Iran behind antisemitic arson attacks in Australia, Iranian diplomats expelled

August 26, 2025

By [Michael Starr](https://www.jpost.com/author/michael-starr)

The Jerusalem Post

<https://www.jpost.com/international/article-865318>

The Islamic Regime of Iran was the mastermind behind at least two major antisemitic arson attacks in Australia and was likely responsible for more incidents among a [wave of anti-Jewish episodes in the country](https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-838713) since the October 7 Massacre, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and law enforcement officials alleged in a Tuesday press briefing, further declaring that as a consequence the Iranian ambassador to Australia will be expelled and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) will be legislated as a terrorist organization.

The Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) had gathered enough intelligence to determine that the Islamic Regime had directed the December 6 [Adass Israel arson attack in Melbourne](https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/article-865155) and the October 20 Lewis' Continental Kitchen arson attack in Sydney.

"These were extraordinary and dangerous acts of aggression orchestrated by a foreign nation on Australian soil," said Albanese. "They were attempts to undermine social cohesion and sow discord in our community."

[Foreign Minister Penny Wong](https://www.jpost.com/international/article-863837) said that as a result of the acts of aggression on Australian soil, the Iranian ambassador to Australia was declared persona non grata. The ambassador and three other Iranian diplomats had seven days to leave the country. Wong said that this was the first time post-World War II that Australia had to expel an ambassador.

While Australia will maintain some diplomatic channels, Wong said that Canberra was withdrawing its own diplomatic mission to a third country and urged Australians not to travel to Iran or leave immediately if possible.

"This has been a distressing time for many Australians," said Wong. "The Albanese Government has been so determined throughout this period to keep our community united. We have sought to lower the temperature in Australia, and to not reproduce the conflict in the Middle East in Australia. I again urge others to consider whether their actions help those who want to divide our nation."

Albanese's announcement that the government would seek to legislate the proscription of the IRGC was welcomed by Australian Jewish community groups and the political opposition. Opposition leader Sussan Ley noted on X that her coalition had been calling for the designation of the IRGC as a terrorist organization for over two years, and further urged the expulsion of the Iranian ambassador a year ago after he praised deceased [Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah](https://www.jpost.com/tags/hassan-nasrallah).

AISO Director-General of Security Mike Burgess explained that the Iranian IRGC had orchestrated the two attacks, and likely others in Australia, using a complex web of proxies to hide its involvement -- including the use of organized criminal elements.

In March, the Australian Federal Police and New South Wales Police claimed that a wave of Sydney area antisemitic arsons and vandalism was part of a crime ring's plan to distract law enforcement and obtain reduced prison sentences in exchange for aiding in police investigations. Petty criminals were supposedly being hired by gangs to exploit the post-October 7 Massacre antisemitism. Law enforcement arrested at least 14 suspects for their role in the plot, including two men involved in the arson of the Kosher Lewis' Continental Kitchen.

The man who was alleged to have directed the arson, now linked to the IRGC, was identified by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation as former gang leader Sayed Moosawi. According to court documents, Moosawi allegedly operated under the pseudonym "James Bond" and contracted Guy Finnegan and Craig Bantoft to commit arson against Curly Lewis Brewing - but the criminal determined that "he sent us to the wrong place.” Three days later, the similarly named Lewis' Continental Kitchen was set ablaze, according to the ABC by Wayne Ogden and Juan Amuoi.

The News South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies said in a statement that the community was owed an apology by those who "sought to downplay the threat against the Jewish community or dismiss the campaign of terror targeting our community as a criminal con-job or hoax."

"Our community firstly had to endure a summer of terror and then had salt rubbed in our collective wound through gaslighting and equivocation from some quarters about the extent of the threat," said the board, demanding that the government not tolerate any support of the IRGC once the group had been proscribed.

**Announcement comes days after second arrest in Melbourne arson attack**

The announcement about the IRGC connection to the arson of the Adass Israel synagogue came only days after the announcement of a second arrest for the firebombing of the historic Jewish house of worship. A 20-year-old Meadow Heights man was arrested on August 14 and charged on Thursday for being one of three men who set the building Ripponlea ablaze and caused extensive damage.

On July 30, the task force charged a Werribee man, identified by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency as Giovanni Laulu, as another of the arsonist trio. Fourteen days earlier, a Melton South man was charged with stealing the vehicle allegedly used in transportation for the alleged arsonists, but he was not charged with directly setting fire to the building himself. The stolen vehicle, a blue Volkswagen Golf sedan, is believed by law enforcement to be the same used in the November 21 LUX Nightclub arson. In May, the Victoria Police charged a 20-year-old Pakenham man in relation to the incident.

The Jewish Community Council of Victoria thanked law enforcement for the revelation about the designs behind the Adass Israel attack, and urged the community to stand united as "proud Jews."

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry also praised law enforcement for protecting Australians from terrorism, but noted that it had warned about the threat posed by the Iranian regime for years.

"This is not a regime that merely subjugates its own citizens and wages war in the Middle East through its proxies. It has consistently shown a willingness and capability to finance and orchestrate terror all over the world," said ECAJ president Daniel Aghion. "Israel’s enemies are Australia’s enemies. This is apparent. The same regime that helped plan the October 7 atrocities, directed Hezbollah to open a second front against Israel, attacked Israel directly with ballistic missiles and threatened it with nuclear annihilation, is responsible for plotting and executing attacks against Australians."

The Australia/Israel and Jewish Affairs Council said in a statement that it welcomed the measures taken by the Albanese government, with AIJAC executive director Dr. Colin Rubenstein urging the government explore "additional measures it can take to retaliate for Iranian aggression, and further limit the threat the regime in Tehran poses to Australians, the Australian Jewish community, and our social cohesion."

Zionist Federation of Australia CEO Alon Cassuto said in an X statement that the "the infiltration and normalisation of terrorism and extremism in Australia has been nothing but shameful," noting that Australian politicians and figures had recently taken photographs in front of a photo of Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The Israeli Embassy in Australia said on X that the Iranian regime posed a threat to Israelis and Jewish communities around the world.

"Today, it became clear that this threat has reached Australian soil," said the embassy. "The international community can no longer be complacent. Australia has taken a principled stand, others should consider following suit."