

# International Liberty Association Newsletter

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## EDITORIAL

For decades, May 1st has stood as a symbol of the struggle for human dignity. But in a time when lives are easily threatened and voices swiftly silenced, this day is no longer just about labour rights — it is about defending the right to live, the freedom to think, and the very essence of human worth.

In today's Iran, hundreds of prisoners of conscience are behind bars for peaceful protest, civic engagement, or simply defending human dignity. Many endure solitary confinement, torture, and harsh sentences — including the death penalty. Among them is **Varisheh Moradi**, a labour rights defender sentenced to death by the Iranian regime for her peaceful activism. Others, such as **Pakhshan Azizi**, **Behrouz Ehsani**, and **Mehdi Hassani**, face similar persecution for their commitment to fundamental rights.

In recent weeks, a powerful wave of global solidarity has emerged in response to these grave human rights violations. Over 1,000 mayors and local officials in France have united their voices, calling for an immediate halt to executions and the release of prisoners of conscience in Iran.

The European Parliament has also passed a firm resolution in support of these demands, affirming that the world is

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## UN EXTENDS MANDATE OF SPECIAL RAPORTEUR ON IRAN AND THE FACT-FINDING MISSION



On 3 April 2025, the United Nations Human Rights Council voted to extend the mandates of both the Special Rapporteur on human rights in Iran, **Dr Mai Sato**, and the Independent Fact-Finding Mission established to investigate ongoing human rights abuses

in Iran. The resolution was passed with 24 votes in favour, 8 against, and 15 abstentions during the Council's annual session in Geneva.

The resolution, drafted by Iceland, Germany, North Macedonia, Moldova, the United

... continued on p.2

## THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IS MOBILIZING ITS FULL INFLUENCE AND AUTHORITY TO BRING AN END TO EXECUTIONS IN IRAN



At its session in Strasbourg on 1–2 April, the European Parliament adopted a resolution concerning the wave of executions in Iran and the confirmation of death sentences for **Behrouz Ehsani** and **Mehdi Hasani**.

The resolution condemns

the decision of the Iranian regime's Supreme Court to uphold the death sentences for Behrouz Ehsani and Mehdi Hasani. It calls for their immediate release, as well as the release of all prisoners on death row for political activities.

... continued on p.3



**UN extends mandate of Special Rapporteur** *continued from p.1*

Kingdom, and Northern Ireland, was presented to the Council’s secretariat on 21 March 2025, and formally adopted on 3 April. The initiative reflects growing international concern over the systematic abuse of human rights by the Iranian regime, particularly following the 2022 uprising.

The resolution highlights a wide array of violations committed by the Iranian regime, including:

- Systematic repression of women, ethnic and religious minorities, and political dissidents.
- An alarming increase in executions, including those targeting women, juveniles, and individuals sentenced after politically-motivated sham trials.
- The structural impunity granted to officials involved



in repression and violence against protesters.

- The use of capital punishment as a tool of political intimidation and suppression, including charges that do not meet the threshold of “most serious crimes” under international law.

The Independent Fact-Finding Mission, initially established in November 2022, was given a broader mandate to investigate and preserve evidence of crimes against humanity, including gender-based violence, violent suppression of protests, and ethnic and religious discrimination. It has also been tasked with preparing evidence for future legal proceedings against regime officials found responsible for these crimes.

In the past year, pressure has intensified on political prisoners, women’s rights defenders, journalists, and human rights activists. Following the mass protests of 2022, which were violently suppressed by security forces, many detainees remain in legal limbo.

*Why Was the Fact-Finding Mission Extended?*

The UN’s Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Iran was established in response to the brutal crackdown on the 2022 nationwide protests. Its mandate is to investigate the human rights violations

committed by Iranian authorities, particularly in their treatment of protesters.

The decision to renew the mission’s mandate reflects the international community’s deep concern over the ongoing repression in Iran. The Fact-Finding Mission has repeatedly emphasised the lack of accountability for those responsible for rights abuses. Iranian authorities have consistently refused to hold security and judicial actors accountable, and no officials have faced consequences for state-led killings or other violations committed during the protests.

