



International Liberty Association Newsletter

Churchill House • 120 Bunns Lane • London NW7 2AS

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

EDITORIAL

As we pass 1st of May, the International Labour Day, it is important to stop and consider the dire conditions for most workers in Iran.

The mullahs ruling Iran rely on the Revolutionary Guard to employ and exploit the labour force and loot the country's human and material resources. The mullahs and the IRGC have a grip on vast sections of the country's assets and income.

Hundreds of companies in the fields of energy, finance, production and trade are owned by the repressive forces and their associated organisations, even the judiciary. All are connected to Khamenei in one form or another and take orders from him.

The mismanagement and plundering of numerous businesses mean that every year new plans or laws are implemented in a desperate bid to generate further income. Only the regime's leaders and enforcers gain, while the exploitation and impoverishment of workers intensifies.

The regime has removed subsidies, reduced customs tariffs for imported goods and under the guise of privatisation has sold government property and assets to its cronies.

The mullahs have devised colourful plans for layoffs and redundancies under the guise of workforce ... *continued on p.2*

A MESSAGE FROM EVIN PRISON



Ali Younesi (left) and Amir Hossien Moradi (right).

On the third anniversary of their arrest, students **Ali Younesi** and **Amir Hossien Moradi** sent a message to campaigners and supporters around the world. The translated text of their message appears below:

“On 11 April 2020, we were arrested and severely beaten and

then transferred to ward 209.

We spent more than two years in solitary confinement and closed cells and were finally moved to the public ward of Evin prison in the third year.

During these three years, we went through a tumultuous path.

In those difficult ... *continued on p.2*

DETAINED REPORTER EXPLAINS WHY SHE WAS RE-ARRESTED



Sepideh Gholian, a civil and workers' rights activist, was first arrested during workers' protests in Khuzestan Province in 2018. Since then, she has been released and re-arrested many times: in July 2020 she was imprisoned, set to serve a five-year prison sentence. On 15 March 2023 she was released when, due to overcrowded prisons, the regime decided to release some prisoners under an amnesty plan.

However, Gholian was rearrested only a few hours later. In the following message she explains why and how:

“In the Name of God, the

Rainbow,

... *continued on p.3*



A message from Evin prison

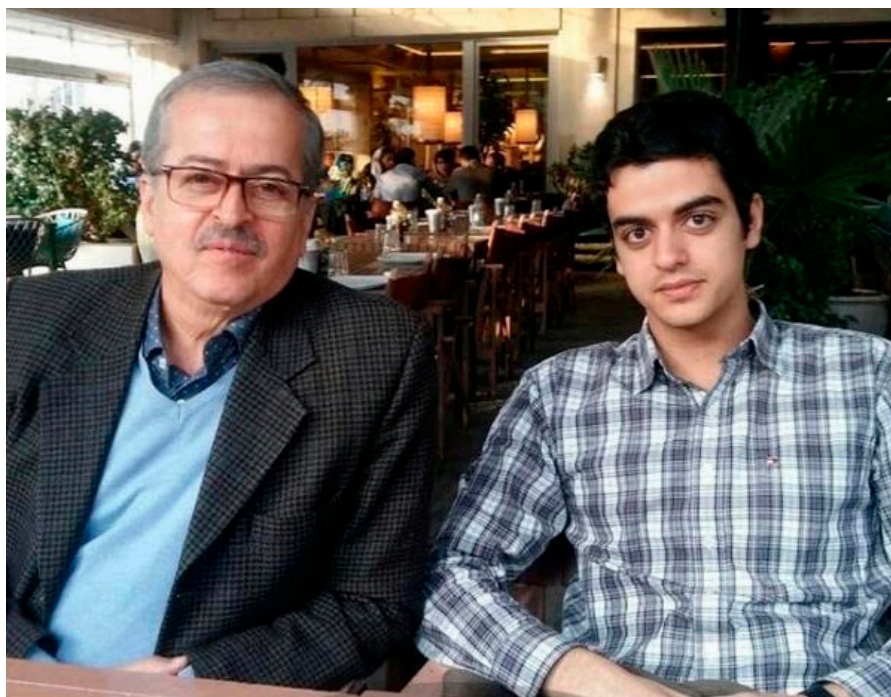
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days, when we were transferred from university classrooms to solitary confinement at a young age, we wondered to ourselves, what pain, suffering, and torture these stone walls, which have been standing for more than 50 years, have witnessed? These walls were hosts to lovers of freedom who went through hardships to free Iran and with their perseverance turned Evin into a common symbol of oppression in two dictatorships.

