



International Liberty Association Newsletter

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EDITORIAL

In the past month, we witnessed a massive campaign led by the families of political prisoners and human rights activists in Iran and around the world to save the lives of detained individuals. These prisoners were arrested during peaceful protests by the regime's Revolutionary Guards.

The regime ruling Iran aimed to create an atmosphere of fear and terror and replicate mass killings like the massacre of prisoners in the summer of 1988, in order to silence any dissenting voices. In this regard, numerous activities were carried out for gaining the support of the majority of parliaments in European countries and the United States, in support of the people of Iran.

Additionally, over a hundred prominent international leaders and dozens of Nobel Laureates expressed their support for this campaign and endorsed Iranian people's desire for change.

With the tremendous pressure exerted on the Iranian regime, we managed to prevent many executions and succeeded in saving many lives. The Iranian regime is making every effort to censor and restrict the dissemination of information about its human rights violations, but with the help of volunteers we strive to collect evidence of human rights abuses and bring them to the attention of the global public.

The dissemination of news regarding human rights violations ... *continued on p.2*

OVER 500 BRITISH PARLIAMENTARIANS CALL FOR ACTION TO STOP HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN IRAN



On 13 June, a parliamentary conference took place at the House of Commons to disclose a joint statement supported by 525 members of both houses of the parliament from political parties across the UK. The statement expressed solidarity

with the Iranian people's uprising and endorsed Maryam Rajavi's ten-point plan for establishing a democratic republic based on the separation of religion and state.

Prominent figures, including several parliamentarians, peers, and political leaders, ... *continued on p.2*

OUTRAGE OVER IRAN'S APPOINTMENT AS CHAIR OF UNHRC SOCIAL FORUM



Human rights advocates have expressed outrage over the appointment of Ali Bahreini, Iran's UN ambassador, to serve as chair of the UN Human Rights Commission's (UNHRC) Social Forum, which is to focus on the

contribution of science, technology, and innovation to promote human rights.

The Center for Human Rights in Iran has said that such an appointment at a time when a fact-finding mission ... *continued on p.3*



Over 500 British Parliamentarians call for action to stop Human Rights violations in Iran

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delivered speeches at the conference.

The signatories of the joint statement included over 50 former ministers and deputy ministers from both the Conservative and Labour party cabinets. 15 bishops from the House of Lords, including three former archbishops of Canterbury and Wales, have also lent their support.

Distinguished individuals such as former deputy prime minister Lord John Prescott, 10 chairpersons of parliamentary committees, five deputy leaders of the Conservative party, the head of the UK delegation to the Council of Europe, the deputy spokesperson of the House of Lords, as well as leaders of the Irish National Unity party and the Welsh National Party, have endorsed the statement.

Former leaders of major political parties in the country, including Lord Neil Kinnock, Ian Duncan Smith, and Tim Farron, representing Labour, the Conservatives, and the Liberal Democrats, respectively, have also added their signatures to the 2023 Iran statement.

During the conference, deputy chair of the European Research Group and former minister for Brexit **David Jones** said: “The Tehran regime claims to have successfully overcome the nationwide uprising and to have defeated what it describes as a conspiracy by the enemy and by foreign states. At the same time, not one day goes by without the state media and the regime’s own officials warning about the growing popular dissent, the growing support for the organised resistance, and the more popular protests that threatened the regime’s very survival. The number of executions in Iran has now reached unprecedented levels over the last few months. And the regime is showing by its own actions that it has not been able to crush the uprising, despite its claims to the contrary, and after months of often really brutal oppression, the Iranian people and resistance would



have paved the way for the regime’s overthrow.”

Addressing Rajavi, deputy speaker of the House of Commons, **Sir Roger Gale** said: “There is no doubt that there are an enormous number of members of both of our Houses of Parliament on both sides and the Chairman has indicated this to you by quoting the number who are passionately in support of what you are seeking to achieve, staunchly behind you and staunchly behind the endeavours and will remain so until the end result is achieved of all of those of you who are working quite simply in the cause of democracy.”

MP **Bob Blackman** stated: “Now I’ve come literally from Foreign and Commonwealth Office questions in the House of Commons this morning where I was questioning the foreign secretary about what we are going to do. One of the key concerns is that outrageously, British universities have been involved in developing research for drones that are then being used by the Iranians to pass on to the Russians to attack the brave people of Ukraine. Now that is a disgrace. I’ve called on the foreign secretary to take action against that and to isolate those individuals responsible. We cannot have that. Equally what we’ve also called upon the foreign secretary to do is not only to sanction the IRGC [Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps] but to proscribe it in its entirety.”

