



Editorial

Happy Easter and Happy NoRuz!

This is such a powerful time of year when nature shakes off the cold, dark days of winter and bursts into colour and life, with the promise of abundant harvest to come. NoRuz, the Iranian New Year, is celebrated at the spring Equinox, 21 March. Rebirth and renewal is also the message of the Christian Easter, a moveable feast based on a lunar cycle, but also deeply rooted in the power of the life force that surges in spring.

The symbolism is so potent, it is no wonder that prisoners of conscience in Iran, despite all the challenges, celebrate NoRuz – as an act of perseverance and a pledge to remain firm in their resolve to stand for justice and human dignity.

We at ILA salute them and take this opportunity to renew our own pledge to stand against injustice.

The news from Iran, though grim, shows the people, with their tolerance at breaking point, throwing off their fear and coming together to protest for their rights.

In a public meeting with forthcoming election staff, a Revolutionary Guards Commander admitted that around 20–30 demonstrations take place each day across Iran and the authorities have told the Guards to ‘manage’ the demonstrations instead of confronting them. This shows the regime is fearful of sparking protests as happened in June 2009, but only serves to embolden the protestors.

The demonstrations by the people of Ahvaz are a case in point. Ignited by a sand storm which made breathing nearly impossible, the demonstrators blame the incompetence and mismanagement of the authorities for the disastrous climate changes in Iran’s formerly most fertile land. The protests are still occurring sporadically at time of writing.

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NORUZ: A SPECIAL TIME FOR CELEBRATION, EVEN IN EVIN

NoRuz is a special time of the year. On 21 March a new Persian year, 1396, begins with the spring equinox. The dark and cold days of winter give way to blossoming nature, bright days and refreshing air to inhale.

Iranians have been celebrating NoRuz for thousands of years and there are various stories about the origins of this national festivity. Today, Iranians of all backgrounds celebrate NoRuz.

What about the prisoners?

The stories you will read here are reflections of political prisoners who spent NoRuz in Iran’s jails during the reign of ayatollahs in Iran.

Reza: *“NoRuz celebration in prison in March 1983 is a lasting memory for me. I will never forget it. As spring was approaching, we, the prisoners of wards 5, 6, and 7 in Karoon Prison of Ahvaz decided to have a NoRuz celebration similar to what we would have if we were outside. We prepared the Haft-Seen and started a spring cleaning of the cells. Each of us took responsibility of a task and also selected members of organising committees for each cell’s celebration*



Inside an Iranian jail: political prisoners celebrate NoRuz 1394.

ceremonies. I was in room 1 of cell block 6. It was a torturous year. My twenty year old brother had just been executed. Many of my friends were executed and we were suffering constant beatings and torture, yet we decided to have a feast and laugh. It was part of our struggle. We didn’t want the torturers to feel they have succeeded. Their aim was to take joy and light away from our lives but we were determined to prove them wrong. When

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A MOTHER’S REPORT ABOUT VISITING DAY

In a report to human rights defenders, imprisoned Narges Mohammadi described one day in a women’s ward of Evin prison where she is being held with 30 other women prisoners.

Following is the translation of her moving report.

“Some days of the week are special for the women held in Evin Prison. Eight prisoners out of a total 31, namely Maryam Akbari Monfared, Leila Jama’at, Nigara Afsharzadeh, Narges Mohammadi, Zahra Zehtabchi, Fatemeh Mothanna, Azita Rafizadeh and Nazanin Zaghari, have small



children. Prison rules allow children to meet their mothers for only one hour

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NORUZ: A SPECIAL TIME FOR CELEBRATION, EVEN IN EVIN *continued from p.1*

Haft-Seen was prepared, Manouchehr, who was executed 2 years later, drew paintings of 6 mountain tops, symbolising 6 martyred friends, and a shining sun and rivers. The painting was put on the top of the Haft-Seen setting. For the green we used the bottom of carrots and turnips that had green sprouts. The red fish was a plastic one in a bottle of water. It was kept afloat by tying it to a pebble. There were about 15–16 of us at the Haft-Seen setup in room 1 of 6th cell block, including Hassan who was blind and Shahpour, the youngest father in the room at 20. The equinox, the exact moment of the turn of the year, was around 8 in the morning that year. Hassan started singing and Manouchehr talked about his painting and what it meant. We hugged and kissed each other's cheeks. We momentarily forgot all the pain. Mahmud told us not to eat too much sweets it might harm

our teeth (most of them broken under torture). We could hear the songs from other cells, the children of Abadan were singing, I am the child of the big river, I am afraid of no one..."

