



New York, NY, September 18, 2014 – Once again, today New York City plays host to the delegations from Iran and the members of the P5+1 (United States, Russia, China, United Kingdom, France and Germany) for a new round of talks aimed at reaching a comprehensive nuclear deal before the deadline on November 24th. As co-chairs of Iran180, a New York City grassroots community organization advocating that Iran reverse course on its nuclear ambitions and human rights abuses, we remain concerned that a strong and meaningful deal can be reached between the parties. For a number of reasons, Iran’s recent actions on the issues of human rights, support for terrorism and nuclear proliferation have us seriously doubting Iran’s ability to abide by the terms of a strong, comprehensive nuclear agreement.

On the issue of human rights, over the past year Iran has continued its policies of human rights abuses in alarming regularity contrary to assumptions that President Hassan Rouhani’s presidency would bring about real change. Estimates from earlier this year suggested that [Iran was holding almost 900 political prisoners](#), including people persecuted for religious activities, lawyers and journalists. This past Friday, the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon reported that President Rouhani’s promises to ease restrictions on freedom of expression and the press are [largely empty](#). Even more disturbing, executions under President Rouhani have increased during his tenure with estimates suggesting that [more than 700 people were executed last year](#).

Moreover, Iran’s support for terrorism not only continues, but has increased in recent days. No longer strained, Iran has repaired its relationship with Hamas and publicly touts [its intent to support the terrorist group with shipments of weapons and ammunition](#). At the same time, Iran has consistently supported Hezbollah, which [has dispatched militants to fight in Syria](#) in support of Bashar Al-Assad’s regime and remains a threat to the stability of Lebanon. History clearly shows that Iran has long been the puppeteer behind instability in the region, genocidal and terroristic acts.

As for Iran’s nuclear program, recent reports cast a troubling light on the regime’s true intentions. Last month, Iran conducted tests on a [new advanced machine to refine uranium](#) amid [Iran’s persistent refusal to commit to a reduction in centrifuges](#) that it will operate after any comprehensive agreement is signed. Just last week, [Iran failed to meet a deadline to provide information on its past nuclear work](#) to the International Atomic Energy Agency. Our world leaders cannot tolerate such blatant violations of collective, international resolve.

None of this inspires the kind of confidence one would hope to have in seeking a comprehensive agreement governing Iran’s nuclear program. We cannot stress strongly enough that the P5+1 enter these New York based negotiations with eyes fully open towards today’s Iran. The onus is irrevocably with Iran to prove that it is deserving of the world’s trust. Recent events and reports would suggest that Iran has yet to earn that trust. In light of these reports, we urge the members of the P5+1 to remain steadfast and resolute to its goal of ensuring that Iran does not obtain a nuclear weapon.