

International Liberty Association Newsletter

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EDITORIAL

The September moon, full around the Autumn equinox, is traditionally called the Harvest moon as it extends the light far into the evening so workers could continue to bring in the harvest. A fitting symbol for us to pay tribute to all the dedicated people worldwide tirelessly striving to bring real change to Iran, to bring to harvest the crops sown this year, especially the uprising of the people in Iran, the renewed sanctions on the regime's oppressive forces, and the progress made in bringing the perpetrators of the 1988 massacre of 30,000 to justice. We pay special tribute to recently deceased Senator John McCain at this time.

We are proud to be part of such a unified international effort and thank every one of our supporters for standing by our side during this epic struggle.

As well as remembering 1988, our 1st September event in Waterloo paid tribute to the 52 slaughtered in cold blood in Ashraf on that day in 2013.

And, as glorious counter to those September martyrs, we also celebrated the safe relocation of all the remaining Ashrafis to Albania on 9 September 2016 and the unveiling of the new Ashraf 3 built there during 2018.

Inside Iran, September sees the students back to school, facing another year of arduous journeys, deteriorating school buildings, lack of facilities and teachers, in an environment so polluted it is hard to breathe.

Many environmental activists have been arrested and silenced for bringing attention to the gravity of the situation resulting from years of corruption and mismanagement. As the regime "shoots the messengers" it is vital that we voice their courage and redouble our efforts so that the ecological devastation, and all the other evil spawn of this regime, can be redressed.

30 YEARS AFTER



On Friday, 14 September, a meeting was held at the United Nations Headquarters in Geneva marking the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the massacre of 30,000 prisoners in Iran.

The meeting aimed at drawing the attention of the new UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Iran and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to this massacre in order to include it in the agenda of the UN Human Rights Council at its forthcoming summit.

The speakers were Ingrid Betancourt, Gilbert Mitterand, Tahar Boumedra, Laurence Fehlmann Rielle (member of the Swiss Federal Parliament), Dr Alejo Vidal Quadras, the prominent lawyer Juan Garcès, and the Italian Elisabetta Zamparutti, the secretary of 'Hands off Cain'.

Dr Tahar Boumedra stressed that "The Iran regime will never form an investigation into the ... continued on p.2

SENATOR JOHN McCAIN, A SAVIOUR OF ASHRAFIS, DIES



Senator McCain and Senator Lindsey Graham meet with Liberty representatives in Baghdad Airport -November 2015

Ashraf residents lost a great friend and saviour on 25 August 2018 when Senator John McCain lost his life after a long battle with cancer.

The Ashrafis in Tirana know very well that his intervention was instrumental in forcing John Kerry to take the plight of the Ashrafis in Camp Liberty as seriously as it actually was. After the last deadly attack on Camp Liberty in October 2015, Senator McCain along with Senator Lindsey Graham went to Iraq to visit the camp residents. The Iraqi government did not allow the visit to take place and hence Senator McCain asked the US embassy in Iraq to bring their representatives to the airport so that he could meet with them before his departure.

At that time the Obama administration had chosen ... continued on p.2



30 years after continued from p.1



1988 Massacre and they are destroying the evidence.

"I advise all Special Rapporteurs and UN officials to call for independent investigation into the 1988 Massacre.

"We commemorate Asma Jahangir, previous Special Rapporteur on Iran who first addressed the 1988 Massacre and we hope that Mr Javid Rahman will follow her path."

Ingrid Betancourt said: "The regime of the mullahs denies this massacre but the facts show otherwise.

"This is important because we are facing prisoners who had been sentenced, serving their terms, some had finished or were about to be released, who were executed in the Massacre.

"Executions were carried out en masse. Hundreds were executed each day. Imagine in 5 months 30,000 people were executed, men and women." Mr Gilbert Mitterrand said: "How many such sessions should we still have to hold? This is once again an expression of our denunciation of the injustice."



Dr Vidal Quadras said: "Many perpetrators have actually admitted to committing the crime. Some have actually said they are proud of having participated in the massacres.

"During the presidency of the so-called moderate Hassan Rouhani, over 3000 have been executed.

"The Iran regime has also responded brutally to the nationwide uprising since December. More than 50 were shot in streets; more died under torture in prisons.