Zohreh: "I was arrested in October 1980. About 2 weeks to NoRuz they moved us to ward 311 in Evin Prison and put me and 2 others in a 1 by 1.5 metre cell. There was a broken window and cold wind was coming inside the cell. We didn't have any blankets so we tried to protest by yelling. In retaliation the guards put several loud speakers in the corridor just outside of our cell with high volume of noise. They were so loud that we could not hear each other and had to shout very loud in our normal conversations. So after 2 weeks we all had lost our voice. But even in that condition we celebrated NoRuz by singing traditional songs and eating the

only sweet we could have, a 'cake' that we had made with sugar cubes that each of us had kept from the morning tea, mixed with a little butter and bread crumbs. For Haft-Seen we did not have anything so we drew a Haft-Seen table on the cell's wall using our aluminium spoons which was working like pencil on the white concrete wall. We kept each other's hand and made a wish for the day that people of Iran enjoy their NoRuz, feeling free and living in democracy with happiness."



A NoRuz table displays many items, including colourful eggs.

EDITORIAL *continued from p.1*

Demonstrations in solidarity with the people of Ahvaz are springing up across Iran, including Tehran, which have heightened the fear of the regime. The extent of these protests proved the officials are in a hopeless dilemma, not able to crush the demonstrations, but also unable to cope with them.

A Persian expression comes to mind: "A good year can be foretold by events in its spring.!"

We must continue our own solidarity campaign to urge the UK Government to link any deals with Iran to its human rights record. There are indications that pressure is working as there is some discussion within the regime about reducing the use of the death penalty. Tangible results, or stopping executions entirely, are still a long way off, but it is reassuring that our efforts are making a difference.

As our friends continue to share their amazement at the safe relocation of the Ashrafis, against all odds, we are reminded that together we can accomplish what might seem almost impossible.

We are confident that with your support we will continue to achieve the unachievable, and salute you for that. So together we march on!

**CHRISTIAN CONVERTS IMPRISONED IN IRAN
APPEAL FOR HELP AND PRAYER**

**ARREST AND TORTURE OF CHRISTIAN CONVERTS IN IRAN
MUST BE STOPPED**

Two Christians imprisoned in Iran wrote an open letter to Ms Asma Jahangir, the newly appointed Special Rapporteur on Iran, asking her to call on Iran's government to respect their basic rights of worship and assembly. In the letter published on social media, Ebrahim Firuzi and Khalid Hardani who are imprisoned in Gohardasht Prison wrote: "We respectfully write to you [Ms Asma Jahangir] since we are seeing an increase in continued pressure, arrest, imprisonment, torture and long-term sentences for Christian converts in Iran". In their letter, they highlight the absurd and trumped up charges such as, "relation with the West", "relation with the State of Israel", and, attending "house church", used against Christians and call on Ms Asma Jahangir for help.

Ebrahim Firuzi who is charged with 'acting against national security, illegal gathering, and collusion' and sentenced to 5 years in prison, has previously also appealed for prayers for Christians in Iran. In his appeal, Ebrahim emphasised that he wants to stand strong in the face of persecution, but acknowledged that he cannot do this alone and appealed for prayer. While he longs to be free from prison, he noted that "where the Spirit of



the Lord is, there is freedom". He continued: "I can't think only about myself when there are so many believers suffering persecution. My freedom and getting out of prison cannot be my only purpose. We think especially about the suffering of new believers. If my being in prison stirs the international community to work to prevent such future persecution of new believers, then my choice is to remain in prison."

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Ebrahim Firuzi who is charged with



A mother's report about visiting day *continued from p.1*



between 1 and 2 pm on Wednesdays in the presence of prison guards and 5 cameras.

