



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

March 8th, International Women's Day, is an opportunity to reflect on the status of women worldwide, especially in Iran, where women, with unparalleled courage and determination, stand against the oppression of the Iranian regime. These women show, with every moment of their lives, that they will not easily submit to injustice and discrimination, and they resist the repressive actions of the regime in their fight for freedom and human rights.

The courage and perseverance of Iranian women will be remembered in contemporary history. Many of these women have paid a heavy price for their struggles, from imprisonment and torture to threats of death and exile, but none of these threats have been able to divert them from their path.

Today, on International Women's Day, we listen to their voices and echo them. We must remember that these women are not fighting for their own freedom alone, they are fighting for a better world for all humanity.

They deserve and need the support and backing of the global community. We must condemn any violation of human rights and pressure the fundamentalist regime of Iran to respect their rights.

Ultimately, the victory of these women in their struggle for freedom, justice, and equality will be a victory for all of humanity.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



Prominent international figures, distinguished political leaders, human rights activists, and advocates from over 80 countries took part in a conference near Paris for the occasion of International Women's Day. Speakers in the conference included:

Michèle Alliot-Marie – Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, France

Rosalía Arteaga Serrano – Former President of Ecuador

Anneli Jäätteenmäki – Former Prime Minister of Finland

Ingrid Betancourt – Former Colombian Senator and Presidential candidate

Linda Chavez – Former White House Public Liaison Director

Dominique Attias – President of the European Lawyers Foundation

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ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1979 REVOLUTION IN IRAN



On the occasion of the anniversary of the 1979 revolution in Iran which ended the Shah's dictatorship, Iranian expatriates gathered in Paris on 8 February 2025 to commemorate the martyrs of that revolution which was hijacked by the murderous mullahs who reversed the course of history for Iran

taking it backwards to a religious dictatorship reminiscent of the rule of clergy in Europe before the renaissance.

The protestors reiterated the demands of the martyrs of that revolution who gave their lives for a free and democratic Iran and pledged to continue their struggle until their noble goal is achieved.



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Candice Bergen – *Former Leader of Canada's Conservative Party*

Cherie Blair KC – *Founder, Cherie Blair Foundation for Women*

Baroness O'Loan – *Member, UK House of Lords*

Theresa Villiers – *Former Minister, UK*

Helen Goodman – *Former UK Shadow Minister*

Katja Adler – *Member of the German Bundestag*

Sandra Weeser – *Member of the German Bundestag*

Naike Gruppioni – *Italian MP*

Dolores Bevilacqua – *Italian Senator*

Elisa Pirro – *Italian Senator*

Kathleen Depoorter – *Belgian MP*

Yakin Ertürk – *Former UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women*

Helena Carreiras – *Former Minister of National Defense, Portugal*

Edita Tahiri – *Former Deputy Prime Minister, Kosovo*

Izabela Konopacka – *President of the European Bar Federation*

Sharron Davies MBE – *Olympic Medalist from the UK*

Katya De Giovanni – *Maltese MP*

Siham Badi – *Former Minister for Women's Affairs, Tunisia*

Carmen Quintanilla – *Former Spanish Senator, President of AFAMMER, and Permanent Parliamentarian, Council of Europe*

Catherine Noone – *Former Deputy Speaker of the Irish Senate*

Faten Ramadan – *Head of the Syrian Human Rights Without Borders*

Iulia Dăscălu – *Member of the Moldovan Parliament*

Dorein Rookmaker – *Former Member of the European Parliament from the Netherlands*

The keynote speaker was **Maryam Rajavi**, *president elect of the Iranian opposition, the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI).*

Excerpts of her speech appear below:

Distinguished Guests, my dear sisters in cities and villages across the country, my dear sisters in Ashraf 3 – Happy International Women's Day, a day that symbolises uprising and rebellion to build a new world devoid of repression, oppression, and exploitation.

We pay tribute to the women who laid the foundation for this day, and we salute the countless heroines whose names shine brightly in the long history of Iranian women's resistance, particularly those in the resistance units who today are prepared to be arrested, tortured and executed.

Their struggle is the continuation of a struggle that has continued for nearly 44 years in Iran. Khamenei has time and again described it as a civil war. On one side are the masses of the

people of Iran, and on the other is a religious fascism that seeks to guarantee its survival with nuclear bombs.

