



## NUFDI Policy Brief: Ebrahim Raisi, The Butcher of Tehran

Ebrahim Raisi has just been selected as the president of the Islamic Republic in Iran. While most officials in the regime have a long history of corruption and murder, Mr. Raisi's track record of crimes against humanity is particularly shocking. NUFDI has prepared the below policy brief for policy makers, analysts, and the media to be better acquainted with him and his crimes.

### *Raisi's Record*

- Mr. Raisi has deep ties to Iran's clerical hierarchy and enjoys strong support from the security apparatus, including the IRGC and Khamenei. He is expected to stand by the supreme leader's hard-line conservative policies.
- [The United States](#) and the European Union have both imposed sanctions on Mr. Raisi over his human rights record, which makes him the first Iranian president to take the world stage under such a designation.
- [As Head](#) of the Iranian Judiciary, Ebrahim Raisi has presided over a crackdown on human rights which has seen hundreds of peaceful dissidents, human rights defenders and members of persecuted minority groups arbitrarily detained.
- [Under his watch](#), the judiciary has also granted blanket impunity to government officials and security forces responsible for unlawfully killing hundreds of men, women, and children and subjecting thousands of protesters to mass arrests and at least hundreds to enforced disappearance, and torture and other ill-treatment during and in the aftermath of the nationwide protests of November 2019.
- [OFAC](#) added Ebrahim Raisi to their list of specially designated nationals for his administrative oversight over the executions of individuals who were juveniles at the time of their crime and the torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment of prisoners in Iran, including amputations.
- [As deputy](#) prosecutor general of Tehran, Raisi participated in a "death commission" that ordered the extrajudicial executions of over 5,000 political prisoners in 1988.
  - [The death commission](#) bore no resemblance to a true court; its proceedings were arbitrary and offered no possibility of appeal. The main question that it asked blindfolded prisoners was whether they were prepared to repent for their political opinions, be it Marxism or liberalism, and pledge loyalty to the Islamic Republic.
  - [The commission](#) never told prisoners that their answers could condemn them to death, and some prisoners believed they were appearing before a pardon committee. Many prisoners realized they were about to be executed only minutes before feeling nooses around their necks.

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- [Mr Raisi](#) has claimed that the death sentences were justified because of a fatwa by former supreme leader Ayatollah Khomeini.
- [Raisi](#) was involved in the regime's brutal crackdown on Iran's Green Movement protests that followed the 2009 election as the First Vice Chief Justice. Hundreds of students and protesters were violently and unlawfully arrested or attacked by the Basij paramilitary wing.
- [According](#) to a United Nations report, Iran's Judiciary sanctioned the execution of seven child offenders in 2018, and two in 2019, despite human rights law prohibitions against the death penalty for anyone under age 18. There are at least 90 child offenders currently on death row in Iran.
- [Under](#) Raisi's leadership, between September 2018 and July 2019, at least eight prominent lawyers were arrested for defending political prisoners and human rights defenders, many of whom have received lengthy sentences by Iran's Judiciary.
- [During](#) his tenure the fatal shootings of hundreds of peaceful unarmed demonstrators were never investigated. In 2019, at least 7,000 protesters were arrested, tortured and sentenced to harsh prison terms by the judiciary that Mr. Raisi led
- Since his selection to the presidency, victims interviewed by the international press have recalled Raisi ordering and [watching](#) the rape of political prisoners, the [slamming](#) of newborn babies into the ground, and the execution of activists

*Policy recommendations:*

- Maintain sanctions on Mr. Raisi pursuant to E.O. 13876
- Maintain all sanctions on the Islamic Republic, including its critical economic sanctions

*Further reading:*

- Tablet Magazine: [Meet 'The Butcher' Iran's New President Ebrahim Raisi](#)
- National Post: [Iran's Reform Project is Dead. Let's Help the New Revolution.](#)
- The Atlantic: [Iran Stops Pretending](#)
- Washington Post: [Iran's Election Reveals A Weakening but Ruthless Regime](#)

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