

September 9, 2025

Anthony Capuano
President and Chief Executive Officer
Marriott International, Inc.
7750 Wisconsin Avenue
Bethesda, MD 20814

Re: Use of Marriott-Managed Property in Doha by Designated Terrorist Entities

Dear Mr. Capuano:

I am writing to bring to your immediate attention a matter of serious concern involving the use of a Marriott-managed property—the Ritz-Carlton in Doha, Qatar—in connection with individuals and entities sanctioned under the laws of the United States and its allies.

Specifically, a publicly circulated photograph (see following page) taken at the Ritz-Carlton Doha appears to show senior Hamas official Khalil al-Hayya and other senior Hamas operatives meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araghchi and members of his delegation from Tehran. Both Hamas and the Islamic Republic of Iran are well known for their central roles in global terrorism. Hamas is a U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) under Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act. Iran’s regime is officially recognized by the U.S. State Department as the world’s leading state sponsor of terrorism, and the U.S. government has designated Iran’s regime as a state sponsor of terrorism since 1984.

Hamas has also been designated as a terrorist organization by countries and international organizations, including the United Kingdom and the European Union. In addition, Araghchi, who led the Iranian delegation, is an affiliate of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) – a U.S. designated FTO. Araghchi has himself publicly acknowledged that he served in the IRGC Quds Force, as per reporting in Iran’s state-run media outlets.¹ The IRGC Quds Force commands and controls the Iranian regime’s network of terrorist militias—such as Hamas and Hezbollah—and spearheads Tehran’s transnational repression, including on U.S. soil. It is under multiple U.S. sanctions designations.

¹ Etemad Online, “[Seyyed Abbas Araghchi: a Member of the IRGC Quds Force who entered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#)” (in Persian), April 12, 2025.

<https://x.com/paulrubens/status/1964966374884737395>



← Post

Photograph of meeting at Ritz-Carlton, Doha between Hamas leader Khalil al-Hayya, other senior Hamas operatives (LC, with hand raised) and Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Seyyed Abbas Araghchi (RC) (Source: Daniel Rubinstein, X @paulrubens), September 8, 2025



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Katara Hospitality owns the Ritz Carlton Doha, while the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, a Marriott subsidiary, reportedly manages the premises.² Marriott International, Inc. is a publicly traded U.S. corporation listed on the Nasdaq stock exchange and subject to U.S. laws and regulations, including those related to anti-terrorism, anti-money laundering, and compliance with the Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). The use of Marriott-managed properties by designated terrorists or representatives of terror-sponsoring regimes raises grave questions not only about brand reputation but also about legal exposure, fiduciary responsibility to shareholders, and compliance with U.S. sanctions laws.

The foregoing image—showing Hamas and Iranian officials engaging in coordination on Marriott-managed premises—risks associating your brand with actors directly responsible for violence against civilians, the destabilization of regional governments, and the undermining of U.S. national security interests. It also exposes your company to reputational risk that could materially affect shareholder value, investor confidence, and consumer trust in the Marriott brand. Given the seriousness of this issue, I respectfully request answers to the following questions:

1. Was Marriott International aware that individuals affiliated with Hamas and the Iranian government were meeting at the Ritz-Carlton Doha?
2. What due diligence, if any, does Marriott perform regarding high-level meetings or events hosted at the international properties it manages, especially in jurisdictions with known ties to terrorist organizations?
3. Has Marriott International conducted any internal investigation into the use of this property by sanctioned individuals or entities in this case?

² [The Ritz Carlton Doha Fact Sheet.](#)

4. What compliance mechanisms are in place to ensure Marriott-managed properties are not used—directly or indirectly—to facilitate meetings involving designated terrorist organizations?
5. Has Marriott notified U.S. authorities—including OFAC or the Department of Justice—about this incident?

The global hospitality sector plays a critical role in upholding international norms, not least by ensuring that its properties are not used to legitimize or facilitate meetings between internationally-sanctioned actors. Your company’s response to this matter will demonstrate whether Marriott is committed to operating within the ethical and legal boundaries expected of a U.S.-based multinational corporation.

