

# International Liberty Association Newsletter

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## EDITORIAL

We start the New Year 2025 with new hope for the arrival of the day when human rights violations and the death penalty become things of the past.

Last year, we witnessed the fall of the Assad regime in Syria and the liberation of its people from years of suffering and oppression. Significant blows were also dealt to Iran's proxy forces, which had been a source of instability in the region. After the fall of Assad regime, the horrifying extent of the crimes and tortures inflicted upon the Syrian people became evident.

Yet, the bitter truth is that in Iran, human rights violations, executions, and torture are on an even larger and more systematic scale. Iran's Evin Prison is not only more infamous than Syria's Sednaya Prison but has become a symbol of repression and terror. Over the past years, our charity has made significant efforts to break the silence surrounding these atrocities and raise global awareness about the dire state of human rights in Iran.

Courageous human rights activists, young men and women, and religious minorities continue to risk their lives to amplify the voices of the Iranian people. These individuals report on prisons, torture, and executions, providing critical

## ILA'S CHRISTMAS EVENT



The event on 21 December 2024 for the occasion of Christmas, Hanukkah and Yalda, was attended by many ILA supporters and volunteers.

In this Newsletter we will cover

some of the speeches along with many photos to give our readers a glimpse of what went on.

Among speakers were many former members of UK parliament who ... *continued on p.2*

## 250 BRITISH POLITICIANS DEMAND UN PROSECUTES IRAN AYATOLLAH FOR GENOCIDE OF OWN PEOPLE

**By Paul Baldwin – Daily Express.**

*Excerpts of the article published 31 December 2024:*

More than 250 British politicians, including Iain Duncan Smith, Bob Blackman and Roger Gale, joined an international call for the leaders to be charged with crimes against humanity for historic and ongoing political executions running into many thousands.

Iran has been ruled by a religious dictatorship since the Islamic revolution of 1979. In their statement, the cross-party signatories condemn the regime's systematic use of the death penalty to target dissidents



and detained demonstrators – a political weapon it has used with impunity for 45 years.

According to Amnesty International, Iran carried out 74 percent of all recorded executions in the world in 2023. This alarming trend continued as new President Masoud Pezeshkian took office in July. ... *continued on p.2*



**ILA's Christmas Event** *continued from p.1*

addressed the event via video...



**Mark Williams (MP 2005–2017):**

“Merry Christmas to everybody gathered at the ILA Christmas Gathering in London. I join you from Wales and I wish you all festive greetings. I was very glad to be invited to this gathering to thank the ILA for their inspired work in standing up – a testament to the powers of empathy and compassion and action – in their campaign and fight for freedom and justice in Iran. I want to thank the ILA for being in a group which has shone a torchlight on the barbarism and criminality of contemporary Iran.

As we prepare for Christmas in this country and across the globe, can we spare a few moments to reflect on the hardship and the bravery of those

within Iran who risk their lives daily campaigning for freedom and democracy, those that publicly call for the basic human rights to which we are all entitled: the right to free elections, the right to gather, the right to determine one’s own identity, the right to determine what clothes we wear, the right to decent wages, the right to choose the religions that we practice and believe in. Rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.”



**Struan Stevenson (MEP 1999–2014):**

“As we gather here tonight, I am struck by the beautiful coincidence of this season: Christmas, Hanukkah and Yalda, three celebrations that share the universal message of light triumphing over darkness. And it’s in that spirit that I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt ... *continued on p.3*

**Editorial** *continued from p.1*

information to our charity and other human rights organisations, ensuring these crimes are exposed.

The horrifying truths about Syria’s prisons and the Iranian regime’s role in orchestrating and managing such repression have created an historic opportunity. Together, we can draw the world’s attention to the extensive executions and torture occurring in Iran and prevent further human tragedies in its prisons.

In these critical times, highlighting human rights issues and supporting human rights efforts is more vital than ever. To continue this journey, we need your help and support.

Let us unite to be the voice for the voiceless.

**250 British politicians demand UN prosecutes Iran Ayatollah**

*continued from p.1*

The executions tally for the year 2024 is estimated to be just under 700 – with 100 (including 10 women) taking place in August 2024 alone. Victims have also included several political dissidents, including **Reza Rasaei**, who was arrested during the uprising in November 2022 in Shahrivar, Tehran province.