In the midst of torture, pressure, and the threat of execution, we saw ourselves as a drop of a roaring river that tries to break the dam called dictatorship, which stands in the way of Iran's history, and reach the beautiful plain of freedom.

In the heart of those difficult days, your support, dear people of Iran, became our backbone and refuge. The support that became a strong barrier between us and the baton, a barrier that time did not erase so that we would be indebted to you for our entire lives, and this is a great honour for us. We hope and strive to be worthy of these selfless supports.

In your loving and supportive embrace, we, fellow citizens, were saved from many dangers, and more than ever, we know that we owe it to you. We pledge to



Mir Yousef Younesi (left), Ali's father, was arrested without an arrest warrant on 28 December 2022 and taken to Evin prison. On 2 March 2023 he was taken to ward 209 after 63 days in solitary confinement without any charge.

ourselves that on the day when we celebrate the freedom of Iran together, we will not be concerned about our own freedom and will remember those children who are more worthy than us but have been deprived of opportunities due to poverty and discrimination, moment by moment.

Like all the young people who were killed on the streets, we also have no desire other than the freedom of Iran, and resistance in prison is a small duty on our shoulders amidst the suffering and

hardships of these years, leading to the arrival of real moments of happiness and to the rising of the dawn."

Ali Younesi and Amir Hossein Moradi are award-winning university students. Ali won silver in 2016 and gold in 2017 in Iran's National Astronomy Olympiad. In 2018 he won a gold medal in China's 12th World Astrophysics Olympiad.

Amir Hossein Moradi won the silver medal of the National Astronomy Olympiad held in 2017.

Editorial *continued from p.1*

adjustment. The expansion of temporary contracts, legalised by the judiciary, deprives more and more workers of job security.

On the pretext of 'removing production barriers', numerous laws and decisions have been made, to facilitate the dismissal of workers. The implementation of the 'contractual wage' has further eroded benefits and rates of pay.

As a result of these rules and regulations 90% of workers live

below the poverty line and 60% of employed individuals in the country are not covered by any form of insurance.

The privatized healthcare system means labourers are forced to endure pain and illness rather than receive medical care and hospitalization.

Embezzlement, amounting to billions of dollars, is rife amongst those in Khamenei's circle who enjoy open-door access to all types of theft.

No wonder, despite massive

repression and rising executions, workers across Iran have been protesting their living conditions almost continually. This is one of the many problems the mullahs have imposed on the people of Iran who have been crying for change with bravery and resilience.

We at ILA pledge to be their voice until real change is achieved and the misery of the people in our country, so rich in natural and human resources, comes to an end.



ITALIAN SENATE SUPPORTS THE IRANIAN PEOPLE'S UPRISING

In its session on 22 March 2023, Italy's senate unanimously passed a resolution regarding the Iranian uprising and the violations of women's rights by the mullahs ruling Iran. The resolution expressed support for the Iranian people's struggle for freedom and democracy.

This resolution presented by the ruling Italian party, the 'Brothers of Italy', states in parts:

"For decades, women and men in Iran have fought with firm determination for freedom, democracy, and respect for human rights. Despite the repression, torture, and execution of thousands of political prisoners, the regime has been unable to silence the resistance of citizens who demand freedom, democracy, and respect for human rights and have risked their lives ...



"The security forces, IRGC, Basij, police, anti-riot police, and uniformed personnel used bullets, tear gas, and batons to suppress the protests."

Expressing solidarity with Iranian women and many young men who bravely protest, the resolution emphasises full support

for the aspirations of Iran's people for democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms.

