

Iranian Support for Terrorism and Violations of Human Rights

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In 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article Three of this document states that “everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.”¹ This week, marked here in the Canadian Parliament as “Iran Accountability Week,” it is appropriate to consider Iran’s long record of supporting and carrying out terrorist attacks in express violation of this right to “security of person.”

Iran has a long history of violating human rights at home, but some of its more recent violations are taking place in Syria (where Tehran is actively supporting Bashar al-Assad’s government’s targeting of the Syrian civilian population) and around the world (where Iranian agents and proxy groups like Hezbollah are targeting diplomats and civilians alike for assassination). In fact, these violations—both at home and abroad—are now more interconnected than ever: it is frequently the case that the people who direct and oversee the regime’s human rights abuses at home and abroad are the same people who direct and oversee the regime’s foreign terrorist activities and its nuclear and missile programs.

Iranian Human Rights Abuses at Home

Iran’s Human Rights record at home is truly abysmal. In 2012 Iran conducted among the highest number of executions in fifteen years, executing at least 580 people. This number is likely to be much higher, but due to Iran’s control of the press and opaque judicial system, it is difficult to get a more accurate number. Sixty of these executions were carried out publicly, including public hangings on cranes, in order to intimidate people even further. The number of executions increased dramatically following the 2009 Green revolution protests.² The Iran Human Rights group reported that in the period between April 16 and May 19 of this year, 62 people were executed in Iran.³ Executions are only one metric of Human Rights violations, there is also substantial evidence of extreme censorship and surveillance that is used to

¹ United Nations Department of Public Information, “Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights,

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/Language.aspx?LangID=eng>.

² “Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran 2012,” Iran Human Rights, April 4, 2013,

http://iranhr.net/IMG/pdf/Rapport_iran_2012-GB-250313-BD.pdf

³ “Two Prisoners Executed for Espionage in Tehran this Morning- At Least 62 Executions in Iran Since April 16,” Iran Human Rights, May 19, 2013, <http://iranhr.net/spip.php?article2781>.

track dissidents and detain them, in addition to brutal techniques to suppress them. During the 2009 revolution bystanders caught on video the death of Neda Agha-Soltan. Joining in the protests, she was shot in the chest by a man who was revealed to be part of the Basij.⁴ Now, with elections only two weeks away, Iran has stepped up its repressive behavior in order to stymie the possibility of a repeat of 2009.⁵

Canadian officials are familiar with Iran's human rights abuses at home from the firsthand experiences of Canadian citizens. In June 2003, Canadian-Iranian Journalist Zahra Kazemi was arrested for taking pictures of protesters outside of a prison. Three weeks later, she was dead. Initially, the Iranians said that she died of a stroke while being interrogated. Later, Iran's vice-President would admit that she died as a result of being beaten. Two years later, a doctor who had examined her after she was admitted to the hospital came forward with evidence that she had in fact been severely tortured, including suffering a fractured skull, broken fingers, missing fingernails, a crushed big toe, a broken nose, abdominal bruising, and more. Her death was a direct result of torture.⁶

Iranian Human Rights Abuses in Syria

When the revolution in Syria began in March 2011, Tehran dispatched the Qods Force to help the Syrian regime stifle protesters. A month later, the US government designated the entire IRGC-Qods Force under Executive Order 13572 for human rights violations in Syria, specifically for repressing the people of Syria, the use of violence and torture against them, and the arbitrary arrests and detentions of peaceful protesters.⁷

Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) forces as well as Iranian Law Enforcement Forces (LEF) have also been active in Syria and have also been designated by the US Treasury Department for human rights abuse. Both of these forces provided material support to the Syrian General Intelligence Directorate (GID). They also dispatched personnel to Damascus to assist the Syrian government in suppressing the Syrian people. The deputy chief of LEF Ahmad Reza Radan traveled to Damascus in April 2011 where he met with Syrian security services and provided expertise to aid the Syrian government crackdown. MOIS was also designated for its support to several different terrorist groups, including, al-Qaeda, Al-Qaeda in Iraq, Hezbollah and Hamas.⁸

However, it is the Qods Force that is in charge and is the most active Iranian unit in Syria. In May 2011, the third highest ranking Qods Force officer, Mohsen Chizari,

⁴ "Iran doctor tells of Neda's death," *BBC News*, June 25, 2009.