Families bring the children to the prison gate and hand them to prison guards who take them to the meeting hall to stay with their mothers for one hour.

On Wednesdays all the women in the ward are eagerly anticipating the mothers seeing their children. When Azita [Rafizadeh] returns to the cell she immediately begins talking about her 6-year-old Bashir. Hearing of his childish ways is sweet for all the women in the ward. Bashir goes to see his imprisoned father in Rajaei Shahr prison and comes to Evin to see his imprisoned mother. His little body cannot bear the long journeys, short visits, and the regret and heavy deprivation. But his visits revive Azita.

Maryam [Akbari-Monfared] had to leave her daughter Sara to come to prison when she was only three and a half years old. She has not experienced the mother-daughter relationship with her for long. But these very short visits, are a chance for mother and daughter to talk. A daughter who got to know the mother sense not through Maryam but through her two older sisters, and Maryam is more of a mother name for her than a mother sense.

Leila's [Jama'at] children come rarely to visit her since travelling a very long distance is difficult. Leila will entertain the women in the ward for over half a day by describing the actions and

gestures of her 8-year-old Arad and 6-year-old Armita. But this happens very seldom.

Nigara Afsharzadeh, is a young woman from Turkmenistan. She was in solitary cells of ward 209 for over a year and a half and it is only about 6 months that she has been moved to Evin's women's ward. Her son Aldar is 8-years-old and her daughter, Mirana, is 10. It is two years now that she has not seen her children. We celebrated Aldar's birthday in women's ward on 17 February.

Nazanin Zaghari [Ratcliffe] has been in solitary cells in Kerman and 2A in Evin. It is about a month since she was moved to Evin's women's ward. Her Gisso [Gabriella] was only 22 months old when she was arrested. Gisoo is yet to have regular meetings with her mother. Nazanin is knitting a jacket for her little daughter and Marjan a hat. Gisso's father is in the UK and the little girl is without her mother and father for 10 months now.

Zahra [Zehrabchi] is very calm and patient. Her patience is unbelievable. Her little Mina comes to see her mother every Wednesday. She rushes from school to come and see her mother.

Fatemeh [Mothanna] is very lonely. Her husband, Hassan Agha is imprisoned in Rajaei Shahr prison and Maryam and Iman [their children] go to Rajaei Shahr to see their father for one week and go to Evin to see their mother. Maryam is lonely too. Her brother Iman, who has to attend to the

home tasks and carry the burden of his parents' imprisonment, is 21 years old. Iman will bring Maryam to Evin and stay waiting behind stone walls himself.

Nargess's [herself] twins Kiana and Ali are in Paris with their father. Wednesdays are good days for her because she sees the happiness of mothers and their children, and a hard day too, for being deprived of seeing her own children.

Wednesday night visits and their memories are finished, as if we all have a common feeling, a feeling of being deprived of being with our children.

POSTSCRIPT

Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, 38, is sentenced to 5 years in prison.

Zahra Zehrabchi, 49, has to endure 12 years of imprisonment.

Fatemeh Mothanna, 48, has a 15 year prison term.

Maryam Akbari Monfared, 40, is sentenced to 15 years in prison.

Azita Rafizadeh, 34, is sentenced to 4 years in prison.

Nigara Afsharzadeh, 39, a citizen of Turkmenistan, has 5 years prison term.

Leila Jama'at, 36, is sentenced to 2 years in prison.

Narges Mohammadi, 44, has been sentenced in two separate cases one to 6 years and the other to 16 years of prison.

FATEMEH AKBARI MONFARED: A PATH THAT LEADS TO FREEDOM



Greetings from Tirana.

My name is Fatemeh Akbari Monfared, the sister of Maryam Akbari Monfared, a mother of two daughters who has been imprisoned for 8 years without a

single days leave; the woman who has filed suit against the Iranian regime officials in her effort to seek justice for our massacred sister and brothers. We lost two brothers in the executions of the early 1980s and a sister and a brother in the 1988 massacre.

Her 'crime' is her telephone contacts with us who have devoted our lives to

our people's freedom.

We've learned from one another to be patient and steadfast in standing up to the dictator.

Yes, we are the continuation of a crimson path which is coloured with the blood of the best children of our land, yet undoubtedly paves the way from inside the prisons towards freedom.