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and the global support received by the people of Iran sends a message that their voices are heard, and their demands are supported by the international community and the free world. This serves as a source of strength, hope, and encouragement for the people of Iran.

We are aware that the main arm and instrument of suppression and human rights violations in Iran is the Islamic

Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). For this reason, we and other human rights organisations are making every effort to persuade Western governments to designate the IRGC as the terrorist entity that it is.

Currently, numerous women and young people are held in prisons across Iran where they are subjected to torture and execution sentences, while their families are threatened and harassed by authorities.

The support of people like you, our readers, is needed to help us continue our efforts and activities, standing with these individuals trapped in the most oppressive conditions. Supporters and friends like you have been an inspiration to us in the toughest circumstances. The people of Iran will never forget the support and solidarity they received while enduring harsh conditions under dictatorial rule. They will cherish it forever.



IRAN'S JUDICIARY CHIEF SAYS EXECUTIONS OF PROTESTERS WILL CONTINUE



The head of the Iranian regime's judiciary has said that convicts sentenced to death in connection with anti-government protests will have their sentences implemented "without any delay," amid international outrage over the rise in the number of executions.

In a speech in Tehran on 30 May 2023, Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei urged security and intelligence agencies to arrest women who were flouting mandatory hijab rules and to hand them over to the judicial authorities for "severe punishment".

The regime has already executed seven people in connection with the protests. The execution of three men on 19 May sparked wide-

spread outrage inside and outside Iran, with rights groups and several governments criticising the authorities for conducting hasty trials based on forced "confessions" and denying the accused due process.

On 23 May, **Amnesty International** raised "grave" concerns

that at least seven other people are at high risk of execution after being unjustly convicted in connection with protests, while dozens of others also face capital punishment.

It is clear that the regime ruling Iran has escalated executions in recent weeks to try to instil fear in society.

Mohseni Ejei responded to the criticisms by falsely claiming that the judicial processes fully adhere to "legal standards" and to the principles of "justice and fairness."

The brutal repression unleashed by the regime has succeeded in quelling the months-long protest movement to some extent, but acts of civil disobedience have continued, including nightly shouts of anti-regime slogans from rooftops, burning pictures of regime officials and the supreme leader, as well as sporadic demonstrations.



Outrage over Iran's appointment as chair of UNHRC Social Forum

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set up by UNHRC is investigating the killing of hundreds of peaceful protesters by the Islamic Republic "reflects a shocking ethical blindness".

Iranian authorities have cracked down hard on months of nationwide protests sparked by the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, while in police custody in September last year. Amini had been arrested

in Tehran for allegedly wearing a headscarf improperly.

Security forces killed more than 700 people during demonstrations and unlawfully detained over 30,000 others. Following fake trials, the judiciary has handed down stiff sentences, including many death penalties, to protesters.

UN Watch, a human rights group, says it has submitted to the UN the draft text of a resolution to overturn Iran's appointment as the chair of the Social Forum of the

UNHRC.

There is no stipulated procedure for cancelling such an appointment, but the 47-nation UNHRC plenary can overrule any decision of the president if one of the council's 47 member states sponsors the resolution, according to UN Watch.

It is obviously a disgrace for the UN body to allow such a decision to be even considered in the first place. The agents of the regime of executions should not be allowed to stand as candidates.



ILA EVENTS IN OXFORD AND EDINBURGH

The ILA held events in **Oxford** and **Edinburgh** on 20 May and 10 June respectively. The participants were delighted that we held local events in those cities and provided the opportunity for our supporters to meet and get to know each other.

In **Oxford**, in addition to our volunteers, two of our supporters spoke. Below you will find excerpt of their speeches:



Judy Mason:

"I live with my husband George a few miles outside Banbury, and came across ILA when

shopping in Oxford. As I remember it, they were talking to members of the public at a table in Cornmarket, and being nose, I went to find out what their campaign was about.

Since then, we have had many visits from volunteers of ILA, always warm and friendly and appreciative of our support.