By renewing the mandates of both the Special Rapporteur and the Fact-Finding Mission, the UN Human Rights Council signals a continued international commitment to monitoring and addressing the deteriorating human rights situation in Iran.

Despite the Islamic Republic’s efforts to deflect criticism and deny the allegations, growing evidence of widespread repression and abuses underscores the need for ongoing independent investigations.

With increasing international pressure and persistent domestic unrest, the Islamic Republic is likely to face heightened scrutiny and accountability demands in the months ahead.

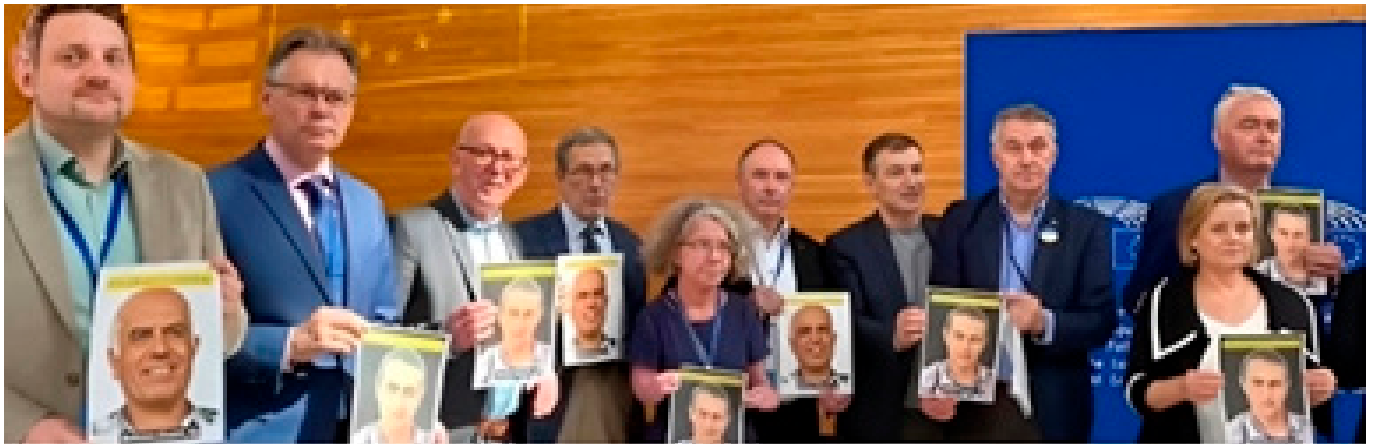
**Editorial**

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watching — and that silence in the face of injustice is no longer an option.

At the International Liberty Association, we are proud to be part of this global effort — a collective stand to save lives, uphold human dignity, and confront a regime that has pushed repression into the most personal realms of existence. On this symbolic day, we call upon all people of conscience to join the campaign to save prisoners of conscience in Iran.

Let us be the voices for those silenced. Let us be a light in the darkness, and a beacon of hope for a brighter future. Today, defending humanity is a global responsibility.



### European Parliament mobilizing to end executions in Iran *continued from p.1*

The resolution urges the Council of the European Union to designate the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) of Iran as a terrorist organization and to continue sanctioning the regime's leaders for their ongoing human rights violations.

The resolution further condemns the regime's use of hostage diplomacy and calls on the EU and its member states to make the abolition of the death penalty and the release of political prisoners and EU nationals a precondition for improving relations with the Iranian regime.

The Strasbourg session was accompanied by impassioned speeches from Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) from various countries, reflecting a broad consensus in condemning the repressive practices of the Iranian regime.

**Petras Auštrevičius, MEP** from Lithuania, highlighted that the number of executions in Iran doubled last year, emphasizing that the Iranian regime uses executions as a tool of repression, and called on the EU to take strong action to stop this brutality.

**Francisco Assis, MEP** from Portugal, described the Iranian regime as one of the most atrocious of our time, saying:

“We are facing a regime that represses both men and

women. We refer to two cases here, but there are many more.”

**Veronika Vrecionová, MEP** from the Czech Republic, described the unjust trials and death sentences for Ehsani and Hasani as clear examples of show trials under a dictatorship.