WORLD MEDICAL ASSOCIATION URGES IRAN TO STOP DENYING MEDICAL CARE TO PRISONERS

The President of the World Medical Association has joined members of other organizations involved in medical ethics and human rights, including the International Federation of Health and Human Rights Organisations, the Standing Committee of European Doctors and the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims, to urge the Iranian authorities to stop using the denial of medical care as a form of punishment against political prisoners.

In the joint letter to Sadeq Larijani, Head of Judiciary in Tehran, WMA President Dr Ketan Desai refers to the “deliberate indifference of prison officials to prisoners’ medical needs; their refusal to transfer critically ill prisoners to hospitals outside the prison; long periods of time without hot water for washing and bathing; inadequate space; poor ventilation; unsanitary conditions; insect infestations near kitchen areas; insufficient cleaning supplies; and meagre rations of (poor quality) food” and concludes that such conditions “put inmates at risk of infection and various skin and respiratory diseases”.

Dr Desai, and other signatories to the letter also protest about the pattern of guards beating, verbally assaulting and sexually harassing prisoners particularly when transferring them to and from hospital and court.

The letter continues: “We are extremely concerned by this situation that precludes access to adequate medical

care, a key human right which under international law and standards must not be adversely affected by imprisonment. Denying medical care amounts to ill treatments and can constitute a form of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment that are unambiguously prohibited under international human rights law”.

The signatories of the letter remind the government of



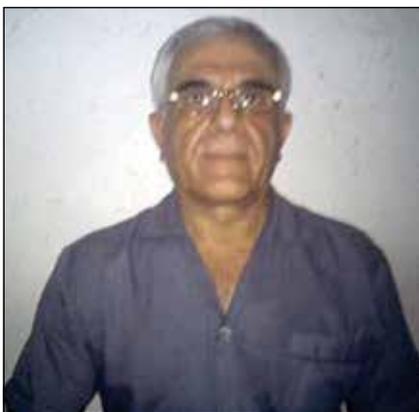
Iran that it has signed up to international covenants and rules on “the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health” and the commitment that “prisoners should enjoy the same standards of health care that are available in the community, and should have access to necessary health-

care services free of charge without discrimination on the grounds of their legal status”.

Dr Desai and his colleagues call on the Iranian authorities to stop the denial of medical care, to protect prisoners from torture and other ill-treatment, to ensure they are treated humanely and to allow monitors to conduct inspection visits.

Finally, they urge Iran to ensure that medical decisions on care outside prison and the necessity of release on medical grounds are taken only by the responsible health care professionals and are not overruled or ignored by non-medical authorities.

THE DEVASTATING SITUATION IN IRGC PRISON



In an open letter from inside Zabol Central Prison in south-eastern Iran, the political prisoner

Arjang Davoudi describes the prison’s humiliating conditions and how the prisoners are tortured there:

“I have been in the Intelligence Ministry’s ward 209 as well as the Revolutionary Guards’ (IRGC) security ward 2-A. In both places I have been put under physical and psychological tortures, interrogated overnight and kept in solitary confinements for months. I have been subject to prison guards’ violent behaviour in Evin, Rajae-Shahr and Bandar Abbas Prisons. And after enduring close to 14 years of imprisonment in those prisons, it’s now a few months that I have been sent to Zabol Central Prison in exile. It goes without saying that I have heard, seen and tasted a lot about different types of tortures practiced by Iranian regime’s criminal agents in different prisons across the country, but here in Zabol prison, I saw with my own eyes a type of torture which is quite unique in its kind.

In this type of torture, they first beat and insult

the prisoner and then totally shave his head so as to somehow humiliate him. The prisoner is then tightly chained in the open to a column with his arms and legs around it so that he could be seen by all the prisoners, prison guards and other prison officials and personnel. They keep the prisoner in the same situation for a few days until he loses consciousness* due to pain and suffering caused by contraction in his muscles. Prisoners even wet themselves in the process.

I personally don’t remember to have seen a wild animal in cage being chained. I wonder how in Zabol Prison, which is nothing but a cage, humans are being treated this way, while even animals don’t deserve to be treated like this.

