

18

June 2018

Tom Tugendhat MBE MP
Chair of Foreign Affairs Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

Secretary of State

Dear Tom,

Thank you for your letter of 5 June about the harassment of BBC Persian staff by the Iranian authorities.

The criminal investigation, alongside reports of BBC staff in Iran being harassed and subject to asset freezes and similar forms of mistreatment are deeply worrying. Both the Minister for the Middle East and I have raised the issue with our Iranian counterparts on several occasions, most recently, on 29 April and 23 February respectively. In addition, at the UN Human Rights Council on 12 March, we expressed our concern about the treatment of BBC Persian staff.

We will continue to raise this issue regularly with the Iranian government and continue to take action with the international community via the UN. I intend to discuss the treatment of BBC Persian staff during my next substantive engagement with Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif. Freedom of Expression is a fundamental human right which underpins and enables many of the rights and freedoms which are essential to a functioning democratic society. We will continue to work to support these freedoms in Iran and around the world.

THE RT HON BORIS JOHNSON MP