Conference on the Eve of Human Rights Day

Iran: Wave of Executions, EU Policy

Engagement in trade and political relations with a regime that holds the world’s record of per capita executions infringes all human rights standards

On the eve of the Human Rights Day, European lawmakers held a conference at the European Parliament on Wednesday 7 December 2016. They strongly condemned the violations of human rights in Iran and urged the EU High Representative, Federica Mogherini and Member States to condition the expansion of relationships with Iran to a halt of executions.

According to a statement by the Belgian MEP Gérard Deprez, Chair of Friends of a Free Iran (FOFI) in the European Parliament, this meeting was held by the initiative of the FOFI at the European Parliament, which has support of some 300 MEPs from different political groups. The keynote speaker was the Iranian opposition leader, Maryam Rajavi, who heads the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI). She was joined by former Italian Foreign Minister Giulio Terzi as well as a young female former political prisoner, Shabnam Madadzadeh, 29, who spent 5 years in prison and recently managed to leave Iran.

FOFI called the massacre of 30,000 political prisoners in 1988 one of the biggest crimes against humanity since WW II and stressed that the world’s silence on it contributed to its prolongation. The victims of the massacre were mainly from PMOI/MEK. Calling on EU High Representative Federica Mogherini, MEPs stressed that we should not turn a blind eye to human rights violations in Iran in exchange for business. They specified, “We have not heard Ms. Mogherini condemning much the appalling human rights abuses in Iran. A state that does not respect human dignity can hardly become a trusted partner. EU should further condition its relation with Iran to a stop of executions.”

Iran is not the only place where the mullahs trample human rights. The carnages in Syria and Iraq are among the most horrendous violations of human rights which have been met with silence by the European Union. So long as Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and its mercenaries are in Iraq and Syria, engaged in killing the people of these countries, the region will not experience peace and tranquility. The European Union must call for the eviction of the Iranian regime from the entire region. MEPs also expressed their delight for the successful relocation of Camp Liberty residents to Europe, calling it a great victory. The plight of Iranian opposition members in Camps Ashraf and Liberty in Iraq has been the subject of numerous resolutions and statements in the European Parliament in recent years.

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In three days, we will be marking the anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. For my country, Iran, the Human Rights Day is a reminder of the deep scar on my nation's body and soul, with 120,000 executed dissidents and hundreds of thousands of tortured political prisoners. With at least 5,000 prisoners who are presently on the death row and human rights activists and followers of different faiths in prison. Under the mullahs there is no respect for human rights. For the world community and the European Union, unfortunately human rights in Iran is a victim of diplomacy and trade. Under the rule of the Iranian regime every single article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been violated. The right to life, the right to freedom, the right to security, the right to protection from torture and arbitrary arrests, the right to freedom of religion and faith...

The most horrific page in the record of this regime is the massacre of 30,000 political prisoners in only a few months in 1988. This genocide was carried out upon a written edict by Khomeini. The main perpetrators of this massacre are now among the regime's leaders and senior officials.

In recent months, a growing movement has begun in Iran, demanding accountability and bringing those responsible for the massacre to justice. Last month, the Iranian Resistance made public the names of 110 individuals in charge of making decisions on the executions in Tehran and other provinces. We also revealed information about 213 officials involved in the massacre in 35 cities, as well as the addresses of a number of secret mass graves in 12 provinces.

In their talks with the EU, senior officials of the Iranian regime declare that "retribution" and the death penalty are "red lines" for Tehran and could not be set aside in any form. Is it not shameful to remain silent on such aggressive attitude of a criminal regime?

Governments’ excuse for their silence is to avoid meddling in Iran’s internal affairs. If they oppose meddling in Iran, then they should not intervene in the interest of the Iranian regime, either.

In addition, in return for the JCPOA, Western governments accepted some unwritten agreements with the mullahs, such as: Freedom of sending IRGC troops to Syria, overlooking the regime's ballistic missile tests despite UNSC resolution 2231, overlooking the Quds Force’s destructive role in Iraq, and remaining silent on the violations of human rights in Iran.

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Governments’ excuse for their silence is to avoid meddling in Iran's internal affairs. If they oppose meddling in Iran, then they should not intervene in the interest of the Iranian regime, either. Let me also add that such relations with this regime are counter to global peace and security and even the long-term interests of the West.

This regime is surrounded by explosive social discontent in the country. It lacks funds and is paralyzed. The country’s banking system is bankrupt. The economy is engulfed in fraud and money laundering and is not able to pull out of recession for a long time. In addition, it is engulfed in expensive wars in the region with massive casualties. Those who advocate such policy are not mindful of the extent to which the mullahs are vulnerable, and how much they need these deals with the West. Therefore, no matter how much the mullahs are pressured to account for violations of human rights, they will not abandon Europe because of their
The mullahs' regime has enjoyed huge concessions by the US government, for many years. The disastrous consequences of the US policy on Iran and rapprochement with the mullahs have been countless: It destroyed Iraq, created a human catastrophe in Syria and blocked the road to change in Iran.

