

SUBMISSION TO THE PARLIAMENTARY JOINT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY (PJCIS)

*Review of the Criminal Code
Amendment (State Sponsors of
Terrorism) Bill 2025*

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1. Introduction

AUSIRAN welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security's review of the Criminal Code Amendment (State Sponsors of Terrorism) Bill 2025 ("the Bill").

AUSIRAN brings together Iranian-Australian advocates, researchers, and community members who have, since the Woman, Life, Freedom movement began in 2022, campaigned for Australia to recognise and respond to the threat posed by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and its agents operating abroad.

For more than three years, Iranian-Australians have called on the Australian Government to proscribe the IRGC as a terrorist entity. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Iran, also urged countries, including Australia, to list the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organisation in 2023¹. We therefore strongly support this Bill, which directly enables the Commonwealth to list foreign state entities, including the IRGC, as state sponsors of terrorism.

This reform represents a long overdue step toward protecting Australian democracy, strengthening diaspora security, and countering transnational repression.

2. Support for the Bill

AUSIRAN recognises that the current legislative framework does not capture foreign state entities and that new provisions are necessary to address the unique threat posed by state-sponsored terrorism.

The Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) has assessed that the regime in Iran, through the IRGC, directed at least two attacks on Jewish interests in Australia in 2024². This evidence confirms that state-backed terrorism is not an abstract threat but an immediate danger to the safety and cohesion of Australian society.

The Bill will fill a critical gap in the Criminal Code, creating a framework that allows the Government to:

- List the IRGC as a state sponsor of terrorism;
- Criminalise support, funding, or association with such entities; and
- Harden the domestic environment against foreign intimidation, espionage, and violence.

¹ Sadrolodabaei, N., & Dixon, C. (2023, November 27). UN expert urges Australia to investigate individuals with links to Iran human rights abuses. SBS News.

<https://www.sbs.com.au/language/persian/en/article/un-expert-urges-australia-to-investigate-individuals-with-links-to-iran-human-rights-abuses/y9nop6glg>

² Wong, P., Albanese, A., & Burke, T. (2025, August 26). Response to Iranian attacks [Joint media release]. Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

<https://www.foreignminister.gov.au/minister/penny-wong/media-release/response-iranian-attacks>

These mechanisms will finally provide Australian law enforcement and intelligence agencies with the tools to deter and prosecute state-linked terrorism within our jurisdiction.

3. Protection of the Iranian-Australian Community

Since 2022, Iranian-Australian activists, journalists, and ordinary citizens have faced harassment, surveillance, and intimidation by networks sympathetic to or directed by the IRGC and the Iranian state. In response to the Woman, Life, Freedom protests and reports of repression, the Australian Senate referred an inquiry into the human rights implications of recent violence in Iran to the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee on 27 October 2022³. The inquiry received over 1,100 submissions, many from Iranian-Australians reporting surveillance, intimidation, and harassment by individuals linked to the regime in Iran and the IRGC.

Such conduct has included:

- Monitoring of protests and online activism⁴;
- Stalking and harassment of dissidents and activists in Australia⁵;
- Threats to family members in Iran⁶;
- Online abuse and doxxing of community leaders⁷; and
- Coercive pressure on dual nationals and refugees⁸.

Despite the Committee's recommendation in February 2023 to list the IRGC as a terrorist organisation, the government refrained from action, citing legislative and diplomatic constraints. This Bill, however, will create a framework to overcome those constraints. By enabling the proscription of the IRGC, the Bill will:

³ Parliament of Australia. (2022). Human rights implications of recent violence in Iran (Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee).

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/IranHumanRights

⁴ 60 Minutes Australia. (2023, November 27). Iran illegally operating in Australia, using stalking to intimidate dissidents [Video segment] <https://9now.nine.com.au/60-minutes/iran-regime-suspected-of-relentless-intimidation-to-people-on-australian-soil/b4f3736c-6c3f-4795-ac02-96d9690606c7>

⁵ Aitchison, M. (2025, August 28). I was stalked and harassed by Iranian agents on Australian soil: This is my message to Anthony Albanese. Daily Mail Australia. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15038231/Tina-Kordrostami-Iran-IRGC-talked-Australia.html>

⁶ Scherer, J., & Sadrolodabaei, N. (2025, May 1). Penny Wong has defended stance on Iran, after plot targeting diplomat revealed. SBS News. <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/why-iranian-australians-want-irgc-listed-as-terrorist-organisation/3sqzpp17n>

⁷ Khadem, N. (2023, January 25). Australians urged to be vigilant against continued cyber attacks from Iran's regime. ABC News. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-01-25/australia-iran-irgc-cyber-attacks-senate-inquiry-human-rights/101886648>

⁸ Australian United Solidarity for Iran. (2024). Submission no. 26 to the Inquiry into the wrongful detention of Australian citizens overseas. Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, Parliament of Australia. https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/WrongfulDetention/Submissions

- **Criminalise IRGC-linked intimidation of Iranian-Australians;**
- **Deter further interference by foreign state actors; and**
- **Affirm the right of diaspora communities to participate safely in civic and political life.**

This measure therefore has not only national security implications but also profound social and psychological importance for Iranian-Australians who have endured fear and trauma under Iran's extraterritorial repression.

4. Strengthening Australia's National Security and Social Cohesion

4.1 Hardening the Domestic Environment

The framework is designed to harden the Australian environment against the activities of listed entities. For Iranian-Australians, this is essential to ensuring that our public spaces including universities, religious centres, media, and community associations, are free from foreign-state coercion or infiltration.

This Bill sends a clear message: Australia will not tolerate the export of authoritarian violence and intimidation into its multicultural society.

4.2 Reinforcing Public Trust

The listing of the IRGC as a state sponsor of terrorism will also serve as symbolic recognition of the courage of Iranian-Australian civil advocates who have fought for women's rights, freedom of expression, and democracy.

It demonstrates that Australia stands with those who resist terrorism and political violence, both at home and abroad.

5. Ongoing Engagement with Civil Society

AUSIRAN urges the Government and Parliament to maintain active, meaningful and structured engagement with the Iranian-Australian community throughout the implementation of this Bill.

Specifically, we recommend:

1. A regular consultation mechanism with diaspora organisations, including AUSIRAN, to discuss the Bill's implementation.
2. Clear guidance for law enforcement and community education on the new offences and defences, to avoid misapplication or fear among the community.
3. Maintaining a victim-centred approach to ensure individuals targeted by IRGC intimidation or harassment are supported and protected.

Recommendations

AUSIRAN respectfully recommends that the Committee:

1. **Support the passage of the Bill** as a necessary reform to protect Australia from state-sponsored terrorism.
2. **Ensure early and transparent use of the new listing powers** to proscribe the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).
3. **Commit to structured engagement with diaspora** to ensure the Bill's implementation enhances community safety and trust.
4. **Monitor community impacts** and support protective measures against transnational repression, in coordination with law enforcement and human rights agencies.

7. Conclusion

The *Criminal Code Amendment (State Sponsors of Terrorism) Bill 2025* represents a historic milestone in Australia's counter-terrorism law and its moral stance against state-sponsored violence.

For the Iranian-Australian community, this legislation is a long-awaited acknowledgment that our safety, dignity, and freedom matter.

AUSIRAN urges the Committee and the Australian Parliament to pass this Bill without delay and to continue engaging with our community as partners in safeguarding Australia's democratic and multicultural values.