

Open letter to the US government:

Iran's president Ebrahim Raisi must not be allowed to attend the UN assembly: He should be arrested and put on trial for crimes against humanity

The Iranian government has announced that its president Ebrahim Raisi is planning to attend the United Nations General Assembly, which is due to take place from 13 to 27 September 2022. We urge the US government to refuse an entry visa to Raisi on grounds of his role in mass murder and crimes against humanity and his terrorist activities on US soil.

Ebrahim Raisi is a wanted criminal.¹ He was one of the four members of Tehran "death commission" that carried out the wholesale massacre of thousands of political prisoners in the summer of 1988.² As a senior prosecutor for decades and as the head of the judiciary, Raisi was responsible for the arrest, torture, flogging, forced confessions and execution of thousands of political dissidents and other innocent citizens. During the mass protests against the fuel price rise in November 2019, Raisi, as the head of the judiciary, granted impunity to government officials and security forces responsible for shooting and killing hundreds of protesters. As a member of the Islamic Republic's Supreme National Security Council, Raisi took part in the decision to intentionally shoot down passenger flight PS752 as it was leaving Tehran Airport on 8th January 2020, killing all 176 people onboard.

Since his appointment as president in August 2021, Raisi has headed a regime which has continued the persecution of political dissidents and social activists, implemented the death penalty on hundreds, let loose its "chastity and hijab" mobs onto the streets to violently attack women, and in the past few weeks alone has overseen the use of the most barbaric Islamic punishments, namely amputation of limbs and blinding, all of which are continuing today.

In the meantime, Raisi's government has carried on with its plots to assassinate³ and kidnap⁴ - with the intention to smuggle into Iran, interrogate under torture, force to publicly "confess" and ultimately execute - members of Iran's opposition abroad, including in the United States. It has, furthermore, continued to detain foreign citizens and dual nationals in Iran on fabricated charges of espionage in order to blackmail foreign governments for money, political concessions or to secure the extradition of its convicted terrorists. The attack last week on renowned author Salman Rushdie, carried out at the behest of the Islamic Republic, whose founder Khomeini issued the original *fatwa* and whose leaders have repeatedly called for the murder of Rushdie as an Islamic duty, is the latest example of the Iranian regime's continued terrorism abroad.

A criminal such as Ebrahim Raisi, responsible for such horrendous crimes, must not be allowed to set foot in the United States to take part in the UN General Assembly. The only scenario in which Raisi ought to be allowed to enter the United States or

any other country in the West should be to face trial for his crimes against humanity. Indeed, this is what happened in the case of one of Raisi's collaborators in the 1988 massacre of political prisoners, namely Hamid Nouri, who in July this year after a landmark trial in Sweden was convicted of murder and war crimes for his part in the massacre of political prisoners, and was sentenced to life imprisonment.⁵

We once again urge the US government not to grant a visa to Ebrahim Raisi. Raisi's place is not in the UN General Assembly, but in a court of law to investigate his crimes against humanity. Allowing Raisi to enter the United States to take part in the UN General Assembly is a gross insult to the people of Iran, the people of the United States and the bereaved families of his countless victims.

We reiterate our call for a comprehensive political, arms, cultural and sporting boycott of the Iranian regime. Not accommodation and appeasement, but political isolation and global pressure is the only viable response to the barbarism and terrorism of Ebrahim Raisi and his regime.

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¹ Amnesty International Press Release: *Iran: Ebrahim Raisi must be investigated for crimes against humanity*, 19 June 2021

² Amnesty International Research: *Iran: Blood-soaked secrets: Why Iran's 1988 prison massacres are ongoing crimes against humanity*, 4 December 2018

³ New York Times: *Man With Loaded Assault Rifle Arrested Outside Iranian Writer's Home*, 31 July 2022

⁴ Washington Post: *Iranian intelligence agents plotted brazen abduction of Brooklyn dissident journalist, U.S. prosecutors say*, 14 July 2021

⁵ Amnesty International: *Conviction of former Iranian official over involvement in 1988 prison massacres landmark step towards justice*, 14 July 2022