



International Liberty Association Newsletter

Rowlandson House • 289-297 Ballards Lane • London N12 8NP

W: www.iliberty.org.uk • E: info@iliberty.org.uk • T: 020 8452 3481

Editorial

As the summer of 2017 draws to a close and we mark the first anniversary of the safe relocation of all the Ashrafis from Camp Liberty, Iraq, to Albania, we find ourselves reflecting on the many events in the summer calendar commemorating the blood of martyrs and the suffering of those imprisoned and tortured since the mullahs, led by Khomeini, calling himself the Supreme Leader, seized control of Iran in 1979.

It starts with the 20 June, Day of Martyrs and Political Prisoners, commemorating the day in 1981 when Khomeini ordered his guards to attack a 500,000 strong peaceful crowd of free thinking Iranians demonstrating their opposition to his increasingly despotic and puritanical rule.

Hundreds were murdered and thousands imprisoned as the first brutal step of the route to survival of the absolute rule of the clergy which has to date incarcerated over half a million prisoners of conscience and executed more than 120,000.

In July and August we remember the dreadful days of 1988 when over 30,000 prisoners were sent to the gallows without due process of law, "the most heinous crime against humanity since the Second World War" according to Geoffrey Robertson QC.

During the same period, we remember the 28/29 July 2009 attack on Ashraf when 13 were murdered by thugs in Iraqi uniforms, but taking their orders from Tehran. Over 500 were injured in that heinous attack and 36 taken hostage. By a miracle all survived the 72 day hunger strike they and hundreds of protestors around the world embarked on until, thanks to the strength of the worldwide campaign, they were returned to Ashraf on 7 October. Thanks to the support of good people

... continued on p.2

UN REPORT ABOUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN IRAN



On 14 August the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, sent the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran to the members of the United Nations General Assembly for their attention and consideration during the upcoming Assembly. The Secretary-General's note accompanying the report said:

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, submitted in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 34/23.

This note appeared on the cover of a 23 page report prepared by Ms Asma Jahangir, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, excerpts of which appear below. (The numbers refer to paragraphs of the report that are relevant to ILA's current justice seeking campaign.)

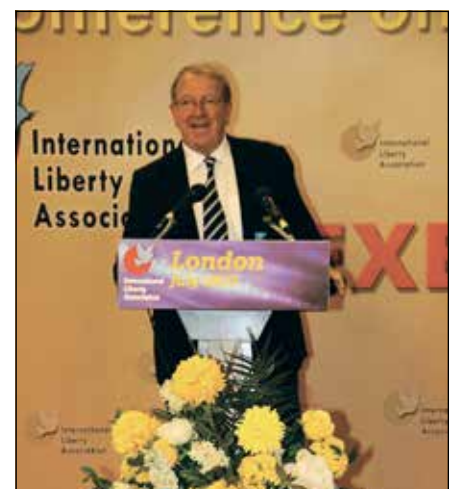
11. During the period of candidate registration, a total of 1,636 individuals, including 137 women, submitted their names as candidates for president. However, in April, the Guardian Council, a body of six clerics appointed by the Supreme Leader that oversees the electoral process and vets the candidates,

... continued on p.2

STEVENSON: THESE PEOPLE MUST BE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE BEFORE THE INTERNATIONAL COURT

In his keynote speech at the ILA event in Lambeth, Struan Stevenson, an international expert on the Middle East and former Conservative MEP said:

"In 1988, 30,000 political prisoners were massacred on the direct orders of Ayatollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic. The current



Justice Minister of President Rouhani's government was one of the key executioners in Tehran during the 1988 massacre and now he says he is proud to

... continued on p.3



UN REPORT ABOUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN IRAN *continued from p.1*

announced that the candidatures of only six men (0.37 per cent of the applicants) had been approved. Among them was Ebrahim Raisi, who reportedly had served on a committee that had ordered the extrajudicial executions of thousands of political prisoners in 1988.

70. During the reporting period, the Special Rapporteur continued to receive information about the harassment, intimidation and prosecution of human rights defenders seeking truth and justice on behalf of individuals who had reportedly been summarily executed or forcibly disappeared during the 1980s.

71. In March, families who visited a mass grave located in the city of Mashhad, Razavi Khorasan Province, where up to 170 political prisoners are believed to be buried, reportedly discovered that the previously flat area had been covered with soil to create a raised mound over the grave. In mid-May, bulldozers were reportedly seen working on a construction project directly alongside the mass grave site at Ahvaz, located on a barren piece of land 3 km east of Behesht Abad Cemetery, where the remains of at least 44 people killed during the summer of 1988 are believed to be located. The plan is reportedly to ultimately raze the concrete block marking the gravesite and build a “green space” or commercial development over the site.

