



Submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security

Review of the Listing of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)

Submitted by: Australian Iranian Community Alliance (AICA)

Date: 23 January 2026

1. Who We Are and Why We Are Submitting

The Australian Iranian Community Alliance (AICA) is a non-profit, non-partisan organisation representing Iranian-Australian community organisations and networks across Australia. AICA engages with public institutions and civil society on matters relating to community safety, inclusion, democratic participation, and social cohesion.

AICA's membership and networks include individuals and organisations active in journalism, cultural production, professional fields, academia, and community advocacy. This breadth provides AICA with insight into how national security settings are experienced across different segments of the Iranian-Australian community.

AICA makes this submission because national security measures adopted by Australia can have direct and indirect effects on Australian communities. These measures shape whether communities feel protected, whether individuals are confident to report concerns, and whether people are able to participate openly in public life without fear or intimidation.

This submission is provided as a community-impact and public-interest contribution. It does not present classified material, does not assess intelligence, and does not seek to substitute for the role of security or law-enforcement agencies.

2. Purpose of This Submission

This submission is made to assist the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security in its review of the continued listing of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a state sponsor of terrorism under the Criminal Code.

The purpose of this submission is to:

- explain how the operation of national security listings is experienced by affected communities within Australia;
- examine why sustained and coherent national security settings are important for Australia's security, institutional readiness, and democratic resilience; and



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- identify practical considerations relevant to maintaining legitimacy, proportionality, and public confidence in the legislative framework over time.

3. Basis of Information and Scope

This submission draws on a combination of publicly available material and community-level information. In particular, it is informed by:

- publicly available reporting and analysis by recognised international and Australian organisations;
- public statements and policy positions of Australian and allied governments; and
- information shared with AICA by Iranian-Australians regarding experiences of fear, pressure, and withdrawal from civic activity.

AICA recognises the distinction between Parliament's oversight role and the responsibilities of executive agencies for investigation, designation, and enforcement. The observations contained in this submission are intended to inform the Committee's consideration of public interest and community impact, rather than to replicate intelligence or evidentiary assessments.

4. National Security Considerations Relevant to the Review

In assessing the continued operation of the IRGC listing, it is important to consider not only past conduct, but the broader threat environment that the legislation is designed to address.

The IRGC is not a conventional non-state actor. It is a formal component of a foreign state's military and security apparatus, operating with access to state resources, intelligence capabilities, and institutional reach. This structural characteristic distinguishes it from non-state extremist organisations and has implications for how risk manifests and evolves over time.

Contemporary national security challenges increasingly involve indirect and adaptive methods, including intimidation, coercion, influence operations, and the use of affiliated or intermediary networks. Such methods are often calibrated to remain below the threshold of overt violence, while still exerting sustained pressure on individuals, institutions, and communities.

Australia's national security framework recognises that these forms of activity require forward-looking legal settings. Listing mechanisms contribute to deterrence, support early intervention, and assist authorities in responding to threats that are transnational, state-linked, and capable of evolving in response to countermeasures.

From a national security perspective, continuity and clarity in the operation of listing frameworks enhance institutional preparedness. They reduce uncertainty, support coordination across agencies, and signal that Australia remains equipped to address complex security challenges consistent with democratic values and the rule of law.



5. Relevance of Sustained National Security Settings

National security frameworks do not operate in isolation from the broader social and democratic environment. Their credibility and effectiveness are influenced by whether they are understood, trusted, and perceived as stable by the public.

Where legal settings appear inconsistent or subject to abrupt change, affected communities may interpret this as uncertainty about the seriousness of particular threats. Over time, this can undermine confidence in institutions and discourage cooperation with authorities.

Conversely, sustained and transparent application of national security measures reinforces predictability and trust. This is particularly important in an open and pluralistic society such as Australia, where community engagement and voluntary reporting play a critical role in maintaining security.

6. Community Experiences in Australia

Information shared with AICA indicates that national security threats with an overseas dimension can have tangible domestic effects on civic participation and social cohesion within Australia.

a. Fear of consequences for family members overseas

Many individuals report that their primary concern is not personal safety in Australia, but the possibility that public visibility or advocacy may expose relatives overseas to pressure or harm. This fear can act as a powerful deterrent to lawful participation in public debate.

b. Harassment and perceived monitoring

Community members have raised concerns about being photographed at events, approached in ways that feel intimidating, or otherwise discouraged from public engagement. Even where individual concerns cannot be substantiated in isolation, their cumulative effect contributes to anxiety and restraint.

c. Online harassment and reputational pressure

Some individuals describe coordinated online harassment or reputational targeting intended to isolate them socially or professionally. In smaller community networks, reputational harm can have outsized consequences.

d. Withdrawal from lawful civic participation

As a result of these concerns, some community members reduce or cease participation in protests, public forums, media engagement, or advocacy, despite acting lawfully.



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These dynamics have broader implications for democratic participation. When segments of the Australian public disengage from civic life due to fear or intimidation, social cohesion and trust in institutions are weakened.

7. Democratic Participation and Social Cohesion

Democratic participation relies on the ability of individuals to express views, organise collectively, and engage with institutions without fear of reprisal. Where intimidation concerns discourage participation, the effects extend beyond individual communities.

Reduced participation weakens the diversity of voices in public discourse and can exacerbate social fragmentation. Over time, this undermines the inclusive character of Australia's democratic system.

From this perspective, national security measures that address state-linked threats also serve a democratic function. By helping to mitigate intimidation and coercion, they support the conditions necessary for open civic life.

8. Practical Considerations for Community Confidence

To ensure that listing mechanisms have meaningful domestic impact, AICA highlights the importance of the following practical considerations:

- clear and accessible reporting pathways for intimidation and harassment concerns, including guidance on which agencies to approach;
- visible and sustained community engagement by relevant authorities to build trust and understanding;
- coordination across law-enforcement, migration, financial, and regulatory systems to avoid gaps or inconsistencies; and
- ongoing parliamentary oversight to ensure proportionality, accountability, and public confidence.

9. Recommendations

AICA respectfully recommends that Parliament:

- Support the continued operation of the IRGC listing as part of a national security framework designed to address state-linked threats operating through indirect and adaptive methods.
- Maintain continuity and clarity in the application of listing mechanisms, recognising their preventative and deterrent functions within Australia's broader security architecture.
- Recognise the domestic democratic implications of state-linked security threats, including their impact on community confidence, reporting behaviour, and civic participation.
- Ensure ongoing parliamentary oversight to safeguard proportionality, transparency, and public trust in national security legislation.



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10. Conclusion

For many Iranian-Australians, the operation of the IRGC listing is closely linked to whether they feel protected and supported in exercising their democratic rights in Australia.

A clear, proportionate, and transparent approach to addressing state-linked security risks strengthens democratic participation, protects affected communities, and reinforces confidence in the rule of law.

AICA would welcome the opportunity to provide further community-based information to the Committee if requested.

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