

DAVID TRONE
6TH DISTRICT, MARYLAND
EDUCATION AND LABOR
COMMITTEE
FOREIGN AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE
JOINT ECONOMIC
COMMITTEE



1213 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-2721
ONE WASHINGTONIAN CENTER
9801 WASHINGTONIAN BOULEVARD
GAITHERSBURG, MD 20878
(301) 926-0300
TRONE.HOUSE.GOV
@REPDVIDTRONE

April 1, 2020

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo,

I write to express my concern for the people of Iran as they struggle to respond to an increasing number of COVID-19 cases. Iran was one of the earliest countries to experience a widespread outbreak, with at least 38,000 cases and 2,600 dead so far according to official counts, though most agree that numbers are actually much higher. Unlike most other countries, Iran has unique challenges brought on by the terrible choices of its leaders -- namely, heavy sanctions that now prevent full access to necessary medical care. I urge you to provide humanitarian relief that will allow the Iranian people to access to medicines, medical equipment, and supplies desperately needed to address the coronavirus pandemic.

I cannot deny the mistakes made by Iran's leadership that have at least contributed to this crisis. They failed to take the pandemic seriously early and were too slow to react to the growing public health threat -- clearly endangering the lives of millions with inadequate isolation and quarantine measures. Nor will I ignore the malign activities of Iran's regime that are worthy of condemnation, such as support for terrorist proxies that kill innocent civilians and U.S. service members, illegal weapons transfers, and pursuit of a harmful nuclear program. But we can have compassion for Iranian civilians who are suffering and dying from COVID-19 while we recognize the faults of their leadership and seek to hold the regime accountable.

According to a recent article in the *Washington Post*, over the past few quarters, the Trump Administration has reduced the number of licenses granted to companies that export medical equipment and supplies such as oxygen generators and respirators to Iran. U.S. sanctions have also hampered Iran's ability to import components needed to produce medications. I was pleased to hear the announcement of the Swiss Humanitarian Trade Arrangement at the end of February and that the U.S. has offered direct aid

to help combat the virus, but I firmly believe we are not yet doing enough to get the people of Iran the help they need.

I therefore strongly urge you to provide targeted sanctions relief that will allow critical supplies to be shipped to Iran. Both the George W. Bush and Obama Administrations took similar steps when humanitarian assistance was needed following devastating earthquakes. Such action is a sign of American empathy, compassion, and strength, and it is desperately needed now more than ever.

Thank you for your attention to this pressing matter. I look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Trone". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "D" and a long, sweeping underline.

David Trone
Member of Congress