72. In her first report to the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur raised the case of Maryam Akbari Monfared, who had been denied medical treatment and threatened with the



cancellation of her visitation rights for having published a letter calling for an investigation into the executions of 1988. In May, Ms. Akbari Monfared’s husband was summoned for interrogation by the Ministry of Intelligence and Security and threatened with the prospect that his wife would face an additional three-year prison term and exile to a remote prison in Sistan and Baluchestan Province if she continued to write open letters about the 1988 events.

73. Between July and August 1988, thousands of political prisoners, men, women and teenagers, were reportedly executed pursuant to a fatwa issued by the then Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khomeini. A three-man commission was reportedly created with a view to determining who should be executed. The bodies of the victims were reportedly buried in unmarked graves and their families never informed of their whereabouts. These events, known as the 1988 massacres, have never been officially acknowledged. In January 1989, the Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Reynaldo Galindo Pohl, expressed concern over the “global

denial” of the executions and called on Iranian authorities to conduct an investigation. Such an investigation has yet to be undertaken.

74. In August 2016, an audio recording of a meeting held in 1988 between high-level State officials and clerics was published. The recording revealed the names of the officials who had carried out and defended the executions, including the current Minister of Justice, a current high court judge, and the head of one of the largest religious foundations in the country and candidate in the May presidential elections. Following the publication of the audio recording, some clerical authorities and the chief of the judiciary admitted that the executions had taken place and, in some instances, defended them.

This is the first time in the last 3 decades that the Special Rapporteur raises the issue of the 1988 massacre of prisoners in his/her report after it was once acknowledged in 1989.

Ms Jahangir’s report also elaborates on the cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment that is systematically used by the Iranian authorities and cites numerous examples. Paragraph 80 refers to degrading punishment for eating or drinking in public during Ramadan:

80. In June, the public and revolutionary prosecutor in Qazvin, Ismail Sadeghi Niaraki, announced that, out of the 90 people arrested for eating in public during the month of Ramadan, 20 had received flogging sentences, which had been carried out.

EDITORIAL *continued from p.1*

like yourselves one of the hostages is now in the UK and was hailed by the ILA meeting in Lambeth on 27 July.

A second attack on Ashraf on 8 April 2011 resulted in another 36 Martyrs, but the third was the most vile as, on 1 September 2013, 52 of the 101 remaining in Ashraf were murdered in cold blood by Iraqi soldiers in uniform.

While we commemorate all these events and pay tribute to the fallen heroes and heroines, we also turn to salute the survivors, the brave souls who stood tall in the face of these atrocities

and kept the flag of righteousness, dedication and self sacrifice held high.

And turning to the present, we hail and pledge to support the brave prisoners of conscience in Gohardasht Prison who have been on hunger strike since 30 July to draw attention to the inhumane conditions they are suffering, deprived of even their most basic rights, to fresh air, drinking water, sanitation and medical treatment, let alone the rights that most prisoners enjoy in a civil society such as visitation and communication.

The international campaign to seek justice for the victims of the 1988

massacre coupled with the campaign to stop executions and imprisonment of activists of any sort and those imprisoned for their beliefs, religious or otherwise, is gathering momentum and we pledge to work wholeheartedly towards these ends. Working wholeheartedly for such a noble cause will undoubtedly make us better people, our world a better place and hopefully save the precious lives of those who, by their courage and commitment, stand in the vanguard of history, setting the example for generations to come. Thank you for being part of this collective effort!



Stevenson: These people must be brought to justice before the international court *continued from p.1*

have killed so many PMOI members. The other key murderer in charge of the 1988 slaughter was Ebrahim Raisi, the black-turbaned mullah who the current Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, is cultivating as a future successor, ready to take over from him when he dies. It is incredible that we in the West believe it is acceptable to have so-called 'constructive dialogue' with murderers and butchers like this, who remain in powerful positions in the leadership of Iran today. These people must be indicted for crimes against humanity and brought to justice before the international court in The Hague."

Mr Stevenson continued:

"The Iranian regime plays a destructive role in the Middle East and the systematic violation of human rights across the zone characterizes their aggressive attempts to spread Islamic fundamentalism. The Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards Force (IRGC) and the body responsible for extra-territorial operations, the terrorist Quds Force, are the main vehicles for Iran's aggressive expansionism in the Middle East. The IRGC has for decades been carrying out terrorist attacks across the zone, including in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Lebanon.