In presenting the bill to reporters, **Senator Giulio Terzi**, chair of the EU Policy Commission in the senate, once again demanded that the EU designate the IRGC as a terrorist organisation.

Detained reporter explains why she was re-arrested

continued from p.1

we did not give up to compromise! Only four hours had passed since my release from Evin prison and I was only four hours witness to the streets after 'Women, Life, Freedom'. I hadn't even covered half the distance to home when I was arrested on the road and taken to Evin's ward 209 detention centre. In this short period, they did not spare me any humiliation and harassment. I was severely beaten. A man in the corridor of ward 209 threatened to rape me. He said we would tie your hands and feet and take care of you very well.

Obviously, the dimensions of accountability for the tens of thousands of detainees of the "Women, Life, Freedom" movement, has a special place in both, the dark crimes committed by this regime during [the] past four decades and in the process of [a] justice seeking campaign. But what



is more clear is that our covenant is still valid: Freedom is not something to be given, but something to be taken, and I, Sepideh Gholiyan, stand on the covenant I have made with the people of Iran, who have come to the brink of death. I will not go to a show trial headed by someone who has signed the execution order of activists, and I do not endorse the legitimacy of their sham and show trials or their verdicts. I explicitly declare that

as long as the Islamic government of executions is in power, and as long as the humble discoverers of water [referring to imprisoned environmentalists], and protesters against tyranny are hostages of the Islamic government and its unfair and show trials, I will not participate in any court.

Hoping for the downfall of the time's cruel ruler,"

Sepideh Gholiyan,

Women's ward, Evin prison



ILA EVENT ON 29 APRIL



For the occasion of Nowruz (Persian New Year), Easter and Passover, which all coincide at the beginning of spring, the ILA held an event on 29 April at the ILEC Conference Centre in central London. The colourful event is best explained with the photos on this and the next page.

Other than all sorts of music and a hearty dinner, there were a few speakers who addressed the event.

Excerpts of the speech by **Mark Williams**, former Liberal Democrat MP for Ceredigion, follows:



“When the invitation came and I left my home in Ceredigion in West Wales, I didn’t quite know what to expect, so I came in here this morning and looked at this room thinking, my goodness, that’s going to take some job to fill every seat in every table, and our friends in the ILA have done that, they’ve brought us together from different parts of the United Kingdom and beyond, and I’m not going to ask

you to stand up again but let’s show our appreciation once again to the ILA for a tremendous, tremendous event.

We are here to show our friendship to, our support of and our love of Iran.

We are here to promote the noblest cause of all: the cause of justice, of freedom, of a new secular, free Iran. Let us celebrate that and I come before you today to talk, as you know, some of you better than I, about the nationwide, ongoing uprising in this country. It’s been going on, the uprising in Iran, for eight months, and do not be downhearted by the fact that it has been going on for eight months,



because meaningful change is a process rather than an event, and it is a huge mark of the perseverance and determination of the people of Iran that they have been demonstrating for eight months, and despite the repression they continue to demonstrate, demonstrate, for democracy and change.

“You know, I don’t know whether people here are politically involved; it doesn’t matter, we’re here for a central, more important cause, much beyond our party interests, but one of the great motivations for me in becoming involved in politics and certainly this campaign, is a responsibility of each and every one of us as global citizens, as global citizens, to call out repression, to call out human rights abuses wherever they occur in the world. That is our job and I want the Iranian people within that country to know



that there are thousands if not millions of people watching what is going on and we need to [stand in] solidarity with the people in that great country of Iran.

“So, ladies and gentlemen, my third thanks, of course, is to the brave, courageous Iranian people, in the expectation to them on July the 1st we will send them the strongest, most powerful message of hope. The rally will demonstrate that the Iranian people are united in their demands for genuine democratic change and they of course are willing to make great sacrifices to achieve it but they are not alone. So finally, if this is transmitted to our friends in Iran and I hope it is, one way or another, can I reassure them, can I reassure all within the great borders of the great country of Iran, that beautiful, beautiful country, with a people that need and deserve so much more, can I say to them directly: change is coming. Change is coming. Ladies and gentlemen, change is coming.”





