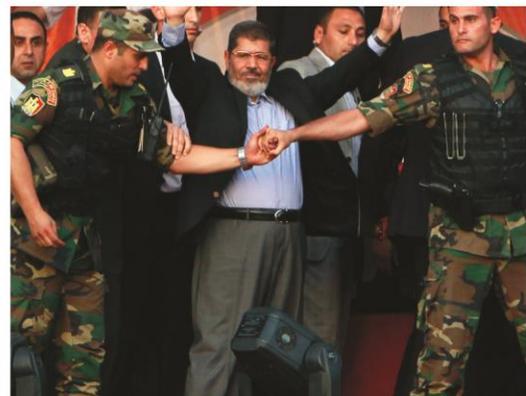
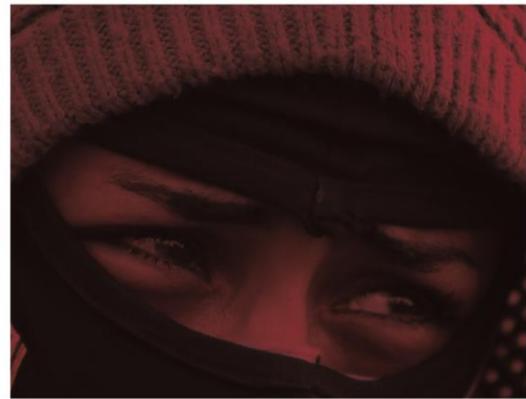


FACT SHEET

IRANIAN SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM

Iran – World’s Leading State Sponsor Of Terrorism | Relationship With Al-Qaeda |
Iran’s Links To 9/11 | The Iranian Regime’s Ideology | Pres. Rouhani’s Support of
Terrorism | History Of Terrorism | Other Resources

Prepared by Clarion Project National Security Analyst Ryan Mauro



IRANIAN SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM - FACT SHEET

Founded in 2006, Clarion Project is a non-profit, educational organization providing a platform for human rights activists and for challenging Islamic extremism through facts. Clarion Project is a registered 501 (c) (3).

Clarion's award-winning movies have been seen by **over 50 million people** around the world. They grapple with issues such as religious persecution, human rights, women's rights, the dangers of a nuclear Iran and what the concept of jihad means for the West. Our dynamic website, viewed by **over 900,000 unique visitors** annually, covers breaking news and provides expert analysis on extremism and the struggle for human rights.

Clarion Project's factsheets and films are used as teaching materials by professional educators, military intelligence, counter-terrorism specialists and human rights activists.

Clarion Project draws together Middle East experts, scholars and human rights activists from diverse backgrounds to promote tolerance, engage in dialogue and challenge extremism.

Website: www.clarionproject.org | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | Inquiries: press@clarionproject.org

IRANIAN SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM - FACT SHEET

IRAN – THE WORLD’S LEADING STATE SPONSOR OF TERRORISM

The U.S. government has consistently stated that Iran is the largest state sponsor of terrorism, providing a wide array of weaponry, funds, intelligence, safe harbor and logistical support to Shiite and Sunni terrorists. In some cases, Iran’s elite Revolutionary Guards Force directly perpetrates acts of terrorism. ¹

Congress has considered legislation requiring the State Department to label the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization.² The IRGC is currently on the Treasury Department’s list of Specially Designated Nationals involved in terrorism. It was added in 2007.^{3 4}

Iran has been on the State Department’s list of State Sponsors of Terrorism since 1984. Its 2013 Country Reports on Terrorism states that Iran is supporting Hezbollah, Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, the Syrian regime (also labeled a State Sponsor of Terrorism), Houthi rebels in Yemen, Shiite militants in Bahrain and Shiite militias in Iraq.⁵



A poster of (R-L) Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Hezbollah Sec-Gen Hassan Nasrallah, former Hezbollah Sec-Gen Sayyed Abbas al-Musawi and Lebanese cleric Sheikh Ragheb Harb

The State Department confirmed that Iran continues to work with Al-Qaeda elements, despite their expressed hostility towards one another. It stated: “Iran remained unwilling to bring to justice senior Al-Qaeda (AQ) members it continued to detain, and refused to publicly identify those senior members in its custody.