⁵ "Annual Report on the Death Penalty in Iran 2012," Iran Human Rights, April 4, 2013, http://iranhr.net/IMG/pdf/Rapport_iran_2012-GB-250313-BD.pdf

⁶ "In Depth: Zahra Kazemi," *CBC News*, November 27, 2007, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/kazemi/>.

⁷ US Executive Order 13572, "Blocking Property of Certain Persons With Respect to Human Rights Abuses in Syria," April 29, 2011, <http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/13572.pdf>

⁸ US Department of Treasury, "Treasury Designates Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security for Human Rights Abuses and Support for Terrorism," press release, February 16, 2012, <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/tg1424.aspx>; US Department of Treasury, "Treasury Sanctions Syrian, Iranian Security Forces for Involvement in Syrian Crackdown," press release, June 29, 2011, <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/tg1224.aspx>.

who serves as the Commander of Operations and Training, was designated for human rights violations helping the Syrian government violently repress protesters. Chizari had previously been detained by U.S. forces in 2006 in Baghdad with evidence showing he was importing weapons into Iraq from Iran, however the Iraqi government released him.⁹

In January 2013, senior Qods Force officer Hassan Shateri was killed in Jamaraya, Syria, near the border with Lebanon when Israel attacked a convoy of Iranian weapons being delivered to Hezbollah in Lebanon. General Hassan Shateri had been a member of the Qods Force for three decades. Iran described his work as “war reconstruction” in Lebanon, but gave no explanation for why he was in Syria. Hezbollah flags flew prominently at his funeral and a representative of Supreme Leader Khamenei eulogized him calling him “our very own Imad Mughniyah” –a reference to Hezbollah’s late terrorist commander. The comparison of Shateri to Mughniyah, is itself an indication that Shateri was responsible for something more than just “reconstruction” in Syria and Lebanon. In fact, Shateri had already been designated by the US Department of Treasury in August 2010 under the alias “Hessam Khoshnevis” for providing financial, material, and technological support to Hezbollah and as the personal representative of President Ahmadinejad to Lebanon.¹⁰

Not surprisingly, the US Treasury Department has also designated the head of the Qods Force, Qassem Soleimani, not only for terrorist activities (themselves human rights abuses) but also for human rights violations in Syria. In May 2011 Soleimani was designated for supporting the Syrian government by using violence to repress the Syrian people and for acting as the conduit for Iranian material support for the Syrian GID.¹¹

Later that year he was also involved in the plot to assassinate the Saudi Ambassador to the US, in a popular Washington DC restaurant. The Treasury Department designated him this time as a global terrorist for his role overseeing the officers involved in the plot.¹² British officials agreed, designating Soleimani and others involved in the plot themselves as well.¹³ This plot against the Saudi diplomat, director-general of MI5 Jonathan Evans explained in June 2012, was likely tied to senior Iranian leadership. The plot was the work of the IRGC, he noted, adding “and of course the IRGC leads straight back to the Iranian leadership.”¹⁴ In the assessment by Director of National Intelligence Gen. James Clapper, the Arbabsiar plot “shows that some Iranian officials—probably including Supreme Leader Ali

⁹ Will Fulton, “Iran’s Global Force Projection Network: IRGC Qods Force and Lebanese Hezbollah,” AEI Iran Tracker, March 20, 2013.

¹⁰ US Department of Treasury, “U.S. Treasury Department Targets Iran’s Support for Terrorism Treasury Announces New Sanctions Against Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force Leadership,” press release, August 3, 2010, <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/tg810.aspx>.

¹¹ US Department of Treasury, “Administration Takes Additional Steps to Hold the Government of Syria Accountable for Violent Repression Against the Syrian People,” press release, May 18, 2011, <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/tg1181.aspx>

¹² U.S. Treasury Department, “Treasury Sanctions Five Individuals Tied to Iranian Plot to Assassinate the Saudi Arabian Ambassador to the United States,” October 11, 2011.

¹³ HM Treasury Department, *General Notice: Renewal of Final Designations, Terrorist Asset-Freezing etc. Act 2010*, October 10, 2012.

¹⁴ Jonathan Evans, Director General of the Security Service, Address at the Lord Mayor’s Annual Defence and Security Lecture, London, June 25, 2012.

