

One Hundred Tenth Congress

# Congress of the United States

## Committee on Foreign Affairs

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**For IMMEDIATE Release**

## Ros-Lehtinen, Lantos Question Interpol's Procedures on Arrest Warrants for Iranians & Hezbollah Implicated in '94 Argentine Terror Bombing

(WASHINGTON) – Interpol may not be following standard procedures in its handling of arrest warrants issued by the Government of Argentina for 11 Iranians and Shiite militia Hezbollah members implicated in a 1994 terrorist bombing in Buenos Aires, according to the Chairman and the Ranking Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

In a letter sent today to Ronald K. Noble, Secretary General of Interpol, Tom Lantos (D-CA) and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) suggested that the agency, which processes arrest warrants issued by member governments, appears to have taken the unusual step of undertaking its own review of the evidence.

With 186 member countries, Interpol is the world's largest international police organization. It facilitates cross-border police co-operation, including worldwide distribution of arrest warrants and alerts for capture issued by a member states.

The July 1994 attack on the Argentine Jewish Mutual Association (AMIA), a community center, killed 85 and injured more than 150. In November, 2006, Argentine officials issued arrest warrants for the 11 including former Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani and Monsen Rabbani – the former Iranian cultural attaché in Buenos Aires, who is allegedly tied to the purchase of a van that was used in the bombing.

The bipartisan congressional letter questioned why Interpol is taking the unusual step of investigating rather than helping to enforce legitimate arrest warrants issued by a member government.

“Argentina government authorities have issued new and more extensive indictments...with additional, relevant and conclusive evidence of Iran's involvement in the attack,” it said. “We would like an explanation of the purpose and intent of these proposed proceedings or meetings with the government of Iran on the warrants and investigation.”

Ros-Lehtinen and Lantos both have followed this case very closely through the years.

“Interpol should act expeditiously and assist Argentina to locate and capture the alleged perpetrators of terror. Anything less than full cooperation undermines Interpol's essential mission,” Ros-Lehtinen said.

“Now that Argentina has finally gotten to the bottom of this heinous crime, Interpol should be doing everything to see justice done, not delayed,” Lantos said.

A text of the joint letter:

*We are writing to express our concerns regarding Interpol's handling of the most recent warrant requests (November 2006) from the government of Argentina in the tragic July, 1994*

*AMIA terrorist bombing in Buenos Aires involving officials of the government of Iran and Hezbollah.*

*Based on our understanding of the matter, it appears that Interpol is looking beyond the four corners of the arrest warrants and the traditional red notice request. It also appears to us that your agency maybe getting into the substance and merits of the formal AMIA criminal charges, and engaging in a sort of a judicial function and review, which is clearly not appropriate for that of an entity such as Interpol.*

*The proposed meeting that you suggested to the government of Iran to take place in Lyon, France on December 22nd on the AMIA matter without ever formally notifying the government of Argentina, seems far out of the ordinary traditional practice with regard to the processing of Interpol warrants and red notices. Such a change in practice in such an important and sensitive case is not only curious, but also potentially problematic.*

*As you know Argentinean government authorities have issued new and more extensive indictments on AMIA with additional and relevant new conclusive evidence of Iran's involvement in the attack which is untainted by the prior inquiry. They deserve your agency's full respect and traditional deference.*

*We would like an explanation of the purpose and intent of these proposed proceedings or meetings with the government of Iran on the AMIA warrants and investigation, and what the basis is for your inquiry and proceedings outside the norm.*

*While these events surrounding the AMIA matter are concern enough, the direction and precedent that Interpol may be setting by looking beyond the warrant request into the substance of the terrorist indictments could equally apply to other cases like Al Qaeda and possible U.S. indictments and warrant requests of Interpol. That aspect of this matter is of great concern to us.*

*We ask that if you are in Washington, D.C. or committee staff are in France you will give us the opportunity to sit down and discuss this important precedent-setting case in more detail. We look forward to a timely response to these serious concerns.*

*With best wishes,*

*ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN  
Ranking Member*

*TOM LANTOS  
Chairman*

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