



Speaking Peace to Power

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IRAN

The Minnesota Peace Project strongly supported the Iran Nuclear Agreement or Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) negotiated between the United States, China, France, Germany, Russia and the European Union.

We were dismayed when Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from the JCPOA, an historic agreement to end Iran's development of a nuclear weapon. According to all international inspection teams and observers, Iran was complying with the terms of the agreement.

The refusal of the United States to remain a party to the agreement threatens peace and stability in the region. It is possible that Iran will now revert to enriching uranium and developing a nuclear weapon. This could lead to more countries in the region, notably Saudi Arabia, on the path to obtain nuclear weapons. In a region already beset by numerous conflicts, more nuclear weapons would be catastrophic.

Despite humanitarian exemptions to U.S. sanctions on Iran, the broad scope of the sanctions has created an environment of risk aversion and overcompliance that has obstructed humanitarian trade.

- Most firms and humanitarian organizations cannot find financial institutions to process payments for humanitarian goods, transfer donations, or even pay local aid workers.
- In early 2020, the Norwegian Refugee Council reported that for most of 2018–19 it “could not find a single international bank able to transmit Western donor money to aid Afghan refugee communities across Iran and natural disaster victims in most affected provinces.”
- Firms and humanitarian organizations engaging in permitted trade must shoulder additional burdens to comply with sanctions, which is a time- and resource-consuming process. This has led to a “chilling effect” and many firms ending all provision of goods and services to Iranians, including the provision of personal communication tools and services by companies such as Amazon and Google, which were vital for Iranians to circumvent their own government's censors.

We call on our Senators and Representatives to issue public statements supporting the JCPOA and opposing sanctions on Iran.