The times have changed. Khamenei's war machine in the region lies in ruins, and now, the regime's power structure inside Iran is next to fall. Freedom is confronting tyranny, and without doubt, dictatorship is doomed to go, just as the people of Iran brought down the Shah and expelled him with his dynasty and court. He called himself "God", and officially considered monarchy as "God-given blessing," a blessing that of course was forbidden for women and only bestowed to the male offspring from one generation to the next. The king was the shadow of God.

Now, the Vali-e Faqih or the supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, is also officially called the Guardian of all Affairs of the Muslims of the World. According to his Constitution, the supreme leader is the absolute monarch and God's representative on earth.

But an uprising is on the horizon. The ideals of the revolution that Khomeini hijacked in 1979 will surely and definitely prevail.

Dear friends and sisters, every year, International Women's Day offers us a moment to reflect on the journey we ... *continued on p.2*





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have made and the commitments we must undertake for the future – a future that must ensure human liberation and a better world.

We must ask, has global progress, particularly over the past century, not moved toward reducing oppression, repression, and the subjugation of women? Undoubtedly, these are positive strides.

Throughout history, as technology has advanced and human knowledge has expanded, suffering of humanity has gradually subsided. Yet today, when we examine the status of women, we see that at its core, society remains deeply misogynistic.

Nowhere is this more evident than in Iran, where women endure the ruthless oppression of a religious dictatorship.

From both hard-won victories and bitter defeats, especially in our enchained homeland, one fundamental truth stands clear:

the presence of women – their leadership and decisive role in the fight against religious tyranny – is essential to the regime's downfall.

Likewise, in a free Iran, the same role and responsibility are the requisite for true democracy, and lasting economic and social development.

Women comprise more than half of the members of the National Council of Resistance of Iran. The NCRI is the only political coalition in Iran's contemporary history, which, four decades ago, unanimously adopted a comprehensive plan on women's rights and freedoms.

Therefore, today, we are not speaking of a hypothesis or a mere theory. It is the enduring experience of Iran's pioneering women that has unfolded in the course of a revolutionary and liberating struggle.

During this longest, bloodiest, and the most complex battle in the Iranian history over the past 46 years, we have learned a great lesson. We learned that we

need to perpetuate and promote this struggle against religious fascism in a world obsessed with appeasement and coupled with a massive demonisation campaign against the resistance of an oppressed nation. But two fundamental factors are essential:

First, rejecting gender-based ideologies. This means rebelling against a culture that seeks to portray women's weakness and incapacity – and consequently, a commoditised view of them – as enduring. I have spoken extensively about this subject in the past years.

Today, I want to focus on the other aspect, which is the elimination of selfishness, narcissism and egotism. The same arrogance and jealousy that hinder collective work and organisation, and serve as the dynamism for social and historical retardation.

The reality is that in the face of every organised activity and against cohesive and collective relationship

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there stands an automatic, albeit regressive, tendency, which is debilitating individualism.

This internal obstacle or tendency manifests itself in selfishness and in various forms of rejecting the collective. It insulates a person and severs their relationships with others.

What eliminates the interests and benefits of the collective and the community is rooted deeply in the “me-first” and negative individualism.

In confronting this tendency, the members of this movement have cultivated relationships built on listening and learning, respecting and uplifting one another.

Women who have made this choice view sacrifice for others a necessity and a higher value in relationships. Through this, they have gained resilience, self-confidence, and an ever-greater capacity to give.

One by one, they have untangled the knots created in human relationships under the influence of exploitative systems, traditions, and the culture of oppressive governments.

And in doing so, they have

demonstrated that every individual possesses an infinite capacity to give and to sacrifice.

The true capability of humans lies in their ability to rise up in struggle when darkness, oppression, and tyranny prevail, never relying on the powers, chances, or events to bring about change.

As the hero of a Shakespearian play declares: “The time is out of joint – O cursed spite, that ever I was born to set it right!”

Yes, the moment one rises to change the world is the moment one believes that one can change and begin to transform.

Dear sisters, today’s world of politics is unfortunately driven by individualism, greed, deceit, fear, and gender discrimination. Human values have degenerated. Yet, in the midst of this, a resistance has risen – one that embodies truth, purity, and courage, and is standing as a formidable challenger to the monstrous rule of the Supreme Leader.

This resistance has risen to free the people of Iran from the grip of religious fascism, to break the chains of regressive and exploitative ideologies – indispensable to this struggle

– and to overcome disbelief and remove all obstacles in the path of struggle, and forge their own path to victory – by its own hands and its collective action.

