

## **Written evidence submitted by the British Committee for Iran Freedom (UKI0015)**

With more than 20 years of experience and expertise in affairs concerning Iran and the Middle East, the British Committee for Iran Freedom (BCFIF) is a leader for analysis of Iranian affairs. For more info please visit: [www.iran-freedom.org](http://www.iran-freedom.org)

Comprised of over 100 cross-Party MPs and Peers, the committee has been active for the past two decades in shaping policy on Iran in favour of a firm approach towards Iran's theocratic regime and support for the Iranian people and their legitimate resistance movement to achieve a secular democracy.

In pursuit of its aims, the Committee enjoys links with the Anglo-Iranian societies in the UK, especially supporters of the opposition groups, the NCRI and the PMOI/MEK.

For all these years, it has been continuously and rigorously following the situation in Iran and addressed serious concerns with regards to the country through meetings, conferences, parliamentary debates and bringing these issues to the attention of politicians, governments, media and general public by way of statements and press releases.

## INTRODUCTION

When deciding on the right approach for the UK Government in the face of the Iranian regime, it is essential for one to be sufficiently aware of the core and foundations of this theocracy, how it was brought about, and its record and actions over the last 4 decades, especially in the recent past in Iran and its foreign policies on a regional and worldwide scale.

In the Iranian people's revolution against the monarchy on the 11th February 1979, the main demands of the people were freedom and democracy. They had risen up against censorship and oppression, arrests and torture of political and human rights activists and corruption within the ruling Shah's family. The main leading opposition groups had received numerous blows from the Shah's SAVAK service and had many of their leaders imprisoned and even executed. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who was exiled in Iraq, took advantage of the Iranian people's religious tendencies and by utilising a network of mullahs already in Iran was able to mislead people as to his true intentions and establish a strangle-hold on the leadership of the revolution and violently establish his "Islamic Republic". (*See historic background in reference 1a for more information.*)

The Human Rights situation and that of other basic individual and social freedoms under the system of the Absolute Rule of Clergy (Velayat e Faqih):

Under the banner of religion, the worst type of oppression against the bulk of the population, especially directed towards women and ethnic and religious minorities, was imposed by the mullahs, from forcing women to wear veils to their exclusion from areas of education and participation in certain jobs and access to transport etc.

Until now, the regime has been condemned by way of 66 resolutions drafted and issued by different bodies of the UN because of its systemic violations of Human Rights; but systematic suppression still continues in Iran. (*See Appalling Human Rights situation in Iran in reference 1b for more information.*)

The regime is the leading executioner per capita in the world.

The hostage-taking of individuals with dual Iranian-British, Iranian-European or Iranian-American citizenship in Iran, arrests and subsequent long term prison sentences under the banner of threats to national security or spying on behalf of foreign countries are ways in which the regime tries to blackmail western countries to obtain ransom money and other forms of political credit, especially since Rouhani was appointed as President.

Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe is a British-Iranian dual national and charity worker from north London who was held and imprisoned on bogus national security charges in Iran in April 2016. She was arrested at Tehran's Imam Khomeini airport on her way back to UK and sentenced to five years for spying, a charge which she denies.<sup>1</sup>

Her case have been raised with Iranian regime's leaders and ministers by both the Prime Minister and several Foreign Secretaries since her arrest. The FCO has accused Iran's regime of being engaged in hostage diplomacy by using Ms Zaghari-Ratcliffe and other British dual nationals to exert political leverage.<sup>2</sup>

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1 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazanin\\_Zaghari-Ratcliffe#cite\\_note-bbc-20160910-2](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazanin_Zaghari-Ratcliffe#cite_note-bbc-20160910-2)

2 <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/7772973/jeremy-hunt-slam-iran-brits-diplomatic-hostages/>

On 7 March 2019, the then Foreign Secretary, the Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, decided that the UK should exercise diplomatic protection in the case of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe as part of the Government's continuing efforts to secure her release.<sup>3</sup>

On various occasions, Iran's regime has asked UK to pay an alleged 400 million dollar debt to Iran to facilitate the release of Ms Zaghari-Ratcliffe.<sup>4</sup>

It is necessary to point out that upon coming to power, Khomeini dissolved Iran's judicial system and forced many judges and lawyers into retirement or made them redundant. This included excluding women from the judiciary. The common laws were abolished and replaced by man-made "Islamic" laws that were founded on the fundamentalist theories of the mullahs. The Supreme Leader established Islamic Revolution courts. All judges were selected on the basis of loyalty to Khomeini and appointed as Sharia rulers. Many of these "judges" had not even completed primary or secondary school education, let alone having any sort of higher qualification in law or law-related subjects. Consequently Iran's current framework of law bears very little resemblance to other legal jurisprudence throughout the world.