"I was delighted to see that on Tuesday 25 July, the U.S. House of

Representatives voted overwhelmingly (419-3) in favour of imposing new sanctions on the Iranian regime, including the blacklisting of the IRGC.

"Over the past six years the world has witnessed in horror how the Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad has massacred his own people, even using chemical weapons like Sarin gas to murder innocent men, women and children, while enjoying unlimited financial and military support from Iran and air cover from the Russians. The IRGC finances, arms and leads most of the brutal Shi'ite militias rampaging through the predominantly Sunni provinces of Iraq, massacring families and levelling ancient cities like Ramadi, Fallujah and Mosul in the name of the war against Daesh (ISIS). The Iranian regime's violence and crimes in other countries in the region and in particular its suppression of the Sunnis, carried out under the banner of fundamentalist Shi'ite Islam, is what provoked the original backlash that in turn spawned the birth of groups like Daesh who seek to establish an "Islamic Caliphate" while spreading their violence, brutality and hate to the four corners of the globe.

"Iran cannot be part of the solution to the conflicts raging in Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Libya. It is part of the problem. Iran exports terror. This is the real Iran



Struan Stevenson is President of the European Iraqi Freedom Association (EIFA). He was a Member of the European Parliament representing Scotland from 1999 to 2014. He was President of the Parliament's Delegation for Relations with Iraq (2009 - 2014) and Chair of the Friends of a Free Iran Intergroup from 2004 - 2014.

under the theocratic and fascist rule of the mullahs, whose so-called 'moderate' president Rouhani the West believes it can do deals with. We should wake up! The 'smiling' Rouhani is in charge of a venally corrupt government that has executed over 3500 people since he took office in 2013 and which is behind every conflict in the Middle East".

Mr Stevenson ended his speech by thanking everyone for their selfless support of the cause, emphasising that without such support the Ashrafi would not have been saved and closing with the touching and impassioned words "I will be proud to remind my children and grandchildren that 'I AM AN ASHRAFI.'"

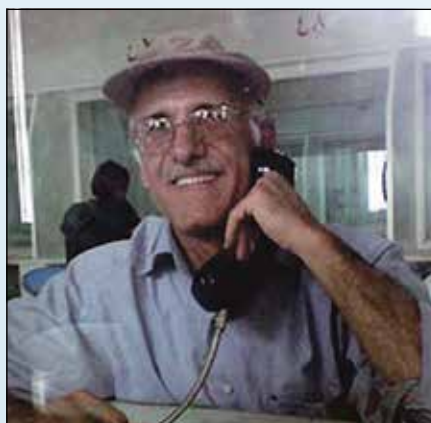
ALI MOEZZI WRITES IN SUPPORT OF POLITICAL PRISONERS ON HUNGER STRIKE

Prisoner of conscience, Ali Moezzi, detained in Tehran's Central prison, wrote a letter on 14 August in support of the political prisoners on hunger strike in Gohardasht prison.

In this letter he recalled his memories from Gohardasht prison in Karaj where thousands of prisoners were executed in the 1980's and particularly the martyrs of the 1988 massacre.

Mr Moezzi also refers to the martyrdom of some of the political prisoners in recent years in Gohardasht and writes:

"In recent years, martyrs such as Hojjat Zamani, Ali Saremi, Valiollah Feyz Mahdavi, Abdolreza Rajabi, Mohsen Dogmehchi, Mansour



Radpour and Shahrokh Zamani as well as several Sunni political prisoners, have lost their lives in this prison."

Ali Moezzi emphasised that "long hunger strikes, after years of

imprisonment, have irreversible physical complications." He saluted the hunger strikers and called on the families of prisoners and all the good people around the world to advocate their cause and support them.

As we go to press, there are more than 20 prisoners of conscience in Gohardasht Prison of Raji Shahr, Karaj, Northwest of Tehran, who have been on hunger strike since 30 July. They are demanding their most basic rights as prisoners including access to their medication, return of their confiscated belongings and the right to fresh air and minimum privacy. Their health is deteriorating by the day.



IRAN MUST STOP DESECRATING MASS GRAVE OF 1988 MASSACRE

Amnesty International started a campaign Monday 4 September, to call on the Iranian regime authorities to “urgently stop the destruction of a mass grave in the southern city of Ahvaz”.

Footage obtained by Amnesty International shows the site being buried under building waste after a construction near the area began earlier this year.