"We in Europe should side with the people of Iran.

"It is essential that the UNSC refers this case to international court."

Ms Fehlmann Rielle said: "The perpetrators of the crimes have never been brought to justice and on the contrary, some of them are still in power in high positions in Iran.

"This massacre is one of the most atrocious crimes that Iran has ever experienced. And it has really slipped out of the screening of the international community.



"The victims' families have the right to know the truth about these events and the fate of their loved ones. There should be effective investigations.

"The situation of the political prisoners in Iran continues to be extremely worrying, and, we are seeing very regular executions."

Ms Elisabetta Zamparutti of the Italian human rights organization, Hands off Cain, intervened at the side event of UNHR: "The Iranian people paid a high price in 1988 Massacre and it continues with a large number of current executions in Iran."

John McCain dies continued from p.1

to remain silent at such atrocities in order not to jeopardise the fragile nuclear deal he had forged. The heavy price was being paid by the blood of Ashrafis. After being briefed about the attack and the horrendous conditions that the residents were facing after demolition of their place of residence, Senator McCain gave a promise to the Ashrafis that he would change the situation on his return to Washington. Up to this point the US government, responsible under international law for the protection of Ashrafis, was not worried about neglecting this responsibility since the US government is not a party to the International Court of Justice. Senator McCain introduced an amendment to the US Budget Bill which required the State Department to provide protection for the Ashrafis and arrange for their safe transfer. The amendment, titled McCain Amendment SA 4400, called for US government action for the safe relocation of Ashrafis to

Albania as well as making sure that their stay in Iraq was safe and free of further harassment.



Senator McCain meeting with Ashrafis in Tirana, 14 April 2017

This amendment was the main reason for the then Secretary of State, John Kerry, taking interest in the matter and working with the UN High Commission for Refugees and the Albanian government to organise the safe relocation which ended in fact when the last group of Ashrafis arrived in Tirana on 9 September 2016.

Senator McCain made it his mission to go to Tirana in April 2017 to meet with the Ashrafis there. At the meeting he congratulated them on their successful transfer from Iraq and praised their perseverance and steadfastness. He said: *"There is no doubt that people in this room have suffered not only themselves, but in the loss of their loved ones because of the Iranian tyranny.*

"I thank you for being an example; an example to the whole world that those people who are willing to fight and sacrifice for freedom, will achieve it and you are an example to everyone in the world who is struggling for it."

Senator McCain will always be remembered for his support for the people of Iran and the Ashrafis. In the midst of recent demonstrations in Iran Senator McCain wrote: "For too long the Iranian people have been oppressed by their government which cares more about sowing instability abroad than its own citizens. The US stands with the brave protestors who yearn for freedom, peace, and an end to corruption in Iran."

MULLAHS' 40 YEAR LEGACY: DESTRUCTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISTS IN IRAN ARE IMPRISONED AND KILLED INSTEAD OF BEING SUPPORTED AND HELPED



Kavous Seyed Emami, a university professor and managing director of the Persian Heritage Wild Life Institute, which has been active in this field for many years, was arrested by the government and then killed in prison. Officials pretended that he committed suicide, which was strongly contested by his family and the evidence. Currently his wife, a Canadian citizen, is not allowed to leave Iran.

Persian Heritage Wild Life, a non-governmental organization, was registered in 2008. One of the activities of this institution is its focus on high-risk animals such as the Asian leopard, Iranian cheetah, Asian black bear and Larestan ram.

According to numerous reports, the main reason for arresting and killing Kavous Seyed Emami was his opposition to the establishment of missile bases in wild life areas and their impact on the environment.

Other environmental activists in prisons across Iran include:



Sepideh Kashani, an activist and environment expert, used to hold training courses about the environment in Iran. Her family has no information about her condition, since her arrest.



Niloufar Bayani is an active environmental expert, who was arrested with no justification. Her family have been trying to follow up her situation in vain.

Sam Rajabi is another environmental activist detained for no specific reason. His mother, Ms



Houshmand Afshar, regarding her son's latest condition told Persian BBC: "Since my son was arrested, he has not had any contact with me. I went to the prosecutor's office twice, but I did not receive an answer."