In an interview Ahmad Janati, who was the regime's chief justice, said that he along with the other mullahs had had no formal education and that Khomeini taught them how to apply the death sentence. (*See reference 2 for more information.*)

The attack on the UK embassy in Iran was dismissed under the banner of angry youths protesting but in fact was an officially sanctioned attack in which all buildings and belongings of the embassy were looted, destroyed and set alight.<sup>5</sup>

When the UK decided to reopen its embassy, it was in the absence of any apology for the flagrant attack on diplomatic premises. Many in Iran's leadership interpreted this as a sign of weakness on the part of the UK Government. They took this as a signal that they had no need to apologise and could simply deny any responsibility for the previous attack. They elected to describe it as "youth's objection" to the "UK Government's evil".

The Iranian opposition NCRI later revealed that the attack on the UK embassy was in fact ordered by Khamenei and carried out by members and associates of the IRGC and Basij forces.

The arbitrary arrest and illegal detention of the UK Ambassador in Tehran in January 2020 is another example of the regime's contempt for the normal rules of diplomatic exchange.<sup>6</sup>

Senior officials within the regime have been quoted as demanding that the Ambassador be slaughtered and "chopped into pieces"<sup>7</sup>.

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3 Press release: Foreign Secretary affords Nazanin Zaghari Ratcliffe diplomatic protection, 7 March 2019 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-affords-nazanin-zaghari-ratcliffe-diplomatic-protection>

4 <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/4915082/nazanin-zaghari-ratcliffe-iran-release-demands/>

5 Foreign Secretary statement to the House of Commons on British Embassy Tehran, 30 November 2011 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-statement-to-the-house-of-commons-on-british-embassy-tehran>

6 Arrest of Ambassador to Iran: Foreign Secretary statement, 11 January 2020 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/arrest-of-ambassador-to-iran-foreign-secretary-statement>

7 <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1228872/iran-news-ayatollah-Khamenei-Ahmad-Alamolhoda-uk-ambassador-rob-macaire-video>

The only rational advice as to the policy that should be adopted towards Iran is that the UK should be firm in the face of a regime which is contemptuous of diplomatic obligations and international conventions and is the biggest state sponsor of terrorism in the world. There is little doubt that the Iranian Embassy in London is used to support a network of spies on those the regime regards as its enemies.

There must be some serious doubt about the value of orthodox ambassadorial exchange in the current climate. This regime does not conform to any sort of international legal or diplomatic framework. It interprets diplomatic activity as a sign of weakness and an opportunity to be exploited.

### **UPRISING IN IRAN – TIME FOR CHANGE – BOYCOTT OF SHAM ELECTION**

The widespread uprising in Iran and the tone of the slogans against the regime in recent years, (December 2017, January 2018, November 2019 and January 2020) along with the ever-increasing strikes and protests by people against oppression, poverty, inflation, systemic corruption and embezzlement of large funds by key figures in the regime are all signals that it is time for a change.

In recent protests the Iranian people chanted slogans such as ‘death to Khamenei’, ‘death to Rouhani’, ‘death to oppressor Shah or leader (Khamenei)’, ‘Basig and Sepah’ (revolutionary guard) you are Daesh (ISIS)’, ‘people are beggars ‘Agha’ (Khamenei) rules as a God’, ‘using Islam to destroy people and hardliners’, ‘reformist this is the end of an era’.

Khamenei’s order of ‘shoot to kill’ during the uprising of November 2019 led to 1,500 deaths<sup>8</sup>, 4,000 injured and the arrest of 12,000 people. The regime’s order to disconnect people from the internet all over Iran is a further sign of how much it fears the spread of information.

Economic bankruptcy, millions of young unemployed and widespread poverty (affecting 70% of Iran’s population) is not due to international sanctions, rather to corruption, embezzlement, engagement in terrorist activity within the region, missile development and the nuclear programme. Together, these factors have increased the Iranian people’s discontent and pushed the country to the point of crisis.

That widespread discontent is evidenced by the boycotting of the sham parliamentary elections in February 2020. Many media and international observers reported the lack of participation. This was a conscious choice from a people who know that Iran’s is a sham democracy and that only those approved by the mullahs can be elected.

