

JIM BANKS  
THIRD DISTRICT, INDIANA



COMMITTEE ON  
ARMED SERVICES  
COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION AND LABOR  
COMMITTEE ON  
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-1403**

Dear Secretary Blinken and Secretary Mayorkas,

I am writing to you with grave concern over Iranian actor Parviz Parastui's presence in the United States and his assault on an Iranian American dissident, which was caught on camera during a film screening event in Los Angeles last Sunday. Parastui is well known in Iran for his support for Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC).

To this day, the IRGC remains a foreign terrorist organization (FTO) designated by the US State Department, despite the Biden administration's intention to delist it as such. Those who built their careers by supporting and benefiting from the IRGC but apply for US visas must not be allowed into the United States.

Parastui has been directly involved in IRGC funded propaganda projects, promoting a hardliner ideology that seeks to shape Iran's culture to the agenda of the Iranian regime. He played roles in numerous pro-regime and pro-IRGC films.<sup>1</sup> Parastui also never shies away from expressing his affinity with the IRGC in public. He praised the IRGC Quds Force commander Qassem Soleimani in a TV interview, whom President Trump took out in January 2020. Photos of Parastui sitting and chatting with Qassem Soleimani among other senior IRGC commanders are being widely circulated on the Internet to show just how close he is to key figures in the terrorist organization.<sup>2</sup>

Despite Parastui's notoriety and close relations with the IRGC, it seems he has been given a visa and let into the United States. Parastui's appearance in the film screening event in Los Angeles has angered the Iranian American community. When an Iranian dissident insisted that Parastui explain his relations with Soleimani, he simply struck the activist.<sup>3</sup>

The fact that Parastui (and other IRGC supporters in his party from Iran) may have been granted US visas and allowed into the US is alarming. My colleagues and I in Congress have consistently opposed the delisting of IRGC as an FTO to keep IRGC affiliates out of our country and to keep America safe. Yet, your departments have allowed notorious, high-profile affiliates of the IRGC

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/owi-arts-media-organization-iranian-ngo-tied-iranian-revolutionary-guards-corps-plays-central-role-struggle-hearts-minds-home-abroad/> and <https://en.radiofarda.com/a/warrior-interrogator-artist-the-man-who-leads-irgc-s-cultural-onslaught/30778529.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://twitter.com/GLNoronha/status/1520447603355406337?s=20&t=1k0YCGZljrdFz2RM0lp7A>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202205010514>

into our country even before the administration is delisted. I can only imagine how members of the IRGC could rush to the United States legally to exploit our market and financial system and carry out terrorist activities against the United States, if the IRGC is indeed delisted.

I would like you to respond the following questions by May 20th, 2022:

- 1) Given Parviz Parastui's notoriety and overt connection with the IRGC, was he granted a visa to be allowed into the United States? If so, how? Who approved it?
- 2) What vetting procedure do you have in place to ensure that supporters or defenders of Iranian terrorism will not be admitted into the United States?
- 3) In the vetting process, does the State Department review social media postings of visa applicants from Iran to evaluate their potential ties to the IRGC and other Iranian terrorist groups?
- 4) Is IRGC affiliation a criterion in evaluating whether an alien can be granted US permanent resident status?
- 5) What steps are you taking to ensure that Iranian agents – particularly those seeking to assassinate US officials – are not masquerading as ordinary Iranians requesting tourist visas?
- 6) What has the State Department done and is planning to do to counter disinformation by the Iranian regime and the IRGC through the pretext of cultural event and exchange?

With regards,

Rep. Jim Banks

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Banks". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Jim" on the top line and "Banks" on the bottom line.