Reza was linked to the “Woman Life Freedom” protests which seriously shook the theocracy. According to Amnesty International he was executed at dawn in Dizel Abad prison after a trial that relied on his forced “confessions” obtained under torture and other ill-treatment which included beatings, electric shocks, suffocation and sexual violence.

The signatories to today’s campaign highlight the regime’s

long history of crimes against humanity, from past massacres to ongoing atrocities, as documented by UN mandate holders and human rights experts.

They criticise the international community for turning a blind eye to Iranian atrocities, a failure that has emboldened the regime to intensify its repression and crackdowns with impunity.

They also endorse Iranian opposition leader Maryam Rajavi’s call to end executions in Iran and her Ten-Point Plan for Iran’s future, which outlines a commitment to abolishing the death penalty and safeguarding human rights.

Co-president of the British Committee for Iran Freedom (BCFIF), Prof. Lord Alton of Liverpool, said: “The time to act is now to prevent further atrocities and support the Iranian people’s fight for justice and freedom.”



## ILA's Christmas Event *continued from p.2*

gratitude to all the remarkable volunteers and supporters of the International Liberty Association who are here tonight. It's your tireless dedication, your compassion, and your belief in the power of justice that make this organisation what it is. The work you do, the hours you give, the sacrifices you make: they are not just actions, they are acts of defiance against tyranny, acts of hope for those in despair and acts of love for humanity.

The world we live in today is fraught with challenges, none more so than in Iran where an oppressive regime continues to deny its people the most basic rights and freedoms. And yet, in that darkness we see extraordinary courage. Thanks to your work, we've made great achievements in Iran. At long last, UN's silence has been broken on the horrible 1988 massacre.

Impunity within the Islamic Republic of Iran must end. And that's why we celebrate the courage of the Iranian people as they fight injustice and tyranny. But courage alone cannot break chains; it needs allies, and that is where your role becomes so vital. Through the work of the ILA, you amplify the voices of those who risk everything for freedom. You ensure that their sacrifices are not forgotten, that their stories are heard and that the world knows they are not alone."



**Baroness O'Loan:**

"It's a privilege to stand here among you, remarkable

individuals who make the work of International Liberty Association possible, the volunteers and the supporters. Your commitment, your compassion and your work, your relentless dedication to justice, have built a beacon of hope for those living under oppression.

We did not expect Assad to fall as quickly as he did. The crumbling and vicious regime in Iran must be filled with fear that what happened in Syria could happen in Iran, and it could. No regime lasts for ever. I hope that day will come very soon, and a new era of equality, religious freedom, women's rights and a non-nuclear Iran will emerge.

We must all stand together with the Iranian people and their fight for freedom. It is a fight for justice, democracy and peace. Thank you."



**David Jones (MP 2005–2024):**

"These traditions, though born of different lands and beliefs, share the same truth: hope endures, renewal is possible, and unity can conquer even the greatest divisions. And it's in that spirit that I want to express profound gratitude to the International Liberty Association, and to every single one of you here tonight. You are more than just supporters, you are warriors for justice, beacons of hope and the embodiment of compassion. The hours that you dedicated, the resources you provide and the love you share with those in desperate need, those are not mere acts of charity. They are declarations of unity, resistance and humanity.

*... continued on p.4*





ILA's Christmas Event *continued from p.3*

We live in a world that is no stranger to suffering, but tonight let us turn our thoughts to the people of Iran, brave men and women who stand on the front line of the fight for freedom. But their courage needs allies, and this is where the work of the International Liberty Association shines brightest. You amplify their voices. You ensure their stories are heard and remind them that they are not alone. It stands as a testament to the power of persistence and determination. Together you have kept alive the memory of the victims, and we are holding those responsible to account on the global stage. This is not just a victory for Iran, it is a victory for humanity.”



