



# THE MASIH ALINEJAD HARASSMENT AND UNLAWFUL TARGETING (HUNT) ACT

Sponsors: Senators Pat Toomey (R-Pa.) and Ben Cardin (D-Md.)

**Summary:** The Masih Alinejad Harassment and Unlawful Targeting (HUNT) Act, introduced by Senators Pat Toomey (R-Pa.) and Ben Cardin (D-Md.), will hold Tehran accountable for its ongoing efforts to silence dissidents and help to deter future violence against critics of the Iranian regime by imposing new mandatory sanctions on Iran.

## Background

In July 2021, Federal prosecutors [charged](#) Iranian agents with conspiring to kidnap one of the country's most influential dissidents — Iranian American journalist and human rights activist Masih Alinejad — from her home in New York City. Exiled in the United States, Ms. Alinejad uses her platform to expose Tehran's grave human rights abuses and oppression of women. The FBI described the elaborate plot to abduct her as Iran's first kidnapping scheme on U.S. soil. Since the Department of Justice unsealed her case, threats by Tehran against Ms. Alinejad's life have only intensified, warranting constant FBI protection.

Masih Alinejad is one of countless victims of the Iranian regime's ongoing campaign to silence dissidents and journalists. Since the revolution in 1979, the Iranian state has frequently conducted assassinations of exiles and deployed a systematic campaign of assassinations, renditions, detentions, digital intimidation, unlawful surveillance, coercion by proxy, and other forms of suppression across Europe, the Middle East, and North America. Tehran's transnational repression is intertwined with its parallel campaigns of bombings, assassinations, and espionage directed at U.S., Jewish, and Israeli targets around the world, including on U.S. [college campuses](#).

## The Masih Alinejad Harassment and Unlawful Targeting (HUNT) Act

Senators Toomey and Cardin's bipartisan legislation, the Masih Alinejad HUNT Act, will hold Tehran accountable and prevent future targeting against critics of the brutal regime by:

- ***Imposing mandatory sanctions against those engaging in acts of transnational repression on behalf of Iranian authorities;***
  - o Requiring the State Department to regularly report on the state of human rights and the rule of law inside Iran;
  - o Mandating a continuous assessment of Tehran's targeting of dissidents at home and abroad, and how such suppression is financed; and
  - o Imposing mandatory sanctions on agents of the Iranian regime who are knowingly involved in surveillance, harassment, kidnapping, or assassination of Iranian or U.S. citizens who are critics of the Iranian regime.
- ***Authorizing secondary sanctions on banks doing business with agents engaging in transnational repression and targeting dissidents on behalf of the Iranian state.***