*Political Prisoner Arjang Davoudi
Zabol Prison, February 2017*

*** Some victims have died under this horrific torture.**



UNREST IN KHUZESTAN: THE OIL-RICH PROVINCE OF IRAN

People in the city of Ahvaz, the capital of the oil rich south-west-Iran province of Khuzestan, demonstrated for 7 consecutive days from 13 February, amidst warnings by state security agents to stop. Residents of Ahvaz were protesting high levels of air pollution as well as severe cuts in water and electricity.

Riot police and troops were transferred to Ahvaz from neighbouring cities to suppress the protests.

Demonstrators were calling for the resignation of incompetent authorities and an end to squandering Iran's resources in wars in Yemen and Syria.

Demonstrations in support of the people of Ahvaz were also staged in various other cities across Iran including in the capital, Tehran.

Because of abusive and misguided measures and projects handled by Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corp, Khuzestan, one of the richest and most fertile provinces of Iran has been turned into a dry land, and thick dust has covered various cities in the province in particular in the capital of the



province, Ahvaz, which prompted the demonstrations on February 13.

The demonstrators raised placards written: "Enough with silence", "Khuzestan is not alone", "Khuzestan has no water", and "Khuzestan has no clear air, help the dying Khuzestan."

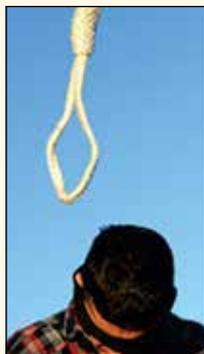
"I'm just a worker and [doctors] had to remove fluid from my chest twice due to the dust filling my lungs," regime's media quoted a protester. "My grandchild, wife and I, are all suffering from respiratory diseases; when the storm hits the city we have to shut the windows and draw the blinds and can't leave the house for some days and we



COULD WE BRING AN END TO EXECUTIONS IN IRAN?

According to state-run IRNA news agency, Abbas Jafari Dolatabadi, Iranian regime's Tehran Prosecutor General, announced Wednesday, 8 February that the Prosecutor Office has submitted requests to the courts to cancel retaliation sentences for ten under-18 convicts, of which six requests have been accepted. A positive sign indeed.

International Liberty Association and many other international human rights bodies, have repeatedly called for an end to juvenile executions and expressed grave concerns over executing convicts who were under-18 at the time of their offence. According to a well documented Amnesty International report, at



least 73 convicts who were under-18 at the time of the offence have been executed in Iran between 2005 and 2015. According to a UN report, there are at least another 160 such convicts who are awaiting execution.

The UN Human Rights Council as well as other human rights organizations have repeatedly criticised Iran's high execution rate. Issuing the death penalty for drug traffickers has been reported as one of the reasons behind Iran's high execution rate.

The Iranian regime's Attorney General, Mohammad Jafar Montazeri, has recently emphasized that the death penalty is not going to be removed from the regime's drug penal code, while Mohammad Bagher Olfat, the regime's Deputy Head of the Judiciary on Crime Prevention, has said that execution of drug traffickers in Iran "has not been deterrent". So there is room to press forward.

feel like prisoners who live in small and dark cells," said another.

Suffocating dust is reported to be 66 times above acceptable level when the storm hits the city.

The dust storms that provoked protests are seen to be caused by negligence of officials who have not done anything to control and reduce the damaging effects of environmentally disastrous projects in the area as well as their acute inattention to infrastructure and environment.

Wetlands in the province have dried up due to plundering policies and mismanagement of oil extracting projects in the region.



OUR EVENTS IN KINGSTON AND OXFORD

We have had two events – one in Kingston and another in Oxford – since the last newsletter went for publication. Both events were full and we thank everyone who took part and particularly those friends who performed and/or talked and helped to organise the setup of the venue. A selection of short extracts from the speeches follow.

JACK: My wife and I went to Tirana about two and a half years ago, when the first group of people came out of Camp Liberty to Albania. There were about three or four hundred at that time, but it was an extremely inspirational opportunity to speak first-hand to those who'd really suffered very

terribly in Camp Liberty, and to see what progress they were making. Now, to see Steve's video of the developments since then, when there are ten times as many people now in Tirana, they're really showing what they can do in a very impressive way.

