

**NOTES FOR NCRI INTERNATIONAL BROADCAST
15 Dec 2018,**

Sandy Hill Community Centre

Ottawa

Hon. David Kilgour, J.D.

Chers amis/cheres amies,

We are today connecting with numerous cities across the democratic world to demand collectively human dignity and freedom for all Iranians.

Permit me to focus on about 3000 PMOI/MEK democrats from Iran now in Albania, thanks to the generosity of its people and government.

A group of MEPs from Brussels last month visited Tirana. Struan Stevenson of Scotland, a member of the European Parliament for 15 year and now coordinator of Campaign for Iran Change, wrote important points afterwards and I quote:

- *In 2013, the first Iranian dissidents arrived in the Albanian capital, plucked to safety from the hell they had endured in Camp Ashraf and Camp Liberty inside Iraq... Soon the surviving PMOI/MEK members were safely housed in special accommodation in Tirana, provided by the U.N. High Commission for Refugees.*
- *The Iranian mullahs were appalled; their attempts to liquidate the PMOI/MEK, the main democratic opposition to their tyrannical regime, had been thwarted...The Iranian regime reverted to acts of terrorism, using one of their diplomats from their embassy in Vienna to organize a bomb plot against a PMOI/MEK Rally in Paris (last)*

June and more recently, sending another agent to assassinate an opposition figure in Denmark. Both so-called ' diplomats' have been arrested and are facing trial for acts of terror.

- *Massoud Khodabandeh and his wife, Anne Singleton, two well-known agents of the Iranian security ministry (MOIS)... were flown to Tirana...(They) had been seen outside the gates of Camp Ashraf and Camp Liberty in Iraq before the lethal assaults took place, leaving a death toll of 168 dead and over 1,700 wounded men and women... Sure enough, in due course, some gullible Western journalists were seen in their company.*
- *Forced to leave their accommodation in Tirana when UNHCR funding ran out in September 2017, the MEK refugees had purchased some farmland near Manez and began construction of living accommodation. They hired over 600 local Albanians, training them in building and construction skills and quickly becoming a trusted and respected part of the Albanian community.*
- *The new compound, named Ashraf 3, was fenced in with security at the main entrance to deter assassination attempts. However, the MEK men and women are free to come and go as they please. Hundreds of them leave the compound daily on shopping and recreation trips. Over 700 Iranian families have come to visit their relatives in Ashraf 3, having been prevented from seeing them for years during their brutal incarceration in Iraq. Journalists, politicians, lawyers and trades people are daily visitors.*

- *I (S.S) have just returned from a three-day-visit to Ashraf 3... in a week which has seen 150 MEPs from all political factions and groups sign a petition condemning human rights abuse in Iran. What we saw was a remarkable transformation. We were able to move freely around the camp, talking to hundreds of the Iranian refugees.*
- *In only 12 months, these hard-working and resilient freedom fighters have constructed a small city, with shops, clinics, sports facilities, kitchens, bakeries, dormitory blocks, meeting halls, offices and studios. A comprehensive report of this visit will be published soon.*
- *In a deceitful story that they repeat endlessly, they claim that a young woman, 38-year-old Somayeh Mohammadi, is being held captive against her will. Her parents, both Iranian/Canadian citizens, have in the past been seen outside Camp Ashraf in Iraq, hurling threats and abuse through loudspeakers, in the company of Khodabandeh and Singleton and other notorious MOIS agents. Together with the delegation of leading MEPs, I met Somayeh on my visit to Ashraf 3. She was alone and unaccompanied by the "minders" that her father claims always accompany her. She said that sadly she had disowned her father many years ago after he became a willing MOIS agent. She told us that her father, who is a plumber in Canada, recently spent four months in Albania, staying in the luxury Plaza Hotel in Tirana, clearly paid for by the mullahs. She confirmed that she is free to come and go from Ashraf 3 whenever she wishes and that she could leave permanently if she wanted to. However, she said she is a proud and committed member of the MEK, who,*

unlike her father, has devoted her life to seeking freedom for the people of Iran.

- *It is lies like this, lapped up by "useful idiots" in some of the Western press that emboldens the mullahs. A recent lengthy article in a national newspaper in Britain that repeated all of these insults and lies was published word for word on Khodabandeh's vitriolic pro-mullah website fully three weeks before it appeared in the newspaper, clearly revealing its odious source. Shamefully, such media are apparently happy to ignore the ongoing repression in Iran, where strikes and mass protests have continued daily for almost a year, with striking truck drivers sentenced to death and protesting sugarcane workers sentenced to flogging and long terms of imprisonment. Over 12,000 protesters have been jailed. Many have been murdered.*

Finally, I am delighted that today many residents of Ashraf 3 are also connecting in this global conference. Recently, former minister of Justice Irwin Cotler, with MPs from all political parties, demanded that Iran's notorious murderers, especially those responsible the 1988 massacre of political prisoners in Iran, be sanctioned under the new Canadian Magnitsky law. We will together push for this until it is done. Your own perseverance and sacrifices will on doubt bear fruit soon.

Merci mille fois.

Read more: https://www.upi.com/Top_News/Voices/2018/11/27/European-visit-to-Albania-exposes-Irans-misinformation-campaign/2581543322843/#ixzz5ZfOqZA4j