Khamenei—have changed their calculus and are now more willing to conduct an attack in the United States in response to real or perceived U.S. actions that threaten the regime.”¹⁵

Iran has also helped the Assad regime crack down on social media. In February 2011, Syria allowed access to social media websites such as Facebook and YouTube for the first time since 2007. At the time, some viewed this as a positive attempt at reform in order to allow freedom of expression. By May there was a 105 percent increase in the number of Facebook users in Syria, but it also became clear that the regime was using social media to track dissidents.¹⁶ US officials reported that in addition to providing weapons, riot gear, and training, Iran was also supplying sophisticated surveillance equipment to the Syrian government. The Syrian regime used it to track down leaders of the protest movements and arrest them.¹⁷ The regime demanded that dissidents turn over their passwords to Social Media accounts, allowing the regime to post materials that discredit the activists as leaders. During this same period the government was also strategically cutting electricity and telephone service in neighborhoods with the most unrest.¹⁸

Iran’s primary proxy terrorist group, Hezbollah, is now also deeply involved in Syria despite the fact that Hezbollah’s fighting alongside the murderous Assad regime is costing Hezbollah significant political standing back home in Lebanon—not least because Hezbollah’s involvement is dragging a sectarian bloodbath over the border into Lebanon. Hezbollah’s destabilizing activities in Syria have, as one Lebanese journalist put it, “torn away the party’s mask of virtue.”¹⁹ In a recent editorial written in a Lebanese paper that is traditionally supportive of Hezbollah, the editor in chief wrote: “Quite frankly, no one—from Hezbollah leadership all the way down to its popular base—wanted to see the party’s fighters engaged in the Syrian conflict.”²⁰

Nonetheless, Hezbollah’s activity is increasing. Just last week US Secretary of State John Kerry acknowledged “there are several thousands of Hezbollah militia forces on the ground in Syria who are contributing to this violence.”²¹ Hezbollah’s expertise in urban warfare is proving particularly effective in places like Qusayr. One activist noted that “battling Hezbollah is very difficult compared to the army, Hezbollah are more professional than the army.”²² In August 2012, Hezbollah was re-designated by the US Department of Treasury, this time not just as a terrorist organization but for

¹⁵ Statement of James R. Clapper, *Worldwide Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community*, January 2012.

¹⁶ Jennifer Preston, “Seeking to Disrupt Protesters, Syria Cracks Down on Social Media,” *New York Times*, May 22, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/23/world/middleeast/23facebook.html>

¹⁷ Joby Warrick, “Iran reportedly aiding Syrian crackdown,” *Washington Post*, May 27, 2011, http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2011-05-27/world/35233022_1_syrian-crackdown-Qods-force-iranian-interests-section.

¹⁸ Jennifer Preston, “Seeking to Disrupt Protesters, Syria Cracks Down on Social Media,” *New York Times*, May 22, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/23/world/middleeast/23facebook.html>

¹⁹ Michael Young, “Syria Widens Hezbollah’s Contradictions,” *Al Arabiya News*, October 4, 2012

²⁰ Ibrahim al-Amin, “On Hezbollah’s Syrian Intervention,” *Al-Akhbar*, May 21, 2013, <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/hezbollahs-syrian-intervention>.

²¹ Arshad Mohammed, “Kerry warns Syria’s Assad against rejecting political solution,” Reuters, May 22, 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/22/us-syria-crisis-kerry-idUSBRE94L0P720130522>.

²² Liz Sly, “Assad forces gaining ground in Syria,” *Washington Post*, May 11, 2013, http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-05-11/world/39297570_1_urban-warfare-government-forces-rebels.

its destabilizing activities in Syria.²³ A month later, Hezbollah leaders were designated by the Treasury department for their roles in Syria, noting not just the group's close coordination with the Qods Force, but also that Hezbollah, "consistently uses terrorism against civilian targets to achieve its goals, and this trend has only increased recently."²⁴ Under Nasrallah's leadership, Treasury reported, Hezbollah has provided "training, advice, and extensive logistical support" to the Assad regime in support of its violent crackdown on the Syrian people.²⁵

Iranian Human Rights Abuses through Sponsorship of Terrorism

Terrorism has long been a tool of Iranian foreign policy. In April 2008, General Petraeus testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee about the flow of sophisticated Iranian arms to Shia militants in Iraq. The military's understanding of Iran's support for such groups crystallized, Petraeus explained, with the capture of a number of prominent Shia militants and several members of the Qods Force operating in Iraq as well.²⁶