**Milan Zver** from Slovakia emphasised:

“Behrouz Ehsani and Mehdi Hasani cried out for the freedom of the Iranian people... Now is the time for the international community and the European Union to take action. All negotiations with Iran must demand an end to these executions. Human rights must be recognised and discussed at the UN Security Council.”

Other MEPs who spoke included **Davor Ivo Stier** from Croatia and **Danuša Nerudová**, who strongly called for designating the Iranian regime as a terrorist state and expressed full support for the victims of repression in Iran.

**Hadja Lahbib**, European Commissioner for Crisis Management, Preparedness, and Equality, responded to the MEPs by saying:

“The European Union is closely monitoring the human rights situation in

Iran. The current pace of executions is horrifying. Iran is setting terrifying new records each year in the number of executions, with over 900 executions recorded last year – the highest since 2015.”

She added: “The European Union has a firm, clear, and longstanding opposition to the death penalty at all times and under all circumstances. Therefore, we also call on Iranian authorities to revoke the death sentences of Behrouz Ehsani and Mehdi Hasani, who face imminent execution.”

The unprecedented increase in executions by the Iranian regime, and its instrumental use of the judiciary to suppress dissent and crack down on public uprisings, demands a firm international response against this anti-human regime.

The adoption of this European Parliament resolution against the wave of executions and blatant human rights violations in Iran is a step toward global accountability for the systemic crimes of this regime.





## STATEMENT BY OVER 1,000 FRENCH MAYORS CONDEMNING EXECUTIONS IN IRAN



In a recent gathering of French mayors and legal experts, **Ms Florence Berto**, Mayor of Paris's 5th arrondissement, presented a statement endorsed by more than 1,000 mayors expressing strong support for the call to end executions in Iran and for the global movement to abolish the death penalty.

In their statement, the mayors voiced deep concern over the rising number of executions in Iran, noting that these are often used as tools of intimidation to suppress dissent and instill fear among

the population.

The mayors referred to the report by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, which concluded that “executions, torture, and other inhumane acts constitute crimes against humanity,” and highlighted that many such acts are carried out with the intent to silence opposition and maintain authoritarian control.

Prominent speakers at the event – including leaders of European legal institutions, academics, and municipal representatives from various

districts of Paris – called for an end to the death penalty and reaffirmed the importance of defending the fundamental rights of the Iranian people.

The event also paid tribute to the courageous efforts of civil society actors and activists in Iran who have been campaigning against the death penalty, often at great personal risk. Participants emphasised that these voices must be heard and supported by the international community.

In a video message shared during the conference, **Mrs Maryam Rajavi** thanked the thousands of elected French officials for their stand against executions in Iran. She emphasised that such support offers hope to those on death row and reassures their families that they are not alone.

The conference concluded with a strong call for the international community to take meaningful action against human rights violations in Iran and to stand in solidarity with those fighting for dignity, justice, and the right to life.

### ILA's Upcoming Events

**Wimbledon: Saturday 7 June 2025 from 18:30 to 20:30**

**Merton Arts Space, Wimbledon Library,  
35 Wimbledon Hill Road, London SW19 7NB**

**Mehregan (Autumn) Celebration:**

**Saturday 13 September from 14:00 to 19:00**

**ILEC Conference Centre, 47 Lillie Road, London SW6 1UD**

**RSVP: [info@iliberty.org.uk](mailto:info@iliberty.org.uk) or call 020 8452 3481**



## IRAN'S REGIME DEPLOYS POLICE TO SCHOOLS TO ENFORCE HIJAB



fall into a third negligence – and once again, be caught off guard,” he warned ominously.

The agreement has drawn strong condemnation from educators and civil society figures. Some expressed concern that any agreement that opens the doors of schools to security and police forces undermines the psychological safety of students and teachers. Schools are no place for batons and coercive power.

The agreement is part of a broader strategy by the Iranian regime to militarise the educational environment and extend its surveillance and control over students and educators – particularly in the wake of the 2022 nationwide uprising.

The State Security Force has a well-documented history of violent crackdowns on peaceful protests and systematic human rights abuses.

Their presence in schools to enforce ideological conformity and mandatory hijab laws raises serious alarms about the increasing infringement of students' rights and the psychological pressure being exerted on the educational community.

