



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi attends a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow, December 7, 2023.

Iran's Raisi Skips Trip To Switzerland Amid Legal Bid For His Arrest

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Iran International Newsroom

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A legal complaint filed on Monday asked Swiss authorities to arrest Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi if he travels to Geneva to attend a UN event.

The complaint has been lodged by three former political prisoners who seem to have narrowly escaped the Islamic Republic's "prison massacres" of 1988.

Ebrahim Raisi was a member of the infamous Death Committee in Iran, which oversaw summary execution of between two to five thousand political prisoners in 1988.

The three survivors have accused Raisi of crimes against humanity, including genocide, torture, and extrajudicial executions. They have asked the Swiss federal public prosecutor to arrest and prosecute him.



Raisi was scheduled to participate in the [United Nations Global Refugee Forum](#) in Geneva, but UN officials told AFP on Monday evening that the Iranian delegation would be led by foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian.

It is unclear whether the change of plans –if confirmed– has been forced by the legal bid to arrest Raisi.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency 

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The legal complaint contends that Raisi played a pivotal role in the Death Committee. His role has been all but established by scores of testimonies, and by an audio recording of the meeting in which members of the Committee seek blessings of Hossein Ali Montazeri, the Supreme Leader's deputy at the time.

In 2018, Amnesty International published a [180-page report](#) on the "1988 prison massacres", documenting summary execution of political prisoners in Tehran and 15 more cities across Iran. Ebrahim Raisi is one of the very few people to have been accused of crimes against humanity in that report.

In tandem with the legal action, an international campaign has been launched against Raisi's involvement in the UN refugee forum. The signatories –including Nobel laureates, judges, academics, and UN rights experts– call for Raisi's prosecution for past and ongoing crimes under international law.

"We firmly believe that the United Nations, as a bastion of human rights and justice, should not compromise its reputation by extending an invitation to an individual accused of grave human rights violations," reads the petition. "His presence at the UN forum contradicts the fundamental values the UN stands for."

The campaigners have asked the UN to "promptly rescind its invitation to Raisi," arguing that the institution's reputation would be marred by extending an invitation to an individual accused of severe human rights violations.



evil."

Responding to the petition, the UN refugee agency (UNHCR), defended Iran's participation, stating that the country is a UN member state with a significant number of refugees.

"The Iranian delegation will be led by the foreign minister," a spokesperson for UNHCR said in an email, according to AFP.

The UN Global Refugee Forum will be held in Geneva 13-15 December. It is held every four years with the aim of "easing pressures on host countries, enhancing refugee self-reliance, increasing access to third-country solutions and improving conditions in countries of origin."

The 2023 forum is hosted by Switzerland and UNHCR, and co-convened by Colombia, France, Japan, Jordan and Uganda.

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