Iran allowed AQ facilitators Muhsin al-Fadhli and Adel Radi Saq al-Wahabi al-Harbi to operate a core facilitation pipeline through Iran, enabling AQ to move funds and fighters to South Asia and also to Syria.

¹<http://www.voanews.com/content/iran-is-leading-state-sponsor-of-terrorism-again/1452064.html>

² <http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/house-bill-would-designate-iran-s-revolutionary-guard-terrorist-group>

³ <http://www.treasury.gov/ofac/downloads/ctrlst.txt>

⁴ <http://www.foxnews.com/story/2007/08/15/us-to-label-iran-revolutionary-guard-terrorists/>

⁵ <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2013/224826.htm>

IRANIAN SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM - FACT SHEET

Al-Fadhli is a veteran AQ operative who has been active for years. Al-Fadhli began working with the Iran-based AQ facilitation network in 2009 and was later arrested by Iranian authorities. He was released in 2011 and assumed leadership of the Iran-based AQ facilitation network.”



Iran operates a global network, including in the U.S. and South America. In May 2013, a 500 page report by an Argentine state prosecutor said Iran has an “intelligence and terrorist network” in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile, Colombia, Guyana, Trinidad, Tobago and Suriname and elsewhere.⁶

The State Department also said Iran increased its presence in Africa. Iran is also known to work closely with North Korea on weapons of mass destruction programs. The IRGC is believed to have a presence in Sudan (another State Sponsor of Terrorism), where it oversees a supply route to Hamas.

⁶ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/29/us-argentina-iran-idUSBRE94S1F420130529>

IRANIAN SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM - FACT SHEET

IRAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH AL-QAEDA

The Clinton, Bush and Obama Administrations all agreed that Iran supports Al-Qaeda terrorists, despite their ideological differences.

In February 2014, the Treasury Department sanctioned three IRGC officers and one IRGC associate for supporting the Taliban and involvement in attacks in Afghanistan.⁷ The U.S. government also blacklisted an operative of the Olimzhon Adkhamovich Sadikov, also known as Jafar al-Uzbeki, for assisting Al-Qaeda from Iranian territory.

Sadikov is a member of an Al-Qaeda affiliate named the Islamic Jihad Union and is based in Mashhad, Iran. He assists Al-Qaeda members and other extremists with travel documents to and from Pakistan and Afghanistan. He also collects money for the greater Al-Qaeda network in Iran, where it is distributed to other affiliates such as Jabhat al-Nusra in Syria.

In October 2012, the U.S. Treasury Department sanctioned two Al-Qaeda leaders in Iran that manage its “critically important Iran-based funding and facilitation network.”⁸ The two terrorists were:

- Muhsin al-Fadhil, the leader of the Al-Qaeda pipeline in Iran. He arrived in Iran in 2009 and was detained. After he was released in 2011, he replaced Yasin al-Suri as the pipeline’s manager.
- Abdel Radi Saqr al-Wahabi al-Harbi joined the Iran-based network in early 2011 and acts as al-Fadhil’s deputy. He oversees the movement of Al-Qaeda members to Iraq and Afghanistan via Iran.

In July 2011, the U.S. Treasury Department sanctioned six Al-Qaeda operatives connected to an Iran-based “core pipeline” for Al-Qaeda’s operations which enables it to move personnel and resources back and forth from the Middle East to South Asia.⁹

The operatives were:

- Yasin al-Suri, who has served as Al-Qaeda’s representative in Iran since 2005. He oversees the transfer of money and recruits through Iran and negotiates the release of Al-Qaeda detainees held in Iran.
- Atiyah Abd al-Rahman, Al-Qaeda’s overall commander in the Pakistani tribal areas and previous Al-Qaeda ambassador to Iran.
- Umid Muhammadi, an Al-Qaeda facilitator and trainer involved with Al-Qaeda in Iraq. He has used his contact with the Iranian regime to request the release of detained Al-Qaeda members.