Sam is the son of Dr Parviz Rajabi, a prominent Persian historian, writer and translator.

Taher Ghadirian is another environmental activist whose family have no information about his situation as

their enquiries have not yet yielded a result.

Amir Hossein Khaleghi has been working in the environmental field for many years. His family

is totally unaware of his situation since he was arrested.

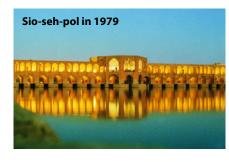
Iran wetlands



The Anzali wetland is one of 20 wetlands in Iran. With an area of about 20 hectares, it is the largest animal habitat in Iran. Unfortunately, the depth of this lagoon has fallen in the past thirty years from 14 metres to less than 2 metres. The volume of water entering the wetland during the past thirty years has been reduced 200 times due to mismanagement of the waterways.

Unfortunately, during this period many wetlands have completely dried up across Iran.

Isfahan



Sio-seh-pol in 2018

Isfahan is probably the most famous city of Iran owing to its rich traditional architecture and historical buildings. The most important of these buildings are Naghshe Jahan square, Ali Qaapo, Khajou Bridge and Sio-seh-pol Bridge with its special architecture. Unfortunately, because of wrong policy and the lack of attention to the environment and its river, Zayandrood, the water under Sio-seh-pol Bridge has now dried up, turning a beautiful tourist attraction into a place of devastation. Every human being suffers by comparing its present to its past.

Urmia Lake

Urmia Lake was a magnificent tourist destination and an environmentally essential place for the local people and animals. But unfortunately, owing to the mullahs' mismanagement and greed it has turned into a dried salt land threatening the local habitat.

Not so long ago, the Urmia Lake was the largest permanent water intake in Western Asia, with an area of 51, 876 square km, equivalent to more than 3% of the total area of Iran. This ecosystem has been registered internationally by UNESCO as a protected area. ... continued on p.8



A REPORT FROM TIRANA

Washington Times reporter, L. Todd Wood has been in Albania recently and took the opportunity to meet the Ashrafis in Tirana. The following are excerpts from his first article as he intends to write more about this encounter.



"I had no idea what to expect upon reaching the sprawling facility which is the new home for approximately 3,200 of the Iranian resistance movement's personnel, after being forced out of Iraq by violence from the Iranian-backed government.

"Iranian intelligence agents have been active in Albania, recruiting former MEK members for propaganda purposes and attempting to stain the reputation of the group within the eyes of Albania's people.



"The car picked me up at the hotel in Tirana and we made the 45-minute drive out to the camp. The conversation was pleasant enough and we even stopped for some local fruit along the way. But security was very tight.



"The camp is very large, and in various phases of construction. The group has done remarkably well in such a short period of time to recreate what they had left in Iraq. There is everything you would expect in a small city — lodging, food service, assembly halls, administrative buildings. "In a short amount of time I was

introduced to the leadership of the group in Albania and we sat around a table in one of the new buildings to get acquainted. What struck me initially was the openness that I encountered. Multiple attempts at journalistic hit pieces had culminated in a recent drone flyover by an adversarial news group from the UK, most likely funded by someone who doesn't want the MEK to be successful in its quest.

As the members of the camp knew that I had promised to keep an open mind, I was met most graciously. I asked many questions during my two-day visit. All of the questions were answered in-depth, sometimes with other members being brought in to give a more detailed and complete answer. I was not prevented from seeing or requesting anything. I asked about life at the camp, those who had left the movement, even about the MEK's alleged involvement in the Iranian Hostage Crisis decades before. All questions were met with complete answers.



"In fact, I was given a tour of the camp. The facilities are very functional, if somewhat barren.

"With the tour I was exposed to the robust cooking capabilities that have been built. I toured the medical facility which has a good amount of equipment and staff, trying to do their best with limited resources. Many patients were in various phases of medical treatment as I walked from room to room.



In addition to being exposed to many of the day-to-day locations members would frequent, I also had the chance to talk and interview probably 50 members from all walks of life within the movement. Some of the older, original members were provided,

as well as the youngest. They all had their own unique story of what led them to join. Many had violence perpetrated on their loved ones by the regime. Many had family members executed. Many had simply given up hope of a decent life in Iran and now had committed themselves to bringing regime change for future generations.



