



International Liberty Association Newsletter

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UN CONDEMNS IRAN'S REGIME ONCE MORE IN THE MIDST OF CONTINUED PROTESTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

The United Nations (UN) general assembly's third committee adopted a resolution condemning the human rights violations in Iran with a majority of votes on Wednesday 16 November 2022. This is the 69th UN resolution censuring the brutal and systematic human rights abuses happening in Iran right now.

While the resolution reflects only a small portion of the crimes of the regime in Iran, it nevertheless makes it abundantly clear that this regime has systematically violated all recognised principles and standards of human rights. There are no aspects of the Iranian people's rights, including the right to life, freedom of speech, the rights of ethnic and religious minorities, and the rights of women, that have not been violated by the regime in Tehran.

The mullahs' regime has perpetrated crimes against humanity and genocide for more than four decades. These examples include, but are by no means



exhaustive: the massacre of the people of Kurdistan which includes the mass execution of political prisoners in the 1980s and then again in 1988, the murder of protesters in November 2019, the ... continued on p.2

EDITORIAL

As we start the New Year, the people of Iran continue their brave struggle for improved freedoms and human rights in Iran. As women and young students gather to chant on the streets they continue to face a brutal response from the regime's security forces.

In a further effort to intimidate protesters, the regime has already conducted a number of show trials without due legal process, followed by cruel and disgusting executions.

Thousands of other protesters remain in prison facing torture and similar sentences.

With so many women and young people in this situation, ... continued on p.2

FLIGHT 752: AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

The International Coordination and Response Group for the victims of Flight PS752 issued the following joint statement on 28 December 2022:

"We, ministers representing Canada, Sweden, Ukraine and the United Kingdom, have taken concrete action today to ensure that our efforts to hold Iran to account for the unlawful downing of Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752 (Flight PS752) can progress to the dispute settlement phase.

"In particular, we have requested that Iran submits to binding



arbitration of the dispute related to the downing of Flight PS752 by two surface-to-air missiles launched unlawfully and intentionally by members of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (aka the IRGC, the notorious private army of the supreme leader) air defence unit pursuant to Article 14 of the ... continued on p.3



UN condemns Iran's regime in the midst of continued protests

continued from p.1

killing of protesters in the past three months (including the murder of at least 60 children aged two to 17), the massacre in Zahedan on 30 September 2022, the brutal attack on Evin prison on 15 October 2022, along with the bloodshed in Khash on 4 November 2022. All of these are clear examples of crimes against humanity.

The current senior officials of this regime, including the supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, the so-called 'president', Ebrahim Raisi, the

head of Iran's judiciary, Gholam-Hossein Mohseni-Ejei, and the speaker of the Majlis (the Iranian parliament) Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, have all been directly involved in these crimes since the early 1980s.

The ruling theocracy in Iran is a regime of massacre, perpetuating crimes against humanity and therefore it must be shunned by the world community.

Due to the fact that the human rights situation in Iran is getting worse

every day, the time has come to refer the dossier of the regime's crimes to the UN security council and bring the regime's leaders face to face with justice within the international criminal court based in The Hague.



Despite brutal repression and execution sentences delivered to protesters, the people of Zahedan, capital of Baluchistan Province, continue to come to the streets demanding freedom and human rights.

Editorial *continued from p.1*

we must increase our efforts and activities as much as possible and be a source of hope and support for the people of Iran.

With the help of volunteers inside Iran who are willing to take risks, we will continue to gather and publish information and organize more support for the people of Iran and thereby save more innocent lives.

Knowing that an international

spotlight is shining on them gives the people of Iran hope and encouragement and lets them know that they are not alone and their voices are heard and supported.

In fact, if it wasn't for this pressure and mobilization of public opinion and global condemnation, the Iranian regime would have executed thousands within a few months, like the massacre in 1988.

Instead, faced with the scrutiny of governments and public opinion around the world, the Iranian regime has been forced to withdraw from the execution of a number of young people, against its desire, due to fear of the consequences.