⁷ <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/jl2287.aspx>

⁸ <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/tg1741.aspx>

⁹ <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/tg1261.aspx>

IRANIAN SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM - FACT SHEET

- Salim Hasan Khalifa Rashid al-Kuwari, who is based in Qatar and works with the Iran-based Al-Qaeda operatives in arranging travel and money transfers.
- Abdallah Ghanim Mafuz Muslim al-Khawar, who is based in Qatar and delivers money, material and other items to Al-Qaeda's leaders in Iran. He also makes travel arrangements for terrorists.
- 'Ali Hasan 'Ali al-Ajmi is based in Kuwait and works with Yasin al-Suri. He provides travel and financial assistance to Al-Qaeda in general, Al-Qaeda in Iraq and the Taliban.

“By exposing Iran’s secret deal with al-Qaeda, allowing it to funnel funds and operatives through its territory, we are illuminating yet another aspect of Iran’s unmatched support for terrorism,” the U.S. Treasury press release stated.

In January 2009, the Treasury Department sanctioned four Al-Qaeda operatives linked to Iran.¹⁰ They were:

- Mustafa Hamid, who “negotiated a secret relationship between Usama Bin Laden and Iran” in the mid-1990s so Al-Qaeda members could transit the country. He acted as a liaison between the Iranian regime and Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. He was detained in Iran in 2003.
- Muhammad Rab'a al-Sayid al-Bahtiyti is a trusted aide to current Al-Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri. After the 9/11 attacks, he arranged for Zawahiri's daughters to travel to Iran. He was detained in Iran in 2003.
- Ali Saleh Husein, who oversaw the movement of Al-Qaeda members to Iran after the 9/11 attacks. He was also detained in 2003.
- Saad Bin Laden, a son of Osama Bin Laden who oversaw the movement of Bin Laden's family members to Iran after the 9/11 attacks. He also helped manage Al-Qaeda from Iran and was detained in 2003. He was reportedly allowed to leave Iran in September 2008. He was killed in a U.S. drone strike in 2009 in Pakistan.



Ayman al-Zawahiri, current leader of Al-Qaeda

The Al-Qaeda network in Iran has been tied to plots against the United States. In April 2013, two individuals linked to the network were arrested in Canada as they planned to derail a train going

¹⁰ <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/hp1360.aspx>

IRANIAN SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM - FACT SHEET

from New York to Toronto. Royal Canadian Mounted Police official James Malizia said, “The individuals were receiving support from Al Qaeda elements located in Iran. There is no information to indicate that these attacks were state-sponsored.”¹¹

The relationship between Iran and Al-Qaeda goes back to the early 1990s. According to the 9/11 Commission report, Iran agreed to assist Al-Qaeda in late 1991-1992 in carrying out operations against common enemies, chiefly the U.S. and Israel. Senior members of the group received explosives training inside Iran. Another group of Al-Qaeda members were trained in Lebanon by Iranian operatives in 1993.¹²

“The relationship between al-Qaeda and Iran demonstrated that Sunni-Shi’a divisions did not necessarily pose an insurmountable barrier to cooperation in terrorist operations,” the 9/11 Commission concluded.

Contact between the two sides continued throughout the 1990s. After Al-Qaeda’s attack on the *USS Cole* in Yemen in 2000, Iran wanted to further develop the relationship. The 9/11 Commission says Bin Laden did not pursue the opportunity because he worried it would strain his Saudi ties.

¹¹ <http://www.northcountrypublicradio.org/news/story/21836/20130423/canada-disrupts-al-qaeda-supported-major-terror-plot>

¹² <http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf>

IRANIAN SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM - FACT SHEET

IRAN'S LINKS TO 9/11

The 9/11 Commission said it “found no evidence that Iran or Hezbollah was aware of the planning for what later became the 9/11 attack” but that further investigation was needed into the issue. In December 2011, U.S. District Judge George B. Daniels ruled “that Iran and Hezbollah materially and directly supported al Qaeda in the September 11, 2001 attacks.”¹³

The 9/11 Commission reported that 8 to 10 of the 9/11 hijackers traveled through Iran between October 2000 and February 2001. They took advantage of an Iranian agreement to not stamp the passports of Al-Qaeda members going through the country. The travel of the hijackers appears to have been coordinated with Hezbollah, with one even boarding the same flight to Beirut as Hezbollah’s operations chief, Imad Mughniyah.

The judge was also persuaded by testimony from three Iranian defectors, including a former intelligence officer named Hamid Reza Zakeri that defected in 2001 and claimed to have foreknowledge of the 9/11 attacks. Zakeri provided alleged top-secret intelligence documents proving that Iran and Hezbollah helped orchestrate the attacks.



