

Face the Iranian Regime Firmly and Intelligently
Rally For Human Dignity In Iran
Hon. David Kilgour, J.D.
(co-chair, Canadian friends of a Democratic Iran)
Phillips Square
Montreal
13 Jan. 2010

So many indignities have been committed against the Iranian people by the regime over the past three decades. Their concerned friends around the world are participating in demonstrations such as this one today in Montréal.

Let us share a moment of silence to show respect for, and remembrance of, all those whose peaceful protests against mounting repression have been met with bullets, imprisonment, torture and death by execution - the victims of Moharebeh. (Moment of silence follows)

Shirin Ebadi Letter to the UN

Earlier this week, Dr. Shirin Ebadi, human rights advocate and 2003 Nobel Laureate, sent a blunt letter to Madam Navanethem Pillay, U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights and the members of the U.N. Human Rights Council.

In her open letter, Ebadi deplores that "Iran has turned into a big prison for journalists". Her entire homeland has also been turned into a "big prison" for her compatriots; for a large number of political, civil, and cultural activists; for teachers, students, and workers; for men and women of all ages and from all walks of life; Muslim and non-Muslim. No-one is immune from government repression and violence.

In her letter, she also poses this question: "For how much longer do you believe that you could urge young people to remain calm? The patience and tolerance of Iranian people, however high, is not infinite."

Mrs Maryam Rajavii

Mrs. Maryam Rajavi, the Iranian Resistance's president-elect, said on February 11:

Today, the Iranian people made a powerful declaration that the clerical regime must be overthrown. The mullahs' president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had claimed that February 11th would see the funeral of 'the corpse of the capitalist system'. The commander of the State Security Forces (SSF) had threatened that any deviant slogans would be suppressed, while the mullahs' Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, vowed that on February 11th his regime 'will unite with one voice to punch the arrogant powers in the mouth'. Today, however, everyone witnessed the defeat of Khamenei. The struggle is not between 'arrogant powers' and the ruling mullahs. The real fight is between the arisen people of Iran and the velayat-e faqih (absolute clerical rule), and the funeral procession needed for burial of the decaying body of this regime.

This past week, despite efforts by the government of the E.U. and the U.S., including a joint statement, human rights violations in the form of large-scale arrests took place across Iran.

Amnesty International and other groups communicated with the regime in the days leading up to the 31st Anniversary. Tehran was transformed into a "large garrison" as brave dissidents, attempting to demonstrate the regime's lack of legitimacy and their resolve to bring democracy and freedom to Iran, were violently suppressed. The intimidators were the Revolutionary Guards, Bassiji thugs, state security, intelligence and plainclothes agents.

Canada and the responsible international community must hold the Iranian mullahs, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and their security forces, especially the Revolutionary Guards (IRGC), fully accountable for all of the human rights violations, which have arisen out of Thursday 's anniversary events.

One initiative would be for governments to list the IRGC as a banned terrorist entity. Doing this would authorize targeting the bank accounts its leaders hold abroad while minimizing the impact on ordinary Iranians.

Weaponization of Nuclear Energy

Nothing has undermined peace and security in Iran, the region and the world more than Ahmadinejad's defiant proclamation on Thursday that the Republic of Iran is now a nuclear state. The world knows that Ahmadinejad wants nuclear weapons.

Let me stress here once again that the Canadian Friends of a Democratic Iran, the International Committee of Jurists for Iran, the National Council of Resistance for Iran and the PMOI/MEK are all strongly opposed to the use of outside force in Iran.

There is an international momentum underway for new sanctions on Iran, but it is very difficult to design ones that would affect the regime's inner circle but not the Iranian people as a whole. If there is a new Security Council resolution regarding a fourth set of sanctions, China may try to protect its energy and economic ties to the regime by blocking any effective initiative by the Security Council.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I draw upon Ebadi's closing words to the UNHRC: "My honourable friends! Please bear in mind that we are all responsible and accountable to history. God forbid, lest we stand ashamed before a defenceless nation because of our political complicities."

Democratic change in Iran is within reach and we must be on the right side of history by allowing the Iranian people generally and their resistance to bring about that change without foreign military intervention.

Most importantly, let us be accountable to the people of Iran as they continue to resist and insist on the realization of their just demands for democracy and human rights by demonstrating their political maturity through peaceful protests.

Thank you.