In case it was not already clear to General Petraeus that Qods Force chief General Qassem Suleimani was calling the shots for Iran in Iraq, the head of the Qods Force reportedly sent the commander of coalition forces a message in early 2008 to make the point. Conveyed by a senior Iraqi leader, the message came just as Iraqi and coalition forces initiated Operation Charge of the Knights, a concerted effort to target Iraqi Shia militias in Baghdad and Basra. The text message read:

General Petraeus, you should know that I, Qassem Suleimani, control the policy for Iran with respect to Iraq, Lebanon, Gaza, and Afghanistan. And indeed, the ambassador in Baghdad is a Qods Force member. The individual who's going to replace him is a Qods Force member.²⁷

Perhaps the message should not have come as such a surprise, coming from a man known for being aggressive in the belief that "offense is the best defense."²⁸ The crux of the message, however, was no surprise at all. Several months earlier, in October 2007, Petraeus confirmed to the press that he had "absolute assurance" that several Iranians detained by coalition forces were Revolutionary Guardsmen. "The Qods Force controls the policy for Iraq; there should be no confusion about that

²³ US Department of Treasury, "Treasury Targets Hizballah for Supporting the Assad Regime," press release, August 10, 2012, <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/tg1676.aspx>.

²⁴ US Department of Treasury, "Treasury Designates Hizballah Leadership," press release, September 13, 2012, <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/tg1709.aspx>

²⁵ "Treasury Designates Hizballah Leadership," U.S. Department of the Treasury, September 13, 2012, <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/tg1709.aspx>

²⁶ General David H. Petraeus, U.S. Army, Commanding General, Multinational Force Iraq, "The Situation In Iraq And Progress By The Government Of Iraq In Meeting Benchmarks And Achieving Reconciliation," Testimony Before the Senate Armed Services Committee, April 8, 2008

²⁷ "Interview and Moderated Q&A with General David Petraeus," Institute for the Study of War, Washington, DC, January 22, 2010, p. 40-41, <http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/P4%20TRANSCRIPT.pdf>

²⁸ Ali Alfoneh, "Iran's Most Dangerous General," Middle Eastern Outlook, No. 4, American Enterprise Institute, July 13, 2011, <http://www.aei.org/article/foreign-and-defense-policy/regional/middle-east-and-north-africa/irans-most-dangerous-general/>

either," he noted, adding that "The ambassador is a Qods Force member."²⁹

One might assume Iran would behave more cautiously today, at a time when it has come under increasing international pressure over its pursuit of nuclear weapons, its suppression of human rights at home, and its support of terrorism abroad. Indeed, the U.S. government designated the Qods Force as a terrorist group in 2007 for providing material support to the Taliban, Iraqi Shiite militants, and other terrorist organizations.

Iran's use of terrorism as a tool of foreign policy, however, goes back as far as the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Writing in 1986, the CIA assessed in a now declassified report titled "Iranian Support for International Terrorism" that while Iran's support for terrorism was meant to further its national interest, it also stemmed from the clerical regime's perception "that it has a religious duty to export its Islamic revolution and to wage, by whatever means, a constant struggle against the perceived oppressor states."³⁰

A 1989 CIA report highlights several factors that made Iran more likely to take increased risks in support of terrorism—factors that faded somewhat after the mid-1990s but that are now coming back with a vengeance. The first was the dominance of radical elements within the clerical leadership, which translated into significant Iranian hostility toward the West. Then as now, there was little chance more pragmatic leaders would come to the fore. Furthermore, igniting tensions abroad could shift popular attention away from domestic problems, while asymmetrical warfare provided Tehran with a potent weapon at a time when its military and economy were weak.

Underlying Iranian grievances with the West exacerbated these tensions in the late 1980s in much the same way that they have today. In the late 1980s, Iranian anger was fed by the accidental 1988 downing of an Iranian airliner by the USS Vincennes, as well as anger over the publication of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, deemed by Iran to be offensive to Islam. Now, the Iranian authorities' anger is fed by increasing U.S. and European sanctions plus Tehran's conviction that the West is pursuing a "soft overthrow" of the Islamic Republic by use of modern communications to whip up protests. Tehran thinks that the West caused the 2009 protests in Iran and is behind the protests shaking Syria now.