“Bulldozing the mass grave at Ahvaz will destroy crucial forensic evidence that could be used to bring those responsible for the 1988 mass extrajudicial executions to justice. It would also deprive families of victims of their rights to truth, justice and reparation, including the right to bury their loved ones in dignity. By joining Amnesty International’s campaign, people can help to press Iran’s authorities to stop the imminent destruction of the site,” said Philip Luther, Amnesty International’s Research and Advocacy Director for the Middle East and North Africa.

He added: “Instead of desecrating the mass grave with piles of rubbish and



waste and further tormenting families, who face repression for their efforts to protect the memory of their loved ones, the authorities should be upholding their duty to preserve all Iran’s mass grave sites so that investigations can be carried out into the 1988 extrajudicial executions and other mass killings.”

Amnesty International is calling on people to join the campaign by promoting the hashtag #MassGraves88 on social media.

More than 30,000 political prisoners were executed in the summer of 1988 based on a fatwa by Iran’s Supreme Leader at the time, Ruhollah Khomeini.

The victims were buried in secret mass graves across the country and their relatives have been denied information about the burial site of their loved ones.

The late Ayatollah Hossein-Ali Montazeri, the designated successor of Khomeini at the time, described the 1988 massacre as “the worst crime in the history of the Islamic Republic” in an audio tape released by his son last summer.

Many of those responsible for this crime currently hold high positions within the regime. President Hassan Rouhani and many members of his cabinet held positions of influence in the summer of 1988 and were undoubtedly aware of the massacre. The Justice Minister during Rouhani’s first-term, Mostafa Pour-Mohammadi, was one of the four member ‘Death Committee’ of Tehran.

Last month Rouhani replaced Pour-Mohammadi with Alireza Avaie who held a similar role on the ‘Death Committee’ in Khuzestan Province, the same province in which a mass grave is being destroyed. A few days after the replacement Ali Khamenei, the Iranian regime’s Supreme Leader, appointed Mostafa Pour-Mohammadi an advisor to the Head of Judiciary.

HASSAN ROUHANI APPOINTS ANOTHER EXECUTIONER AS JUSTICE MINISTER

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING!

We all remember that there was much talk in British media about Rouhani being the ‘moderate’ candidate during the latest ‘elections’ in Iran. Many rightly anticipated that he would change his justice minister, Pourmohammadi, who was one of the four people identified as members of the ‘Death Commission’ who were exposed in an audio tape revealed by Ayatollah Montazeri’s* son last summer. However, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani appointed another executioner, Alireza Avaie, to replace Mostafa Pourmohammadi as justice minister in his new cabinet. Avaie was also directly involved in the massacre of political prisoners in Iran’s Khuzestan Province in 1988.

At that time Alireza Avaie was serving as the Revolutionary Court prosecutor in the city



Avaie and Pourmohammadi (inset)

of Dezful in Khuzestan. Avaie was the main official in charge of executions in Younesko Prison following Khomeini’s 1988 murderous fatwa. Based on eyewitness reports provided by former prisoners, Avaie ordered “juvenile prisoners to be executed in groups of two or three, carried out in an empty field near the prison.”

Avaie was sanctioned by the European Union in October 2011 for his role in human rights violations and direct participation in torturing and executing political prisoners.

Replacing Pourmohammadi with Avaie,

one executioner with another, proves that the entire mullahs’ establishment in Iran, especially its so-called judiciary, is intertwined with executions, killings and the massacre of political prisoners. Other justice ministers prior to Pourmohammadi, such as Morteza Bakhtiari and Ismaeel Shoushtari, were also involved in the 1988 massacre.

While most of the members of Rouhani’s new cabinet are the same people as before, he was forced to replace Pourmohammadi due to the extensive disclosure at the domestic and international level of him being a member of the Death Committee as well as broad public abhorrence against him.

The appointment of Avaie, who is personally also very close to Rouhani, once again proves that it is impossible to find a clean official in that regime, regardless of their faction. They are all stained with blood of political prisoners on their hands and should be brought to justice for their crimes against humanity.

* Ayatollah Montazeri was appointed successor to Khomeini at the time but he was sacked after objecting to the brutal killings in 1988.



A LETTER FROM BRISTOL

Our event in Bristol was hosted by Geoffrey Sutton who did a splendid job moderating the program. After the event we received the following letter from Bristol. The encouraging words of Bryony and Geoffrey deserve attention. As one volunteer said "It is not at all a coincidence that we found you along this difficult path. Together we definitely can make the world a better and peaceful place."