**Sir Allan Meale (MP 1987–2017):**

“As we gather together to celebrate the festive season, it’s important that I try and get a message across to the supporters of the ILA who work ferociously to try and support those Iranians who are being harmed by the struggle to free their country. It’s essential that we don’t just stand aside and think it’s just another international issue. The work of the ILA and others in the field is phenomenal, it’s on a par with every national, international organisation in trying to get across the situation in Iran, but more, it’s inspiring from all those people who support it. So my message is to the ILA and all its supporters: I thank you unreservedly for all the work you do and beg you to continue all your actions to try and help us resolve this issue for the free world, not just Iran, for the free world.”



**Dr Hanife Khayeri, scientist and women’s rights activist:**

“It’s a pleasure to be here. Some of you I know for a long time, and some of you are new faces. For those who don’t know me, my background is that I’m half Chinese and half Iranian. The story is that my mother, my mother of Chinese origin, was killed by the Iranian regime when I was very, very young. And in that time she taught me that if you come from a privileged world you have the choice to decide if and how you want to make best of your time and spend it to better the world for everyone else who is not in that privileged world. And it is with that background that I’m here to talk about the powerful and inspired women of Iran, women who, despite facing some of the most oppressive laws and restrictions in this world, continue to rise up, to resist, and to fight for their freedom. These women refuse to be silenced or reduced to the roles that the Iranian regime has imposed upon them.

For decades, the Iranian women have lived under a brutal system of control. Their choices and their very existence are dictated by the laws rooted in misogyny. The regime has forced women to wear the hijab, denying them fundamental rights to choose how they present themselves to the world. The laws governing women in Iran go far beyond clothing. They restrict them from the ability to travel without male permission, limiting their access to education, and denying them the same legal rights as the men.

Various government institutions, including the Ministry of Culture and Guidance, the state broadcaster and the Ministry of Education and municipalities, they have all been assigned responsibilities to enforce these regulations, extending the scope of enforcement beyond traditional moral police.

Yet, despite this harsh repression, the Iranian women do not bow down. They have shown incredible courage, defying these laws at a grave personal cost. From the streets of Tehran to the small villages in Kurdistan, women have led protests.

Their defiance is a beacon of hope, not only for Iran but for the world. These women are the true face of resistance against tyranny, and their courage is a testament to the power of human spirit. Now, today, I think it’s our responsibility to support their fight and amplify their voices, and to ensure that the world understands the reality of what’s happening in Iran. Women’s rights are human rights, and we must stand in solidarity with those who refuse to be oppressed, who refuse to live under a regime that seeks to silence their very existence.

And this is why I really want to thank you for standing with an organisation like ILA. The International Liberty Association has been a strong advocate for women’s rights. It promotes education and empowerment for women, supporting those who lead the quest for change and ... *continued on p.5*



**ILA's Christmas Event** *continued from p.4*

pushing for international action to end gender-based oppression in Iran.”



**Dr Henrik Hermansson, Swedish human rights expert:**

“I want to start by thanking the ILA for organising such a warm and really joyful event. I can't think of a better way to celebrate the holidays than something like this.

As this very, very kind introduction mentioned, I have lent my limited skills and insight to ILA campaigns at the Human Rights Council in Geneva, most of all. We've had a few thousand conversations, we've had some important successes, we've made some important allies; it's an important forum, I wouldn't deny that, but that place gets many things twisted and distorted. Time and time again you'll hear, if you listen to those sorts of events in those forums, ambassadors and different experts pleading to the international community to take some sort of action, and what they mean by that most of the time, is the assembled countries, the assembled UN bodies, the major NGOs, the sort of professionalised players. But a truly international community is a community of peoples where boundaries and distance are meaningless and what binds us are common values.

I often get the question of why I, as a Swede, have involved myself in the Iranian issue. In a sense I understand that question on some level, I mean

it makes sense, but those national categories mean very little in practice, and mean very little to me. I've involved myself in a struggle against this grotesque regime that has killed people in my extended family, that has hurt and exiled individuals I care deeply about. Distance, nationalities, mean nothing compared to that, right?

To make a connection with someone is to dare, really, to open your heart to their hurts. That is why events like these tonight, where we connect, are so important. Thank you for daring to be here, together, making connections and opening yourself up to the hurts of others.

