

**Why Tehran Wants
the IRGC
Off U.S. Terror List**

IRAN:

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)

The
Machinery
of
Terrorism



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1. Introduction

In the ongoing nuclear negotiations in Vienna, the Iranian regime has insisted on removing the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) from the United States' list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO). The four-decade-long involvement of the IRGC and its extraterritorial arm, the Quds Force (IRGC-QF), in terrorist operations ultimately led to their designation as an FTO in April 2019.

The IRGC was first added to the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List (SDN List), in December 2007, for supporting Tehran's effort to secure weapons of mass destruction. Additional sanctions designations followed under separate legal authorities for the IRGC's human rights abuses and acts of terrorism and, in October 2017, the U.S. government designated the IRGC as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT). This SDGT designation was imposed under Section 105 of the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act of 2017 (CAATSA), which required the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) to extend terrorism-related sanctions under Executive Order 13224 to "foreign persons that are officials, agents or affiliates of the IRGC."

Since 1979, the use of institutionalized terrorism as a tool of statecraft has been

a pillar of the clerical regime's survival strategy. From using the Hezbollah in Lebanon to bomb the U.S. Marine Barracks in 1983, the Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia in 1996, the Jewish Community Center bombing in Argentina in 1994, using drones to target the Saudi-Aramco refinery in 2019, the downing of a Ukrainian Passenger flight in 2020, to name a few, the IRGC's role in direct or by-proxy state-sponsored terrorism is well documented. In many of the above examples, a common thread is the role of proxy groups recruited, funded, trained, and dispatched by the IRGC and its Quds Force. IRGC is the heart of the development of technology in nuclear, ballistic missiles, drones, and the training of proxy forces in the region.

The FTO designation has handicapped many of the IRGC-related foreign financial transactions. That is why Tehran has reportedly made IRGC's exclusion from the FTO list one of its main demands in the Vienna talks; the designation has been effective. It could have been even more effective if it was augmented by other punitive measures and sanctions.

The IRGC's involvement in research & development of weapons of mass destruction, ceaseless terrorist activities to