It really is an inspirational opportunity to see the people who have been through so much, but yet still have an amazing, positive spirit as to what they want to achieve.

PETER: My wife and I went there in November and for us it was an overwhelming experience, particularly our first welcome in the old university campus where so many of them now live and work. We'd never experienced anything like this in our lives in any form, and it was so impressive. Everyone was so welcoming, they were so pleased to see us, and if you've never had that sort of gratitude directed at you, you just can't imagine what it's like for the first time.

JOAN: I think it's right sometimes to stop for a minute and rejoice, and literally thank God, because really to get these people out of Camp Liberty was something like a miracle; I think it really was, and we mustn't forget that there are joyful things that happen. And that's partly our help, but very largely the work of the International Liberty people.

They really do work hard, and they have their own families to worry about. We know one who has a very sick wife, for example, but they give so much, and I think they are a wonderful team, and I rejoice in their courage and their good will too.

ROBERT: My first encounter with Iran was at school, when during the sixth form we were joined by an Iranian student, Merdad. His English was quite good, which obviously helped, and he really impressed me with his straightforward approach to things, and it was obvious he came from a culture that valued education greatly. That was,

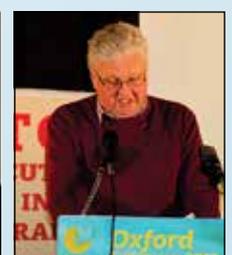
for many years, my only involvement and contact with Iran, until one day I was shopping in Guildford and I came across an ILA stall.

I gave a commitment there and then to support them.

Why do I continue to do so? I think the present regime in Iran is brutal, power-obsessed and wicked in its repression of anybody who challenges its mediaeval world-view. Their outlook is totally at odds with my own and I'm sure with all of you.

The safe relocation of the Ashraffis to Albania was a great relief to me, and I'm sure to them, and proves what can be achieved when people get together behind a cause.

RICHARD: I felt that actually, hell might freeze over before we could get all of them out safely, or even any of them at all. And then, amazingly, last year something went, something worked, and they all got out. And I for one was profoundly shocked. I didn't believe it would actually ever happen. I was amazed, but it was a very gratifying end to the year.





NEWS IN BRIEF

Ahmad Montazeri was arrested without formal notice



The son of a grand Ayatollah who had objected to Khomeini's murderous fatwa which led to summary execution of over 30,000 prisoners in 1988 was arrested on 22 February after being called for a hearing by a special court for the clergy. He was sentenced to 22 years suspended prison term of which he has to serve 6, for revealing a tape recording of a meeting between his father and the members of a 'death commission' who were implementing the fatwa at the time. One of the members of the death commission is President Rouhani's Justice Minister.

Ayatollah Montazeri was designated successor to Khomeini as Supreme Leader at the time and was sacked immediately after he made his objection public in an open letter to Khomeini in the summer of 1988.

14-year-old girl beaten and detained for 'wearing jeans'

A 14-year-old girl who was celebrating her birthday with friends in Shiraz, Iran, was beaten and forced into a "morality police" van with her friends for wearing "ripped jeans".

"I still carry the bruises sustained from their beatings on my face. I still feel their pressure on my arm, and my ribs still hurt," she told human rights activists after the girls were released once they had signed pledges that they would not wear 'ripped jeans' again.



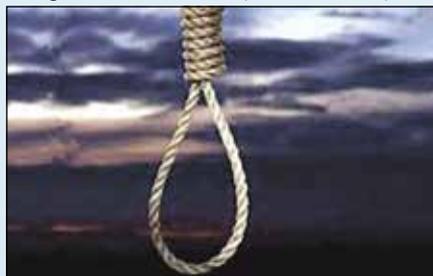
Still no news of prisoner of conscience, Ali Moezzi

The 65 years-old prisoner has been missing since 4 January after a last visit with members of his family. Mr Moezzi is suffering from a variety of ailments and in need of medical attention. He was given an extra prison year in December 2015 and was due to be released in March 2017. Ali Moezzi is the father of two Ashrafi daughters who are in Tirana now. Hejrat and Forough have made an appeal to international organisations to pressure the Iranian regime for an answer as to where their father has been taken.



