



## *The British Committee for Iran Freedom*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Release

### **Nowruz celebration in UK Parliament in solidarity with the popular uprising in Iran**

Cross-party MPs and Peers and members of the Anglo-Iranian Community celebrated the Persian New Year, Nowruz, with a reception in Parliament on Thursday, 16 March 2023.

The cross-party MPs and Peers and other speakers wished those around the world celebrating the Persian New Year a happy Nowruz and expressed solidarity with the people of Iran and their organised Resistance movement, the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI).

They condemned the regime's violent crackdown on the uprising that has continued since September last year. They expressed support the popular uprising across Iran and expressed hope that the new Persian year would be the year the people of Iran realise their aspiration of a free, democratic and secular republic.

NCRI President-elect Mrs Maryam Rajavi was the keynote speaker and addressed the event in a video message. She thanked members of Parliament for their continued support of the Iranian people's resistance and fight for freedom and democracy.

NCRI President-elect Mrs Maryam Rajavi said:

“Following the visit of the Rt Hon. David Jones and Hon. Bob Blackman to Ashraf-3, and the announcement of the declaration of solidarity and support by 250 British Parliamentarians, we had many positive reactions from Iranian people, while the regime's officials reacted with anger.

“The current regime is unable to provide any solutions to the country's economic, social, and political crises. The conditions for change are ready.

“Delaying to blacklist the IRGC and delaying to reactivate the UN resolutions will only result in the spread of more terrorism and war mongering abroad and will provide the regime with a chance to obtain nuclear weapons.

“The people of Iran reject all forms of dictatorship, whether it be the Shah's regime or religious tyranny. They seek a Democratic Republic ... and there is no doubt this will be achieved.”

Co-President of the the International Committee of Parliamentarians for a Democratic Iran (ICPDI) Bob Blackman MP said:

“We must start to hold the regime to account and act with firmness, the only two words dictators understand. I reiterate again here today what many of my cross-party colleagues in both Houses of the UK Parliament support and call for.



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“The UK Government must immediately proscribe the IRGC and refer to the UN Security Council the appalling human rights and terrorism dossier of the regime with the view of holding regime leaders to account for acts of terrorism and crimes against humanity in an international tribunal.”

Co-president of the BCFIF Steve McCabe MP said:

“The fight in Iran today is between the people versus those who want to maintain power by oppressing them.

“This is the reality our Government, our allies and international partners must realise and recognise. We must stand on the right side of history, which is that of the Iranian people and their resistance.

“The UK must lead efforts and actions at the international level and at the UN to shift the balance of power from the regime to the Iranian people and the true representatives of their aspirations, the NCRI.

“This crucial step has been lacking in our soft-line approach to the regime in Iran based on seeking accommodation with the regime instead of accountability. This policy must change to reflect the realities in Iran.”

Rt Hon John Spellar MP said:

“The courage of the Iranian people has brought to the world the real nature of the clerical, fascist regime in Iran. The International Community must be stronger and go further to shut down the regime’s operations. We must proscribe the IRGC in this country and across Europe.”

Co-president of the BCFIF Prof. Lord Alton of Liverpool said:

“The UK should back the NCRI President-elect Mrs Maryam Rajavi’s call for an UN delegation with human rights experts and the Special Rapporteur on Iran to visit the country and meet with detained protesters and political prisoners.

“As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, the UK must pressure the regime to allow such a visit by referring its appalling human rights dossier to the UN Security Council.

“NCRI’s commitment to rule of law and democracy now and in the future of Iran is articulated in Mrs Rajavi’s 10-point platform. That is why I endorse this democratic alternative. And I invite our Government to do the same.”

Baroness Verma welcomed UK’s new global Women and Girls Strategy, which the Foreign Office announced on International Women’s Day and said:

“We have a duty to ensure our government brings this regime to book. We cannot close our eyes to the horrific scenes we have seen. We need to set the standard.

“To the people of Iran you are not forgotten! I urge my government to be at the forefront and to hold the Iranian regime to account.”



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Anna Firth MP said:

“With her 10-point plan and other platforms to secure women’s rights in the future of Iran, Mrs Rajavi has shown the women of Iran will and can shoulder the responsibility and that women are indeed the force for change and the guarantor for a democratic Iran.

“And as our Government is stepping up its efforts internationally to promote the rights of women and girls across the world, it should take the step and recognise Mrs Rajavi’s 10-point plan as a viable roadmap to secure and advance women’s and girls’ rights in Iran and even the Middle East.”

The Rt Hon. the Lord Dholakia OBE DL said:

“The Iranian resistance want freedom and democracy for the people of Iran. The uprising in Iran demonstrated the number of women involved in fighting for freedom and justice in Iran. We have seen the brutality of the regime and I admire and congratulate the people of Iran for fighting this regime. The world is watching.”

Other speakers and participants included: Rt Hon Sir Roger Gale MP; Martin Vickers MP; the Rt Hon. the Baroness Blackstone; Lord Singh of Wimbledon CBE; Baroness Meacher; Earl of Erroll; Roger Lyons, former president of the TUC; Azadeh Zabeti, co-president of the Committee of Anglo-Iranian Lawyers in the UK; and Narges Rahmanfard, representative of the Anglo-Iranian Community.

Two renowned Iranian musicians also performed live traditional Persian music during the Nowruz event.

**British Committee for Iran Freedom**  
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