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your magnificent work for justice and peace. Thank you, too, for bringing events to Bristol. We do appreciate your thoughtfulness and time spent in travel and preparations.

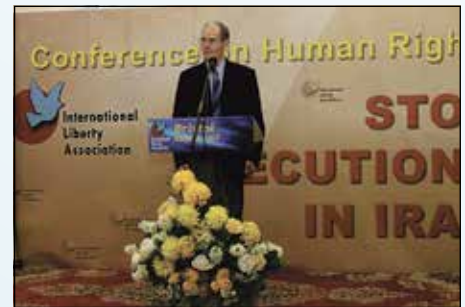
I was reminded of you all recently, when I was attending a Christian lecture. The speaker spoke of the hugely strong and positive role Cyrus, king of Persia, played in shaping history. This stirred me to look up the many references there are to Cyrus in the Bible.

I particularly like the way that God made known to Cyrus that he had a special purpose for him, and Cyrus went ahead in the certainty that the Lord, the God of heaven, would enable him to fulfil this task he was given. It was Cyrus who enabled foundations to be laid (key Bible references from Ezra 1 verse 2 and Isaiah 44 verse 28).

I think of you all in the I. L. A. and believe that you are doing foundational work upon which others will build.

I found my study of Cyrus very encouraging and my hope and expectation is that you, like Cyrus, will play a leading role in bringing about a positive and God-given future for Iran that will be a blessing to the world.

With Best Wishes,
Bryony and Geoffrey





OUR EVENT IN LAMBETH

The ILA event held in Lambeth on 27 July, moderated by David Harris, was well attended and participants had the opportunity to see the exhibition and talk to Struan Stevenson, former MEP who had come from Edinburgh to address the conference. Excerpts from his speech begin on page 1 of this newsletter. During the event we also heard from Ibrahim, one of the 36 hostages of Camp Ashraf abducted during the attack on 28/29 July 2009, which was also commemorated.





NEWS FROM IRAN

UN rights expert outraged at execution of a young man sentenced as a child

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, Asma Jahangir, has expressed outrage at the execution of a young man who received the death penalty as a child.

Alireza Tajiki was arrested at the age of 15 in 2012 and sentenced to death in 2013 at the age of 16.

He was executed on 10 August despite repeated interventions by UN human rights experts, who said the death penalty should never be used against a child, and noted that Mr Tajiki had reportedly been tortured and had not received a fair trial.

“I am distressed in the extreme to learn that this execution has gone ahead despite twice being postponed on previous scheduled dates,” said the Special Rapporteur.



AI: Iran vilifies human rights defenders as ‘enemies of the state’

Iran’s judicial and security bodies have waged a vicious crackdown against human rights defenders since Hassan Rouhani became president in 2013, demonizing and imprisoning activists who dare to stand up for people’s rights, Amnesty International said in a new report published on 2 August. “It is a bitter irony that as the Iranian authorities boast about their increased engagement with the UN and the EU,



particularly in the aftermath of the nuclear deal, human rights defenders who have made contact with these same institutions are being treated as criminals,” said Philip Luther, Amnesty International’s Research and Advocacy Director for the Middle East and North Africa.

UN Human Rights Commissioner: Iran remains No 1 executioner per capita

The Human Rights Council started its 36th session in Geneva on 11 September. In his opening remarks Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, criticised Iran and said: “Ill-treatment of prisoners is widespread, and in addition the judiciary continues to sentence people to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, including amputation of limbs and blinding. Iran also remains the country with the highest reported rate of executions per capita. Many of those executed are drug offenders not guilty of ‘most serious crimes’ under the terms of international law. Since the beginning of the year at least four children have been put to death, and at least 89 other children remain on death row.”



Mothers of martyrs demand trial of the regime leaders for the 1988 massacre

Laleh Park Mothers, a group of activist mothers in Iran, including mothers



of the martyrs of the 1988 massacre of political prisoners and mothers of the martyrs of the 2009 uprising and mothers of other executed victims, in a statement issued on Thursday 31 August 2017 called for trial for the Iranian regime’s officials responsible for the massacre of the political prisoners in the summer of 1988.

In their statement, Laleh Park Mothers also supported the legitimate demands of the hunger striking political prisoners in Gohardasht prison.

Poor street peddler murdered in front of the public by Iran regime agents

A fruit peddler in the city of Qom was killed by municipality agents after he was severely beaten in the head.