"Each and every one of them spoke about their people, and how they wanted a better life for the Iranian population. This was especially prevalent among the young men and women I met, many who had scars and wounds from the violence at Ashraf, or even within Iran itself. Many had a deep sense of loss and pain from their dealings with the regime: murder, assault, deceit, torture. Their overriding principle was to prevent future generations of Iran from having to go through the same horrific experiences.

The ideal of freedom is a powerful one and permeated throughout Ashraf 3. It is utmost on everyone's mind. It is something bigger than themselves. Most of the people I met were highly intellectual and successful in their previous lives. They could have been living anywhere in the West, but they chose, at a personal sacrifice, to join this movement.

"I saw a remarkable level of focus and determination. All of the members of the group had a job to do and were singularly focused on its completion.

Each person I spoke with knew exactly why and for what he or she was fighting for and why they had given up so much of their own lives to fight the regime.

"Albania has nothing to fear from this group. I did not see any weapons or military training. They want to become good citizens of Albania and to build a life in the former communist country. In fact, it is the MEK who has to be worried about violence. The regime has shown it will stop at nothing to destroy them. Iranian Ministry of Intelligence agents are active in Albania. They are the ones the Albanian public has to fear, not the people in the camp."

OUR EVENT IN WATERLOO "IS MY PRESENCE GOING TO MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE?"





In our event at Waterloo, **Dr Tahar Boumedra**, the great friend of Ashrafis who sacrificed his UN career in

order to protect his own integrity and the lives of Ashrafis was the keynote speaker who made a passionate speech about his time in Iraq as the UN human rights chief. Excerpts of his speech appear below:

"What I want to tell you tonight is just to share some little experience with you, some remembrance that stuck in my mind about the ... Ashrafis.

"The Ashrafis were so, were so ingenious. They created a lot of things out of nothing. And can you imagine, during those hard days, hard time, under the government of the former Prime Minister Al-Maliki, the pipes, the water pipes coming from the Tigris into the camp were vandalised by the Iraqi army, and it was an operation to cut off the water.

"Can you imagine the billions the Iraqi government were spending, and it all goes in the air, into looting and bribery and corruption; while the Ashrafis, with very little means, they managed to pump the water for over thirty kilometres, and bring it to Camp Ashraf, filter it, sanitise it and be self-sufficient in terms of drinking water. And not only that, they had surplus which they shared with the dwellings of the Iraqi population around the camp. They shared this with them and also they shared it with the Iraqi army oppressing them.

So when I saw earlier the film about Camp Ashraf 3, I said: 'This is typically the Ashrafis. They are ingenious. They could do it'.

"Camp Liberty, it was me who visited it first, and I reported that Camp Liberty was not suitable for accommodating refugees, and I gave all the reasons why it's not suitable. But because they are so industrious and they work so hard, within a few months Camp Liberty became comparable to a very good camp for refugees.

"And then there was this attack on the 1st of September (2013). By then I was out of Iraq. But the Government of Iraq declared that they knew nothing about it, they had nothing to do with it, and probably they just killed each other. And I was very upset. I was very upset because I knew that nothing could happen in that camp without the direct involvement of the Iraqi security forces in place. Even if the perpetrators were Iranians or some terrorist groups, the real culprit is the Government of Iraq who facilitated access to that camp. Can you imagine, you go into a camp, you kill 52 people, scattered all over a large area, that involved a lot of shooting, it involved a lot of shouting, it involved a lot of noise, and all this happened while the camp is monitored by the police inside and surrounded by the Iraqi army. So we know that nothing, absolutely nothing, could happen in Ashraf or to Ashrafis without the direct involvement of the Iraqi security forces and the Iranian agencies. So now remembrance of that day is very painful to me personally because I really worked very

very hard, and I was on my own. I didn't know you existed here as supporters and friends of the Ashrafis.