In 2023 we seek your continued support and together let us hope that the people of Iran will gain their rightful demands as soon as possible.



Flight 752: an important milestone for accountability *continued from p.1*

Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation of 1971.

“The Coordination Group remains committed to pursuing efforts to hold Iran accountable for its multiple breaches of its international legal obligations pursuant to several treaties. This action is part of our broader approach to ensuring there is transparency, justice and accountability for the victims and their families.”

In a video message published on social media, **Hamed Esmailion**, president and spokesperson for The Association of Victims’ Families of Flight PS752, who himself suffered the loss of his wife and daughter in this heinous crime committed by the IRGC, explained the importance of this achievement and said:

“Do not mourn. Organize. Today the governments of Canada,



Ukraine, the United Kingdom and Sweden, sent an important diplomatic note to the Islamic Republic of Iran invoking its criminal responsibility under the 1971 Montreal Convention on the safety of civilian aircraft. The diplomatic note holds the Islamic Republic responsible for the intentional firing of missiles, resulting in the destruction of flight PS752, and demands that those responsible for this international crime be brought to justice. The Islamic Republic has six months

to respond to this notice, after which the four affected countries can initiate a case before the international court of justice in The Hague. The Association of Victims’ Families of Flight PS752 have endured great hardship to reach this important and essential milestone and the path to justice that was marked by legal and political twists and turns. No one could believe that ours was even a possible journey, but we believed in that glimmer of hope and our own power to organize and persist.”

ESTABLISHING A FACT-FINDING MISSION FOR THE VICTIMS OF IRAN’S CRUEL REGIME

The UN human rights council passed a motion on 24 November 2022, to set up a fact-finding mission to look into the mass arrests and ensuing death sentences for participating protesters in Iran that took place over the past few months, following the death (in custody) of 22-year-old Kurdish woman **Mahsa Amini** in Tehran on 16 September 2022.

Responding to the announcement that the UN human rights council had passed a landmark resolution to establish a fact-finding mission to investigate human rights violations in Iran related to the protests that began on 16 September 2022, especially with respect to women and children, **Agnès Callamard**, Amnesty International’s secretary general, said:

“This important and long overdue step shows that the cries of people in Iran for justice have finally been heard. We hope the establishment of this fact-finding mission marks a fundamental shift in the international community’s approach to tackling the crisis of

systematic impunity that has long fuelled crimes under international law and other serious human rights violations in Iran. The resolution not only enhances international scrutiny of the dire situation in Iran, but also puts in place a process to collect, consolidate and preserve crucial evidence for future prosecutions.”



Many of those killed during protests in Iran were juveniles.



LAWMAKERS SPONSOR JAILED PROTESTERS IN IRAN



Members of the Austrian parliament holding photos of Iranian protesters in danger of execution

In a special move to put pressure on the regime ruling Iran, lawmakers across the world started an initiative to sponsor jailed protesters and take the responsibility of promoting the plight of these detained protesters many of whom face execution.

In a collective move in this regard all 183 members of the National Council of Austria, the lower house of the country's Parliament, announced that they will sponsor Iranians detained during the recent protests.

All members of the Council from four major parties said they will sponsor 183 prisoners including those sentenced to death for their participation in the current wave of antigovernment protests in Iran, ignited by the death in custody of 22-year-old **Mahsa Amini**.

With their symbolic move, members from the ÖVP, SPÖ, Greens and NEOS want to draw international attention to the prisoners, as they explained at a press conference in Vienna on Tuesday. The right-wing populist Freedom Party of Austria FPÖ did not take on sponsorships, therefore 31 MPs from the Federal Council – the upper house -- stepped in to come up with 183 members.

After the National Council unanimously condemned the

execution of detained protesters, the four parties announced that they “have to give the application more weight” and take further steps, explained the foreign policy spokesman for the ÖVP **Reinhold Lopatka**.