### **EXPORT OF TERRORISM, WARMONGERING AND DESTABILISING ACTIVITIES**

1. This regime has so far been responsible for hundreds of terrorist operations outside Iran's borders.
2. Over the last three decades U.S. State Department annual reports, under both Democrat and Republican administrations, have consistently referred to the regime as the main state sponsor of international terrorism.<sup>9</sup>
3. The regime has spent billions of dollars of oil revenues to support terrorist and warmongering projects in various countries<sup>10</sup>.

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8 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-protests-specialreport-idUSKBN1YROQR>

9 US State Department: State Sponsors of Terrorism, <https://www.state.gov/state-sponsors-of-terrorism/>

10 <https://abcnews.go.com/International/iran-ordered-pay-billions-relatives-911-victims/story?id=54862664>

4. After the nuclear deal with P5+1 in 2015 and the lifting of part of the sanctions, more than \$150 billion was received by the regime in unfrozen assets. This money has been used to increase Iran's export of terrorism and interference in the internal affairs of other countries within the region, especially Syria, Yemen and Iraq and Palestine. During this period Iran's economy has all but collapsed and the living conditions of the Iranian people are worsening by the day. Supporters of the regime seek to blame this on western sanctions.

5. Iran is currently financing Hezbollah in Lebanon and Iraq, terrorist groups of Kata'ib Hezbollah, Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, Jaysh al-Mahdi, Hashd al-Shaabi, Badr Corps, etc. in Iraq; the Houthis in Yemen; Bashar al-Assad in Syria; Hamas and Hezbollah against Israel; and, the export of weapons and explosives to Bahrain and other countries in the region.

6. Lebanese Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah admitted that their weapons, money and all their expenses, including clothing and food, are provided by the Islamic Republic of Iran.<sup>11</sup>

7. Iranian-sponsored elements continue to mount terrorist operations and assassination attempts on opponents in various European countries as well as Turkey.

8. There have been a number of terrorist operations and assassinations directed at political activists with Iranian origins, in Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands.<sup>12 13</sup>

9. In March 2018, Iranian sponsored agents were responsible for an attempt to kill members of the main opposition 'The People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran' in the presence of Mrs. Maryam Rajavi, President-elect of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, at the Iranian New Year's gathering in Tirana, Albania.<sup>14</sup> This effort was thwarted due to the joint efforts and vigilance of security organisations of European governments, the United States and the Albanian security forces. Following the operation, the Albanian government expelled the Iranian Ambassador and two other terrorist/diplomats in December 2018.<sup>15</sup>

In October 23, 2019, the central office of the Albanian security forces announced at a press conference that two other Iranian diplomats, who had been in contact with Qassem Soleimani (late commander of the regime's terrorist Quds Force), were expelled from the country due to plans to carry out terrorist operations.<sup>16</sup>

10. A cooperation between the Belgian, French, and Germany police, intelligence agencies and judiciary foiled a planned terrorist plot by the regime in Tehran to bomb the grand gathering of the NCRI, and the PMOI/MEK, in Paris on 30 June 2018. The gathering in support of a free and democratic Iran was attended by close to 100,000 people including a 35-member delegation of current and former British MPs, the Iranian opposition leader Maryam Rajavi and many prominent figures who could have been killed, had the plot gone ahead.

A joint press release of the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office and the Belgian Federal Intelligence and Security Agency on 2 July 2018 confirmed that a terrorism investigation had been initiated by the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office in connection to the foiled bomb plot.

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11. <https://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/features/2016/06/25/In-first-Hezbollah-s-Nasrallah-confirms-all-financial-support-comes-from-Iran.html>

12. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/suspected-assassin-for-iran-found-in-dubai-sg309z9zx>

13. Press release: FCO statement on Iran demarche, 8 January 2019

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fco-statement-on-iran-demarche>

14. <https://townhall.com/columnists/rudygiuliani/2018/10/28/tehran-recognizes-iran-opposition-as-the-alternative-so-should-we-n2532601>

15. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-albania-iran-expulsion-idUSKCN1O12R7>

16. <https://www.cnsnews.com/article/international/patrick-goodenough/us-commends-albania-expelling-iranian-diplomats>

The press release also added: “A husband and wife, both of Belgian nationality but of Iranian origin, were arrested in Belgium and charged with attempted terrorist murder and the preparation of a terrorist offence. Both are suspected of wanting to commit a bomb attack in Villepinte (France) on Saturday 30 June 2018 at a conference held there by the MEK.”