I must emphasise that the point is not to deny individual differences or to weaken the evolving individuality and personality of human beings.

What we advocate is the flourishing of transcendent individuality – the true essence of human existence.

The most significant outcome of this struggle is the flourishing of the collective and the relationships within it, which amplify their capabilities, sense of commitment, and willingness to take risks.

The collective we envision is characterised by solidarity, formed through sacrifice and giving to one another.

Members of this collective move forward based on shared principles and agreements. It is a collective where its members function as one body, seamlessly interwoven.

With such a united collective, women have been able to open the way in the realm of responsibility. They have discovered

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the power of leadership, time management, and energy extraction, and they have harnessed the opportunities for struggle.

They have discovered the laws of collective work and, day by day, have become more united and cohesive than before.

From here, another guiding principle emerges for this struggle: the essence and spirit of social relations is solidarity, not selfish individualism.

Following this vision and struggle has turned a generation of liberated and responsible men into the steadfast pillar of the fight for the regime's overthrow. These individuals have risen against oppression and exploitation, against patriarchal power, and against gendered societal norms.

Let us cast aside once and for all the myth that aggression, dominance, and objectifying views are inherent to men.

Men whose hearts and consciences are filled with selflessness, truth, and human integrity have affirmed this guiding principle: the liberation of women is an indispensable condition for the liberation of men.

For this reason, from the outset, we said and continue to say that women's acceptance of responsibility and their hegemony is not tantamount to pushing aside men and rejecting their brothers. Rather, they are the requisite for their humane revival, enabling them to double their capacity of accepting responsibilities. These men are liberated from the captivity of gender-based ideologies and objectification of women, liberated from the captivity of selfishness and egotism.

I want to remind you that it was in this cultural framework that 30 years ago, in a gathering of Iranians in Earl's Court, London, I declared, "Humanity can only rid itself of vile reactionary and fundamentalist forces when women take on their leading role in this global campaign."

I think over the past 30 years, the accuracy of these words was proven in our region and the world.

At that time, I addressed the mullahs and reactionaries, saying: 'No matter how much humiliation, oppression, repression, torture, and slaughter you wield against Iranian women, it will be by the hands of these

conscious, free, and liberated women that your reign of injustice will be dismantled everywhere.'

Today, the rebellious young women who create uprisings in Iran stand as the embodiment of the will of Iran's struggling women. With the rallying cry of "Women, Resistance, Freedom", they stand firm against every form of coercion.

As we have always said: No to compulsory hijab, no to compulsory religion, and no to compulsory governance.

Yes, women are the force for change.

The struggle of Iranian women is not only about freedom in choosing one's attire but, far beyond, it is about rebellion to achieve freedom, a right that is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The people of Iran reject all forms of dictatorship, including the Shah and the mullahs. Undoubtedly, the Iranian people's democratic revolution will triumph, and a society will be built based on the separation of religion and state... freedom and equality for all the people of Iran, peace and security both regionally and globally.

God bless you all.



LORDS CALL FOR ACTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN IRAN

At a parliamentary debate on 27 February 2025, members of the House of Lords strongly criticised the human rights violations in Iran, raising concerns over the arbitrary detention of British and dual nationals, the systematic persecution of religious minorities, and the regime’s increasing use of the death penalty as a means of political repression.

harsh repression, including arrests, imprisonment, and false charges of acting against national security.

A central focus of the debate was Iran’s continued detention of foreign and dual nationals, with lawmakers acknowledging that over 60 foreign individuals have been detained in Iran since 2010, 16 of whom had British or dual nationality. These individuals

The Bishop of St Albans noted that Iran executed at least 901 people in 2024, including 40 in a single week in December.

Additionally, concerns were raised over Iran’s growing military activities and nuclear escalation, with the Bishop of St Albans warning that “an increasingly desperate Iranian regime is an increasingly dangerous one”.

He also underscored the need for tougher measures against Iran’s security forces, stating that “the Revolutionary Guard drove the taking of such hostages; what is the present Government’s view of the Revolutionary Guard?”

The UK government reaffirmed its commitment to addressing Iran’s human rights violations. Responding to calls for tougher measures, **Lord Collins of Highbury**, the UK’s

Under-Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Affairs, confirmed that the UK has sanctioned 94 Iranian individuals and entities since 2022 for their roles in human rights abuses.