The second reason why I care about the Iranian issue is that the regime stands out as a beacon of brutality in the world, spreading hopelessness and fear across the region. Just think about one statistic: Iran executes by far the most people, not just per capita, but in total. In 2013, Iran accounted for not 24 per cent of all executions, not 34, but 74 per cent of all executions globally. This simple, stark statistic speaks volumes. Not like the other states are angels; still Iran executes 74 per cent of all. It speaks of a regime determined to rule by fear, does it not? The systematic torture, on the other hand, of protesters and political prisoners speaks of a regime determined to divide people and communities by crushing every attempt at gathering, every attempt of coming together, and by silencing every dissenting voice.

Once again, I believe, community is the key to do more, be more, dare more. Community is what the Iranian regime fears the most. So when I thank again the ILA for bringing together this wonderful community, in this wonderful amazing joyous celebration, thank you most of all for extending our community and connecting us with those who need our support and solidarity, having bridged that distance. All communities are different, and they work differently, but I believe all communities need a core to thrive, a driver, a heart. Our core here today, I believe, is the ILA.”





# ILA CHRISTMAS EVENT IN PICTURES





## NEWS IN BRIEF

### 50TH WEEK OF “NO TO EXECUTIONS TUESDAYS” CAMPAIGN IN PRISONS ACROSS IRAN



Prisoners across Iran held the 50th week of the “No to Executions Tuesdays” campaign on 7 January 2025. The campaign is a coordinated protest movement initiated by political prisoners across Iran to oppose the regime’s extensive use of the death penalty. Since it began in early 2024, the campaign has involved weekly hunger strikes by prisoners condemning executions, and aiming to raise awareness and mobilise both national and international support against capital punishment in Iran. It has now expanded to 28 prisons across the country.

### PROMINENT FIGURES CALL ON FRANCE TO BREAK SILENCE ON EXECUTIONS IN IRAN



In a powerful article published in Ouest France, ten prominent French personalities, including philosopher Élisabeth Badinter, lawyer Dominique Attias, and former Colombian senator Ingrid Betancourt, have issued a plea to President Emmanuel Macron to take decisive action against the escalating wave of executions in Iran. With 850 executions

recorded since the beginning of the year (2024), the article highlights the urgency of ending the silent international complicity surrounding these human rights violations.

### PROTESTS IN CITIES ACROSS IRAN BY DIFFERENT SECTORS



Protest rallies have been held across Iran in recent days, featuring a diverse range of demonstrators from retirees and workers to traders, teachers and municipal workers each expressing their distinct demands and dissatisfaction with government policies.

As Iran faces severe economic crises, the Iranian regime’s regional interventions significantly drain the country’s resources.

### GERMAN GOVERNMENT’S HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT HIGHLIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN IRAN

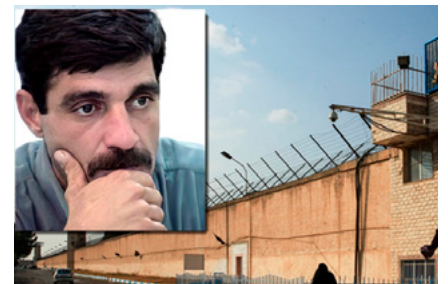
On Wednesday, 18 December 2024, the German Federal Foreign Office released its 16th



Human Rights Report, shedding light on the dire human rights situation in Iran under clerical rule.

The report states that to ensure the regime’s survival, personal and political freedoms are deliberately and systematically restricted, and protests are violently suppressed. The report notes that Iran has the second-highest number of executions globally and the highest relative to its population.

### IRANIAN POLITICAL PRISONER WARNS OF ESCALATING EXECUTIONS AS HE SPENDS 25TH CHRISTMAS BEHIND BARS



In a harrowing letter to international human rights authorities, political prisoner **Saeed Masouri**, now in his 25th year of incarceration, recounts the relentless suffering and escalating executions under the Iranian regime. Masouri, who wrote the letter on the occasion of Christmas, shares the heart-wrenching memories of lost cellmates and the psychological scars of living under the constant threat of death, highlighting the human cost of a regime that executes one person every eight hours on average.

