

September 7, 2012

Mr. Akram Atallah, Interim CEO
Mr. Fadi Chehadé, Incoming CEO
Mr. Kuo-Wei Wu, Chair, IANA Committee of the Board
Internet Corporate for Assigned Names and Numbers
12025 Waterfront Drive
Suite 300
Los Angeles, CA 90094-2536

Re: ICANN/IANA and Iran – Disconnecting Iranian Sanction-Designated Entities from the Worldwide Web

Dear Mr Atallah, Mr. Chehadé and Mr. Wu:

By this letter, United Against Nuclear Iran (“UANI”) calls upon the Internet Corporate for Assigned Names and Numbers (“ICANN”) and its department for key coordination and protocol functions of ICANN – the Internet Assignment Numbers Authority (“IANA”) – to publicly clarify its work in Iran and to:

1. Terminate its relationship with and deny any Iranian entity or person that has been sanction-designated by the United States, the European Union and the United Nations access to and revoke previously assigned Domain Name System (“DNS”), Internet Protocol (“IP”) addresses, space allocation, protocol identifier assignment, generic (“gTLD”) and country code (“ccTLD”) Top-Level Domain name system management, and root server system management functions;
2. Terminate its relationship and deny ICANN/IANA access to all sanction-designated Iranian entities and persons, including the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (“IRGC”) and the Iranian regime, and;
3. Terminate its relationship and deny database services, technical services and information services to sanction-designated Iranian entities and persons and registrants that service sanction-designated Iranian entities and persons.

As you know, the worldwide web enables people around the globe to communicate with each other through unique assigned web names and numbers. ICANN “coordinates these unique identifiers across the world.” More specifically, ICANN “coordinates the Domain Name System (DNS), Internet Protocol (IP) addresses, space allocation, protocol identifier assignment, generic (gTLD) and country code (ccTLD) Top-Level Domain name system management, and root

server system management functions.”¹ (collectively “Unique Internet Identifiers”) (*ICANN Website*, “[What Does ICANN Do?](#)” accessed on 09/04/2012)

As a department of ICANN, the IANA “allocates and maintains unique codes and numbering systems that are used in the technical standards (‘protocols’) that drive the Internet.” As part of its work, IANA “coordinates the global pool of IP and AS numbers, providing them to Regional Internet Registries (RIR).” (*IANA Website*, “[Introducing IANA](#),” accessed on 09/04/2012)

RIPE NCC serves as the RIR for Iran, and its coverage extends to Europe, the Middle East and parts of Central Asia and “provides Internet resource allocations, registration services and coordination activities that support the operation of the Internet globally” (*RIPE NCC Website*, “[Homepage](#),” accessed on 08/19/2012). Internet resource allocation is distributed in a hierarchical manner. This means that “IANA delegates large ranges of Internet number resources to the RIRs, which then allocate the resources within their regions to members, Local Internet Registries, National Internet Registries, and end-users” (*The Number Resource Organization (“NRO”) Website*, “[Regional Internet Registries](#),” accessed on 08/19/2012).

Through RIRs, ICANN/IANA provides the primary means for access to the worldwide web for Internet Service Providers (“ISPs”), telecommunication organizations and end-users within particular regions. Any person or entity within the area covered by the RIPE NCC – including Iran – that has registered for an Internet domain name, utilizes ICANN/IANA services.

According to the NRO and the RIPE NCC’s website, the RIPE NCC manages the .ir country code for Iran and supports almost 200 Local Internet Registries (“LIRs”) that offer services in Iran (*The NRO Website*, “[List of Country Codes in the RIPE NCC Region](#),” accessed on 08/19/2012 and *RIPE NCC Website*, “[Local Internet Registries Offering Service in Iran, Islamic Republic of](#),” accessed on 08/19/2012). An Iranian LIR is a conduit for promoting and facilitating these activities, and in total they comprise the sole systemic means for Iran to access the global Internet system.

Attached is a spreadsheet that lists the web addresses for all Iranian sanction-designated entities with web addresses, their respective local/national registrars and the name servers that have been provided to them by ICANN/IANA through the RIPE NCC (See Exhibit A). No domain name registrant or registrar in the region, including those that provide services to Iranian sanction-designed entities and persons by the U.S., EU and UN, would be able to acquire domain names, IP addresses and ASNs (collectively “Unique Internet Identifiers”) without ICANN/IANA. It is the key provider on which Iran wholly depends upon for access to the Internet.