According to the press release, “A contact person of the couple, Assadollah A., born on 22 December 1971, of Iranian nationality, was also arrested in Germany. He is an Iranian diplomat at the Austrian Embassy in Vienna”<sup>17</sup>. He was later extradited to Belgium where he is now awaiting trial for his role in the foiled terrorist attack.<sup>18</sup>

On 2 October 2018, French officials said Iran's ministry of intelligence was behind the plot to bomb a rally of Iranian opposition groups in Paris in June. In a statement, the French government said it had frozen the assets of two senior Iranian officials.<sup>19</sup>

In a statement on 8 January 2019, the FCO said, “The UK and a number of European partners today jointly raised with Iran our deep concerns about hostile activities and plots being planned and perpetrated in Europe. Such actions are unacceptable and must have consequences. We informed the Iranian authorities that those responsible for the June 2018 bomb plot planned in France are being included on the EU list of persons, groups and entities involved in terrorist acts and will be subject to restrictive measures.”<sup>13</sup>

In October 2017, Bob Blackman MP and 69 other cross-party MPs supported Early Day Motion 483 requesting that the Revolutionary Guards, as a whole, be placed on the British terrorist list.<sup>20</sup>

11. The regime's piracy includes mine-laying and blowing up the Japanese oil tanker in the waters of the Persian Gulf.

12 and 13. There have been attacks on Norwegian and Saudi ships in Oman waters.<sup>21</sup>

14. A US drone was shot down over international waters.<sup>22</sup>

15. The Iranian regime violated international sanctions against the Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad by sending an oil tanker to the country. This tanker was seized by the authorities in Gibraltar with the assistance of the Royal Navy. Despite the disapproval of the US government, the tanker was later released on the strength of a letter of commitment signed by the Iranian regime in the Gibraltar court stating that the destination of the tanker was not Syria. However, only a few days later, the tanker switched off its radars and ended up in Syria.<sup>23</sup>

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17 <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-07-03/diplomat-among-six-arrested-over-suspected-iran-plot/9934108>

18 <https://www.voanews.com/middle-east/voa-news-iran/iran-diplomat-arrested-plot-bomb-opponents-france-0>

19 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-45722523>

20 EDM 483: ROLE OF IRAN'S ISLAMIC REVOLUTIONARY GUARD CORPS, Tabled 31 October 2017, 2017-19 Session <https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/50948>

21 UK Government statement following the attacks on tankers in the Gulf of Oman, 14 June 2019 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/gulf-of-oman-attacks-uk-statement>

22 <https://www.usnews.com/news/world-report/articles/2019-06-20/iran-shoots-down-us-drone-heightening-fears-of-war>

23 Press release: Foreign Secretary condemns Iran over the Adrian Darya 1 oil tanker, 10 September 2019 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-condemns-iran-over-the-adrian-darya-1-oil-tanker--2>

The Iranian regime's move drew criticism from the United States of the British government, saying that they were deceived by the Iranian regime's lies.<sup>24</sup>

16. Intercepting and impounding a British tanker from international waters and taking it to the southern ports of Iran on 21 July, 2019. After weeks of continuous international pressure it was finally released on 27 September.<sup>25</sup>

17. Extensive missile strikes on Aramco oil facilities in Saudi Arabia, which supplied 5 percent of the world's oil and energy, and destroying large parts of it, was another terrorist attack of Khamenei's Revolutionary Guard Corps.<sup>26</sup>

### **IRAN CONTINUES TO ADVANCE ITS BALLISTIC MISSILE AND NUCLEAR PROGRAMME**

1. The Iranian regime continues to test ballistic missiles in violation of UN Security Council Resolutions.

2. In a joint statement on Iran on January 14, 2020, French, German and UK foreign ministers said that Tehran is not meeting its commitments on its nuclear programme and that they were referring the issue to the Dispute Resolution Mechanism.<sup>27</sup>

3. According to media reports in November 2019, Iranian authorities arrested a UN nuclear inspector in Iran.<sup>28</sup>

4. The IAEA Director General, Rafael Mariano Grossi, called on Iran on March 9, 2020 to cooperate immediately and fully with the IAEA and provide prompt access to locations which it has refused to let Agency inspectors visit, according to a statement by the International Nuclear watchdog.<sup>29</sup>

