



(February 20, 2013)

The Bad Deal Between Argentina and Iran

Daniel S. Mariaschin, B'nai B'rith International Executive Vice President

As a representative of one of the world's largest Jewish organizations, I have admired the tenacity with which the government of former President Néstor Kirchner—and subsequently the government of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner—demanded every year before the United Nations that Iran bring those accused of the AMIA bombing to justice.

Today, however, I witness with both surprise and disappointment the pact—negotiated in secret—that the Argentine government has signed with the Iranian regime.

For 19 years, Iran has refused to cooperate with the Argentine justice system and it is clear that it is not going to start now. This is because the main suspects either were or are currently part of the Iranian government. Therefore, it is more than naive to think that because of this agreement Iran will finally hand over its own officials.

The AMIA bombing, the bloodiest terrorist attack ever suffered by a Latin American country—which killed 85 and injured 300—was just one of the many acts of terror that Iran regularly sponsors, because for the Iranian regime the promotion of terrorism is a state policy.

The real goal of the "Memorandum of Understanding" that the Argentine government has just signed is to undermine the Argentine justice system and allow Iran to move forward with a clean slate internationally. The lack of clarity of this agreement and the nature of the law in Iran – where the agreement will be implemented – guarantees this result.

But Iran doesn't have a clean slate. In July 2012, on the anniversary of the AMIA bombing, Hezbollah attacked Israeli tourists in Burgas, Bulgaria. After a six month investigation, the Bulgarian government formally linked the terrorist group Hezbollah to the Burgas attack that left five Israeli tourists and one Bulgarian dead, while wounding 30 others. The Bulgarian government's clear-eyed report shows the world that Iran and Hezbollah are still linked, and still committing terror.

For years, the Iranian regime tried to strengthen ties with Latin America, among other reasons, to ease its international isolation and export its fanatic anti-Western ideology. In Argentina, the AMIA case was a clear obstacle to this. Unfortunately, and thanks to this deal, this is no longer the case.

Through this perverse pact, Argentina has seriously damaged its credibility and opened a dangerous door, at the expense of the victims of this horrendous crime.