In a move that has sparked outrage among civil society and human rights advocates, Iranian state media reported on Sunday, 20 April, that a new agreement has been signed between Iran's Chief of Police (the State Security Force), Ahmad Reza Radan, and the Minister of Education, Alireza Kazemi.

The memorandum grants the State Security Force new authority within the education system, allowing them to enforce mandatory hijab regulations in schools.

At the signing ceremony, Education Minister Alireza

Kazemi openly pledged allegiance to the notorious police chief, referring to himself as a “proud soldier” of Radan. Kazemi described violation of “hijab and chastity” as cultural “threats” that require targeted educational and cultural interventions.

Ahmad Reza Radan – who has been sanctioned by the European Union, the United States, and Canada for gross human rights violations – declared that cooperation between the SSF and the Education Ministry was insufficient. “If we assume this collaboration is enough, we will

## HOPE

This sonnet was dedicated by one of our supporters in Scotland who wishes to remain anonymous, for the occasion of Easter with this title: “Christ, my hope, is risen and he awaits you in Galilee”.



*Hope is the promise of things unseen.  
 Hope is our stairway to the stars.  
 Hope has a colour, and it is green.  
 Hope all black thoughts and depression bars.  
 Hope is our lantern shining in the dark.  
 Hope is what opens an uncertain door.  
 Hope is like the singing of the lark.  
 Hope is a tailwind blowing to the shore.  
 Hope is like the dawning of a new day.  
 Hope is when morning dispels the night.  
 Hope is the beacon that shows us the way.  
 Hope is my consolation in all my plight.  
 Christ is my hope, and He goes before.  
 Christ by His Death and Rising does me restore.*



# ILA NORUZ, EASTER, AND PASSOVER EVENT IN LONDON





## NEWS IN BRIEF

### 16 EXECUTIONS IN TWO DAYS



Sixteen prisoners were executed across Iran on 30 April and 1 May.

As the clerical regime nears its inevitable downfall, Khamenei is futilely attempting to stave off a popular uprising by accelerating the cycle of executions and killings. Since August 2024, when Pezeshkian assumed office, the execution count has reached 1,105, a figure unprecedented in the past three decades.

### 66TH WEEK OF NO TO EXECUTIONS TUESDAYS CAMPAIGN



On Tuesday, 29 April, prisoners in 41 prisons across Iran participated in the 66th week of the “No to Executions Tuesdays” campaign by launching hunger strikes to protest the Iranian regime’s escalating use of executions as a tool of repression. This week, Sanandaj Prison joined the campaign, expanding its scope to yet another facility.

In their weekly statement, the prisoners extended condolences to the victims of the deadly explosion at the Bandar Abbas port, which

left dozens dead and over a thousand injured. They directly blamed the Iranian regime and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) for the tragedy, linking it to the regime’s militaristic policies and pursuit of nuclear armament.

### CATASTROPHIC EXPLOSIONS AT BANDAR ABBAS DUE TO NEGLIGENCE



On April 26, 2025, a series of massive explosions devastated the Rajaei Port in Bandar Abbas, southern Iran. According to the latest field reports from Simaye Azadi, a satellite network affiliated with the Iranian Resistance, and eyewitness accounts, over 110 people have died and more than 1,250 were injured, many suffering critical injuries, including amputations and eye trauma. Eyewitnesses on the ground describe a city submerged under toxic smoke, with a suffocating atmosphere permeating even indoors.

Iranian regime sources, however, report conflicting figures. According to Hammihan Online, citing the regime’s official updates, 195 people have been transferred

to hospitals, including Shahid Mohammadi, Seyed al-Shohada, Khatam al-Anbia, and Saheb al-Zaman facilities. Other reports suggest the total number of injured exceeds 750, with at least eight confirmed fatalities and six individuals still missing. Significant structural damage occurred at administrative buildings in the port, with reports of collapsed roofs trapping employees under debris.

