



## [The EU Issues New Sanctions on Iran, Stops Short of Labeling the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps Terrorists](#)

On Monday, January 22, the European Union (EU) agreed to impose a new package of sanctions against Iran. These sanctions are targeted at those that are “directing the repression” according to the President of the EU, Ursula von der Leyen. Peaceful anti-government protestors in Iran have been brutally repressed by Iranian authorities with punishments that are disproportionate to their alleged crimes, provoking further sanctions. 37 entries will be inserted into this package that will be presented in their next meeting. The senior officials of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) are being specifically targeted. Though some from the EU want the whole group added to the list of terrorist organizations, it could only happen if all countries in the EU deemed the IRGC guilty of terrorism. The sanction targets 18 individuals and 19 entities. Those targeted incur travel bans into the EU, frozen assets, and prohibition from transferring funds or economic resources. A ban also exists on exports of equipment to Iran that could be deemed useful toward their internal repression, including certain media equipment that is being used to control and manipulate the people in Iran. Along with the sanctions, the EU also condemned Tehran’s response to the country’s ongoing protests. The Iranian foreign minister, Hossein Amirabdollahian has said that the United States is actively attempting to reopen dialogue to reestablish negotiations over the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). “The Americans found out sooner than the E3 (France, Germany, and the United Kingdom) that there is nothing behind the riots in Iran. They sent a message sooner and insisted on returning to the JCPOA,” Amirabdollahian said, in line with Tehran’s repeated stance that the West has been behind the country’s unrest. The United States maintains that talks are not a priority. The EU and Tehran had previous conversations in efforts to re-establish the JCPOA, but the appalling treatment of Iranian protestors has sent those talks into serious decline.

The IRGC began in 1979 during the Islamic Revolution to provide a defense to the Shi’ite ruling system. They have a strong army of 125,000 ground, naval, and air units amongst them. The IRGC has been a main tool of Iran’s government in the suppression and brutalization of its people. They are currently being heavily utilized to crush any protests in the country. Iran has warned that designation of the IRGC as a terrorist organization would harm EU security. The IRGC is recognized as a terrorist organization by the United States.

These sanctions on Iran could have some serious negative implications on their economy. As a consequence of their treatment of their citizens, Iran faces limitations on the country’s ability to trade with other nations. Restrictions on exports to Iran coupled with the difficulty to access financial markets limit the resources and put a strain on the Iranian economy. This also limits the resources Iran has at their disposal to suppress the protests. Businesses within the country will be impacted. It will become increasingly difficult to operate a business as a country faces more restrictions and sanctions putting jobs in jeopardy. Quality of life will likely plummet. What started as a protest of the death of Mahsa Amini has transformed into large-scale protests that demand societal change. The people of Iran fighting to have more equality for women, opportunity, and representative leadership. The world must remain vigilant and continue to support the protests in Iran.