



# FAMILIES OF IRANIAN TERROR VICTIMS MOVE TO BLOCK OBAMA ADMINISTRATION FROM RELEASING \$100 BILLION IN FROZEN IRANIAN ACCOUNTS UNDER NUCLEAR DEAL

Central Bank of Iran (CBI), which are primarily held in overseas bank accounts, under the nuclear agreement signed with Tehran. The families claim that releasing the funds will preclude them from ever collecting on their judgments and deprive them of the only leverage they have to make Iran pay.

Two dozen plaintiffs filed the lawsuit today in U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York. The lawsuit names the U.S. State Department and Treasury Department as well as Secretary of State John Kerry and Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew as respondents.

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of the terror victims by attorneys Robert Tolchin of New York and Nitsana Darshan-Leitner of Tel, Aviv, Israel who represent the families.

The judgments stem from deadly attacks, including suicide bombings and drive-by shootings, committed from 1995 through 2006 by Hamas, Hezbollah and Palestine Islamic Jihad, Iran's terrorist proxies, in which the terror-victim plaintiffs were harmed. In addition to the American families bringing the petition for the injunction against the State Department and Department of Treasury, there are many additional families of terror victims who have won judgments against Iran in court that have never been paid.

The lawsuit comes as Congress is reviewing the Obama administration's agreement negotiated with Iran. Under the controversial deal the U.S., and other P5+1 countries, are required to lift the longstanding economic sanctions against Iran, including unfreezing overseas bank accounts, in return for Tehran shutting down its nuclear weapons program. Iran could receive between \$100 billion to \$150 billion of frozen funds released under the plan.

The families of the terror victims also fear that the released billions will be utilized by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, which provides financial support and weapons to the terrorist groups, to fund waves of future rocket and bombing attacks. They are adamant that other innocent American families will not endure the tragedies their families suffered.

The lawsuit notes that the judgment holding families have been efforting, some for more than a decade, to locate and execute against Iranian assets. The bank accounts currently frozen by the Treasury are not located in the United States, but rather held by the CBI in foreign bank accounts. According to the court papers the sanctions that freeze these Iranian assets should be lifted only if President Obama is able to certify to Congress that Iran no longer funds terrorism, the lawsuit says.

Lifting the sanctions would also include resuming Iran's participation in the SWIFT financial system, which will reconnect Iranian banks with the global financial system. Together with the removal of sanctions against major Iranian banks, the SWIFT reconnection "will enable Iran to more easily launder money, transfer funds for terrorist use and make the enforcement of terrorism-financing laws much more difficult," the lawsuit argues.

"It would be outrageous to release the \$100 billion in frozen Iranian funds when these American families have unpaid court judgments against the terror sponsoring regime in Tehran" stated Nitsana Darshan-Leitner.

"For more than a decade Iran has refused to pay these court judgments and has thumbed its nose at these terror-victim families and the U.S. court system. The \$100 billion in frozen funds is the last leverage the families have to compel Iran to satisfy their judgments. If you release these funds you erase all hope for the families of ever getting a measure of justice against this outlaw regime."

"The U.S. encouraged these families, grievously harmed by terrorism, to file suit against Iran and now the government has a moral duty to assist them in collecting on their judgments. To release the funds instead of turning them over to the victims would make a farce out of this hard fought legal process."

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