According to CIA reporting in the late 1980s, "Iranian leaders view terrorism as an important instrument of foreign policy that they use both to advance national goals and to export the regime's Islamic revolutionary ideals." The CIA noted that Iran had already "supported and sometimes directed terrorist operations by Hezbollah" described as "a thriving Shia fundamentalist movement in Lebanon." Iran had also "smuggled explosives into Saudi Arabia and conducted terrorist operations against Kuwait targets." Iran, the CIA concluded, would "keep the United States as a primary terrorist target" for itself and its surrogates for a variety of reasons, including the U.S. military presence in the Gulf, the recent reflagging of Kuwaiti oil tankers, the seizure of an Iranian ship laying mines in the Gulf, and an attack on an

²⁹ Paul Von Zielbauer, "U.S. Calls Iranian Official Part of Elite Force," *New York Times*, October 8, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/08/world/middleeast/08iraq.html>

³⁰ "Iranian Support for International Terrorism," Directorate of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, November 22, 1986, Approved for Release June 1999, <http://www.foia.cia.gov/>

Iranian oil platform used to support Iranian military operations.³¹

But when it comes to Iranian sponsorship of terrorism, Tehran's primary terrorist proxy group is Hezbollah. The relationship between the two has been described by US Director of National Intelligence James Clapper as "a partnership arrangement[,] with the Iranians as the senior partner."³² This "strategic partnership," as the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) director Matthew Olsen put it, is the product of a long evolution from the 1980s, when Hezbollah was just a proxy of Iran."³³

Iran has used Hezbollah networks for a variety of terrorist activities, from carrying out assassinations of Iranian dissidents, to bombing the Israeli Embassy in Argentina in 1992 and the AMIA Jewish community center in Argentina in 1994 or the Khobar towers military barracks in Saudi Arabia in 1996. Hezbollah's Unit 1800 is dedicated to supporting Palestinian terrorist groups and infiltrating Hezbollah's own operatives into Israel to carry out reconnaissance and attacks there, while its Unit 3800 was established to train Iraqi Shia militants and conduct attacks targeting Coalition forces in Iraq.

Recently, however, Iran's use of terrorism has been even more closely linked to the regime's nuclear ambitions. In January 2010, a sticky bomb assassinated Professor Masoud Ali Mohammadi a particularly important individual to Iran's nuclear program.³⁴ This came on the heels of Stuxnet and Flame computer viruses,³⁵ Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) defections³⁶, and sabotage through front companies of some of their centrifuges.³⁷ But the assassination of Professor Mohammadi with a sticky bomb in Tehran pushed Iran to make two important decisions. First, the Qods force established a dedicated unit to target western diplomatic interests around the world, called Unit 400. Second, Hezbollah was instructed to target Israeli tourists in an effort to deter the Israelis or others from taking action against the Iranian nuclear program now, and also, to send a message that if anybody does target their nuclear facilities, more asymmetric terrorist capabilities would be awaiting them.³⁸ The deliberate targeting of civilians is another clear example of Iran's disregard for human rights.

The results were made clear last July when Hezbollah blew up a bus in Burgas, Bulgaria, resulting in the deaths of five Israeli tourists and the Bulgarian bus driver and injuring thirty others. Just two weeks prior, a Hezbollah agent had been arrested in Cyprus. And six months before that, in January 2012, a foiled Hezbollah plot had targeted Israeli tourists on a ski trip to Bulgaria. A week after the successful Burgas

³² Statements of James Clapper and Lt. Gen Ronald Burgess, *Worldwide Threat to U.S. National Security*.

³³ Statement of Matthew G. Olsen, *Homeland Threats and Agency Responses*.

³⁴ Alan Cowell, "Blast Kills Physics Professor in Tehran," *New York Times*, January 12, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/13/world/middleeast/13iran.html>.

³⁵ "Stuxnet: Targeting Iran's Nuclear Programme," IISS *Strategic Comments*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, February 2012, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13567888.2011.575612>.

³⁶ Laura Rozen, "Where is Ali-Reza Asgari?" *Politico*, December 31, 2010, http://www.politico.com/blogs/laurarozen/1210/Where_is_Alireza_Asgari_.html

³⁷ "Stuxnet: Targeting Iran's Nuclear Programme," IISS *Strategic Comments*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, February 2012, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13567888.2011.575612>.

