

To Destroy Hamas, the Regime in Iran Must Fall

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by [Mark A. Heller](#) and [Sumit Ganguly](#) / October 16, 2023

Whether or not Iran played a direct role in planning and executing Hamas' brutal assault on Israel doesn't really matter. What does matter is Iran's indispensable, long-term role in building Hamas' capability to do what it did. In the near term, Israel will settle for nothing less than the physical elimination of Hamas as a military, administrative, financial, and organizational entity in Gaza. There can be no return to the status quo ante. But for any success in destroying Hamas' capabilities to endure, the Iranian regime must also be eliminated.

The Iran Challenge

The Islamic Republic is a vile regime that shares the annihilationist ideology of Hamas. It is detested by large numbers of Iranians. Their resentment periodically erupts into widespread opposition, which is brutally repressed by methods reminiscent of many other tyrannies.

This cycle will probably repeat itself in the future. Still, another round of demonstrations by anti-theocrats wearing green shirts or by women discarding their hijabs is unlikely to produce a different outcome. Nor is economic strangulation on the horizon as long as Russia, China, others in the Global South, and even Western democracies worry first of all (understandably) about their own energy security and economic well-being and, therefore, fail even to enforce all the sanctions they have already endorsed.

Nor is there much enthusiasm for the kind of military coercion that ultimately ended vile regimes in Afghanistan (temporarily) and Iraq.

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