Republican Senators to Biden: Deny visas for Iranian President Raisi to attend UN General Assembly

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<https://www.jpost.com/american-politics/article-713853>

A group of seven Republican senators sent a letter to US President Joe Biden on Tuesday. They urged him to deny visas for [Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi](https://www.jpost.com/international/article-712613) and his delegation, preventing them from attending the [UN General Assembly](https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-708802) in New York City in September. “Raisi’s involvement in mass murder and the Iranian regime’s campaign to assassinate US officials on American soil make allowing Raisi and his henchmen to enter our country an inexcusable threat to national security,” they wrote.

Among the senators were [Tom Cotton,](https://www.jpost.com/american-politics/taylor-force-act-addition-seeks-to-block-pay-for-slay-688141) Marco Rubio and [Ted Cruz.](https://www.jpost.com/opinion/article-708604) “Raisi’s record as a violator of human rights is long-standing and clear,” they wrote. “In 1988, while deputy prosecutor of Tehran, Raisi served on a death commission, which sentenced approximately 5,000 prisoners to death, including women and children, without the right to appeal or a fair trial.”

They went on and wrote that in the decades since, Raisi continued to subject the Iranian people to extrajudicial prosecution, torture and execution, such as during the 2009 Green Revolution or during his more recent tenure as the head of Iran’s judiciary. “Raisi’s role in these gross human rights abuses led the Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) to sanction him in 2019,” they noted.

Raisi's reign of oppression

While Raisi continues the regime’s wave of repression at home, agents of Iran’s[Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps](https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-712981) (IRGC), a US-designated foreign terrorist organization, plot to assassinate current and former senior US officials in the United States. In March, the Washington Examiner reported that the Department of Justice had indictable evidence that IRGC Quds Force operatives were planning to assassinate former US national security adviser John Bolton.

The IRGC has reportedly been plotting similar efforts against former secretary of state Mike Pompeo, former CENTCOM commander Kenneth McKenzie and other former officials. According to news reports earlier this month, the IRGC is also targeting current US officials as part of its assassination campaign.

“If recent reports are true, that Raisi plans to attend the UN General Assembly, the White House must deny Raisi and other Iranian officials visas to attend,” they wrote. “Allowing Raisi to travel to the United States – while his agents actively work to assassinate senior American officials on US soil – would gravely endanger our national security, given the likely presence of IRGC agents in the Iranian delegation. Furthermore, granting a mass murderer like Raisi a visa to enter our country would also legitimize his repression. It is a risk we cannot and should not take.”

“There is strong precedent for denying an entry visa to foreign leaders,” the letter reads. “In 1988, the United States barred PLO chairman Yasser Arafat from entering the United States to attend a meeting of the United Nations.”

They also noted that in 2014, President Barack Obama denied an entry visa to Iranian UN Ambassador Hamid Aboutalebi, who was involved in taking American diplomats hostage in 1979, and that in 2020, the United States declined to issue a visa for Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif.

“Ebrahim Raisi’s role in the regime’s human rights abuses and Iran’s continuing efforts to murder American officials should more than disqualify him from receiving a visa to the United States,” the letter said.