As you know, the U.S. administration has intensified its efforts to dismantle Iran’s decades-long illicit nuclear infrastructure, including decisive military strikes targeting key nuclear facilities on June 21, 2025.³ These operations underscore a broader strategy not only to impede the Iranian regime’s nuclear and missile programs, but also to send a clear message of deterrence against the weaponization of Iran’s nuclear program.

Following the strikes on its nuclear facilities, the Iranian regime’s posture has become markedly more defiant. Tehran has enacted legislation to suspend all cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).⁴ This decision demonstrates Iran’s intransigence and its determination to continue uranium enrichment, sending clear signals of its intent to advance its nuclear program regardless of international concerns. The German Foreign Ministry spokesman Martin Giese has been explicit: the suspension sends a “disastrous signal,” and Berlin has insisted that IAEA cooperation is “crucial” for any diplomatic solution.⁵ The sense among U.S. and European officials is that Iran’s regime has now “gone rogue,” no longer making any effort to appear as though it is following international law or cooperating with international monitoring bodies.

Iran’s regime has also undertaken numerous plots to assassinate Americans and Europeans. This includes President Trump, former U.S. national security advisors, a former U.S. secretary of state, members of the Jewish and Iranian diasporas, as well as fomenting terror plots against diplomatic installations in London and elsewhere. In fact, public reporting suggests the U.S. Secret Service had to undertake extraordinary measures to protect former U.S. National Security Advisor Robert O’Brien who was participating in a meeting at the Ritz Carlton in Paris and had to be extracted from a meeting at the hotel due to an imminent threat.⁶

³ Politico, “[US bombed 3 Iranian nuclear sites, Trump says - POLITICO](#),” June 21, 2025.

⁴ Associated Press, “[Iran president Pezeshkian reportedly orders to suspend cooperation with IAEA | AP News](#),” July 3, 2025.

⁵ RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, “[European Powers Alarmed As Iran Halts Nuclear Oversight](#),” June 2, 2025.

⁶ Politico, “[Iran has a hit list of former Trump aides. The U.S. is scrambling to protect them](#),” October 11, 2024.

Iran has also been trying to target, if not outright assassinate, the director-general of the IAEA Rafael Grossi.⁷ Australia recently expelled Iran's ambassador in Canberra after the regime was implicated in arson attacks against synagogues. As you know, Hamas, with Iranian support, was responsible for the largest massacre of the Jewish people, including Americans and Europeans, since the Holocaust on October 7, 2023. Since then, Hamas has likewise undertaken terror plots against Jewish targets in Europe.⁸

Given these developments, it is clear that the risks of doing business with Iran, which naturally includes hosting senior Iranian regime officials, have reached unprecedented and intolerable levels. Maintaining such ties now entails exceptional reputational, legal, and strategic risks, far exceeding those of previous years.

In view of the foregoing, we urge you to treat this matter with the seriousness it warrants and to respond publicly and transparently. Stakeholders, including investors, customers, and policymakers, are watching closely.

Thank you for your attention to these important matters. Please let us hear from you within 48 hours of receipt of this letter.

Very truly yours,



Ambassador Mark D. Wallace

UANI is a not-for-profit, bi-partisan, advocacy group that seeks to prevent Iran from fulfilling its ambition to obtain nuclear weapons. UANI was founded in 2008 by Ambassador Mark D. Wallace, the late Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, and Middle East expert Dennis Ross. UANI's private sanctions campaigns and state and federal legislative initiatives focus on ending the economic and financial support of the Iranian regime by corporations until Iran verifiably abandons its drive for nuclear weapons, support for terrorism and gross human rights violations. Former Governor of Florida Jeb Bush is UANI's Chairman. UANI's Advisory Board consists of distinguished leaders in government, academia and business. See www.unitedagainstnucleariran.com/about/leadership.

