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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Committee on Appropriations
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(202) 225-2771

March 4, 2026

The Honorable Kash Patel
Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20535

Dear Director Patel:

As the Ranking Member of the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS) Subcommittee of the House Committee on Appropriations, I write to request information about the ongoing work of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in connection with Operation Epic Fury in the Middle East.

I am deeply troubled by reports that just days before the launch of Operation Epic Fury, you personally ordered the firing of at least 10 counterintelligence agents and support staff, including those who served in the unit known as CI-12—the elite unit within the FBI that conducts counter-espionage and counterintelligence in the Middle East.¹

For years, the Islamic Republic of Iran has built up nuclear capabilities, a ballistic missile program, and terrorist proxies—and has maintained a known network of sleeper cells here in the United States and in our allied countries in Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East.² Since the launch of Operation Epic Fury on February 28, the Intelligence Community, analysts, and elected officials have warned of sleeper cell activation in response.³

On March 1, a gunman killed three people and injured at least a dozen others on a busy street in Austin, Texas. Law enforcement reportedly discovered an Iranian regime flag and photos of regime leaders in the

¹ David Edward Rosen, "Exclusive: FBI Staffers Fired for Role in Mar-a-Lago Probe Were Assigned to Espionage Unit that Investigated Iranian Threats in America, Sources Say," *The New York Sun*, March 2, 2026, <https://www.nysun.com/article/exclusive-fbi-staffers-fired-for-role-in-mar-a-lago-probe-were-assigned-to-espionage-unit-that-investigated-iranian-threats-in-america-sources-say>

² Matthew Levitt, "Tehran's Homeland Option: Terror Pathways for Iran to Strike in the United States," *CTC Sentinel* 18, no. 8 (August 2025), Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/tehrans-homeland-option-terror-pathways-for-iran-to-strike-in-the-united-states/>

³ Amanda Macias, "Enemy Within: Counterterrorism Experts Fear Sleeper Cells Could be Poised Inside US," *Fox News*, March 1, 2026, <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/after-u-s-israel-strike-kills-iranian-leaders-fbi-shifts-high-alert-home>

suspect's home. As the FBI investigates this as a potential act of terrorism, Americans throughout the United States—including in New York City—are fearful that they will be the next target.⁴

In response to reports of the gutting of CI-12, an FBI spokesperson refused to comment on personnel matters but said that the FBI “maintains a ‘robust counterintelligence operation, with personnel all over the country, who delivered record results in 2025.’”⁵ This is an inadequate response.

The FBI owes Americans answers and assurances that your leadership and personnel decisions are helping keep the homeland safe.

Given the urgency of this moment and the heightened threat environment, I request a Member-level briefing covering:

- 1) Changes to counter-intelligence and counter-espionage personnel levels at the FBI since January 20, 2025;
- 2) The reasons for the firings of the CI-12 agents and support staff reported on March 2, 2026;
- 3) The FBI's ongoing coordination with local and state law enforcement and other federal agencies to monitor and counter potential attacks on Americans in the United States; and
- 4) The FBI's ongoing coordination with allies and partners in Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East to counter malign activities abroad.

Sincerely,



Grace Meng
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies

⁴ Eyewitness News, “NYPD Enhances Patrols Due to Jewish Holiday, Security Concerns after Iran Attack,” *ABC7 New York*, March 2, 2026, <https://abc7ny.com/post/nypd-enhances-patrols-due-jewish-holiday-security-concerns-new-york-city-iran-attack/18666834/#:~:text=Meanwhile%2C%20Gov.%20Kathy%20Hochul%20also,transit%20hub%20or%20a%20museum>.

⁵ Carol Leonnig, “Kash Patel’s Latest Firings Ousted Agents with Expertise in Iran,” *MS NOW*, March 2, 2026, <https://www.ms.now/news/kash-patels-latest-firings-ousted-agents-with-expertise-in-iran>