THE IRANIAN REGIME'S IDEOLOGY

The Iranian regime consists of Shiite Islamists who interpret their faith as a code of governance. This ideology holds that Muslims are required by Allah to wage global *jihad* until a messianic figure called the Mahdi appears to bring about final victory over Islam’s non-Muslim enemies.

¹³ <http://iran911case.com/>

IRANIAN SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM - FACT SHEET

In June 2014, for example, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said “the coming of Imam Zaman [Mahdi] is the definite promise by Allah.” Khamenei’s representative in the IRGC likewise said that Iran must pursue “regional preparedness” so that the Mahdi can appear.¹⁴

This unshakeable commitment to *jihad* is stated in the preamble of Iran’s constitution. It states that the government is committed to “the establishment of a universal holy government and the downfall of all others.”¹⁵

PRES. ROUHANI’S SUPPORT OF TERRORISM

In contrast to his public image of being a “moderate,” Iranian President Hassan Rouhani continues to support terrorism and has not given any indication that the regime will reconsider it. In fact, Hamas announced its ties to Iran would resume immediately following his election.¹⁶ Financial assistance to Hamas was revived by March 2014.¹⁷ Rouhani also publicly pledged continued support for the Syrian regime and Hezbollah.^{18 19}

Rouhani has also appointed numerous ministers with histories of supporting terrorism, extremism and gross human rights violations. His Defense Minister was an orchestrator of the bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Lebanon in 1983 that killed 241 American troops.²⁰



¹⁴ <http://dailycaller.com/2014/06/15/iran-supreme-leader-the-shiite-islamic-messiah-is-coming-to-free-the-world/>

¹⁵ [https://faculty.unlv.edu/pwerth/Const-Iran\(abridge\).pdf](https://faculty.unlv.edu/pwerth/Const-Iran(abridge).pdf)

¹⁶ <http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Zahar-Hamas-renewed-ties-with-Iran-following-Rouhani-election-334478>

¹⁷ <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/03/iran-hamas-finance-economy-resistance-axis-gaza.html>

¹⁸ <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/irans-new-president-hassan-rouhani-vows-to-support-syrian-regime-as-president-assad-vows-to-crush-rebels-with-iron-fist-8745857.html>

¹⁹ <http://www.timesofisrael.com/irans-rouhani-affirms-support-for-syria-hezbollah/>

²⁰ <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/aug/13/irans-new-defense-minister-hezbollah-chief-who-pla/>

IRANIAN SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM - FACT SHEET

THE REGIME'S HISTORY OF TERRORISM

Since 1979, Iran has been responsible for countless terrorist plots, directly through regime agents or indirectly through proxies like Hamas and Hezbollah.

The IRGC is believed to have had a direct role in the 1983 bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks and French military barracks in Beirut, Lebanon which killed 299 American and French soldiers.^{21 22} It was the deadliest terrorist attack in U.S. history before the 9/11 attacks. The Iranian regime carried out various other operations in Lebanon in the 1980s, including Hezbollah's kidnapping and torture of CIA station chief William Francis Buckley.²³ He never escaped and died in the custody of terrorists.

Iran is also believed to be responsible for the 1992 bombing of the Israeli embassy in Argentina that killed 29 people and the 1994 bombing of a Jewish cultural center in Buenos Aires that killed 85 people. Ali Akbar Velayati, a senior advisor to Supreme Leader Khamenei, is accused of orchestrating the 1994 attack.²⁴

On June 16, 1996, the Khobar Towers bombing took place in Saudi Arabia that killed 19 U.S. soldiers. It is widely thought that Iran orchestrated it. The 9/11 Commission concluded that Hezbollah, likely with the support of the Iranian regime, was the perpetrator. It said there are "signs" that Al-Qaeda also played a role.²⁵

After the attacks of September 11, 2001, the Iranian regime assisted the Taliban, Al-Qaeda and radical Shiite militias battling U.S. and allied soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq.²⁶ This support included safe harbors, training and the provision of advanced weapons including sophisticated improvised explosive devices. The Iranian support was also used to target the Iraqi and Afghan security forces.