“The more the US and the EU distance themselves from this policy of appeasing the mullahs, the closer the region would get to peace and tranquility.”

It is not without reason that the ruling mullahs are so afraid of the end of this era, which they called “a golden era.” We have repeated this over the years, and I repeat that the United States' worst mistake in the region was appeasing the mullahs. Today, the Iranian people and Resistance and the nations and governments in the region expect this policy to be revised and the U.S. stand firm against the grave violation of human rights in Iran and its efforts to obtain a nuclear bomb and meddling in the countries of the region. From now on, the more the US and the EU distance themselves from this policy, the closer the region would get to peace and tranquility. We specifically urge the EU and its member states to:

1. Refer the Iranian regime’s 37-year record of crimes against humanity to the UN Security Council, and in the first step, condition expansion of their economic relations with Iran on an end to executions.
2. Do not deal with the IRGC companies. Such businesses only fuel the regime's repressive machine in Iran and the war machine in Syria.
3. Recognize the Iranian people's desire to achieve freedom and democracy.
4. The Iranian regime is equally responsible for crimes against humanity in Syria. The world must not remain silent about Iranian regime's meddling in the region especially in Syria and should demand its immediate eviction.

I appreciate your continued support for the Iranian people in their struggle for freedom and democracy in Iran. I would also like to sincerely thank you for your role in the successful relocation of PMOI members from Iraq to Europe. We are confident that you will not take long before the people of Iran and Europe would appreciate you for your principled policies.

We are here today to speak about human rights in Iran, and unfortunately, it is clear for all of us that the state of human rights in that country is deplorable. I would just want to make two short points in this regard. The first point is on the European Union policy towards the Iranian regime. Since the current High Representative, Federica Mogherini, took office two years ago, the position of the European External Action Service in relation to dictatorships that violates human rights has weakened. And its voice has sounded on too few occasions and too low. Suffice to say, that in her several trips to Tehran, and in her meetings with Iranian officials, the issue of human rights has been practically absent. I'm sorry to say that her unnecessary friendly and submissive attitude in her conversations with people directly involved in thousands of executions, systematic torture and all kinds of abuses against human rights and civil liberties, people that in fact should be taken to court for crimes against humanity, is a moral discredit for herself, and for the European Union in its role as promoter and defender of the values of the open society in the world.

Javad Larijani, one of the three brothers who hold key positions in the regime, is in charge of the so-called Iranian Human Rights Committee. I propose they change the name. It should be called “The Anti-Human Rights Committee”. Mr. Larijani has recently returned a letter to Mrs. Mogherini asking her to prevent opposition activities in Europe and block the democratic rights of the PMOI and the NCRI in exposing the crimes of the Iranian regime. For instance, he has asked Mrs. Mogherini to forbid that we should be here. I think he's not very familiar with the institutional structures of the European Union. Larijani is being so cynical as to present the Iranian regime, one of the most bloodthirsty regimes of our times, as a victim of human rights violations itself. He also complains about the gathering of Iranian opposition with one hundred thousand participants in Paris in July 2016. Many of us were there with Mrs. Rajavi enjoying this fantastic event, and he has complained about this gathering. The same man that strongly defends the massive use of death penalty against political opponents and human rights activists, is the one that criticizes a democratic and peaceful event in favor of regime change in Iran. The second point, is that their systemic violation of human rights cannot be considered an internal matter of any country.

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We are in a historic phase which is rapidly developing and we see the political environment changing very fast over the two sides of the Atlantic. This is a moment where the positions of the European Parliament must have an enormous importance in reassessing, readressing, readjusting the course of action and the European foreign policies over the last three years after the nuclear deal and the JCPOA technically as it is called. The nuclear agreement between the international community and Iran has been flawed by the global positions on human rights and global security. In fact, after this signature of the JCPOA and the subsequent Resolution 2231 by the Security Council of the United Nations, European institutions, member states, companies, NGOs, think-tanks and individuals have engaged in an unprecedented competition in reaching out to Iran by signing hundreds of MOUs, declarations in negotiating practically everything with economic activities. I have always been proud to promote the wisdom of my country and my governments in foreign policy. But in this occasion, I cannot do that because very unfortunately the Italian government has taken the lead in a direction which is wrong. With Prime Minister Renzi’s guidance, each minister of the Italian government, foreign affairs minister, justice, economy, trade, culture, environment, education, health minister and practically every minister in the government have announced over the last few months those intentions with their Iranian counterparts.

