

# Trends in Iranian External Assassination, Surveillance, and Abduction Plots

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**Law enforcement actions and financial designations are appropriate but insufficient—the attacks will not stop without firm diplomatic isolation, travel and study bans on family members of Iranian leaders, and other direct consequences for regime decisionmakers.**

**O**ver the past forty-plus years, Iran has targeted dissidents, Western opponents, Israelis, and Jews in assassination plots, abduction plots, and surveillance efforts that facilitate both. It has carried out these operations around the world, in countries with strong or weak law enforcement agencies, border crossings, and intelligence services. And it has done so consistently, including at times and places where such actions could undermine its diplomatic efforts, such as negotiations over the nuclear program. This study, based on a dataset of 98 Iranian plots from 1979 through 2021, maps out key trends in Iranian external operations plotting...

**To read the full study, download the PDF above or visit the CTC website (<https://ctc.usma.edu/trends-in-iranian-external-assassination-surveillance-and-abduction-plots/>). ❖**

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