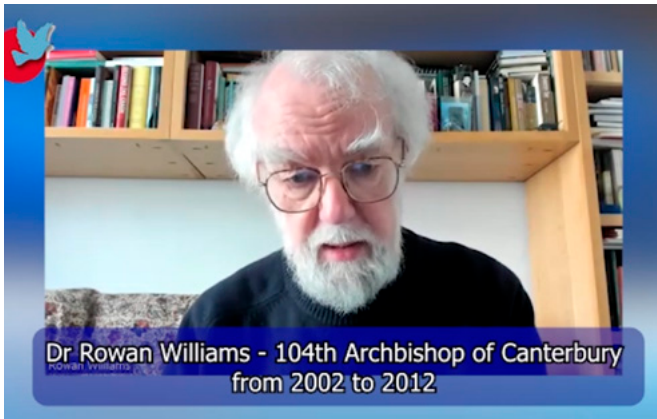
According to eyewitness reports and international media, including the Associated Press, the catastrophic explosions at Bandar Abbas were linked to containers carrying sodium perchlorate, a volatile chemical used in solid rocket fuel. Sodium perchlorate can detonate from impact, heat, or a detonator. Associated Press confirmed that improper handling of a shipment of ammonium perchlorate, recently delivered from China to replenish Iran’s missile stockpiles, likely triggered the disaster.

The regime’s president downplayed the catastrophe with vague remarks, suggesting that accidents are sometimes “beyond human control.” However, people accuse the regime of systemic negligence and cover-ups, citing events from the PS752 passenger plane shoot-down to recent environmental disasters.





## MESSAGE OF HOPE BY ARCHBISHOP DR ROWAN WILLIAMS



**This is the text of a video message that was delivered to the audience at the ILA's Easter, Passover and NoRuz event on 19 April 2025:**

My dear friends, it's a very great privilege to be able to speak to you today. I'm sorry I can't be with you in person, but I'm very glad to have the opportunity of sending this recorded message for a special gathering organised by the International Liberty Association.

It takes place on a very special day when we as Christians remember Holy Saturday, the day between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Jesus, and when we also commemorate the celebration of the Persian New Year, the festival of NoRuz. Both of these festivals speak of similar things. A spring festival, a New Year festival, speaks of the turning of the year, the turning of the universe, the change from darkness to light, the opening up of new possibilities; but our commemoration speaks of the faithfulness of a God who is not defeated by human injustice, cruelty and atrocity, a God who is always the source of new life and new hope.

So today is a very appropriate day indeed, representing the depths and the riches of our several cultures. Our celebrations speak of a shared truth and a shared vision. Renewal is always possible, even in the darkest times; even in the face of what seems the victory of evil, hope is not extinguished.

The work of the International Liberty Association rests on that same vision and that same spirit. In the face of repression, injustice and cruelty, and very particularly the repression and cruelty that occurs in Iran today, the ILA continues to raise its voice on

behalf of the voiceless. It makes sure that their sufferings are not forgotten or ignored in the wider world. It highlights the plight of those who have suffered unjust imprisonment and harassment, those who live under the threat of death, the threat of exile, the threat of the loss of their liberties and their dignity. And we remember especially those, particularly women and young people, who have shown in recent years such extraordinary courage in their struggle for the freedom and dignity denied them by the regime in Iran today.

So this is an opportunity for me to express my own deep admiration, gratitude and appreciation to all the supporters of the ILA. Your continued commitment, your compassion, your advocacy, reflect something very profound and significant in our shared humanity. You are more than just donors or volunteers, but friends, fellow-workers, those who share a faith in justice and in hope.

But it's also an opportunity to say to the people of Iran whose courage inspires us all, that we stand in solidarity, that we do not forget your plight and your struggle, and that we pray that your path will lead to freedom, to peace and justice, to a new order in Iran which will be a sign of hope in the region and in the world. We pray that your suffering will not be in vain. You are not forgotten. Your witness is appreciated, treasured, and, we hope, followed and supported by us outside Iran. Around the world, people are standing with you, thinking of you, praying for you, working for you.

So as we celebrate Easter and NoRuz together, we may remember that the promise of a new dawn is not only a spiritual gift and a spiritual truth, but like all spiritual gifts and spiritual truths, it calls us to change. It calls us to action, to keep working, praying and standing together until justice and freedom become a reality for all in Iran and world-wide.

So with my thanks and my blessings I send my very warmest wishes for this event today, hoping that the season will bring renewal, fresh strength to all of us who work and pray for a better future for our beloved friends in Iran and for all God's children world-wide.

Bless you and thank you!