

Force Iran to Pay Terror Victims, Not Their Killers

The President's Iran deal came at great expense to U.S. security—and it may come at even greater expense to the regime's victims—about 43 billion dollars' worth. Until recently, most people probably didn't know that the Iranian government owed a bundle of money to American and Israeli terrorism victims. Since the late 1990s, U.S. courts have awarded billions of dollars to these families for their loss and their suffering. Billions of dollars that—for years—has gone unpaid.

Now, with Iran set to cash in on the international community's misplaced trust, Congress is demanding that President Hassan Rouhani pay up. Before the U.S. lifts sanctions, at least 120 House conservatives want the regime to give survivors of terrorism what's owed them. If Iran refuses, a new bill would block the flow of funds promised in the U.S. nuclear deal.

Rep. Patrick Meehan (R-Pa.), the man behind the measure, argues that "Iran should not get a red cent in U.S. sanctions relief until it has paid its victims what they are owed. I oppose the Iran deal, but surely we can all agree that Iran should not reap any benefits from the U.S. until it has compensated the families of those whose lives were taken by Iranian terrorism." Under his Justice for Victims of Iranian Terrorism Act, the President would be barred from lifting sanctions until Rouhani's country paid "all court-ordered judgments."

Unfortunately, the White House doesn't seem to care about American victims—not here, and not in Iran. While American Pastor Saeed Abedini is senselessly beaten for his faith in the worst prison in Tehran, the Obama administration continues to shrug off his plight, the plight of three other U.S.

hostages, and now, other families that have suffered because of Iran's state-sponsored terrorism. In an announcement this week, the White House made it clear that it would veto H.R. 3457, insisting that the President will not renegotiate the Iran deal despite his supposed concern for the victims.

An astonished Meehan said, "I'd just like to understand why [Obama] thinks it's more important to give money back to Iran than it is to first pay the victims of their past terror acts." Instead of fighting for American victims, the President is going to send billions of dollars to Iran to create more? Like us, Congressman Ted Poe (R-Texas) is outraged that the administration would even consider bankrolling Iran while these atrocities go unanswered. In a speech on the House floor, he railed against the lunacy of the White House's position.

"Iran is a state sponsor of terrorism. Iran has been sued in federal courts by the families of the murdered victims. Iran is guilty of the murder of 421 Americans in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1983. Iran is guilty of the murder of 19 service members and injuring 372 others in Saudi Arabia in 1996. Iran is guilty of murdering a thousand other Americans, including some in Iraq and Afghanistan ... Federal courts have awarded the victim and families over \$40 billion for these crimes, but Iran will not pay. It laughs at the death of the innocent it has murdered. It laughs at American justice." Now, he argues, is the time to hold the regime accountable. "Let the ayatollah know he cannot get a diplomatic pass or sanctions relief until he pays for his crimes. The ayatollah has sown the seeds of murder in Iran, and now it is time for them to reap the consequences of their crimes."

Contact your representative and urge him or her to stand with the survivors of Iranian terrorism. For more on what the deal could cost America, don't miss Senator John McCain's speech at last weekend's Values Voter Summit.