Since coming to power in 1979, the Mullah regime in Iran has persecuted its political opponents, the Jewish community and Israeli institutions around the world with acts of terror. In his recently published NZZ article “Shadow war against dissidents and Jews”, Daniel Rickenbacher describes the decades-long international terror strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He criticizes the fact that Europe has long done too little against this state-sponsored terrorism.

Rickenbacher mentions the recent speech by British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, which received little media attention, in which he stated that Iran had supported over twenty potentially deadly attacks in the UK in the past year alone. Following the killing of Iranian revolutionary leader Ali Khamenei, new acts of revenge are feared, which is why the USA has put its security forces on heightened alert.

The US State Department blames Iran for around 360 attacks abroad, while the Washington Institute has documented more than 200 operations in 2024 – almost half of them in Europe. According to terrorism researchers, there has been a significant increase in Iranian attack plans since 2020. Targets include synagogues, Israeli embassies, kosher restaurants and exiled Iranian journalists and activists. It is striking that Iran is increasingly cooperating with criminal networks. Criminals with links to the Middle East sometimes receive protection and in return help with espionage, kidnappings or arson attacks. Examples range from contracts with Russian and Pakistani perpetrators in the USA to cooperation with gangs in Germany, the UK and Sweden.

The international terror of the Islamofascist mullah regime in Tehran began shortly after the revolution: the nephew of the overthrown Shah was murdered in Paris as early as 1979. Europe and Switzerland were also affected several times. In 1990, the Iranian opposition figure Kazem Rajavi was murdered near Geneva. The most fateful act of terrorism, however, took place in Argentina in 1994. In a bomb attack on a Jewish community center in Buenos Aires, 85 people were killed. Investigations have shown that Iranian embassies are often used as operational centers. Despite individual reactions – for example after the Mykonos attack in Berlin in 1992 – European states were hesitant to react for a long time. The EU only recently placed the Revolutionary Guards on its terror list, while in Switzerland a corresponding ban has been called for but not yet decided.

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