to the United States if the
admission of the alien is necessary to permit the
United States to comply with the Agreement regard-
ing the Headquarters of the United Nations, signed
at Lake Success June 26, 1947, and entered into
force November 21, 1947, between the United Na-
tions and the United States, the Convention on Cons-
sular Relations, done at Vienna April 24, 1963, and
entered into force March 19, 1967, or other applica-
ble international obligations.

(b) NATIONAL SECURITY WAIVER.—The President
may waive the application of sanctions under section 4
with respect to a person if the President—

(1) determines that the waiver is in the national
security interests of the United States; and

(2) submits to the appropriate congressional
committees a report on the waiver and the reasons
for the waiver.

(c) IMPLEMENTATION; PENALTIES.—

(1) IMPLEMENTATION.—The President may ex-
ercise all authorities provided to the President under
sections 203 and 205 of the International Emer-
gency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1702 and
1704) to carry out this Act.

(2) PENALTIES.—A person that violates, at-
ttempts to violate, conspires to violate, or causes a
violation of section 4(b)(1) or 5(b) or any regulation,
license, or order issued to carry out either such sec-
tion shall be subject to the penalties set forth in sub-
sections (b) and (c) of section 206 of the Inter-
national Emergency Economic Powers Act (50
U.S.C. 1705) to the same extent as a person that commits an unlawful act described in subsection (a) of that section.

SEC. 7. EXCEPTION RELATING TO IMPORTATION OF GOODS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the authorities and requirements to impose sanctions under this Act shall not include the authority or a requirement to impose sanctions on the importation of goods.

(b) GOOD DEFINED.—In this section, the term “good” means any article, natural or manmade substance, material, supply or manufactured product, including inspection and test equipment, and excluding technical data.