³⁸ Author interview, Israeli Intelligence officials, September 13, 2012.

attack in July, which involved at least one Hezbollah operative who was a dual Lebanese-Canadian citizen, the Bulgarians found a Qods Force officer—possibly a woman with Canadian citizenship—conducting surveillance of one of the main synagogues in Sofia.

Following the arrest of self-confessed Hezbollah operative Hossam Yaacoub in Cyprus in July 2012, Yaacoub told Cypriot police: “I don’t believe that the missions I executed in Cyprus were connected with the preparation of a terrorist attack in Cyprus. It was just collecting information about the Jews, and this is what my organization is doing everywhere in the world.”³⁹

Hezbollah has a history of deliberately targeting civilians. For example, in the July 2006 war Hezbollah deliberately targeted Israeli civilian communities with rocket fire. Israeli intelligence recovered Hezbollah rocket range cards during the war. From one launching position, for example, 56 of the 91 Israeli targets listed were civilian targets. Hezbollah knew this, but chose these targets anyway. Some of the civilian targets included three large cities in the north, but other targets included agricultural and community settlements, civilian outposts, industrial zones, and even a few Druze villages.⁴⁰

Following the 2009 Green Revolution in Iran, the Qods Force gained prominence at the expense of the Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) over the latter’s perceived soft-handed approach to suppressing political protests in Iran. Whereas some MOIS officials were reportedly uncomfortable with orders to violently crack down on peaceful, civilian protestors, the Qods Force had no such compunctions. The blatant human rights abuses that followed across Iran later had a direct impact on Iran’s abuse of human rights abroad. Within the Qods Force, quick promotions of mediocre managers willing to follow through on orders to abuse human rights diluted the group’s professional capabilities at the management level.⁴¹ The problem was compounded when, desperate to quickly implement Iran’s new attack strategy and exact revenge for covert attacks against its nuclear program, the Qods Force exchanged tradecraft for speed, cut corners, and reaped what it sowed. Qods Force planners were stretched thin by the rapid tempo of their new attack plan, and were forced to throw together random teams of operatives who had not trained together.⁴² Worse, despite Iran’s preference for signature attacks targeting embassies, diplomats, or other official targets—and despite concerns by U.S. intelligence that Iran was developing contingency plans for such attacks targeting the United States and its allies—Iranian planners found their chosen targets too well protected and settled for less-hardened targets (civilians).⁴³

Conclusion

Let there be no doubt: Iran is involved in severe human rights violations, both at home and abroad. Since 2009 these violations have become more intertwined than

³⁹ Depositions of Hossam Taleb Yaacoub (some spelled Yaakoub), Criminal Number Σ/860/12, File Page 187, by interviewing police officer Sergeant Michael Costas. Depositions taken on, July 22, 2012.

⁴⁰ Reuven Erlich, Declassified Secret Report on Hizballah’s Use of Civilians as Human Shields, Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center at the Center for Special Studies, Appendix 1 (v) November 2006, <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsourc/arabs/hizreport.html>

⁴¹ “Iran: IRGC Rise Increases the Influence of Radicals,” Oxford Analytica, November 5, 2009.

⁴² Judith Miller, “Bagels and Plots: Notes on the NYPD’s High Holy Days Threat Briefing.”

⁴³ Statement of Dennis C. Blair, *Annual Threat Assessment of the Intelligence Community*.

ever before. The partnership with the terrorist organization Hezbollah has amplified these violations with instructions from Iranian leadership to target civilian tourists in terrorist attacks around the world and the Oods Force's own plots targeting American, British, Saudi and Israeli diplomats as well. And now, Iran and Hezbollah provide significant assistance to the Assad regime's brutal campaign against its own people—the latest in a terrible litany of Iranian human rights abuses around the world. Indeed, the UN Human Rights body is considering a non-binding resolution condemning the intervention of foreign combatants fighting on behalf of the Syrian regime in Qusayr.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ AFP, "UN rights body mulls resolution on foreign fighters in Syria's Qusair," *Daily Star* (Beirut), May 28, 2013, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2013/May-28/218644-un-rights-body-mulls-resolution-on-foreign-fighters-in-syrias-qusair.ashx#axzz2UattzfVT>.