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Review into the listing of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a state sponsor of terrorism

Australia's Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism (Special Envoy) was appointed by the Prime Minister on 9 July 2024.

The terms of reference for her appointment note:

“The surge of reported antisemitic incidences has occurred in both physical and online contexts. These threaten the safety and security not only of Australia’s Jewish community but also of Australia as a whole and its future as a peaceful, free, cohesive and diverse multicultural society.”¹

The office of the Special Envoy appreciates the opportunity to make a submission to the Committee's inquiry into the listing of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a state sponsor of terrorism.

In view of the known conduct of the IRGC over a long period of time, and particularly its connection – and that of the Iranian Government more broadly – to significant antisemitic attacks in Australia, the Special Envoy strongly supports the Australian Government's decision to list the IRGC under the relevant legislative framework.

The Special Envoy notes the assessment by the Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), shared by the Prime Minister and the Director-General for Security on 26 August 2025, that “the Iranian Government directed at least two and likely more attacks” against the Australian Jewish community.² Specifically, ASIO assessed that commanders in the IRGC were involved in directing the arson attacks on Lewis' Continental Kitchen in Sydney on 20 October 2024 and on the Adass Israel synagogue in Melbourne on 6 December 2024.

¹ <https://www.aseca.gov.au/about/terms-reference>

² <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/press-conference-parliament-house-canberra-38>

Until the recent anti-Zionist, Islamic State inspired attack on a Chanukah celebration at Bondi on 14 December 2025, the destruction of the Adass Israel synagogue was the most high-profile act of antisemitism in Australia since the appointment of the Special Envoy.

The introduction of Part 5.3A of the Commonwealth Criminal Code created a mechanism to make a regulation specifying an entity as a “state sponsor of terrorism” where the entity:

- a. is a government or authority of a foreign country; and
- b. has engaged or fostered the doing of a terrorist act targeted at Australia.

A terrorist act is targeted “at Australia”:

- a. if done in Australia;
- b. if done with the intention of intimidating a section of the Australian public;
- c. causes serious harm to an Australian citizen;
- d. endangers the life of an Australian citizen; or
- e. causes serious risk to the health or safety of a section of the Australian public.

In view of the targeted attacks on the Jewish community in Australia that the Commonwealth Government and securities agencies have publicly and directly linked to the IRGC, the Special Envoy believes that the IRGC squarely meets the legal criteria for listing.

The Special Envoy notes that the decision brings Australia into line with the United States, Canada and a number of other states that had already proscribed the IRGC.

Indeed, the attacks coordinated by the Iranian Government in 2024 are part of a history of pernicious attacks on overseas Jewish communities known to have been directed by the Iranian regime over many years. On 11 April 2024, for instance, Argentina’s highest criminal court confirmed that Iran was responsible for a 1994 terrorist attack on a Jewish community centre in Buenos Aires that murdered 85 people and wounded 300.³

The attacks on the Australian Jewish community associated with the IRGC form part of a long list of antisemitic conduct that have caused fear, anxiety and real harm to the Jewish community since 7 October 2023, including the recent Bondi massacre. Their impact on Australia’s social cohesion cannot be overstated.

As every new attack or threat manifests itself, Jewish Australians find themselves attending schools, religious services and community gatherings behind ever-tighter security. As a consequence, many have questioned their ongoing place in a country that, for generations, Jewish Australians believed was a haven from the antisemitism experienced elsewhere in the world.

The conduct of the Iranian Government and the listing of the IRGC should serve as a catalyst for Australia’s security agencies to look closely at the potential penetration and influence of other foreign malign state actors, particularly those associated with extreme or radical Islamic viewpoints. This includes the influence of such actors within our institutions and within movements that have actively stirred up hostility and inflamed social tensions in recent years.

If such investigations reveal information or assessments that reach the relevant threshold, our nation’s efforts to meaningfully combat antisemitism may then require the listing of further state sponsors of terrorism.

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/12/argentina-iran-1994-amia-bombing>