"So, I was working and doing my best, and ... like many of you, I sometimes say: 'Oh, is my presence going to make any difference?' And it really, believe me, it really makes a difference. Every participation, every little contribution, every little presence, everything you do, it makes a difference. You have gone and accompanied these people for a long way and the fact that they have not been exterminated, even though I could tell you that the Iraqi government in place from 2008 to 2012, that government had the intention of exterminating them and I am very happy to know that a large number have left Iraq safely, and now they enjoy the freedom they are enjoying in Albania, and some of them as well in Europe and beyond Europe.

"What they have achieved is absolutely unbelievable... and even though we congratulate the Ashrafis at first hand, but we should also congratulate ourselves for what has been done and what has been achieved.

"I think we should all be proud, proud of whatever little we have done. So if you allow me on behalf of all the victims I witnessed I say to you, thank you, thank you so much!" ... continued on p.6



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OUR EVENT IN WATERLOO

Other speakers at the event were **Captain Dennis Barber** and **Mr Nicholas Weedon**, both long time supporters of the cause who have also met with the Ashrafis in London and in Tirana. Excerpts of their inspiring talks appear below.



Captain Barber:

"My wife and I got on the plane and we went to Albania not knowing what to expect. Albania is a place which up until that time had

been associated with dictatorship, all kinds of the opposite of freedom, I knew that it had come out of that, but I wasn't sure just how it had come out of that. But when we arrived, the thing that struck me was the welcome, far better than you get in the UK when you arrive here.

"Then as we went down into town the next day, we went down to what is now called Ashraf 3. What we got was "welcome, welcome, welcome" and "Thank you", the other thing that was said more than anything else.

"It made me feel very humble, and we were sung to, we were welcomed, we were fed, we were treated like royalty.

"The people who deserved that were the people who were doing it. Because what I saw was the amazing resourcefulness, somebody spoke about that earlier on, the resourcefulness and the ingenuity of people to produce a city out of dust, more or less the same as what they're doing again, and that was so encouraging to see.

"But these people, I thought, what is it that's so special about them? What is it that's special about these people? And it came up in the song we had earlier on, a very gentle song. I've never heard it sung so gently before. It was so powerful in such a gentle way, because this is how it's happening. It's happening gently. The mullahs don't understand that. They do not understand that. These people are full of love. We just were showered with love when we arrived in Albania, and right to the time we left, right to the time we stepped onto the plane, we were still showered with love. The mullahs don't understand that. They have a dream, they have a dream of freedom ... They have a dream of love triumphing over hate, but more than anything they have a dream to return home."



Nicholas Weedon: "I thought that it's a fantastic thing that this remembrance of the 1988 massacre has been pulled

into the foreground ... I was very heartened in the Paris conference to see the video clips from Iran making specific reference to this campaign and how it's all really beginning to come together on both sides. And another thing I just saw this evening which I'd like to acknowledge was on that clip of the orchestra playing in Ashraf 3. It has always struck me when I came to meetings in the time of Ashraf and Camp Liberty ... they were hurling music across the border, and I thought that was very poignant. And it's great to see that ... they're really getting their music and orchestra back, so they can start hurling the music across the airwaves back into Iran. And so this campaign is really important because it's about exposing truth, and it's been truth that has been covered up for too long - you can't really stop the truth, and just bringing this truth out with simple humility and dignity as this campaign is doing.

I thought that [song] was another poignant thing this evening ... that 'the answer's blowing in the wind', and it's really a matter of making it, just bringing out the self-evident degree to which that regime is discredited, because the people who lead that regime, they are directly responsible for ordering massacres, and as that comes out, as that discrediting becomes self-evident, only good things can come from that."

At the event we also enjoyed the music played and sung by David Hopkins as well as having comments and questions from the floor that made for a very lively event.















STRIKES & PROTESTS CONTINUE IN IRAN



Strikes in Iran continue without stop. Many people whose assets have been plundered by the financial institutions belonging to the oppressive forces continue to stage gatherings in front of the offices of IRGC affiliated institutes despite intense repressive measures to stop them protesting.



At the same time truck drivers continue their nationwide strike in protest over the high prices of spare parts and tyres and other pressures on them.



Workers and retired workers also continue their protest across the country demanding payment of their wages and complaining about their low wages and harsh living conditions.