Khobar Towers, Saudi Arabia

²¹ http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/USCOURTS-dcd-1_01-cv-01924/pdf/USCOURTS-dcd-1_01-cv-01924-0.pdf, http://www.weeklystandard.com/articles/secret-history-hezbollah_767144.html#

²² <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1981-1988/lebanon>

²³ Joseph Trento, *Prelude to Terror* (2005)

²⁴ <http://freebeacon.com/national-security/new-iranian-foreign-policy-head-approved-1994-terror-bombing/>

²⁵ <http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf>

²⁶ <http://www.clarionproject.org/analysis/iran-murdering-us-soldiers-afghanistran>

IRANIAN SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM - FACT SHEET

In 2006, the government of Azerbaijan arrested 15 citizens for involvement in an Iranian terror campaign to target Israeli and Western visitors.²⁷

There are strong indications of Iranian involvement in a 2007 terrorist plot against New York's JFK International Airport.²⁸ The plan was to blow up fuel tanks and pipelines leading to the site. Among those convicted was a radical Shiite imam. The FBI confirms that one of the individuals involved has links to "militant groups" in Iran and Venezuela and had regularly contact with Iranian authorities.²⁹

In 2008, authorities in Azerbaijan foiled an Iranian-Hezbollah plot to bomb the Israeli embassy in Baku.³⁰

In 2011, the U.S. government announced it foiled an Iranian terrorist plot to work with Mexican drug cartel members to assassinate the Saudi ambassador to the U.S. by bombing a Washington D.C. restaurant he frequented. The two-man cell also aspired to bomb the Saudi and Israeli embassies in the capital and in Argentina.³¹

In 2012, the U.S. State Department reported a "clear resurgence" in Iranian terrorist activity and that Hezbollah's "terrorist activity has reached a tempo unseen since the 1990s." The IRGC and/or Hezbollah were linked to terrorist plots in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, South Asia and the Far East.³²

The State Department's 2012 report says Iran was behind the attempted assassinations of Israeli diplomats in India and Georgia and bomb plots in Thailand and Nigeria.³³

Iran and Hezbollah are strongly suspected of involvement in the July 2012 bombing of a bus in Bulgaria with Israeli tourists that killed six people. In February 2012, terrorists planning a bombing campaign in Azerbaijan were arrested and linked to Iran and Hezbollah.³⁴ An Iran-linked series of attacks in Bahrain was also stopped.³⁵

²⁷ <http://articles.latimes.com/2009/may/30/world/fg-shadow30>

²⁸ <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/2217/iranian-terror-plot-jfk-airport>

²⁹ <http://www.fbi.gov/newyork/press-releases/2011/russell-defreitas-sentenced-to-life-in-prison-for-conspiring-to-commit-terrorist-attack-at-jfk-airport>

³⁰ <http://articles.latimes.com/2009/may/30/world/fg-shadow30>

³¹ <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/us-iran-tied-terror-plot-washington-dc-disrupted/story?id=14711933>

³² <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2012/209982.htm>

³³ <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2012/209985.htm>

³⁴ <http://www.jta.org/2012/02/22/news-opinion/world/azerbaijan-arrests-terror-suspects-linked-to-hezbollah-iran>

³⁵ <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/prosecutors-iran-syria-aided-bomb-assassination-plot-bahrain/story?id=15472224>

IRANIAN SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM - FACT SHEET

It also confirmed that Iran continued to train Taliban elements and provide them with weapons including rocket-propelled grenades, rockets, mortars and explosives. The allegation of Iranian support for the Taliban does not appear in the State Department's 2013 report.

OTHER RESOURCES

State Sponsors: Iran (Council on Foreign Relations)

<http://www.cfr.org/iran/state-sponsors-iran/p9362>

Country Reports on Terrorism 2013 (U.S. State Department)

<http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2013/index.htm>

Iran's Terrorism Problem (Brookings Institute)

<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/iran-at-saban/posts/2013/11/21-iran-terrorism-problem-beirut-bombing-byman>

Iran's Support For Terrorism Worldwide (The Washington Institute)

<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/testimony/LevittTestimony20140304.pdf>

Iranian Terrorist Policy and "Export of Revolution" (IDC Herzliya)

<http://www.herzliyaconference.org/uploads/2903iranian.pdf>