### **INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE IRANIAN RESISTANCE**

The National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), which is led by its president-elect Maryam Rajavi, advocates a secular and democratic Iran and enjoys grass-roots support inside Iran and widespread support among cross-party British and international political figures and other personalities. This support was displayed at the Free Iran conference in Albania, home of the members of the main Iranian Resistance, in July 2019. These are people who were moved under an international agreement from the former Camp Ashraf in Iraq. *(See reference 3 for excerpts from international speakers at the Free Iran conference.)*<sup>30</sup>

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24 Press release: Foreign Secretary calls Chief Minister of Gibraltar, Iranian Foreign Minister, 13 July 2019, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-calls-chief-minister-of-gibraltar-iranian-foreign-minister>

25 Iran tanker seizure: UK government response, 21 July 2019 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/iran-tanker-seizure-uk-government-response>

26 Statement by the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), 3 October 2019: NCRI Reveals Details of Attack on Saudi Oil Installations by Regime in Iran, <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/498257734/ncri-reveals-details-of-attack-on-saudi-oil-installations-by-regime-in-iran>

27 Press release: E3 foreign ministers' statement on the JCPoA, 14 January 2020 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/e3-foreign-ministers-statement-on-the-jcpoa-14-january-2020>

28 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-nuclear-inspector-exclusive-idUSKBN1XG1XM>

29 IAEA Office of Public Information and Communication, 9 March 2020: IAEA Director General Calls on Iran to Cooperate Immediately and Fully, <https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/iaea-director-general-calls-on-iran-to-cooperate-immediately-and-fully>

30 <https://www.washingtontimes.com/specials/free-iran-rally-2019-washington-dc/>

Dr Matthew Offord MP led a delegation of British politicians and lawyers to attend the Free Iran conference. In a speech during the main event, Matthew said<sup>31</sup>:

“The British delegation is here to remind our government of our obligations under international laws of human rights. I believe that we should follow the US example and proscribe the Iranian Republican Guard Corps as a terrorist organisation. They have a malign influence throughout the Middle East and are now threatening the UK government directly with attacks on our oil tankers.”

Going on to confirm his support for the resistance in Iran, Matthew stated: “The cause of human rights, freedom and democracy in Iran has widespread support in both Houses of the UK Parliament. This includes strong support for Madame Rajavi’s 10-point democratic platform for future Iran<sup>32</sup>, which abolishes the death penalty and prohibits torture. These are values that are close to our hearts and at the centre of our democracy in UK.”

## **CONCLUSION**

It is clear to a wide range of those who have studied the situation in Iran that it is virtually impossible to have a constructive, bilateral relationship with a regime which has such appalling track record.

The only correct way to respond to a regime which insists on promoting state sponsored terrorism sponsored is with firmness. This requires strong condemnation of their unacceptable behaviour and economic and diplomatic sanctions unless they are willing to work within the international community.

Normal diplomatic language and conventional relations do not work with Iran. It is like nourishing a viper in one’s bosom. There is not indication that they are willing to end their infiltration and spread of terrorism in Britain and Europe. The longer this goes on the greater the damage will be.

Iran is at a historic cross-roads. It is impossible to believe that the current level of repression at home will be tolerated without a massive reaction and its international behaviour can only lead to isolation.

The UK should abandon what is a policy of near-appeasement in favour of one that recognises the ongoing popular protests for change, holds the regime to account for its atrocities at home and abroad and backs a viable Iranian alternative supported by the Iranian people which already exists in the NCRI and has been articulated in its democratic plan for future of Iran.<sup>32</sup>

This firm policy should include the following recommendations in each area of concerns:

### **Supporting the Iranian Alternative**

The UK Government should:

- recognise the democratic aspirations of the Iranian people and their right to change the regime for a better future;

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31 Matthew leads UK delegation to Free Iran rally in Albania, 16 July 2019

<https://www.matthewofford.co.uk/news/matthew-leads-uk-delegation-free-iran-rally-albania>

32 <https://www.ncr-iran.org/en/maryam-rajavis-ten-point-plan-for-future-iran/>

- support the brave protesters in Iran and their organised Resistance movement, the NCRI, as they spearhead the popular struggle for democratic change in Iran;
- recognise and back the NCRI President-elect, Mrs Maryam Rajavi's 10-point plan for the future of Iran as a viable democratic alternative to the current theocratic regime in Iran<sup>32</sup>.