Harald Troch from the SPÖ said that the action is primarily meant to stop the wave of executions. He praised the parliament for condemning the Iranian regime for the brutal crackdown on demonstrators but criticized the federal government for its lack of a policy on the activities of the Austrian embassy in Tehran. He also recalled the dual Austrian-Iranian citizen **Kamran Ghaderi**, who has been imprisoned in Iran for years, and called on the Foreign Ministry to work towards his prompt release.

“International attention means protection for prisoners, that’s the most effective means” Green Club chairwoman **Sigrid Maurer** said in explaining the action. “The barbarism of the Iranian regime” is unacceptable, and the mandataries regularly demand information about the whereabouts of the detainees. Maurer himself has taken on the sponsorship of the journalist **Niloofar Hamed**, who was arrested for reporting the death of Mahsa Amini.

Helmut Brandstätter from the NEOS is the godfather of the Iranian rapper **Toomaj Salehi**, who faces death over trumped-up charges of ‘war against God’ and ‘corruption on earth’ because he reportedly asked people to participate in the protests. Both allegations can result in a death sentence. Brandstätter says, “There is only one chance to save his life, that’s international pressure”.

Earlier in the month, several members of the German parliament (Bundestag) announced their political sponsorship of Iranian political prisoners, most of whom are in danger of imminent execution on bogus charges.

Ye-One Rhie, a member of the Bundestag who has undertaken political sponsorship of the imprisoned dissident rapper said in a series of tweets that she has written to the Iranian ambassador, the EU special representative for human rights, the council of Europe commissioner for human rights, and the high commissioner for human rights about Toomaj’s case and expressed her great concerns for his well-being.

The number of German MPs taking political sponsorship of Iranian protesters is growing.

Carmen Wegge has declared herself the sponsor of **Armita Abbasi**, a young woman of 20, who was missing since her arrest on October 10 before being taken to a hospital in Karaj on October 18 by security forces with multiple injuries including internal bleeding and evidence of repeated rape.

Political sponsorship (politische patenschaften in German) is a way for parliamentarians to select a specific political detainee and use their political weight to campaign for the prisoner’s freedom. This is mainly done by addressing the ambassador and the relevant government and international institutions dealing with human rights.



THE MULLAHS' REGIME IS EXPELLED FROM THE UN WOMEN'S RIGHTS COMMITTEE

In its session on 14 December 2022, the economic and social council of the UN general assembly (ECOSOC), voted with an absolute majority to expel the mullahs' regime from the UN commission on the status of women (CSW). In contrast to the vote of the 29 countries in favour, i.e. more than half of the ECOSOC members, only 8 countries voted against and 16 countries abstained.

The resolution expressed concern about the killing of protesters, including women and girls, by the Iranian regime, and about "continuously undermining and increasingly suppressing the human rights of women and girls including the right to freedom of expression and opinion, often with the use of excessive force, by administering policies flagrantly contrary to the human rights of women and girls and to the mandate of the UN commission on the status of women." The ECOSOC, therefore, decided to expel the regime from the CSW with immediate effect.

The religious dictators ruling Iran have arrested, tortured and executed thousands of female political prisoners in the past four decades. In the past three months alone, during the recent uprising, the regime has killed at least 61 women and 70 children in the streets.

The UN resolution has been welcomed by the ILA and the people of Iran.



The regime has continuously violated international covenants, treaties, and laws. This illegitimate regime does not represent the people of Iran in any way and must be shunned by the international community and expelled from the UN and its various agencies, especially Unicef. The case of human rights violations committed by this regime must be referred to the UN security council and then the regime's leaders must be prosecuted for more than 40 years of crimes against humanity and genocide.

THE UK SUMMONS IRAN'S DIPLOMAT AFTER PROTESTOR EXECUTED



The UK government summoned the Iranian chargé d'affaires on 8 December 2022 following the execution of a protestor.

MP and foreign secretary **James Cleverly** said:

"The execution of **Mohsen Shekari** by the Iranian regime is abhorrent. He is a tragic victim of a legal system in which disproportionate sentences, politically motivated trials and forced confessions are rife. We have made our views clear to the Iranian authorities – Iran must immediately halt executions and end the violence against its own people."