I. IRAN BUSINESS RISKS

Any desire from foreign firms to maintain or ramp up Iran business is short-sighted, ill-advised, and fraught with risk to its shareholders, employees, agents, and contractors. The risks inherent in doing business in Iran are serious and fall into at least ten distinct categories:

Revocation of the JCPOA and Reimposition of U.S. Secondary Sanctions. On May 8, 2018, the United States Administration announced it would withdraw from the JCPOA, and secondary sanctions were reimposed which affect companies even outside U.S. jurisdiction with respect to every major industry in Iran. Due to Iran's military support of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, there are increasing calls for E-3 signatories to the JCPOA, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, to follow the example of the U.S. and reimpose sanctions snapback.

⁷ "Among the sharpest public threats against Grossi came from Ali Larijani, who is a senior aide to Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and the head of Iran's National Security Council. "When the war ends, we are going to deal with Grossi," he wrote in a post on X." See Wall Street Journal, "[U.N. Atomic Chief Given Security Protection Over Iran Threat](#)," August 26, 2025.

⁸ Wall Street Journal, "[Germany Uncovers Alleged Hamas Terror Plot in Europe](#)," December 14, 2023.

Impairment of Corporate Reputation. A company that seeks opportunities in a country notorious for sponsoring terrorism and violating fundamental human rights, including state sponsored torture and killing of its own citizens, like Mahsa Amini in late 2022, will inevitably corrode its reputation with consumers, trading partners, and the general public, as recent polling strongly indicates.

Banking Risk. U.S. and European banks are unwilling, largely as a result of Iran's own actions, to finance new business ventures in Iran. Along with the serious money laundering issues in Iran, banking-related Iran risks continue to be severe, as strong penalties remain for those institutions that directly or indirectly facilitate prohibited transactions. Iran remains on the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) blacklist.

Doing Business with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Doing business in Iran means doing business with the IRGC. It is flatly illegal for American and international companies to do business with the IRGC, but corporate compliance officers and country managers will be unable to discern if their companies are doing business with a reputable Iranian company or one that is secretly operated, managed, and even owned by the IRGC.

Economic Sanctions Independent of the JCPOA. Notwithstanding the JCPOA, significant economic sanctions unrelated to Iran's illegal nuclear proliferation program remain in effect which bar companies and their affiliates from doing business in multiple sectors of Iran's economy. The passage of the JCPOA does not eliminate or ease those sanctions.

Unavailability and Deficiency of Insurance Coverage. Companies will find that their business operations and assets in Iran are either uninsurable or subject to inadequate coverage and/or extraordinary insurance premiums because of the highly unstable and risk-laden political, legal, and business environment. Germany no longer allows export credit insurance from 2023.

Impairment of Shareholder Value. Influential shareholders and the investing public will not look charitably upon any company whose drive for short term profits in Iran will inexorably finance that regime's policies of sponsoring terrorism, nuclear proliferation, subjugation of women, violent repression of LGBT individuals, and the arbitrary incarceration and execution of its citizens. It is difficult to see how share value will not suffer.

Impairment of Future Business Opportunities. A company that shortsightedly embraces business opportunities in Iran will likely be cut off from more lucrative business opportunities in countries that oppose Iran's hegemonic policies, especially among Gulf Arab states. Even worse, companies may be barred altogether from doing any business within the borders of these neighboring countries because they will be viewed as providing financial support to a lawless regime that is antithetical to their very existence.

Arrest, Imprisonment, Kidnapping, Torture, and Execution. A company that does business in Iran exposes its officers, employees, and contractors to a high risk of harassment, arrest, prosecution, and incarceration without due process of law, without the right to legal counsel, and without an effective and independent judicial system to protect basic legal rights. Even individuals with dual citizenship, such as British-Iranian Alireza Akbari, executed by the regime in January 2023, are not safe from the regime's clutches.

Hacking, Cyber Insecurity, and IP theft. Doing business in Iran will inevitably lead to the hacking and theft by Iranian operatives and security agents of a company's proprietary information, trade secrets, confidential employee and corporate information, personal information, and customer information. Moreover, Iranian firms systematically use the slightest association with foreign firms as a pretext to continue advertising purported partnerships, and misappropriate corporate trademarks often many years after ties may have been excised.