

Changing Iran's Behaviour

Canadians rightly want a warming of relations with Iranians, and for Iran to rejoin the family of nations as a responsible, cooperative partner. However, all major federal political parties have voiced concerns regarding the regime's ongoing abuses and have expressed varying degrees of skepticism regarding Iranian compliance with the P5+1 nuclear deal.

The Iranian regime must cease its human rights abuse, terrorism, nuclear proliferation, genocidal calls for the destruction of Israel and a whole litany of other crimes. Canada can encourage positive change by continuing to apply pressure on the regime for its many violations of international laws and norms, and by tying changes in Canadian policy to clear performance-based benchmarks.

Pressure brought Iran to the negotiating table, and continuing pressure is the best way to encourage Iranian compliance.

Canada has had full diplomatic relations with Iran for just six of the last 35 years. Embassies were closed for a decade after the Islamic Revolution, reopening in 1990. However, by 1996, Canada had in-

stituted a "Controlled Engagement Policy", limiting the scope of bilateral interaction. The relationship continued to degrade steadily, and controlled engagement was tightened

with more severe restrictions after the 2003 murder of Canadian journalist Zahra Kazemi by Iranian officials.

By 2007, Canada and Iran were no longer exchanging ambassadors and, in September 2012, Canada closed its embassy, recalled all diplomats from Tehran and expelled Iranian diplomats from Ottawa. The government simultaneously listed Iran as a state sponsor of

terrorism, opening the regime to lawsuits by Canadian victims, and enabling Canadian courts to order the freezing of Iranian assets in Canada.

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rael. This approach has been met, to a large extent, with support across party lines on Parliament Hill.

With the dissolution of the UN's sanctions architecture, Canada has maintained independent sanctions under the Special Economic Measures Act, which isolate entities and individuals associated with Iran's human rights violations and illicit nuclear, ballistic missile and terrorism activities. Canada also leads an annual resolution on the situation of human rights in Iran at the UN General Assembly, first initiated in 2002, ensuring the horrific plight of the Iranian peo-

ple remains on the global agenda. The government should remain vigilant and maintain existing measures commensurate with Iran's behaviour.

With regard to Iranian terrorism, the Government of Canada should consider listing the IRGC in its entirety as a terrorist entity. The distinction has evaporated between the Qods Force, which is currently listed, and the rest of the IRGC when it comes to Iranian violence being perpetrated in Iraq and Syria, contributing to the refugee crisis Canada is helping to alleviate.

KEY POINTS

- Canada has exercised the full weight of diplomacy to pressure the Iranian regime to cease its nuclear proliferation, sponsorship of terrorism, human rights abuse and genocidal calls for the destruction of Israel.
- All major federal parties have voiced concerns regarding the Iranian regime's ongoing abuses and have expressed varying degrees of skepticism regarding Iran's compliance with the P5+1 nuclear deal.
- Any change to Canadian policy should be tied to clear, performance-based benchmarks to encourage positive changes in Iranian behaviour.
- The Government of Canada should consider listing the IRGC in its entirety as a terrorist entity.