Vijay Rangarajan, UN director general for the Middle East, held the meeting with Mehdi Hosseini

Matin to underline that in the UK's view this is a grossly disproportionate action, which is designed to intimidate ordinary Iranians and stifle voices of dissent. He stressed that the UK opposes the death penalty

in all circumstances and urged Iran to immediately halt executions and the imposition of pending death sentences.

In another move on 13 December 2022, Cleverly warned about a 'sordid' alliance between Iran and Russia as the UK imposed sanctions on high level figures from both countries.

Vladimir Putin's forces have used Iranian drones to carry out strikes on Ukrainian towns and cities along with areas of key energy infrastructure.

Cleverly added: "Iran and Russia's sordid deals threaten global security. We are holding their desperate alliance to account."



ILA CHRISTMAS EVENT



On Tuesday 13 December 2022, the ILA held an event for the occasion of Christmas. Even though the national train strikes on that day had prevented many supporters from attending the event, it was well-attended and reception was positive. Other than live music by talented musicians, there were five speakers including: retired MP **Sir Alan Meale**, MP **Steve McCabe**, **Lady Verma**, **Guy Sainty**, and **Masoud Zabeti**.

Excerpts from their speeches appear below:



Lady Verma: “I want to thank the International Liberty Association of

which all of you work tirelessly to make sure that we appreciate and respect the human rights of people across the globe and become a voice for those that need our voice at this very critical time in life. I think it’s people like yourself sitting in this room today, the work you do, the way you raise issues, the way you support people, particularly people who are going

through such challenging times themselves. I’m always, always extremely grateful for organisations like the International Liberty Association, but particularly so I’m grateful to every individual sitting here and beyond, because you are the people that actually enable us to do all of the work that we can do. But push us hard, push your members of parliament hard, push all of the people in the political field hard because unless you push them hard, things do not change. And we need things to change.”



putting on this wonderful event and for all of their hard work over the years to help the various people who have fallen foul of events in Iran, and the various people who’ve suffered, or seen members of their family suffer at the hands of this regime... it’s been a long struggle. It may be it’s going to go on for many more years, but in the end, those who are in the right will

prevail. We will prevail and Iran will be free.”



Sir Alan Meale: “In Iran over the last few years, we’ve seen bullying on a scale that

hasn’t been seen anywhere in this part of the world since the second world war, or before and during the second world war with a community who lost 8 million lives. You’ve seen people who are harassed from their bank accounts, bank accounts are seized because they [the people] protested. You’ve seen people who are being jailed because they objected. And you’ve seen people who have put themselves forward and they’ve been executed... The amount of reports I’ve read over the years where people have been hung in public from lamp-posts in streets, from cranes, there was only one [person] just two days ago in Iran who was hung from a crane. His mother was informed by telephone that morning that her son had been executed. This man was arrested three weeks before, he was tortured,



OVER 230 MPs CALL ON UK GOVERNMENT TO SUPPORT IRANIAN PEOPLE IN THEIR QUEST FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS



On December 14 2022, cross-party MPs and peers held a conference to announce a joint initiative that consolidates their recommendations to the UK government to support the Iranian people and their popular uprising for human rights, freedom, and democratic change in Iran.

The conference highlighted the need on the part of the international community to end impunity for the regime leaders and discuss the next steps for the UK to deliver on its promise of holding to account the regime for its deadly crackdown against protesters and its serious human rights violations following the recent decision by the UN human rights council to establish a new fact-finding mission to investigate the violent

crackdown on protests in Iran.

Several parliamentarians from both houses of the UK parliament (the House of Lords and the House of Commons) addressed the conference along with members of the Iranian community in London who have been witness to the atrocities committed by the regime ruling Iran for the past 43 years. Below are some excerpts from the conference:

MP Matthew Offord:

“Iran is standing at a historical moment. We want to send a strong message of support for the people of Iran. Iran’s protests have been met with violence, and torture by the regime. I want to condemn the execution of **Mohsen Shekari** and **Majidreza Rahnavard**.