The JCPOA signature has proven to be the best opportunity for all those who have vested interest in a supposedly lucrative Iranian market to spread a distorted and manipulative narrative about the true nature of the Iranian regime. According to this flawed narrative, Rouhani’s Iran is not a threat anymore to the international and regional stability. Because of this narrative, a flurry of visits, meetings, conferences have been taking place. The EU High Representative, heads of governments, ministers, and leaders of regional governments put aside all concerns and remained silent when the very same Iranian officials they meet threaten Israel, support international terrorism, violate human rights and involve in crimes against humanity in Aleppo, and other places in Iraq and Syria. They must remind Iranian support for Hezbollah, organized and led by IRGC commanders, were active in ethnic cleansing against Sunni communities and religious minorities. That has emboldened the mullahs. It has reinforced their convictions of the Iranian supremacy in the region, and repression of all dissidents at home is fully acceptable to their European interlocutors.

The JCPOA signature has proven to be the best opportunity for all those who have vested interest in a supposedly lucrative Iranian market to spread a distorted and manipulative narrative about the true nature of the Iranian regime.

We should therefore remind forcefully our leaders in our civil societies, our journalists, our media networks, of the responsibilities of all Europeans, and individuals which have been undertaken by the ECHR Article 3 Paragraph 5. The Union shall contribute to the protection of human rights, to the strict observance of the principles of the United Nations Charter. Therefore, I think this debate can summarize or settle the practical actions that all the European institutions should undertake with Iran, for reiterating human rights and freedoms, opposing the death penalty and torture, and very importantly putting in all agreements on trade and cooperation with Iran on improvement of human rights and stipulating that human rights are central to Tehran’s relations with EU.

Let me also note our resolution in the European Parliament on October 25, concerning normalization of relations with Iran. That was quite a strange reaction; this reaching out effort that all Europeans were making vis-à-vis Iran. The reaction on the other side was diplomatic to say the least, was in fact very cold. Important voices within the regime expressed their distaste and even said that the European Parliament resolution should not interfere with the strong support shown by the European institutions. Concerning the European Parliament resolution, I need to underline what was expressed by the head of the Iranian Judiciary’s Human Rights Council, Mohammad Jawad Larijani. He said and I quote: “If the EU wants to establish close contacts with human rights advocates, so they can ensure the process of human rights implementation, they should know that the judicial system in Iran will definitely not allow such a nest of corruption to be established in Iran.”

I would like to recall, and Maryam Rajavi would permit me to quote a couple of sentences, very important in my opinion, that she said just a few days ago in the November 2016 meeting in Paris: “Our demand is for the international community to end its policy of giving concessions to the Velayat-e Faqih regime. Our demand is to end the silence and inaction over the crimes of the Iranian regime in Iran and throughout the region. What we seek instead is their respect for the Iranian people’s quest for freedom, the Justice Seeking Movement for massacred political prisoners, and justice for the victims of the 1988 massacre in Iran.”

We know very well the difficulties of aiding a resolution of the Council of Humans Rights in Geneva explicitly mentioning massacres. We know we are not the majority of advocates for human rights but still the presence and the weight of the European Union is extremely important and I believe that the appeal as such launched by Mrs. Rajavi should be transposed in all European Union deliberations concerning Iran.
The people of Iran expect us from Europe to stand up for them, and not to ignore their suffering. We should side with the people of Iran and not with the brutal dictators in Iran. That I think is the clear message that should go out from us here today.

We have gathered on the occasion of the International Human Rights Day, and we are absolutely delighted to have Mrs. Maryam Rajavi, President of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, with us. She is regarded as the number one enemy of the mullahs because she leads an anti-fundamentalist movement which believes in a tolerant and democratic Islam, a secular government for a free future for Iran and the abolition of the death penalty which is very important for us here in Europe.

We should take a very close look at the record of the last 3 years under Rouhani: More people have been hanged under the so-called “moderate” Rouhani than during the time of Ahmadinejad. Rouhani has not said a word against these executions. Indeed, he defends the death sentences as the rule of God. Religious and ethnic minorities are suppressed more than ever before. But EU policymakers have completely ignored these realities. They are advocating more trade and more business deals with this regime.

Let us not forget that most of Iran’s economy is run by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards, not by ordinary Iranian businessmen. So the EU policy has encouraged the mullahs to continue their internal repression and to carry on crimes in Syria in support of Bashar Assad. Just one example is the complete failure of the international community to deal with the mass executions in Iran and in particular the massacre of 30,000 political prisoners, mainly from the PMOI, in 1988. This frankly shames the free world.

It is totally unacceptable for the EU to remain silent and continue business as usual with such a regime. Our High Representative Mrs. Mogherini must condemn the 1988 massacre as a crime against humanity. The people of Iran expect us from Europe to stand up for them, and not to ignore their suffering. We should side with the people of Iran and not with the brutal dictators in Iran.

Listening, Madam Rajavi, to your words, you are on the right side. Being Polish I know particularly well how difficult it is to stay on the right side of events.