Unfortunately, ICANN/IANA and the Unique Internet Identifiers that it provides are misused by the sanction-designated Iranian entities and persons to facilitate their illicit operations, activities and communications including support for Iran’s rogue nuclear weapons

¹ As ICANN notes, “these services were originally performed under U.S. Government contract by the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) and other entities. ICANN now performs the IANA function.” (*ICANN Website*, “[What Does ICANN Do?](#)” accessed on 09/04/2012)

program, Iran's sponsorship of terrorism around the world, and the Iranian regimes brutal crackdown against its own people. Disturbingly, that crackdown includes the ruthless censorship of the Internet and other communication access, and the use of tracking technology to monitor, torture and kill freedom seeking dissidents. For example, on December 28, 2011 – the registration day for Iran's March 2012 parliamentary elections – Iranian Prosecutor-General Abdosamad Khoramabadi unveiled a list of election-related Internet crimes, which includes “calling for an election boycott, the publication of counter-revolutionary or opposition logos or website contents, etc.” Further, cybercafés in Iran were required to produce ID, install cameras, keep tape recordings and maintain a record of their clients and a list of websites visited. (Reporters Without Borders, “[Internet Enemies Report 2012](#),” 03/12/2012)

Prominent sanction-designated Iranian entities have acquired .ir Unique Internet Identifiers from ICANN/IANA through the RIPE NCC. For example, Iran's nuclear brain trust, Malek Ashtar University holds the <http://www.mut.ac.ir/> address. Major Iranian banks, including the country's central bank, maintain active websites (e.g. <http://www.cbi.ir>, <http://www.bank-maskan.ir>, <http://www.bmi.ir> and <http://www.banksepah.ir>). Further, Khatam al-Anbia, which serves as the IRGC's engineering arm with over 812 subsidiaries and is heavily involved in the construction of the Qom/Fordow nuclear weapons facilities, holds the web address of <http://www.khatam.com>. These sanction-designated entities could not gain such web access without ICANN/IANA.

In no way should ICANN/IANA permit such misuse of their web services and Unique Internet Identifiers. During her remarks at George Washington University in February 2011, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated that the Internet could:

[E]nable wrongdoing on an unprecedented scale. Terrorists and extremist groups use the Internet to recruit members, and plot and carry out attacks. Human traffickers use the Internet to find and lure new victims into modern-day slavery. Child pornographers use the Internet to exploit children. Hackers break into financial institutions, cell phone networks, and personal email accounts. So we need successful strategies for combatting these threats and more.... (U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, “[Internet Rights and Wrongs: Choices and Challenges in a Networked World](#),” George Washington University, 02/15/2011)

Simply put, ICANN/IANA should not provide the internet communications means that the Iranian regime and the IRGC misuses to censor and deny Internet freedoms to its people, much less to support Iran's illicit nuclear program or its sponsorship of terrorism.

Absent access to ICANN/IANA, the dictatorial regime of Iran would be severely impeded in pursuing its illegal and amoral activities. For each day that you knowingly continue to provide Iran sanction-designated persons and entities access to the worldwide web, ICANN/IANA will be increasingly complicit in the IRGC and Iranian regime's nefarious behavior. ICANN/IANA must stop transacting with such Iranian entities and persons and deny them access to Unique Web Identifiers, and therefore, the worldwide web. The U.S., EU and UN have enacted a series of sweeping sanctions against Iran. Yet during this period of international

consensus and increasing global isolation of Iran, numerous Iranian sanctioned entities continue to acquire and have access to Unique Web Identifiers through ICANN/IANA.

You should responsibly end all ICANN/IANA access to any U.S., EU or UN Iranian sanction-designated entity or person. As explained below, ICANN/IANA is in violation of law for its provision of services and access to its network to sanction-designated entities and persons. Please immediately cease and desist from providing ICANN/IANA access to these entities and persons.