Family protested against the execution of their son

On Monday 13 February Mostafa Azadi's family were informed that their son has been transferred to the solitary confinement of Zahedan Central Prison awaiting imminent execution. They immediately went to Tehran from Kuhdasht (in Lorestan Province) to the office of Sadegh Larijani demanding a halt to the execution of their son. The chief of judiciary misled the family who then missed the opportunity to meet the wrestler athlete before he was hanged on Wednesday 15 February.



Head of Judiciary orders quick execution of Sunni prisoners

A senior judiciary official has revealed a secret decree given by the head of the



regime's judiciary, Sadegh Larijani, to courts asking them to go ahead quickly with the execution of Sunni prisoners convicted of drug trafficking.

The decree is aimed at preventing the Sunni prisoners from being subject to a new legislation being discussed in the parliament about converting death sentences for first time drug related offenders to prison term. At least 50 Sunni prisoners are subject to the head of the judiciary's secret decree.

Environmental catastrophe in rich Khuzestan Province

Iranian officials have executed various plans to reroute river waters and construct unscientific dams for fast extraction of oil at low costs. These plans have resulted in the destruction of important ponds in Khuzestan Province, leading to an environmental catastrophe endangering the locals' wellbeing and lifestyle.

According to a report published in a state-run daily on 16 February, a large number of people believe that the drying of border ponds because of mismanagement is amongst the main reasons behind the growing dust storm crisis in the south-western Province.

Such a crisis will not be resolved with incompetent managers who have filled key positions in Iran.

Khuzestan Province, one of the most fertile parts of Iran, may in a few years become an abandoned desert.





NORUZ & EASTER GREETINGS FROM TIRANA

My name is Abbas. NoRuz 2003 is an unforgettable NoRuz for me since I lost both of my legs during the coalition bombing of our residence in Iraq (Camp Ashraf). Since then NoRuz creates contrasting feelings; my childhood happiness and joy contrasted with a devastating memory that had permanent affect on my life. In the early years, when we were still in Ashraf and then in Liberty, I could not help stopping to think of that horrible NoRuz of 2003. When I met with American soldiers, many of whom were good people and ashamed of what their government had done, I had to work

hard to stop my anger and treat the visitors nicely.

In Tirana however, I am soaked in love and affection, not just by my comrades as always, but by you. You who have come to visit us helped me to forget my anger. I was hearing a lot about you when we were in Ashraf and Liberty, but seeing you in person was a different thing. Just looking at you and your affectionate eyes filled me with hope and a feeling of extraordinary love. I feel my heart is bigger than ever before and I have already forgiven those who caused my anguish in the first place. So this NoRuz is going to be very different

for me after seeing so many of you. You are in my thoughts and prayers always.

Happy Easter and NoRuz!

I am here in this picture with Pat and Rosalind. I have talked with many of you at the ILA events over Skype but seeing you in person is a very different thing. I hope to see every one of you in person soon.

I wanted to use this opportunity to wish you a Happy Easter and a joyful New Persian Year which starts with spring. With love!

Mabboubeh



YOU ARE INVITED TO A VERY SPECIAL OCCASION

Our Persian New Year celebration (NoRuz) coincides this year with Easter

We have organised an evening for us all to enjoy these celebrations together along with our mutual values of rebirth, hope, harmony with nature and humanity.

You will be entertained by Iranian and British musicians who will dedicate their performances to you. You will be able to delight in the beautiful and colourful flower decorations of Easter; experience tea in a traditional Iranian tea house and relish delicious Persian Cuisine: all graced by our distinguished Iranian congeniality.

Your presence will bring warmth to our event, encourage hope and invigorate our spirits.

As NoRuz and Easter are family events we invite you to bring your family and friends too.

Saturday, 15 April, 2017

4:00 – 9 pm

Hammersmith Town Hall, King Street, Hammersmith, London W6 9JU

Entry fee: £10

Please let us know if you are able to come and if you are bringing family and friends.

RSVP: event@iliberty.org.uk or call 020 8452 3481