We Poles do have a long memory, and we used to remember for quite a long time, almost centuries, all good deeds, all incidents and morals, important efforts of help, assistance we received in the most difficult times. And by this contribution I would like to pay this tribute to the people of Iran, for helping us Poles, the most suffering Poles who were refugees of different times. They wanted to travel this long way to their home country hoping for Poland being free not only free from Nazis, free from German Nazi occupation, but also independent.

There is also my own experience of combatting a regime that was vicious to its own society and I know how difficult it is. When we speak now about sanctions in the parliament, being imposed on countries for atrocities performed by different regimes, we always hear the argument that sanctions are first and foremost addressed to harm society, and here I would like to give my own personal evidence.

We Poles who used to live in Poland under communism and fighting communism. We supported sanctions against Poland during martial law, even if there were no chicken for dinner and our life was poorer, knowing that it is probably the only way to squeeze the imposed regime that was preventing the free will of Poles.

The people of Iran expect us from Europe to stand up for them, and not to ignore their suffering. We should side with the people of Iran and not with the brutal dictators in Iran. That I think is the clear message that should go out from us here today.

From Left:
Iran which is the National Council of Resistance of Iran led by Mrs. Maryam Rajavi.

Mrs. Rajavi mentioned the so-called moderates and hardliners and it is always the preference of many western powers to try to differentiate inside a dictatorship. I think this is an illusion. We are neglecting a very important component that is the Iranian military expansion and export of terrorism are responsible for a great deal of the current situation. Even getting Russia involved in Syria is to be seen as a result of Iranian policy that prefer the ground, as they both are interested in retaining the bloody dictatorship for Bashar Assad and both are bombing Aleppo.

I think the question today is whether we really want a change or do we prefer to continue our daydreaming, expecting, assuming that some deals could be concluded with dictators whose regime has not changed.

“If we are really interested in peace and stability in the region, it’s our moral commitment to support this alternative.”

We are betraying not only the Iranian people but we are betraying and deluding also our own citizens because there is an alternative and it is here. It is the only alternative for a laic, non-religious Iran, based on equality between women and men, based on friendship with all neighboring countries, and renouncing nuclear weapons program. I think if we are really interested in peace and stability in the region, it is our moral commitment to support this alternative. We need to stand together based on principles. Let us unite in supporting the Free Iran movement.

I address the European negotiators on economic deals that making business must end when thousands and thousands of human beings die. We, as the Europe's lawmakers, have a responsibility and cannot just go on condemning the actions. We have to become proactive and take practical steps to show the mullahs that we mean everything serious and that we are serious. Therefore, the first step must be recognition of the democratic opposition to the mullahs in Iran which is the National Council of Resistance of Iran led by Mrs. Maryam Rajavi.

Mrs. Rajavi, it is a great honor to be with you again this afternoon. I remembered by listening to your testimony thirteen years ago, you had been the victim of the repression in France and Europe, where they tried to criminalize you, where the Iranian resistance was arrested and accused, in an incredible way, of wanting to divert money, and trafficking. People remained in prison, people were put under house arrest, and thanks to the action of many lawyers and the transparency of the movement, everyone was released at that time. That was the proof that this resistance is a resistance open to all opinions.

“The way in which Europe today prefers to hide the issue of human rights, to hide the question of death penalty, because trade must be stronger than everything else, is unbearable.”

When I read a few days ago that the so-called human rights official, who is at the same time one of the brothers of Judiciary chief in Iran, was complaining that why in Europe and in France the PMOI can continue its activities when they should be in prison and Mrs. Rajavi should be silent, it was unbelievable. This situation is unacceptable and therefore I am proud to be here with you, along with all the other members of this Parliament, to say your place today is in Europe and in this Parliament you are welcome. You are at home in the European Parliament. Just a short note not to be too long, to say that the situation we are witnessing in Aleppo, as it has just been recalled, is absolutely dramatic, and that the mullahs government in Iran is heavily responsible for what is happening in Syria. It is unacceptable that we have always forgotten and we no longer want to recognize it. The Syrian regime would not have been held without the support of the mullahs. The role of Hezbollah is clearly known. Today, it must be said that Iran regime is one of the biggest troublemakers in the whole Middle East. And the way in which Europe today prefers to hide the issue of human rights, to hide the question of death penalty, because trade must be stronger than everything else, is unbearable. So for me I am telling you clearly that trade money is worth less than the life of a single child, one person in Iran. And one never wants to trade with dictatorships. Today they must be sanctioned, they will have to be prosecuted, but in any case, we will fight on your side Mrs. Rajavi until the Iranian people regain their sovereignty and freedom.

“We have to become proactive and take steps to show the mullahs that we are serious. The first step must be recognition of the democratic opposition to the mullahs in Iran which is the National Council of Resistance of Iran led by Mrs. Maryam Rajavi.”