HORRIFIC VIDEO SHOWS MAN HUNG BY CRANE IN IRAN

Iranian social media accounts have shared a video showing the brutal execution of a young man being hanged while lifted with a crane before the eyes of the public. According to human rights activists who shared the footage the public



execution took place on Friday 14 September in the city of Marvdasht. southern Iran. It is reported that the man who was executed was 26 years old. He had been arrested when he was only 13.

WIDESPREAD PROTESTS AGAINST THE EXECUTION OF 3 KURD ACTIVISTS





The ruthless execution of three Kurdish political prisoners, Ramin Hossein Panahi, Loghman and Zaniar Moradi, was widely criticised throughout the country.

Rug makers, metallurgy experts, teachers and retired individuals, university professors, industrial workshop owners, teachers, exchange store-owners and various other strata of Iranian society have signed statements and letters to various international organizations and the United Nations Secretary-General demanding the UN Security Council evaluate the Iranian regime's human rights violations dossier.

These statements and letters express sympathy with the family and

friends of those who have lost their lives for freedom in Iran.

A group of people in Sanandaj, western Iran, held a rally in the city's Shapour Avenue chanting, "Release all political prisoners."

Following the general strike in Iran's Kurdistan regions, protesting at the execution of three Kurdish political prisoners, the family of Ramin Hossein Panahi expressed their gratitude for all those who took part in this protest movement.

"Our son was executed for his struggle for freedom for Iran's Kurdistan," they said. "Thank you, to all the Ramins of Kurdistan. Today, you responded to the unjust killings of our children."

RESIDENTS OF EARTHQUAKE-STRICKEN KERMANSHAH SELL THEIR KIDNEYS TO SURVIVE



Ten months have passed since an earthquake hit Kermanshah and dozens of aftershocks have kept the fear of

a new catastrophe looming over the city and its population. But a new earthquake isn't the most imminent danger that threatens to accelerate the deterioration of living conditions.

Fati, a 32-year-old housewife, says that they still don't have a proper tent for living. With two four- and sixyear-old children she has to live with four other relatives in a tent that was originally created for four people.

The housing situation is so catastrophic that some of the residents are reportedly selling their kidneys in order to rebuild their homes.

In an interview with Iran's Ilna news agency on September 14, Sarpol-e Zahab's City Council Chairman accuses Hassan Rouhani's administration of inaction and considers this the reason why some citizens are selling their kidneys.

Mullahs' 40 year legacy: Destruction of the Environment continued from p.3 IRANIAN PEOPLE NEED AIR TO BREATHE



Urmia Lake has more than one hundred small islands of migratory birds such as flamingos, pelicans, stork, ducks, and many others.



Osman Fist, the smallest island in the lake, before and now.

Situation of forests in Iran



According to reports in Iranian media, "annihilation of forests in Iran is a sure thing", and with this rate of destruction, "in 30 years there will be no forests left in Iran".

In Iran forests are shrinking and at risk of elimination at an alarming rate, owing to gross mismanagement, including the irregular cutting of trees, using jungles as waste dumps and forests and parklands to build private villas for the authorities.



According to the predictions of environmentalists, unless serious action is taken to stop and reverse the effect of this mismanagement there will be no forests in Iran by 2050.

Figures produced by the Office of Engineering of Natural Resources in Iran show that the size of Iran's forests has shrunk from 18 million hectares to 12 million and the size of jungles in the north of Iran has almost halved from 3.4 million hectares to 1.8 million in the past 40 years. This cannot be allowed to continue.

Iranian people in dire need of air



Unfortunately, because of the mismanagement, the current situation of the environment in Iran is so dire that in most cities

across the country there is a serious lack of breathable air. This level of pollution is not just occasional, or for short periods, but has become a permanent problem in many parts of Iran. This situation has led to many protests being made by committed people and environmental activists who in turn face persecution, torture, imprisonment and death. The world should be alerted.



The mullahs ruling Iran are not only a threat to the peace and security of the region and the world, they are also a threat to the environment and the survival of humankind.



Above: 'We are dying' written on a car Below: Protesters form a human chain to protect the environment in Iran



WE CORDIALLY INVITE YOU TO ILA CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION & DINNER Hosted by Father Christmas

3PM—6PM SATURDAY 15 DECEMBER 2018 Hammersmith Town Hall, King Street London W6 9JT