According to his brother, who explained this in a video clip shared on social media outlets on Saturday 12 August 2017, the Iranian regime agents were trying to take him and his belongings with them by force and he was resisting. When people gathered to support him the agents severely beat him and shortly afterwards he died due to the blow to his head.

Following the death of this peddler, people in Qom staged protests and gathered in the street shouting slogans against the regime’s agents.





MASS HUNGER STRIKE BY POLITICAL PRISONERS PROTESTING AGAINST INHUMANE CONDITIONS

More than 20 prisoners of conscience have been on hunger strike in Gohardasht prison since 30 July. They started the hunger strike after an attack on their ward and forced relocation to a closed cell under constant surveillance. During the attack and forceful relocation their belongings were stolen or destroyed and they were not even allowed to take their medicine with them. Political prisoners in other prisons across Iran issued statements in support of the striking prisoners but the Iranian regime has so far turned a deaf ear on their cry.

Amnesty International issued a statement on 22 August about the hunger striking prisoners in

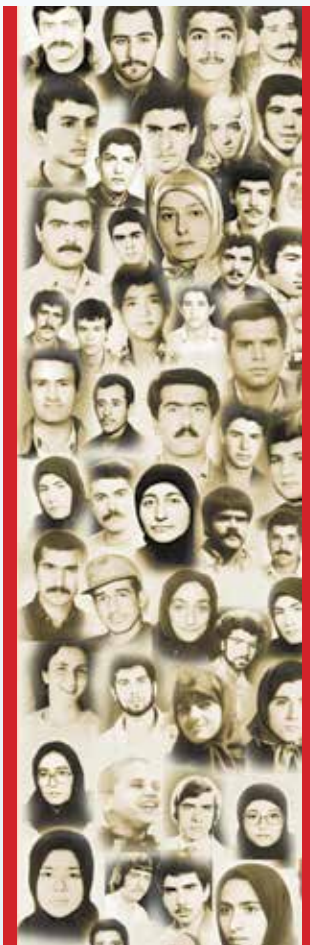


Gohardasht Prison of Rajai Shahr in Iran. In the strongly worded statement Magdalena Mughrabi, Deputy Middle East and North Africa Director for Amnesty International, said: "The fact that detention conditions have become so poor that desperate prisoners feel they are forced to go on hunger strike to demand the most basic standards of human dignity is disgraceful and

highlights the urgent need for reforms to Iran's cruel prison system".

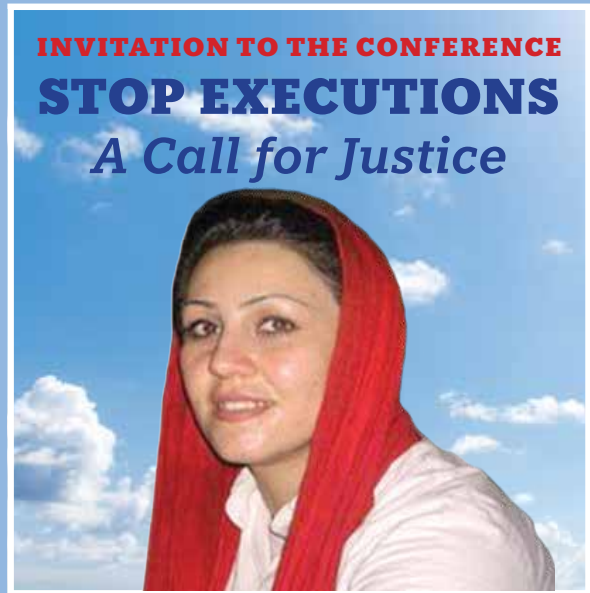
"By detaining dozens of prisoners of conscience after grossly unfair trials the Iranian authorities are already shamelessly flouting their human rights obligations. These are people who shouldn't even be behind bars in the first place, yet instead of being released from custody they are being punished further by being held in appalling conditions," said Ms Mughrabi.

"The horrendous conditions at Raja'i Shahr prison point to a pattern of cruel and inhumane treatment that has repeatedly characterized Iran's ruthless attitude to prisoners in its custody," she said.




**30,000
VICTIMS**

**Saturday
21 October 2017
4 – 9 pm
Hammersmith
Town Hall
275 King Street
London W6 9JU**



**INTERNATIONAL LIBERTY ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE
STOP EXECUTIONS IN IRAN – A CALL FOR JUSTICE**
(To coincide with the *World Day Against the Death Penalty*)

Includes exhibitions, delicious Persian cuisine and traditional Persian music in addition to a panel discussion with prominent personalities and human rights experts.