I should say that as an Austrian I was delighted that Rouhani had to cancel his trip to Vienna because of a demonstration by supporters of Mrs. Rajavi. He had immediately asked to stop and cancel this demonstration, but Austrian authorities strictly said no. So Rouhani who was only afraid of this opposition decided not to go one day before arrival. Let us understand that we have to stand consequently on human rights and our principles, the European values, and let us communicate with all EU political labels to understand this easy clear message that we support your National Council Madam President, to reach a Free Iran for the Iranian people.
Richard Ashworth  
MEP from U.K.

I am extremely pleased that Mrs. Rajavi is with us because she brings with her demands for justice and accountability of the 1988 massacre. We as Europeans hold dear our values of promoting the principles of democracy, human rights and rule of law. And as parliamentarians, it is our duty to demand justice over the massacre of more than 30,000 political prisoners. Particularly we send that message to the EU High Representative, Federica Mogherini.

“We want to know why Mrs. Mogherini in the past year has failed to condemn the appalling human rights abuses taking place in Iran.”

Therefore, we want to know why Mrs. Mogherini in the past year has failed to condemn the appalling human rights abuses taking place in Iran. She should know that the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights situation in Iran has reported that last year executions in Iran surged to nearly 1,000. And that is the highest level in more than a quarter of a century.

According to Amnesty International, 60% of all registered executions in the world took place in Iran last year. Iran holds the infamous title of Top State Executioner per capita. And it has consistently held the hideous record of Top Executioners of Minors. Actually, Mrs. Mogherini should know that Iran hanged 10 prisoners including three women, during the period of her visit to Tehran in April this year. I think it’s a matter of deep regretting shame that she chose to remain silent on those appalling human rights violations while she was there.

I urge the EU High Representative and the UK Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, not to allow the mullahs regime get away with such atrocities as the 1988 massacre. Let us not degrade and devalue our founding principles. We are proud to support millions of Iranians demanding democracy and humanity. We should press the U.N. to establish a commission of inquiry to bring the perpetrators of the 1988 massacre to justice.

Daniela Aiuto  
MEP from Italy

“How can we witness the execution of 71 women and do nothing? How can we witness the massacre of 30,000 political prisoners and do nothing?”

We all know how much we fought to establish the joint comprehensive plan of action to ensure a peaceful nuclear program in Iran. We also know that the European Union and western countries are pushing for this tightening collaboration with Iran. However, how is it possible not to take into account the gross violation of human rights that are occurring in the country? These issues become even more urgent to address when the main targets of these brutalities are the most vulnerable group of society: women and children of Iran. I had the pleasure to be part of the Commission on the Status of Women last March in New York and the UN Women 2016. During the debate, I asked “how humanity, the biggest and most important value we all have, could be overpassed by a nuclear agreement, political disputes or religious beliefs.” Today, I would like to ask you the same question. How can we witness the execution of 71 women and do nothing? How can we witness the massacre of 30,000 political prisoners and do nothing? Human Rights are inherent rights and we should all take action to guaranty them, not only in Iran but also in all the other countries of the world. After the recent events that have reshaped the international scenario, I hope we will be able to find a harmonious balance where human rights can play a pivotal role for the protection of all individuals, regardless of sex, religion or nationality.

I wish to thank you Madam Rajavi for your countless efforts and for inspiring us in the elimination of violence against women. I’m sure that with your dedication and with our dedication in ending these brutalities, we will see a free and democratic Iran in the future, where women’s rights and human rights are guaranteed to everyone.

Anna Záborská  
MEP from Slovakia

Dear Mrs Rajavi, first I would like to congratulate you and your movement for the successful relocation of all Camp Liberty residents to safe countries. Relocating nearly 3,000 defenseless residents from Iraq without a single casualty was almost like a miracle. Many members of the European Parliament followed closely the situation in Camp Ashraf and then in Camp Liberty and felt very strongly about it. We are glad that thanks to your dedication and leadership, and the people of Albania, your people are finally safe. I would like to thank all your collaborators who here in the European Parliament informed us during all these years. Today we are here to mark the Human Rights Day. The international community and the EU need to send a strong signal to hold those who suppress the freedom of thought, belief and conscience. And the government and leadership of Iran is still one of them. We can say that the nuclear deal is good thinking, but it shouldn’t mean we can keep silent on the issue of human rights.

“We need to support the Iranian Resistance led by Mrs Rajavi, for ending the impunity of perpetrators of the 1988 Massacre of 30,000 political prisoners in Iran and bringing those responsible to justice.”