APRIL 29 EVENT IN PICTURES





MEMBERS OF US CONGRESS URGE EU HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SECURITY POLICY TO TAKE ACTION



A bipartisan group of members of the US congress wrote a letter to Josep Borrell, the EU's high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, to encourage the EU to designate the terrorist organisation that is responsible for heinous crimes against the people of Iran as well as terrorist activities in the Middle East, Europe and the rest of the world, as what it is, a terrorist entity that the world should not do business with.

In the letter signed by 138 members of the US congress, the group wrote:

"We write to you today regarding the European Union's decision not to designate Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organization. On January 18, the European Parliament voted 598 to 9 in favor of a measure

calling for the EU to designate the IRGC as part of an annual foreign and security policy report and approved a separate Iran-focused resolution on January 19 reiterating this position on the IRGC. Following this vote however, you and your colleagues on the EU Foreign Affairs Council elected not to execute the designation.

For decades, the IRGC has freely and openly carried out plots targeting citizens in countries across the EU. A recent study by

the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point showed that in the last five years Iran has instigated at least 33 plots to surveil, abduct, or assassinate citizens in Europe.

For many years, the IRGC has supported and participated in numerous human rights abuses and terrorist activities, including the brutal crackdown of Iranian protestors following the murder of Mahsa Amini, the attempted assassination of European citizens, and the provision of hundreds of lethal drones to Russia. We strongly urge you, and your foreign affairs ministerial colleagues, to make the decision to fully sanction, penalize and delegitimize the IRGC, to help prevent them from further threatening democracy & freedom in the United States, Europe, and around the world."

Signatories included:

Thomas H Kean Jr, House foreign affairs chair on the subcommittee for Europe
William R Keating, ranking member of the House foreign affairs subcommittee on Europe
Michael T McCaul, House foreign affairs committee chair
Kathy Manning
Claudia Tenney
Ralph Norman
Pat Fallon
Earl L 'Buddy' Carter
David Rouzer

Andy Kim
Michael Waltz
Mark E Green
Jared Moskowitz
Doug LaMalfa
Michael V Lawler
Jim Jordan
Keith Self
Ann Wagner
Joe Wilson
Bill Huizenga
Nathaniel Moran
Laurel M Lee
Salud Carbajal
Andrew R Garbarino
Jim Costa
Nick LaLota
Rich McCormick
Jefferson van Drew
Tim Burchett
Brad Sherman
Ryan K Zinke
Ritchie Torres
Donald G Davis
Cory Mills
Kelly Armstrong
Michael K Simpson
Nicholas A Langworthy
María Elvira Salazar
Tim Walberg
John H Rutherford
Wiley Nickel
Christopher H Smith
Patrick K Ryan
Ted W Lieu
Russell Fry
Susan Wild
Steve Womack
Grace Meng
Ronny L Jackson
Marcus J Molinaro
Josh Brecheen
Brian Fitzpatrick
Lucy McBath
Deborah K Ross
Jake LaTurner
Tony Gonzales
Josh Gottheimer
Greg Pence
Rudy Yakym III
Bradley Scott Schneider
Andy Barr
Mark Alford



NEWS IN BRIEF

WORKERS IN IRAN EARN FAR BELOW OFFICIAL POVERTY LINE



Coinciding with International Labour Day, **Faramarz Tofighi**, a former workers' representative in Iran's supreme labour council (a regime-affiliated entity), shed new light on the difficulties facing Iranian workers. "The minimum livelihood basket, which was 180 million rials (around £260) at the beginning of the year (meaning late March), has now reached 210 million rials (approximately £300)."

The government of Ebrahim Raisi had previously pledged an increase in workers' wages by 27% for the new Persian year (starting from March 21), but this promise was not upheld. Therefore, the average workers' income during the new Persian calendar year (March 2023 to March 2024) will be just 80 million rials (£115) per month.

MAY DAY PROTESTS ACROSS IRAN



Workers, retirees, teachers, and people from other sectors of Iran's society were also marking International Labour Day (May Day) by holding protest gatherings and chanting anti-regime slogans in cities across Iran including

in Tehran, Kerman, Yazd, Kermanshah, Ilam, Bushehr, and Isfahan. These protests took place against the backdrop of ongoing strikes by Iranian workers in the energy sector.