However, seeing the films and photographs of the ghastly things that happen in Iran was difficult. I didn't want to be compelled to watch them, and I could of course have said so, but I am glad I have seen and been a witness, in however small a way, to many of the atrocities that have happened there. Not only has it brought the horrors facing the people of Iran to life, but it has allowed me to accept the reality of all those other inhumane actions which are happening on

a daily basis all around the world, in a way that might not have been possible without this. We cannot make or press for changes unless we accept the truth.

We all need to stand together. The anthropologist Farhan Samanani says in 'How to Live With Each Other': 'There is no universal template for community, no one way to be together. We must not content ourselves with singular visions of togetherness, but let a thousand blossoms flower.' May they bloom in Iran. Our heartfelt wish is that peace and prosperity will soon return to Iran, that families will be reunited, and that all the brave young people and the adults who support them will come to know what normal family life can be."



Canon John

Hadley: "It's a great pleasure to be here and to have the privilege of speaking. I'm not quite sure

what I've done to earn this or to deserve it, because I'm certainly, apart from being a quite long-term supporter of the ILA, I haven't got any expert knowledge on the matter which I can share with you... So I thought instead I would draw on an area which I have a little bit more expertise on...

"God, it says in the very first book of our Bible, which is also the Jewish Bible, that God made men

and women in God's own image and likeness, and therefore as one branch of the Christian community, the Quakers, are fond of saying: 'There is that of God in everyone.' And so it follows from that that the abuse of human beings, injustice towards human beings, violence towards human beings, is not just a crime against humanity, as we often say, but it is actually an abuse of God Himself. It is actually an act of blasphemy, because God is to be seen in every human being, and God suffers in every human being who is abused in any way. And so there is no room, as far as I can see, for things like nationalism, and racism, and religious discrimination which put one group of people above another group, because that attitude can so easily lead to something much more extreme, can lead to persecution, can lead to violence, and that's what we see, of course, happening in Iran at the moment.

People who persecute others for their own reasons often say they are doing it in the name of God, but that is one of the greatest blasphemies against God. It is impossible to hurt others, to do violence to others, either physically or mentally or spiritually or environmentally or in any other way... in the name of God...

"So I see it as flowing directly from my Christian faith that I have to stand up on behalf of my brothers and sisters wherever such things are going on, to support them with my money and my prayer..."

In **Edinburgh** too, we had



two speakers. Excerpts follow: **Heleen Kist:**

"When I was asked on the streets of Edinburgh, a

long time ago, whether I knew anything about Iran, my answer was of course 'no' and at that point my relationship with the ILA began, and I would never have





ILA EVENTS IN OXFORD AND EDINBURGH

felt that, probably about 16 years later, I would still be here and still supporting this organisation. But I wanted to say a little bit about why, because interestingly, when our friends from the ILA visit, or when we have a Zoom call, they're always extremely welcoming and generous, and curious as to why somebody like me would want to support this country which, we have an expression, it's called the 'far from my bed show', things that happen over there, they're just far from my bed.

But I do care very much about this country that is far from my bed, and partly because during this long relationship I have learned of the incredible influence that the mullahs and their people have, not just in Iran but across the Middle East and, you know, how they are behind so much of the Islamic terrorism that everybody is against, of course. So from a geopolitical point of view, I think it's very important that this very evil regime is swept away; and the thing is, we've seen many countries that have managed to get rid of their dictator, get rid of other evil regimes and so, only to be replaced by a vacuum that then just led to more violence and more insecurity, and I think this is really very much why I'm so supportive of the ILA, because there is a government in exile. There is a government in exile there, and everybody knows exactly what would happen the minute we are able to topple



this regime. And what would happen is that this country, this beautiful country, with its warm and loving people, would be able to have a secular and democratic government, and that would have an enormous impact on the whole world, I feel. What's interesting, what really surprised me the first time I saw it is that the president of this government in exile is a woman and it just reinforced what a change that would be."



Robert

Parsons: "I've been a supporter since I think about 2014, and I can't remember who my first

Iranian visitors were who came to explain what ILA was all about, but I just remember being moved to tears by the stories of imprisonment and torture and death inflicted upon those in Iran who dared to stand up for the most basic human

rights and freedoms, things that we take totally for granted in this country.