We have to demand that the mass executions are stopped. We have to demand that the politics of repression against women are cancelled. We cannot turn a blind eye on human rights violation in Iran in exchange for businesses. What is the message to the Iranian regime and the Iranian people when three women are executed in Iran during the recent visit of High Representative Mogherini in Iran? We must send Iran a clear signal that we will not tolerate crimes against human rights. We need to support the Iranian resistance led by you, Mrs Rajavi, for ending the impunity of perpetrators of the 1988 Massacre of 30,000 political prisoners in Iran and bringing those responsible to justice. Because even Iranian leaders need to understand that a state that does not respect human dignity can hardly become our trusted partner.
Jaromír Štětina  
*MEP from Czech Republic*

I was born during the second World War. I lived almost 50 years in totalitarianism in the former Soviet bloc after the war. During the communist time, we lost freedom of movement, freedom of speech and so on. Millions died in prisons and gulags. It is more than sad that totalitarian regimes still exist in the 21st century. Today, Iran is an example. Everyday control of people, cruelty, executions, etc. We reached a nuclear agreement with Iran last year. But that did not change Iran’s behaviour. We can’t give Rouhani and his administration a free pass for business interests. This policy is shortsighted.

I wish Iranian people success in their long time fight for freedom. We fought for our freedom for half a century. Finally, we are free. One of the most famous fighters in my country, which at the time was Czechoslovakia, was our former president Václav Havel. I am delighted to have this possibility to give this book about Václav Havel to Mrs Rajavi as a symbol of understanding and supporting the fight of Iranian people for freedom.

Wim Van de Camp  
*MEP from the Netherland*

I have been supporting the Iranian opposition and movement led by you, Mrs. Rajavi, for many years, and I must say, it is very encouraging when we look back how much you have reached in these years through your tireless and constant efforts. We had - and I have to remember it – a situation in Camp Ashraf and Liberty for so many years. You tried very hard; you knocked on every door, and finally you managed to bring everyone out to safe countries out of thirteen years of constant repression and dangers in Iraq. It would have been unimaginable a year ago if someone would have told me that this year all Camp Liberty residents would be in safety.

So, I think you are very right to focus now on human rights. This has always been the spirit and essence of your fight. This is the focal point that brings us altogether here from different political families and different cultures, social and religious backgrounds, because human rights are universal and here we all feel equal.

So, I want to encourage you to keep up your right fight. We need to bring those responsible for the massacre of the political prisoners in Iran in 1988 - as it was remembered many times this afternoon - to justice especially those who are still sitting in positions of power in Iran today.

I am sure with this commitment, freedom and democracy will come to Iran much sooner than we dare to believe today.

Timothy Kirkhope  
*Member of the UK House of Lords*

I have had 17 happy years in this parliament and now I am in the British parliament in the Upper House. I intend to pursue very much the sort of things that I have always been keen on when I had been a member of the European Parliament, and that includes of course, my determination to see human rights and democracy, justice and humanity being displayed not only in European nations, including my own country, but also in others countries in the world as well.

And what I would just like to say is this: whenever we, we who are democracies, pursue agreements with others outside of our own ambit, I think it is absolutely vital not only that we look for reciprocation in relation to agreements but that we also demand and expect the countries with whom we deal to display the same level of human rights and democracy that we enjoy ourselves.

Consequently, it is absolutely vital for us in all our future discussions whether it be with Iran or other countries, but particularly here today discussing Iran, that we demand standards to be met before we are prepared to yield to those authorities and those governments.

My own feeling is very much that keeping this pressure up, hopefully will result one day, and I hope not too long in the future, in democracy and freedom returning to Iran. And you will continue to have my support and many of my colleagues will also be in support, together with the wonderful work that colleagues here are doing in the European Parliament.

Jozo Radoš  
*MEP from Croatia, Former Minister of Defence*

As a member of the Friends of Free Iran, I would like to condemn the terrible crimes against humanity which was made in 1988, and at the same time I would to repeat the statement from this group to call the UN Security Council to form an international tribunal to bring the perpetrators and organizers of that terrible crime to justice. But as a member of the European Parliament, I think it is more important to call EU institutions including the European Parliament to do the same as a pre-condition for not only human rights dialogue with Iran, but for any kind of deepening cooperation with Iran from the European side.

In this day of international human rights, when political executions in Iran continue regardless of the nuclear deal and in violation of western values, I think it is very important to say that the European Union must be consistent, to put human rights close in all its international cooperation agreement, EU must do that with regard to Iran.
Witness at the European Parliament On Human Rights Violations in Iran

Shabnam Madadzadeh
Former Iranian Political Prisoner

Ladies and gentlemen, I am Shabnam Madadzadeh and I am honored to be among you today as a witness. When I was a 21 year old student, my brother and I were imprisoned for 5 years in the prisons of the Mullahs regime for supporting the Mojahedin (PMOI) and came face to face with the true nature of this regime.

A girl who entered university with the great love and ambition to obtain freedom and peace for her country but her dreams perished as she only bared witness to solitary confinement, torture of the interrogators, and the horrific cells of Gharchak Varamin prison and the wards of Evin and Gohardasht prisons.

During my 5 year imprisonment I witnessed numerous crimes of this regime particularly against Iran's innocent women and girls and today I am here to be the voice of the voiceless, the voice of those being crushed in the clutches of this misogynist regime in face of the world's silence and inaction.