ICANN/IANA's role in Iran with sanction-designated entities violates various sanctions laws including U.S. and EU law. Given that ICANN/IANA is headquartered in California, it is directly governed by the laws of the U.S. The *Iran Sanctions Act of 1996*, as amended, prohibits the provision of "goods, services, technology, information, or support that could directly and significantly facilitate the maintenance or expansion of Iran's domestic production of refined petroleum products..." and "contribute materially to the ability of Iran to acquire or develop chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons or related technologies; or acquire or develop destabilizing numbers and types of conventional weapons." (*Iran Sanctions Act of 1996, as Amended*, 50 U.S.C. § 1701 Note, [Section 5. Imposition of Sanctions](#)) ICANN/IANA also provides services to entities and persons on the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control's ("OFAC") Specially Designated Nationals ("SDN") List, which is a list of "individuals and companies owned or controlled by, or acting for or on behalf of, targeted countries" such as Iran, and "also lists individuals, groups, and entities, such as terrorist and narcotics traffickers." Assets of those on the SDN List "are blocked, and U.S. persons are generally prohibited from dealing with them." (*U.S. Department of the Treasury Website*, "[Specially Designated Nationals List](#)," accessed on 09/07/2012) Further, Section 106 of the *Comprehensive Iran Sanctions Accountability and Divestment Act of 2010* ("CISADA") requires the U.S. to ban the "procurement of goods or services with a person that exports sensitive technology to Iran." CISADA defines sensitive technology as "hardware, software, telecommunications equipment, or any other technology" that is used "(A) to restrict the free flow of unbiased information in Iran; or (B) to disrupt, monitor, or otherwise restrict speech of the people of Iran."

The RIPE NCC is headquartered in Amsterdam and is directly governed by the laws of the EU. Similar to the U.S.'s SDN List, the EU maintains a list of designated parties that are considered to be, among other things, involved in Iran's nuclear or ballistic missiles activities or affiliated with IRGC. ([Council Decision \(EU\) of 07/26/2010](#) concerning restrictive measures against Iran and repealing Common Position 2007/140/CFSP) In violation of EU law, the RIPE NCC provides key services to such entities and persons. Additionally, on April 19, 2007, the EU implemented UN Security Council Resolution 1737 (2006) by enacting Council Regulation (EC) No. 423/2007, which has now been strengthened by Council Regulation (EU) No. 961/2010, to provide for:

[C]ertain restrictive measures against Iran. These measures include restrictions on exports and imports of goods and technology which could contribute to Iran's enrichment-related, reprocessing, or heavy water-related activities, or to the development of nuclear weapon

delivery systems, a ban on the provision of related services, a ban on investment related to such goods and technology, a ban on procurement of relevant goods and technology from Iran, as well as the freezing of funds and economic resources of persons, entities and bodies engaged in, directly associated with or providing support for such activities.

[\(Council Regulation \(EC\) No. 423/2007 of 04/19/2007](#) concerning restrictive measures against Iran, para. 2). Regulation No. 423/2007 also empowers the EU to establish, publish and amend a list of banned goods and technology and banned persons and entities that provide support to the Iranian regime and its illegal activities ([Council Regulation \(EC\) No. 423/2007 of 04/19/2007](#) concerning restrictive measures against Iran, para. 5 and 6). The RIPE NCC is indeed providing crucial services to prohibited entities.

Clearly, ICANN/IANA's provision of the essential means of access to the internet runs afoul of such laws and regulations.

Please understand that we do not seek this action lightly. We fully support internet freedoms and access to all parties. In this case, however, you are providing internet access to a brutal regime that represses its own people and censors and restricts their ability to dissent and publicly reveal the brutality of the Iranian regime. As U.S. President Barack Obama stated during a video message to the Iranian people, "Because of the actions of the Iranian regime, an Electronic Curtain has fallen around Iran—a barrier that stops the free flow of information and ideas into the country, and denies the rest of the world the benefit of interacting with the Iranian people..." as Iran works to control and monitor what its citizens see and hear. (*The White House Blog*, "[On Nowruz, President Obama Speaks to the Iranian People](#)," 03/20/2012)

Given the urgency of this matter, please let us hear from you on or before September 17, 2012 with clarifying information on ICANN/IANA's work in Iran and your detailed plans to terminate ICANN/IANA access to Iranian sanction-designated entities and persons and immediately revoke their Unique Web Identifiers.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,



Ambassador Mark D. Wallace

cc: The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States

The Honorable Mitt Romney
Republican Nominee for President of the United States, 2012 Election

The Honorable Timothy Geithner
Secretary, U.S. Department of the Treasury

The Honorable Hillary Clinton
Secretary, U.S. Department of State

The Honorable David Cohen
Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, U.S. Department of the Treasury

The Honorable A. Elizabeth Jones
Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State

The Honorable André Birotte, Jr.
U.S. Attorney, Central District of California

Remco van Mook
Treasurer, Executive Board, RIPE NCC

Christian Kaufmann
Secretary, Executive Board, RIPE NCC

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