And all the volunteers I met seemed to have first-hand experience of this suffering, either themselves or within their immediate family and friends. So that captured my interest and sympathy, but perhaps more impressive as time went on, and I became more fully acquainted with the way that the ILA works and how it organises itself, was the extent and degree of dedication that I witnessed amongst the volunteer community who seemed to have committed themselves to doing something about the massive injustices being perpetrated by the current regime in Iran. They seemed, all of them, prepared to devote every moment of their time, every ounce of their energy, and whatever personal resources were at their disposal, to doing what they could to work against the regime, not by violence, I was pleased to discover, but by counter-posing it with the vision of an alternative society embodying the best of universal liberal human values.

And of course, also, I was hugely impressed by the creativity and ingenuity and resourcefulness which they bring to this enterprise, particularly the whole business of keeping open the communications with the population in Iran, the whole broadcasting set-up and just an immense amount of exchange of information going on."





INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE DEMOCRATIC ASPIRATIONS OF THE IRANIAN PEOPLE GROWS



The majority of the Republic of Ireland's senate (Seanad Éireann) has endorsed the establishment of a democratic republic in Iran. 36 out of 60 senators signed a statement supporting the aspirations of the Iranian people and endorsed Maryam Rajavi's ten-point plan.

In the past few weeks, parliamentarians in various western countries have expressed their support for the democratic aspirations of the Iranian people who express their will in their slogans in protests across the country.

The statement, endorsing the establishment of a democratic republic in Iran and supporting the ten-point plan of **Maryam Rajavi** for future Iran has, so far, been supported by a large number of parliamentarians in the UK, Italy, Norway, Iceland, Germany, Moldova, Slovenia, North Macedonia, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain, the Netherlands, and Belgium.

The text of the declaration, which remains roughly the same, is as follows:

“For the past six months, the world has witnessed a sweeping popular uprising in Iran, demanding freedom and democracy. Some 750 protesters have been killed and 30,000 arrested. While any change should come from the Iranian people and their own resistance, the international community has its own responsibility.

We stand in solidarity with the people of Iran in their desire for

a secular and democratic republic where no individual, regardless of religion or birthright, has any privilege over others. Through their slogans the Iranian people have made it clear that they reject all forms of dictatorship, be it the deposed Shah or the current theocratic regime and thus reject any association with either.

We believe it is for the Iranian people to decide their future. However, we recognize the fact that over the past four decades, the democratic coalition of the National Council of Resistance of Iran [NCRI] has constantly and tirelessly pursued democratic change. In this respect, we believe the ten-point plan articulated by the NCRI president, **Mrs Maryam Rajavi**, deserves our support. It stands for free elections, freedom of assembly and expression, abolition of the death penalty, gender equality, the separation of religion and state, autonomy for Iran's ethnicities, and a non-nuclear Iran.

The Iranian people's courageous uprising can be attributed, on the one hand, to the explosive state of Iranian society, a product of suppression, poverty, discrimination, and government corruption, and,

on the other hand, four decades of nationwide organized resistance. Tragically, in the summer of 1988 alone, over 30,000 political prisoners – the vast majority of whom were members of the MEK [Mojahedin-e-Khalq] - were brutally massacred.

We condemn the Iranian regime's meddling in the Middle East region and Europe, including its terrorist attempts and cyber-attacks in Albania.

We urge the international community to stand with the Iranian people in their quest for change and to take decisive steps against the current regime. This includes blacklisting the IRGC and holding regime officials accountable for their crimes against humanity.”

Previously, in a similar statement, over 114 former heads of state all over the world expressed their support of the Iranian people's demands for the establishment of a secular democracy and urged the western governments to do whatever is needed to help the people of Iran reach their goal. They emphasised that a free and democratic Iran is vital for realising peace and stability in the region and the wider world.



NEWS IN BRIEF

BELGIAN STATE SECRETARY RESIGNS OVER IRANIAN EXPENSES AT BRUSSELS URBAN SUMMIT



Brussels' secretary of state, Pascal Smet, resigned on Sunday 18 June 2023, over allegations that Belgian funds were used to pay for the accommodation of the Iranian delegation at the Brussels Urban Summit.

Smet was criticised last week over the presence of the mayor of Tehran, Alireza Zakani, at the Brussels Urban Summit, an international event attended by mayors and cities from all over the world. He was accused of exerting pressure to push through the granting of visas for the Iranian delegation.