### **Accountability for Regime Leaders for Serious Human Rights Abuses**

The UK Government should:

- urgently take the necessary actions, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council and respected member of the Human rights Council, to ask the UN Secretary General Mr António Guterres, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mrs Michelle Bachelet and the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Iran, Mr Javaid Rehman, to send a fact-finding mission to Iran to investigate the killing of protesters and reports of torture in Iran's prisons of those arrested. This has been called for by the NCRI President-elect, Maryam Rajavi;
- press the regime to immediately release all political prisoners, dual citizens and those arrested in the recent popular protests;
- work with allies at the UN to hold the regime and its leaders to account for their atrocities including the killing of protesters and the brutal crackdown on the recent popular uprisings as well as the 1988 massacre of 30,000 political prisoners in Iran's prisons, by referring those responsible to an international tribunal.

### **Countering Regime's Destabilising Role in the Region**

The UK Government should:

- proscribe the IRGC and Iran's Intelligence Ministry as terrorist organisations in their entirety in order to deny the regime resources and funds it will use to suppress protesters and export terrorism;
- work with international and regional allies to expel the IRGC from Syria, Iraq and the Middle East.

### **Addressing Regime's Nuclear Deception and Future of the JCPOA**

The UK Government should work with international allies to reinstate the six UN Security Council resolutions on Iran's nuclear programme and the nuclear-related UN sanctions.

## **REFERENCES**

### **Reference 1a: Historic background**

When Khomeini came to power in Iran, unlike his promises in France, a few months prior to the revolution, forced the Iranian people into a referendum of "yes" to the Islamic Revolution as the only way of saying "no" to the previous disdained monarchy. He then, with the help of a few of his trusted mullahs, managed to write the Constitution of the Islamic Republic. In Khomeini's book, the Supreme Leader has absolute power that is superior to all other persons or authorities.

According to article 110 of the Constitution, the major choices regarding the Government will be made by the Supreme Leader. The Supreme Leader and related offices will have complete authority over the three branches of government, the judicial branch, the legislative branch and the executive branch, the ability to appoint the head of the judiciary, command of all the armed forces, the power to determine all internal relations and foreign policies, control of all the key business and financial foundations, control of state media et al. After Khomeini's death in 1989, Ali Khamenei, with the support of Hashemi Rafsanjani, was promoted to Ayatollah status and was officially declared the next Supreme Leader by the assembly of experts in Iran.

### **Reference 1b: Appalling Human Rights situation in Iran**

Repression, arbitrary arrests, beatings and different forms of systematic torture have been drafted into the laws for the Ministry of Interior and Judiciary including barbaric punishments such as floggings, hangings, amputation of body parts, gouging eyes out, stoning, burning etc.

Arbitrary arrests of dissidents calling for freedom of speech or writing pieces, especially bloggers, journalists, human rights activists, women's and students rights activists, workers, unions and guilds, lawyers, political activists et al... under the nonsensical excuse of "threats to national security" or "disrespect to regime officials" have become something of a routine.

Beatings and torture, high bail costs, long term prison sentences, brutality of prison guards and the lack of basic health and curative facilities in prison are but a few examples of to the horrific level of oppression in prisons in Iran.

The record of the regime includes the execution of 120,000 dissidents and political activists, the massacre of 30,000 political prisoners in the space of a few months in the summer of 1988 because of their beliefs and their support of the PMOI, the execution of 4,000 people just in Rouhani's terms as President, the killing of at least 1,500 of the protestors in the popular protests in November 2019, the firing of 2 missiles by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) aimed at the Ukrainian Airlines aircraft which resulted in the deaths of 176 passengers aboard that plane in January 2020, and the arrests of tens of thousands because of their participation in demonstrations, strikes and uprisings.

### **Reference 2: Jannati's interview with Iranian regime's state television network- Oct 17, 2014**

**Q:** You mentioned that one of your teachers was Imam Khomeini. Did your activities against the regime of Pahlavi (former Shah of Iran) start since you got to now Khomeini or you started earlier?

**Jannati:** No, it was from that time because before that we didn't dare to speak. I mean there was so much repression and we were just a kid and a seminary student. But those who were older than us seminary scholars and non-scholars did not dare to speak and were afraid. So, we didn't have any activities against the regime.

