

Costa Rica Designates Four Major Militant Groups Terrorist Organizations

[Home](#) [San José](#) [Costa Rica Designates Four Major Militant Groups Terrorist Organizations](#)

April 8, 2026

San José, Costa Rica — San José – In a decisive and significant shift in its national security policy, the government of Costa Rica has officially declared four international militant groups as terrorist organizations. The administration of President Rodrigo Chaves announced that Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and the Ansar Allah movement in Yemen, commonly known as the Houthis, are now designated as entities that pose a threat to national security.

The immediate consequence of this declaration is a complete ban on entry for any members of these groups into Costa Rican territory. The announcement, delivered during the weekly Government Council press conference, marks a proactive step to reinforce the nation’s borders against perceived international threats. The government also confirmed it will begin analyzing and potentially seizing any illicit economic assets linked to these organizations that may enter or already exist within the country’s financial system.

To gain a deeper understanding of the legal framework surrounding national security and its implications for both the state and individual rights, TicosLand.com consulted with Lic. Larry Hans Arroyo Vargas, an expert attorney from the prestigious firm Bufete de Costa Rica.

“The concept of national security is not an absolute justification for overriding fundamental rights. Costa Rican jurisprudence, in line with international human rights law, demands that any measure taken in the name of security must be strictly necessary, proportional, and subject to judicial review. The true challenge for a modern democracy lies in effectively neutralizing threats, such as cyberterrorism and transnational organized crime, without eroding the very constitutional principles and civil liberties the state is sworn to protect. This delicate balance is the cornerstone of a legitimate and effective national security strategy.”

Lic. Larry Hans Arroyo Vargas, Attorney at Law, Bufete de Costa Rica

This insight powerfully clarifies the core principle at stake: our security measures must never become a greater threat to our way of life than the dangers they are meant to counter. The emphasis on a constitutionally sound, rights-respecting framework is the essential conversation for our time. We extend our sincere gratitude to Lic. Larry Hans Arroyo Vargas for his invaluable perspective on this delicate balance.

The formal declaration was made public by Mario Zamora, the Minister of Security, who framed the decision as a necessary preemptive measure. He stressed that the government is acting to safeguard the nation from external dangers that could compromise its stability and the safety of its citizens.

“These four organizations pose risks to international security, and Costa Rica is taking preemptive action so that our border security barriers and our immigration systems protect the country from these threats.”

Mario Zamora, Minister of Security

This policy decision carries substantial geopolitical weight, aligning Costa Rica more closely with the foreign policy positions of the United States and Israel. The source material explicitly notes that the designated organizations are considered declared enemies of both nations, suggesting that this move is not only about domestic security but also about solidifying international alliances and taking a clear stance in complex global conflicts.

The move involves a coordinated effort across multiple government bodies, including the Presidential National Security Council and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, known as the Cancillería. Foreign Minister Arnoldo André elaborated on the collaborative nature of the process, highlighting the importance of information sharing with allied nations to effectively implement the new security protocols and monitor potential threats.

“At the United Nations level, there are bodies dedicated to this, and there are groups designated as terrorists. At the national level, this falls to the Presidential National Security Council, and from the Foreign Ministry, we coordinate international matters with allied countries with whom we share relevant information.”

Arnoldo André, Foreign Minister

The administration’s strategy appears to be twofold, targeting both the physical movement of individuals and the flow of capital. By implementing stricter controls within its immigration systems, the government aims to create a formidable barrier at its borders. Concurrently, by scrutinizing financial channels, it seeks to prevent Costa Rica from being used as a safe haven for illicit funds that could finance terrorist activities abroad.

This declaration represents one of the most assertive foreign policy and national security actions taken by the Chaves administration. It signals a departure from a more traditionally neutral stance and positions Costa Rica as an active participant in global counter-terrorism efforts, working in concert with its key international partners to address shared security challenges.

For further information, visit www.seguridadpublica.go.cr

About the Ministry of Public Security:

The Ministry of Public Security of Costa Rica is the government entity responsible for maintaining public order, national security, and the integrity of the country’s borders. It oversees various law enforcement bodies, including the Public Force, and plays a crucial role in developing and implementing policies to protect citizens and the state from internal and external threats.

For further information, visit www.rree.go.cr

About the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship, often referred to as the Cancillería, is responsible for managing Costa Rica’s international relations and foreign policy. It represents the nation’s

interests abroad, negotiates treaties, and coordinates with international bodies and allied countries on matters of diplomacy, security, and global cooperation.