TEN ART UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ARRESTED BY PLAINCLOTHES AGENTS



Plainclothes agents arrested ten art university students in front of the Bagh-e Melli campus on 18 June 2023, the National Students Council announced. They were apprehended and pushed into an unmarked van without a license plate and moved away from the location.

There is no information available about the current situation of these students.

At the same time some 40 female students of the university have been barred from attending classes for their alleged "failure to fully observe" the regime's dress code.

ESCALATING EXECUTIONS TO CRUSH DISSENT



During a span of three weeks, from 22 May to 11 June, the Iranian judiciary executioners took the lives of at least 59 prisoners.

The international community's failure to act in response to the wave of criminal executions committed by the religious fascists ruling Iran serves as encouragement for the mullahs to intensify their execution spree.

EX PRISON OFFICIAL ADMITS THAT GIRLS WERE RAPED BEFORE EXECUTION



The former head of Tehran's Evin prison has spoken about the cruel treatment inflicted to female inmates in the 1980s, including rape, as a means to prevent them from going to heaven.

Addressing an event held on an online platform, Hussein Mortazavi Zanjani, who served in the notorious prison between 1987-88, said that virgin female prisoners were coerced to marry guards before their execution. According to ex-political prisoners, this inhuman practice was based on the belief that women and girls dying as virgins would go straight to paradise.

Zanjani also confessed that the current president of the regime, Ebrahim Raisi, had a direct role in the execution of political prisoners in 1988.

LABOUR ACTIVIST IS GIVEN A FIVE-YEAR PRISON SENTENCE FOR ORGANISING PROTESTS



Labour activist **Davood Razavi** has been given a five-year prison sentence for organising protests demanding better wages and working conditions.

The Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company workers' union announced that the sentence, which also came with a two-year ban on online activities and participation in political groups and parties, was applied on 7 June. Razavi, a member of the union, was arrested last October.

The charges against him included "assembly and collusion against national security" for his membership of the union's board of directors, as well as organising labour protests and having contact with union colleagues.



WHY LEADERS OF THE FREE WORLD MUST LISTEN TO THEIR PREDECESSORS



In an editorial on the International Committee In Search of Justice (ISJ) website, **Dr Alejo Vidal-Quadras**,

a Spanish professor of nuclear physics, who was a member of the European Parliament from 1999 to 2014 and as its first vice-president from 2004 to 2007, and currently president of the Brussels-based ISJ, discussed the importance of the statement signed by over 115 former world leaders and explained why it is important that current world leaders should listen to their predecessors. Excerpts of the article appear here:

“On May 23, more than 100 former heads of state like presidents, prime ministers as well as a former chancellor, joined forces to address their successors in the United States, European Union, the United Kingdom, and Canada to call for action and support a movement that endeavors for regime change in Iran.

The open letter that has now been signed by 115 former leaders of the free world calls on their peers to recognize the four-decades-long struggle that has been going on against one of the most pressing challenges of global security: the terrorist regime in Iran.



Forming such an international consensus knows little precedent. In historical retrospect, such global accomplishments have merely addressed topics where political disagreement was the least, like peace between nations, climate change, or handling a pandemic.

However, in this letter, these leaders who have had the experience to lead their nations through challenging times are asking the most powerful men in the current world to adopt a firm policy vis-à-vis Tehran. With successful legacies of leading millions of people in their own countries, these leaders have recognized the ten-point-plan of Maryam Rajavi, president-elect of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, as a reasonable answer to the potentially insecure post-revolutionary phase.

The bitter experience of two world wars has taught us that when the ambitious cruelty of a few tyrants is met with indifference by the civilized world when human lives cease to matter and morals become cheap, then insecurity will cross borders and eventually invade our naively taken-for-granted comfort zones.

Iran is a country with significant geopolitical magnitude. In recent history, it has triggered or spearheaded many groundbreaking changes on a global scale.

If the leaders addressed in the open letter from 115 former heads of state and government are willing to forgo a shortsighted, election-term mentality and opt for strategic thinking, they ought to look the future in the eye and choose to stand on the right side of history.”

**Please join us for a live event at
ILEC Conference Centre
London Suite, 47 Lillie Road, London, SW6 1UD
Date: Saturday 30 September, 1pm–5.30pm**

**Please contact the ILA by email or phone to book your place:
info@iliberty.org.uk Tel: (020) 8452 3481**