Iranian Revolutionary Guards in the sights of the National Council and Council of States

Zurich National Councillor Erich Vontobel (EDU) and Aargau Councillor of States Marianne Binder-Keller (Die Mitte) have submitted motions in the National Council and Council of States to ban the Islamic Revolutionary Guards IRGC. Vontobel's motion was co-signed by a total of 17 other National Councillors from various parties. Binder's motion was also supported by the FDP and the SVP. The motions seek to oblige the Federal Council to submit a draft law banning the IRGC as a terrorist organization. The law should be based on the existing Swiss bans against Al-Qaeda, the Islamic State and the Palestinian terrorist organization Hamas.

In his motion, Erich Vontobel argues that such a ban is both permissible under international law and necessary in terms of security policy. Firstly, an IRGC ban would strengthen Switzerland as a reliable partner in the international fight against terrorism and at the same time contribute to the protection of human rights. This would be in line with Swiss neutrality. Measures against terrorism and serious crimes under international law are of a police and criminal nature and do not constitute participation in an international conflict. A ban on the IRGC would therefore be part of Switzerland's fight against terrorism and would only affect domestic measures.

Secondly, the motion refers to reports by the UN Fact-Finding Mission on Iran. This has proven for the years 2024 and 2025 that the IRGC committed serious human rights violations during the suppression of the "Women, Life, Liberty" protests. According to the report, these include extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrests, torture, sexualized violence and the targeted persecution of women and girls. The IRGC's repression of domestic Iranian protest movements has become even worse since then. Over 30,000 protesters are said to have been killed during the most recent demonstrations against the regime in Iran. In her motion, Binder also refers to these serious human rights violations with tens of thousands of victims.

In their motions, Vontobel and Binder also emphasize the security policy dimension outside Iran. This refers to the destabilizing activities of the Revolutionary Guards abroad – including support for armed groups in Lebanon and Yemen, military operations in Syria and the delivery of drones to Russia for the Russian war against Ukraine. Such activities would not only exacerbate regional conflicts, but could also indirectly affect the security of European states.

In his proposal, Vontobel also explicitly refers to the situation in Switzerland. A significant Iranian exile community lives here, including many people with Swiss citizenship. The motion argues that the IRGC engages in so-called transnational

repression worldwide, for example through intimidation, surveillance or attacks on members of the opposition abroad. A ban could therefore create a clear legal basis to consistently prevent such activities – such as propaganda, financing or surveillance networks – on Swiss soil and prosecute them under criminal law.

Binder and Vontobel point out that several Western countries have already classified the IRGC as a terrorist organization. These include the USA, Canada and Australia. On January 29, 2026, the European Union also unanimously decided to classify it as such. With their motions, the Aargau Council of States and the Zurich National Council are therefore calling for Switzerland to also create a clear legal basis to take action against the IRGC. The co-signature by National Councillors and representatives of the Council of States from several political parties, in particular the SVP and FDP, shows that there is cross-party support for the issue in both chambers.