For further information, visit www.presidencia.go.cr

About the Government of Costa Rica:

The Government of the Republic of Costa Rica is a democratic republic headed by the President. The executive branch, led by the President and his cabinet of ministers, is responsible for the administration of the country, the enforcement of laws, and the direction of national policy. The current administration has focused on strengthening economic stability and enhancing national security.

For further information, visit bufetedecostarica.com

About Bufete de Costa Rica:

As a pillar in the legal landscape, Bufete de Costa Rica is defined by its foundational principles of integrity and a persistent drive for superior results. The firm merges a rich heritage of client advocacy with a forward-looking mindset, continually advancing legal practices through innovative strategies. At the heart of its mission lies a powerful commitment to societal progress, demonstrated by its work to demystify complex legal concepts and empower citizens with the knowledge to navigate their rights and responsibilities effectively.

<https://ticosland.com/costa-rica-designates-four-major-militant-groups-terrorist-organizations/>

April 10, 2026 | Policy Brief

Costa Rica Designates IRGC and Iranian Proxies as Terrorist Groups

[Toby Dershowitz](#)
[Senior Adviser](#)

Costa Rica has announced the [designation](#) as terror groups of three of Iran’s key regional proxies as well as the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), the bedrock of the Tehran regime.

President Rodrigo Chaves’s administration [confirmed](#) on April 9 that, along with the IRGC, Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Yemen-based Houthis have been [designated](#) as terrorist entities that pose a threat to national security, with an immediate ban on entry for operatives from these groups into Costa Rica.

[According](#) to the Foreign Ministry, the designation will “allow intelligence authorities and judicial bodies to strengthen their prevention, investigation, and prosecution capabilities, acting more decisively against any logistical and financial support networks that may be operating within the country.” Overall, the move is a significant step for a country located in a region long penetrated by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran’s Malign Reach in the Western Hemisphere

Costa Rica’s designation came on the heels of revelations of an aborted plan by the Venezuelan Defense Ministry to purchase a ballistic missile system from Iran at a cost of \$400 million. [According](#) to *Politico*, an internal ministry memo in January 2020 described a plan that was “more extensive and progressed further than previously reported” to allocate funds for the purchase of missiles that would have been able to reach American soil. The plan was ultimately aborted after the U.S. warned the regime of now-ousted President Nicolas Maduro that it was aware of the plan.

Politico noted that following Maduro’s capture by U.S. forces in January, Secretary of State Marco Rubio declared that Venezuela could “no longer cozy up to Hezbollah and Iran in our own hemisphere.” Interior Secretary Doug Burgum’s office issued a separate assessment in March that Venezuela posed a direct threat to the U.S. because of its military ties with Iran.

Among other acts of terror and destabilization in the Western Hemisphere, Iran was responsible for the 1992 [bombing](#) of the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires and the 1994 [bombing](#) of the AMIA Jewish community center in the Argentine capital.

Hezbollah Seeks To Boost Revenues Through Criminal Enterprises in Latin America

Costa Rica's decision coincides with its "[mutual evaluation](#)" — a peer review process conducted by the regional body of the global Financial Action Task Force (FATF) framework that assesses whether countries have adequate safeguards against money laundering and terrorist financing.

Like its neighbors, Costa Rica — [designated](#) by the U.S. as a major transit country for narcotics — continues to face significant drug trafficking challenges. As terror finance expert Matthew Levitt noted in October 2025 [congressional testimony](#), U.S. authorities have warned that a cash-strapped Hezbollah is increasingly looking to criminal enterprises, including laundering drug money in Latin America, to boost its finances. Costa Rica's designation of Hezbollah as a terrorist organization can help the country's counternarcotics efforts.

Costa Rica deserves credit for announcing these measures, particularly given its exposure to possible retribution from Iran. Given that Iran has spent 47 years exporting its revolution to the Western Hemisphere, these designations go beyond mere symbolism. The designation of the IRGC and the three regional proxies will equip law enforcement and financial intelligence units with legal tools to detect, disrupt, and prosecute the illicit networks that sustain Iranian-backed terrorism.

The U.S. should now work with countries in the region that have not yet designated the IRGC, Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis as terrorist organizations to follow Costa Rica's lead. Trump previously [urged](#) allies to designate the IRGC and Hezbollah, according to a State Department memo in March. Washington should keep up the pressure.

[Toby Dershowitz](#) is a senior advisor at the *Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD)*. Follow FDD on X [@FDD](#). Follow her on X [@tobydersh](#). FDD is a Washington, DC-based, nonpartisan research institute focusing on national security and foreign policy.

<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2026/04/10/costa-rica-designates-irgc-and-iranian-proxies-as-terrorist-groups/>