POISONING FEMALE STUDENTS CONTINUES ACROSS IRAN



The plan by Khamenei's agents to poison female students to counter the nationwide uprising persists. Chemical attacks were carried out on several girls' schools in Iran, including at the Parveen Etesami Girls' Primary School in Hassan Abad, Sanandaj, the Alimohammadi Girls' School, Elahia Girls' High School in Baneh, Kimia Girls' Conservatory, and a girls' school in Kumail Street, Kermanshah, among many others. The authorities threaten students who report the incidents for what they are: chemical attacks.

IRAN'S REGIME IS TERRORISING PEOPLE BY A SUDDEN HIKE IN THE NUMBER OF EXECUTIONS



Translation of the sign: #No to Execution - people of Iran deserve respect not repression and execution

The past couple of weeks Iran has been witnessing a significant rise in number of executions around

the country. Just between Saturday 29 April and Tuesday 2 May, 12 Baluch prisoners, including two women, were executed.

Between 20 April and 9 May, at least 60 people have been executed across Iran.

IRAN'S REGIME USES AI FOR MAXIMISING SUPPRESSION



Iran's newly appointed chief of police announced in April that his officers will use surveillance cameras and AI to detect women who defy the hijab law, France 24 reported. The new technology will also allow authorities to pressure business owners and offices to enforce hijab laws, or risk being shut down if they decline.

REGIME EXECUTES SWEDISH NATIONAL IT KIDNAPPED IN TURKEY



Habib Chaab was executed on 6 May, according to statement by Iran's judiciary officials.

Chaab was an Iranian of Arab descent who had Swedish citizenship. He was kidnapped in Turkey by agents of Iran's regime and taken to Iran. His trial and execution is a mockery of justice and a clear indication that impunity has emboldened the mullahs ruling Iran.



PATRICK KENNEDY: THE WEST MUST ACT AGAINST IRAN'S ISLAMIC DICTATORS NOW OR WE'LL REGRET IT

In an article published by the Daily Express on Wednesday 3 May, former member of the US congress **Patrick Kennedy** called on western governments to act now against Iran's dictators or live to regret it.

Excerpts of this article follow:

"The perilous threats to global peace and security posed by Iran's nuclear program and terrorist activities have long been a matter of great concern for the United States and western powers.

Though targeted measures have been employed by the US administration and its allies, the magnitude of the multi-faceted menace requires a more decisive and resolute response.

It is therefore imperative to acknowledge the deep-seated domestic instability of the regime, which has been inflamed by sustained protests over the past six months and taken concrete action to bolster the democratic aspirations of the Iranian people.

The far-reaching and tenacious uprising, which has been led by the youth and women of Iran, bears testament to the fortitude and bravery of a people determined to forge a brighter future.

Despite the risk of arrest, detention, and even execution, they have steadfastly demanded change in the face of over four decades of economic mismanagement, rampant corruption, and egregious human rights abuses under the current regime.

The regime's brutal and violent reaction to the protests, including arbitrary detention, torture, and extrajudicial killings, is a clear indication of its flagrant disregard for the will of its people.

However, the Iranian people have remained resilient and persistent in the face of such oppression, and



their cause must be supported by the international community.

The nationwide uprising has been marked by chants of 'Death to the oppressor; be it the Shah or the Leader [Khamenei]', reflecting a rejection of both the theocratic system and the autocratic rule of the Pahlavi dynasty.

Instead, the Iranian people are demanding a democratic, secular, and non-nuclear republic that upholds the rights of all, including those of ethnic and religious minorities.

We must not allow this brutal dictatorship to continue its reign of terror and repression, both at home and abroad.

It is high time that we impose comprehensive multilateral sanctions on regime officials and affiliated organizations, and designate the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organization in the United Kingdom and the European Union."

Please join us for our live event in Edinburgh:

Location: Craigmillar Park Church, EH16 5NA

Date & time: Saturday 10 June 2023, 1pm–5pm

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