

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 21, 2019

The Honorable Steven T. Mnuchin
Secretary
Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Mnuchin,

We are deeply concerned by reports that Iran continues to ship oil to the Assad regime. As opponents of the Assad regime's murderous war against the Syrian people, we believe it is vital for the U.S. to apply pressure to end this practice.


Despite increasing pressure overall, Iran has accelerated its shipments of crude oil by exploiting the difficulty of sanctions enforcement. The illicit networks that facilitate these oil shipments also transfer hundreds of millions of dollars to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps for distribution to Hamas and Hezbollah. Meanwhile, the oil itself is enabling the continuation of the Assad regime's crimes against the Syrian people. After nearly eliminating Iranian crude oil deliveries to Assad in the wake of reinstated sanctions, reports indicate that five oil tankers made deliveries in May and early June to be processed by Syrian refineries. This sharp uptick is a concerning trend, which demands a response.

We were encouraged to see Treasury take action this month against Syrian businessman Samer Foz and his Lebanon-based firms, Synergy SAL and BS Company. Synergy and BS Company were both involved in shipping large quantities of Iranian oil. Foz, a close associate of Bashar al-Assad, was a key player in facilitating Iranian oil transactions. We need to apply pressure on all avenues for transporting illicit Iranian oil to Syria, especially maritime routes. In 2019, Treasury published a list of more than 60 vessels that have delivered crude oil or petroleum products to Syria since 2016. The vast majority of those are not currently under U.S. sanctions. Commercial petroleum analysts have reported that two of the crude oil tankers on Treasury's list have made deliveries to Syria since the beginning of May.


Can Treasury determine how many vessels have been involved in shipping Iranian oil to Syria since the department issued its November 2018 advisory to the maritime petroleum industry? We also ask Treasury to outline its plan of action to deter the facilitation of logistics and designate those tankers and their operators, in cases where sanctions may not be directly applicable.

We will continue to support efforts to put maximum pressure on the Iranian regime to prevent Assad from gaining the financial lifeline his regime needs to continue its devastating attacks. We look forward to working with you to close any sanctions loopholes, escalate enforcement, and ensure that any tankers involved in this trade are prevented from continuing.

Respectfully,




Anthony Gonzalez
Member of Congress




Guy Reschenthaler
Member of Congress




Michael Waltz
Member of Congress



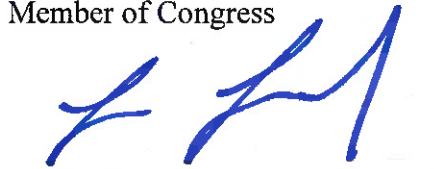
Steve Chabot
Member of Congress



Steve Stivers
Member of Congress



Joe Wilson
Member of Congress



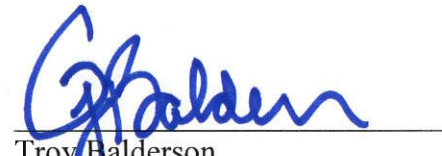
Lee Zeldin
Member of Congress



Adam Kinzinger
Member of Congress



Steve Watkins
Member of Congress



Troy Balderson
Member of Congress



Ron Wright
Member of Congress