



RESOLUTION HONORING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY BROADCASTING IN THE PERSIAN LANGUAGE

November 14, 2018

WHEREAS, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) began broadcasting in the Persian language to the peoples of Iran on October 30, 1998;

WHEREAS, RFE/RL's Persian Service, broadcasting as Radio Azadi, quickly grew to produce six hours of daily programming to Iran focused on local and regional news and analysis, as well as cultural content banned by Iran's Islamic government;

WHEREAS, Radio Azadi was incorporated into U.S. Agency for Global Media's first joint broadcasting venture, Radio Farda, in December 2002;

WHEREAS, Radio Farda was consolidated under RFE/RL management in July 2008, continuing its mission to break through government censorship to deliver accurate news and provide a platform for informed discussion and debate;

WHEREAS, Radio Farda broadcasts via terrestrial and digital platforms a mix of news, current affairs, and cultural programming along with popular Persian and Western music designed to appeal to a young audience, reaching 15.7 percent of adult Iranians in 2018;

WHEREAS, Radio Farda has built a massive online audience for its multimedia content, with an average of 12.7 million visits and 24.1 million page views every month in Fiscal Year 2018 to its website radiofarda.com, of which almost 2/3 of all traffic originates within Iran despite an official government ban that forces Iranians to use circumvention software to access the site;

WHEREAS, Radio Farda has moved aggressively into both social media—with more than 3.5 million followers on social platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Telegram—and video production, with its morning news show and live, hourly news breaks for VOA's Persian TV stream;

WHEREAS, RFE/RL's Radio Azadi and Radio Farda have since their creation been an essential source of news and information for Iranian audiences during periods of unrest, including the "Green Revolution" protests of 2009-2011 and the December 2017-January 2018 protests that broke out in dozens of cities in Iran; at the height of the recent protest wave, on January 1, 2018, audiences viewed more than 2 million pages of content viewed on a single day at radiofarda.com, and eyewitnesses in more than 23 cities provided Farda with user-generated video content;

WHEREAS, Radio Azadi and Radio Farda are distinguished for their cultural and music content, providing a platform for expression that is banned inside Iran or otherwise not available, and have produced numerous original documentaries on human rights and historical issues that are underreported or taboo in Iran;

WHEREAS, Family members in Iran of RFE/RL Persian-language journalists have been subject to interrogation and threats, and numerous phony websites and social media accounts have been used to discredit RFE/RL reporting and smear employees online; and

WHEREAS, the professional journalism produced by RFE/RL's Persian-language journalists remains crucial for the Iranian people, and reinforces that free information is a critical component to democracy.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Board of Governors and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the U.S. Agency for Global Media that we celebrate and commemorate the 20th anniversary of RFE/RL broadcasting in the Persian language.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board and CEO applaud and thank current and former members of Radio Azadi and Radio Farda for their commitment to their audiences and their dedication to professional journalism.