I am here to tell the world the crimes and atrocities of the regime which I have witnessed and experienced firsthand. I am here to echo the voice of the people who have become fed up with their lives under the ruling dictatorship to western politicians who sit at the negotiation table with this regime without any attention to the value of human lives.

Since my brother and I and some other youth and former political prisoners left Iran and joined the resistance, Iranian regime and its agents are trying to say that we are not the voice of Iranian people; it's very simple; please let the people have fair and free elections to express their will and voice, but they know such election will be the end of the mullahs.

The story of the pain and suffering of the Iranian people is not limited to one or two years; it is the story of 37 years of execution, torture and slaughter of innocent lives; but also 37 years of struggle, sacrifice, steadfastness for the ideal of freedom, with 120,000 of Iran's best who have sacrificed their lives but are still standing till the end.

Alejo Vidal-Quandas Speech Continued from Page 3...

These practices of the Iranian regime have penetrated neighboring countries beyond Iran's borders. This is a regime that is extending the crimes that have been committed in its own country in the past 30 years, to other territories, such as Iraq and Syria. The regime's brutal behavior, mainly the massacre of the summer of 1988, and many more atrocities, have never been brought to justice, including the export of terrorism and fundamentalism, meddling in the internal affairs of other countries in the region, the implementation of the same policies of oppression and suppression that exist inside Iran to the hull of the Middle East. Once again we must insist that there is a solution despite all difficulties.

This solution is regime change, to transform Iran into a sound democracy according to the 10-point plan proposed by the Iranian democratic opposition, led by Maryam Rajavi. This is what European governments and the European External Action Service and Mrs. Mogherini should aim to, instead of wasting their time trying to appease a regime that will never give up its hegemonic power of the Muslim world to impose on it its fanatical aggressive and regressive totalitarianism.
Iranian Youths' Hope is Death

December 7, 2016

Interview: Iranian dissident, Farzad Madadzadeh, following the support of Europe... if Europe wants to do business with Iran, it should demand moratorium on the death penalty in Iran in return.

Madadzadeh, 30, says it is completely wrong to call Iran regime's President Hassan Rouhani a “moderate.” Yesterday, he testified in the European Parliament about his experience in Iran's prison: “I have seen the real face of the so-called moderate Rouhani in Evin Prison where I was imprisoned from 2004 to 2014.”

Q: What is level of disappointment and frustration of Iranian young people?
A: Young people are helpless because they do not see any improvement. Their hope to get education and continue their study, like other young people in the world who are studying, so that they are honored and cherished, is dead in Iran. Even my friends who have a university degree or are studying as a Ph.D. graduate student, have to make a living as a taxi driver and illegally....

Q: Does Europe sacrifice human rights for nuclear deal?
A: People of Iran are well aware that both western countries and the mullahs are thinking about their own interests, and now, what about the Iranian people's interests? None of them think about Iranian people's interest. Many Iranians no longer have any wishful thinking and false hope that the nuclear deal would improve their economic situation. After the nuclear agreement, many youths spread this news in social media: “The (nuclear) agreement is good for Hezbollah (of Lebanon) and Assad.”

Q: What is your message to the European Union's High Representative, Federica Mogherini?
A: My friends who are still in prison cells in Iran have sent me this message in this regard: “Tell Ms. Mogherini to come and meet us in prison in order to see by her own eyes the situation of human rights in Iran. Everyday people are still hanged in Iran. If you want to do business with Iran regime, it is O.K. but make it contingent to the stop of executions and do not cuisine (cook pastry) with this criminal regime.”

MEPs denounce worsening human rights situation in Iran, urge EU trade ties to be hinged upon halting executions

December 8, 2016

.....The President-elect of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, Maryam Rajavi (pictured), was the keynote speaker at the conference.... According to MEPs, engaging in trade and political relations with a regime that holds the world record for per-capita executions is a violation of all human rights standards. They stressed that silence and inaction in the face of brutal human rights violations is contradictory to the principles and values the European Union was founded upon.

The diverse MEPs who took part in the event also expressed their support for the Iranian resistance and Mrs. Rajavi's ten-point plan for the future of Iran. In addition to MEPs, a number of European dignitaries including former Italian Foreign Minister Giulio Terzi and Alejo Vidal Quadras, a former vice president of the Parliament, addressed the conference.... Ms. Shabnam Madadzadeh, a young activist, who spent five years in prison for her political activities in support of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran and recently fled Iran provided an eyewitness account of the dreadful human-rights situation in Iranian prisons.
Seminar in European Parliament on Human Rights in Iran

Al Arabiya - December 8, 2016

Rajavi emphasized that “the silence of the European Union about the repression in Iran under the pretext of strengthening the moderates have resulted in an increase of executions in the state of Hassan Rowhani and the Iranian regime’s further meddling in the region, especially in Syria.”... Rajavi called on America to “rectify its policies towards the Iranian people and press toward the cessation of human rights violations in Iran; she also made four demands to the EU...

