

# ‘Serious questions’ if 11 arrested Iranians who were in the US illegally were part of bigger terror network

“The Biden administration endangered Americans with its open border policies,” Lora Ries, of Heritage Foundation, told JNS. “We have no idea who entered this country the last four years.”

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement **arrested 11 Iranian nationals**, who were residing in the country illegally, over the weekend, and a U.S. citizen, who “threatened to kill ICE law enforcement while harboring an illegal alien from Iran,” the U.S. Department of Homeland Security [said](#) on Tuesday.

“We have been saying **we are getting the worst of the worst out, and we are**,” stated Tricia McLaughlin, U.S. assistant secretary for homeland security. “We don’t wait until a military operation to execute. We proactively deliver on President Trump’s mandate to secure the homeland.”

“This report about the ICE arrests **raises many serious questions as to whether these individuals were part of a broader network** the Islamic Republic sought to use to carry out terrorism,” Brodsky said.

The department identified one of the 11 as Ribvar Karimi, who “**had an Islamic Republic of Iran Army identification card**” on him and who served as an Iranian army sniper from 2018 to 2021.

Karimi, who was arrested in Alabama, **had been admitted into the United States in October 2024** on a visa for noncitizens who are engaged to citizens.

“Karimi never adjusted his status, a legal requirement, and is removable from the United States,” Homeland Security said. **“He’s currently in ICE custody, where he’ll remain pending removal proceedings.”**

The ICE website listed Karimi as detained in Etowah County Jail in Gadsden, Ala.

Homeland Security identified another of the 11 as Mehran Makari Saheli, who was once a member of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and **has admitted to having ties with Hezbollah**, the department said.

Saheli was **sentenced to 15 months in prison for felony possession of a firearm**. Despite an immigration judge’s order that he be deported in June 2022, Saheli has remained in the country. He was arrested in St. Paul, and the ICE website lists him in Sherburne County Jail in Elk River, Minn.

Lora Ries, director of the Heritage Foundation’s border security and immigration center, told JNS that **“this is why mass deportations are necessary.”**

“The Biden administration **endangered Americans with its open border policies**,” Ries said. “As a result, we have no idea who entered this country the last four years, where many of them are or how many are really here, but we know it was north of 11 million inadmissible aliens.”

“This is also why radicals obstructing ICE operations need to be arrested and prosecuted,” Ries said. “They have no idea who ICE may be going after. **It could be a known or suspected terrorist.**”