He also reiterated that the UK government advises against all travel to Iran, emphasising that “having a British passport or connections to the United Kingdom can be reason enough for the Iranian authorities to detain someone”.

As Iran’s human rights crisis deepens, British lawmakers continue to push for stronger measures to hold the Iranian regime accountable. The debate underscored growing calls for international coordination in addressing Iran’s use of hostage diplomacy, systematic executions, and suppression of religious minorities.



During a parliamentary debate, **Bishop Alan Smith, the Lord Bishop of St. Albans**, specifically highlighted the cases of political prisoners **Behrouz Ehsani** and **Mehdi Hassani**, who are at imminent risk of execution under charges of “rebellion against the state”.

Calling for urgent intervention, the Lord Bishop urged the UK government to “do all they can” to prevent their execution and address Iran’s escalating use of the death penalty, which he described as “truly harrowing”.

Parliamentarians also raised concerns over the regime’s systematic persecution of religious minorities, with the **Bishop of Chelmsford** noting that “religious freedom is severely curtailed for everyone except Persian-speaking Shias”. He added that Christian converts from Islam face some of the

are often arrested on fabricated charges, denied fair trials, and used as political bargaining chips.

The Bishop of Chelmsford called for greater international pressure on Iran, stating: “Let us call this situation out for what it is. Other countries, such as France, are willing to do so. The more European and other nations speak with one voice, the greater the pressure on Iran to change its approach.”

The Peers also pressed for stronger measures to deter state hostage-taking, referencing the Canadian-led initiative against arbitrary detention, which the UK signed in 2021.

Baroness Northover questioned the government’s approach, asking, “Other countries go about the release of their citizens differently from how the UK approaches it. Will the government review its practices?”



NEWS IN BRIEF

NGOS HIGHLIGHT SURGE IN EXECUTIONS IN IRAN



In a joint statement submitted to the UN Human Rights Council in February, multiple non-governmental organisations (NGOs) underscore a dramatic rise in executions in Iran, urging immediate international intervention. According to the statement, around 1,000 prisoners were executed in 2024 across 86 prisons. Among the victims were at least 32 women and six juvenile offenders. The statement highlighted that Iran executed more women than any other country with available data. Also, 65 percent of these executions occurred after Masoud Pezeshkian assumed presidency in August 2024.

ESCALATING PROTESTS IN IRAN



Several Iranian cities witnessed a new wave of protests led by retirees, nurses, and workers from various sectors. These demonstrations come as economic pressures intensify, inflation soars, and the government continues to ignore public demands.

Meanwhile, the regime persists in spending the country's wealth on foreign interventions, funding



terrorist groups, and pursuing nuclear adventures, leaving citizens to suffer under worsening living conditions.

AHEAD OF RAMADAN IRAN'S REGIME EXECUTES 14 PRISONERS ON 1ST MARCH

The inhuman clerical regime, besieged by economic, political, and international crises, has intensified its machinery of crime and execution to spread fear and terror. In a major crime on Saturday, 1st March 2025, on the eve of Ramadan, Khamenei's executioners sent 14 prisoners, including a woman, to the gallows.

SECURITY FORCES DESTROY HOMES OF IMPOVERISHED PEOPLE



On Saturday, 22nd February 2025, Iranian regime's suppressive State Security Forces destroyed two shops under construction belonging to Baluch citizens in Sarzeh village (Sistan and Baluchestan province), and several homes of impoverished people in Qaleh-Sefid village of Najafabad (Isfahan province). Prior to that, on 18 February, the regime's forces had destroyed homes of impoverished people in Isfahan, Zahedan, Sirjan, and Chabahar.

57TH WEEK OF "NO TO EXECUTIONS TUESDAY" CAMPAIGN



Simultaneous with the fifty-seventh week of the "No to Executions Tuesdays" campaign, prisoners in 37 prisons across Iran protesting the widespread executions in Iran went on hunger strike.



List of ILA events in the coming month:

Sevenoaks: 5th April 2025 from 1pm–4pm
St Luke's Church, Eardley Road, Sevenoaks TN13 1XT

Please join us at our NoRuz celebration:



Saturday 19 April 2025 from 2pm–7pm
ILEC Conference Centre, 47 Lillie Road, London SW6 1UD

RSVP: Please email info@iliberty.org.uk or call 020 8452 3481