“There is no doubt that the people of Iran... seek a true democratic state, by the people and for the people. The United Kingdom should stand with the people of Iran for a free and secular nation. The international community must take measures to stop the regime’s brutality.”

MP David Jones:

“I’m proud of our statement in support of the Iranian people ...The regime has lost all its credibility. The people are prepared to make sacrifices to realise their aspirations.”

he was taken to see a judge, he was sentenced, he was executed, all in three weeks. I defy anybody to see a judicial process like that anywhere else in the world! And, governments just can’t stand idly by and allow this to happen... So I ask you in one simple term, keep on doing what you are doing at the present time. Please keep supporting the ILA and all its work, and the best of luck here, and a merry Christmas.”

Guy Sainty: “Courage. Courage



is a word we are all familiar with. We all have some understanding of what it means. We all

question whether we could actually show that at the right time when we are faced with a threat to our safety, our security or to our families or our lives. 40 years of courage

[has been] shown by the Iranian people who never wanted this terrible regime that they have been forced to submit to for the last, well for the last four decades, and which has become steadily worse... We have to show courage in forcing our government to turn [this] around and, as Sir Alan has just said, take more direct action. Yes, expel the diplomats, prevent anybody from coming to this country who has any connection with the Iranian regime, do not do business with them in any possible way, and encourage our friends in the international community to do the same. Thank you!”





A LETTER FROM PRISON



In a message from the notorious Evin prison to the Iranian people, **Maryam Akbari Monfared**, who has spent the last 14 years in prison without a day of furlough, vowed to continue standing ‘shoulder to shoulder’ with the families of protesters slain during the recent uprising. In her letter, which was also published by *The Independent*, she talks about sufferance in the regime’s prisons but shows her strong spirit despite the regime’s efforts to break her:

“This is not a 4,000-page story, but the pure reality of life under the domination of fascists who imposed it on us while we refused to give in. On this side of the bars, in the dark desert of torture and oppression, as far as one can see – even where one

cannot see – there is just vileness and brutality”, the letter reads.

“As of 29 December 2022, 13 years have passed since I was separated from my four-year-old Sarah and

my two 12-year-old daughters on that winter midnight,” she wrote, adding, “without giving me a chance to say goodbye to my loved ones, they took me to Evin prison to give some explanations and made the ridiculous promise that ‘you will return to your children in the morning’.”

Yet, Maryam Akbari didn’t write to share her plight with people; her letter is in solidarity with her risen compatriots, who are making a revolution and rewriting history.

“With the news of every protest and every uprising, and with the sparks of this rebellious flame, the hearts of women whose only hope of freedom is to break these iron gates are filled with hope.”

She also advised brave young

Iranians on the street to never trust the regime’s interrogators if arrested.

“To my daughters and sons, who are bravely on the streets ... I say: if you are arrested, do not trust the interrogators even an iota.”

Maryam Akbari lost three siblings in the 1980s. Her sister was hanged during the 1988 massacre which resulted in over 30,000 prisoners. Maryam has been a vocal supporter and advocate of the justice-seeking movement for the victims of the 1988 massacre. Therefore, she shared the grief of the slain protesters’ families and urged them to seek justice.

“To the grieving families ... I say that I share in their grief too. I hold their hands from here and stand shoulder to shoulder with them, stronger than before, for justice.”

Maryam Akbari’s letter from the regime’s dungeons, where interrogators abide by no law and are free to commit atrocities against defenseless prisoners, indicates an unwavering determination of a nation to end the crimes being committed by the ruling theocracy, at any cost. The world should indeed support these brave souls who seek justice, freedom, and democracy.

Join us for our live event for the occasion of International Women’s Day

Date and time: Friday 24 February 2023, 3pm–7pm
Location: Porchester Hall, Porchester Rd, London W2 5HS

Please send an email or call the ILA to reserve your place:
Contact: info@iliberty.org.uk Tel: 020 8452 3481