European Parliament’s Meeting in the Presence of Maryam Rajavi to Discuss Human Rights Situation in Iran

In a meeting currently underway in the European Parliament in Brussels, the ways to prevent human rights violations by the Iranian regime in Iran and abroad are discussed. The hall is filled with MEPs and current and former European officials. Former foreign minister of Italy is the most prominent official on the panel. Speeches are focused on human rights violations committed by the Iran regime particularly continuous wave of executions in Iran. The UN has recorded thousands of executions in Iran last year. The meeting discusses judicial mechanisms to hold accountable the leaders of Iranian regime.

Student Tortured for 5 Years in Iran Escapes to Tell of Horror

Britain's Express has interviewed former Iranian political prisoner Shabnam Madadzadeh who explained the ordeal she was put through in detention in Iran. Below is the excerpt of her interview with the Express:

Shabnam Madadzadeh, 29, was kept in a tiny cell, beaten and interrogated during her agonizing years behind bars. The activist was forced to listen from solitary confinement as female inmates were raped, before she was made to watch male guards beat and electrocute her brother Farzad as they ordered her to tell them about opposition group the People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran (MEK).

Intelligence authorities charged the siblings for speaking out against Iran's regime, with Ms Madadzadeh arrested in 2009 on her way to Tehran's Tarbiat Moalem University where she studied computer science. Revealing harrowing details, Ms Madadzadeh told Express.co.uk: "I arrived and spent three months in solitary confinement and there was torture, both mental and physical. My cell was just 2mx3m and I was alone with no connection to the world. My family was not allowed to contact me and they could not find out anything about me or what it was like for me in the jail.”

When she was finally allowed out of solitary confinement, Ms. Madadzadeh secretly sent letters from her cell to draw attention to prison brutality. The student repeatedly refused to speak to interrogators, who would question her for eight to ten hours every day and found herself subject to increasingly violent and lengthy interrogations. She said: “They pushed me and they hit me a lot. It was long interrogations - eight to 10 hours a day every day. They grabbed my hair and pushed my head and wanted me to say what they wanted to hear.”

“They tortured my brother, even more in front of my eyes. They increased the pressure and even more in the interrogation they said they would kill me and threatened to execute me. Nobody knew where I was, I was alone and I heard the sounds of other prisoners being tortured. They would cry out and it was the most horrible sound.”

The activist claims other female prisoners were raped by guards and routinely sexually assaulted. Other prisoners were electrocuted and put on a rack before being beaten. After spending five years in jail refusing to speak, Ms Madadzadeh was released and last month fled the country evading intelligence and surveillance teams......

Speaking to the European Parliament about the horror she endured, Ms. Madadzadeh, said: .... “The message of the Iranian people to western governments, and my message today is that you must adhere to the three decades of struggle by the Iranian people to break free from the clutches of this regime and accept the true freedom fighters, the National Council of Resistance of Iran as the true representative of the Iranian people, and refrain from any type of negotiations or deals with this notorious regime, because the true price of your deals is human lives, gallows in the streets of Iran. “The Iranian people have the will power to overthrow this regime, and with the tireless efforts of the Iranian resistance they will overthrow this regime.”

http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/740992/inside-iran-regime-student-tortured-prison-five-years-escapes-resistance

Live Report by Sky News Arabia

December 7, 2016

http://www.skynewsarabia.com/web/video/899151/
The website of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Council of Resistance of Iran provides the latest news and analysis on Iran and covers issues pertinent to the state of affairs in the country as well as policy on Iran: www.ncr-iran.org

You can also follow us on Twitter @iran_policy or via Facebook: facebook.com/IranNCR

* Support our activities *
The NCRI News Bulletin, Iran Liberation, published since 1984, has reported continuously on the human rights violations in Iran, echoing the cries of the Iranian people for freedom and honoring their human dignity. Our efforts have played an important role in exposing the spread of terrorism and fundamentalism as well as the nuclear proliferation by the reigning mullahs.

A significant amount of our work is undertaken by volunteers, yet in order to meet the inevitable costs of publication and the expansion of our activities, we ask for your generosity in donating to our organisation. We ask you kindly to assist us in our endeavours to bring freedom, democracy and respect for human rights to Iran by donating to www.ncr-iran.org under the “Donate” section.

We thank you in advance for your generosity.

E.U. CONFERENCE HUMAN RIGHTS

AFP - The Iranian Resistance’s President-elect Maryam Rajavi took part in a conference at the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium, on 7 December 2016. Conference at the European Parliament on the eve of International Human Rights Day in Brussels, Belgium, on 7 December 2016. Sponsored by the Friends of a Free Iran inter-parliamentary group made up of more than 200 MEPs from different political parties.

The website of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Council of Resistance of Iran provides the latest news and analysis on Iran and covers issues pertinent to the state of affairs in the country as well as policy on Iran: www.ncr-iran.org
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