**Jannati:** They said it is useless, you cannot fight the regime. There is the power of SAVAK (Shah's Intelligence service). There is the power of the Police and Security Forces. They are everywhere. If somebody speaks out, they would report it immediately and tomorrow he would be arrested. When the revolution took place and the Revolutionary Courts were supposed to form, I was working in Tehran, here in Qezel Qaleh along with a few others. It is a long story. We were constructed to become judge but we were beginners, zero kilometres. That is we didn't know anything about justice and we had not studied law. We weren't educated, but we were familiar with the revolution and Islamic issues. Finally they told us there is no choice, you go here and a court was formed there. they would bring the criminals and tried them in that court and I was in Tehran for a while when Mullah Mottahari told me well you go to Khuzestan because the prisons there are full and we don't have enough judges. Every day there were more and more prisoners, they would be arrested and many times they had no place for them and there were no judges. Upon his insistence, I went to Khuzestan.

I went to Khuzestan and we launched the Revolutionary Courts and started to work but we didn't know what to do and I was desperate. Then I asked Imam [Khomeini] that whom we can execute. He gave me an example and a story and said work like this and many times we worked under his supervision.

**Jannati:** Another thing, they came to the streets and showed themselves. They set Mosques on fire. They tore down pictures of Imam. The said: Neither Gaza nor Lebanon, I sacrifice my life for Iran. They announce negative comments [opinion] about Velayat-e Faqih [Supreme Leader]. They declared their Anti-Velayat-e Faqih belief. They killed people. Set things on fire. They don't have a white point. Their records are totally black. Well, if somebody doesn't understand them, the issue was to overthrow the regime.

**Jannati:** If they were to be tried in court, it was not possible that any fair and aware judge would give them anything but the death sentence.

**Jannati:** If it was anywhere else, they would be executed on the spot. They would be executed right there. When we were working at the Revolutionary Courts, and some people [Judges] were in doubt whether to execute them, Imam said anyone whose crime is certain, [his execution] should not be delayed. Imam's opinion was that they had to be executed immediately.

**Q:** Sir, did you tried hard so that Mohammad Hossein return to the path?

**Jannati:** Yes, once I was in prison unexpectedly, all of a sudden I saw they brought [Mohammad] Hossein there. I was surprised and wanted to see him. I hadn't seen him for a while. They brought him in and he came to me and we talked for a while but it was useless. Later, the revolution took place and the Islamic governance and the Islamic Republic was established. They were freed and I talked with him at home for a while. Very sympathetic and paternal, and with interest I talked a lot with him. I realized that he was impressed so much by Rajavi. In there, they worked on him a lot and for a long time and one session talking with him is useless and my talks finally had no effect.

**Q:** It is a difficult test sir. You were one of those people who passed the test regarding your son. If we want to say in one sentence, how did you pass the test with your heads up because many people are caught up with their children?

**Jannati:** After all, we care more about Islam and Revolution and the System than our children. And if a child separates his path from us, naturally we cannot ...

**Reference 3: Iran: The Power of the Alternative**<sup>30</sup>

*Special Report prepared by Washington Times, July 2019*

Here are some of excerpts from international speakers at that conference:

**Rudy Giuliani, Attorney to the U.S. President and Former Mayor of New York City:** “This organization has grown and grown and grown, and I feel in this room today a kind of optimism that I don’t remember feeling before when we were in Paris. And of course, all of this is possible because of the leadership of Madame Maryam Rajavi, a truly exceptional leader. There are representatives of most of the major countries in the world here. They’ve gotten to know her. They’ve gotten to respect her. In my country, she’s thoroughly respected. The Ayatollah and Rouhani have said that this organization is the only one that’s really a danger to them.”

**Joseph Lieberman, Former U.S. Senator:** “now that you are here, the NCRI and the MEK can focus with full attention and energy on the ground, on the battlefield for freedom in Iran. Resistance groups are growing every day as the regime is weakening every day. A movement needs a strong, principled, collaborative leader. And that is what you have, thank God, in Mrs. Maryam Rajavi. She is able, she is principled, she is visionary, she is selfless, she cares for every one of you. let me once more say in conclusion, to others in the world who would preach appeasement, who would disillusion themselves, who would allow themselves to be entrapped in foolish, wasteful discussions with the mullahs, it’s time to stand firm against the regime. It’s time to stand with the people of Iran. It’s time to stand for the people’s freedom. It’s time to bring a government to Iran that will reject claims of leadership based on heredity or religion.”

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/specials/free-iran-rally-2019-washington-dc/>

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