

## **An update on our efforts with respect to the US sanctions against Iran:**

As many of you know, we announced over the weekend that Neuromatch Academy would sadly no longer be able to operate within Iran due to existing sanctions that prohibit US persons from providing services to residents of Iran. This has severely affected the scientists who got accepted into our program and were planning to participate. This was a restriction that we had not understood and we will be less naive in the future. We want to offer our personal apologies to all the involved scientists.

Our announcement led to an immediate outpouring of support from the neuroscience community for the impacted Iranian students and TAs. Many people expressed their love, sadness, and even offered their help to organize new ways of providing the NMA experience to these Iranian students. The sheer magnitude of the response was inspiring and we sincerely appreciate it.

We would now like to update the community on our efforts to remedy this situation as best we can.

First, upon learning last Thursday (July 2nd) that we would need a license to operate in Iran, we began the process of applying for this license. Specifically, we have appealed to the Department of the Treasury for expedited relief from sanctions. Unfortunately, due to the holiday weekend in the US, this application could only officially be submitted this Tuesday, July 7th. We hope that this process will move quickly.

While we believe that attempting to get an emergency relief from the sanctions is absolutely the right move to take, we do not want to create false hope that this attempt will make it possible for Iranian residents to take part in this year's NMA, which starts in a matter of days. The truth is that, according to our legal counsel, it is unlikely that our application will be successful this year. Importantly though, starting this process now gives us the most possible time to be successful for future iterations of NMA.

It is possible that our application will not be approved in the future either, making it impossible for NMA as it is currently organized to operate in Iran. Should this be the case, we will explore all viable options for re-organizing in a way that results in maximal inclusion for students around the world.

We also recognize that the negative impact of these sanctions extends far beyond NMA. Even if we could obtain a license to work in Iran, this would not make up for the many other ways in which Iranian science and scientists (and those from other countries impacted by sanctions) are cut off from the international science community.

We have therefore organized an outreach effort to bring together the energy of so many scientists outraged by this situation. We are pushing to get this issue covered in the press and appreciate the [statement of support](#) from the National Iranian American Council calling for the Treasury Department to act. If you have the ability to assist with this effort via press contacts, knowledge of effective lobbying methods, and/or community organizing skills,

please contact Konrad Kording through twitter (@KordingLab) or email (koerding@gmail.com). Through a coordinated effort from the scientific community as a whole, we hope to make long-lasting changes to these unreasonable and unnecessary restrictions.

Sincerely,  
The NMA team