

**Declaration by Maryam Rajavi
President-elect of the National Council of Resistance of Iran
on the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

This declaration was distributed in a conference at the European Parliament on December 6, 2017, on the eve of the anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the UN General Assembly. Mrs. Maryam Rajavi, President-elect of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, Maryam Rajavi, was the keynote speaker at the conference sponsored by the EP Friends of a Free Iran parliamentary group.

On the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we pay tribute to all women and men around the world who have risen to struggle against despots and tyrants to defend “the inherent dignity” and “the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family” as “the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.”¹ We particularly pay homage to the 120,000 brave combatants, including members of the People’s Mojahedin Organization of Iran, and the 30,000 political prisoners who were massacred in 1988 in the course of the struggle against the ruling religious dictatorship.

In the blood-soaked history of the struggle for human rights in Iran, the words of Professor Kazem Rajavi, who gave his life for defending victims of the 1988 massacre, continues to shine: “We are writing the history of human rights in Iran with our blood.”

While the Human Rights Day reminds the world of a major historical achievement, for the people of Iran, it is a day marked tears and blood, which is a reminder of a tortuous history; it is a reminder of the brutality of the ruling mullahs which “has outraged the conscience of mankind.”

At the same time, this day underscores the Iranian people and the Resistance’s unwavering commitment to wage a relentless struggle to overthrow the mullahs’ religious tyranny so that Iran is transformed into the cradle of freedom and justice, and the land of human rights.

The Call for Justice Movement, which has been expanding over the past two years, is emanating from the Iranian people’s resolve to achieve freedom and human rights. Beyond the unjustly spilled blood of the 1988 victims, this movement has targeted the foundation of the

¹ Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

ruling regime which relies on the slaughter and annihilation of its opposition forces. Therefore, the escalation of the movement is another manifestation of the end of the mullahs' religious dictatorship and of the certainty of its overthrow.

While recalling some examples of the Iranian regime's catastrophic onslaught on all aspects of human rights in Iran, we underline the Iranian Resistance's commitment to turn this dark page in Iranian history;

1. The religious dictatorship ruling Iran has launched a major assault on the Iranian people's right to life. Since Day One, the mullahs have founded the pillars of their rule on eliminating the Iranian people's human rights; they waged war on the people of Kurdistan, executed youths and massacred Kurdish villagers, slaughtered the Arabs of Khuzestan, killed and incarcerated members and supporters of the PMOI all across the nation. Only 28 months after Khomeini seized power in Iran, 1,000 PMOI members were imprisoned and more than 50 of their young supporters were killed under the blows of batons or stabbed by Khomeini's Revolutionary Guards and operative while distributing PMOI's weekly publication or flyers. Violating human rights then continued with the mass executions of PMOI members and other combatants in the 1980s (sometimes hundreds of people every day) and subsequently with the massacre of 30,000 political prisoners in 1988. Today, there is a long list of dossiers on political killings for which the mullahs have not been held accountable, including the chain murders, and the mutilation of Christian priests in the 1990s, and the slaughter of protesters in an uprising in Qazvin in 1993, the murder of Zahra Kazemi in 2003, and the crimes committed in Kahrizak prison in 2009, as well as the murders and massacres carried out in Camps Ashraf and Liberty in Iraq by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps' Qods Force and Khamenei's proxies in Iraq.

The killings were never indiscriminate, arbitrary or without the approval of the regime's leaders. Khomeini's horrifying decrees to massacre of PMOI prisoners in 1988, the recent remarks made by some of the regime's highest political, security and judiciary officials in defense of the massacre, admissions by Intelligence Ministry interrogators that this notorious ministry approves a list of opponents every year who must be "eliminated or abducted"², and many other pieces of evidence and documents that prove that each of killings have been planned, organized and carried out on the orders of the regime's top officials.

2. The number of political executions is estimated to be 120,000. It is impossible, however, to provide any estimates on the number of executions of people convicted of ordinary offenses.

² The report on the murder of Forouhars, narrated by Parastoo Forouhar, BBC, Nov. 22, 2016; written copy of notes by Mohseni, an employee of the Ministry of Intelligence (MOIS) on July 5, 2000; and of Asghar Eskandari, aka as Sayyahi, another MOIS employee on the same date: "The physical eliminations... were among the duties of our section since 1991 and list was designated in a working print sent to us by the Ministry... These measures were a working procedure in the Ministry's organization... to the extent that the eliminations and abductions were considered as the most prominent activities in the annual planning."

Depending on their political and security imperatives, and to intimate and terrorize the public, the ruling mullahs have either hanged or shot many juveniles and even many innocent prisoners. In 2016, regime officials put the number of death-row inmates at 5,300.³ But reports from numerous prisons confirm that the number of death-row prisoners are actually several times higher. Some of them are Afghan nationals. The mullahs take advantage of the status of these convicts and forcibly send them to war against the people of Syria. The execution of juvenile

offenders is another atrocity the clerical regime continue to commit, for which reason Amnesty International has criticized the regime as “the last executioner of children.”⁴

The countless number of executions notwithstanding, what is important is the ruling mullahs’ disregard for peoples’ lives. The criminals who are known as “life-taking judges” in the Judiciary order executions of group after group of prisoners without fair trials and on the orders of the mullahs’ supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, so that their fragile regime could preserve its balance.

3. The mullahs’ religious dictatorship has deprived the people of Iran of the right to determine their political and nation’s future. Any form of political activity, forming any associations and gatherings, publishing any newspapers and circulating information by outlets not affiliated with the ruling regime are prohibited.

No party could operate unless “it explicitly declares its allegiance to the Constitution and the principle of the absolute rule of the Velayat-e Faqih.”⁵ And no one can be recognized as a party member without “conviction and practical belief in the Constitution and the absolute rule of the Velayat-e Faqih.”⁶

Opposition to the regime is considered a crime and any contact with the People’s Mojahedin Organization faces heavy punishment. Those who do not fully abide by the mullahs’ supreme leader are not eligible to hold an office in the government and other government agencies.

The people of Iran are deprived of the right to elect freely. Instead, the regime holds election masquerades which provides a framework for the rival ruling factions to divide power among themselves. Notorious torturers, members of the death commissions involved in the 1988

³ Hassan Nowrouzi, spokesman for the Judicial Committee of the Majlis (mullahs’ parliament), the state-run ILNA news agency, August 8, 2017.

⁴ Amnesty International report in June 2007.

⁵ The law on “the procedure of activities of political parties and groups”, Article 2, waver 5, official newspaper, November 19, 2016.

⁶ The same law, Article 4.

massacre, and IRGC commanders are members of the mullahs' parliament (Majlis) or the Assembly of Experts.

Earlier this month, the regime's former president confessed, "Today, a sheer minority sees itself as the absolute truth, the exclusive owner of the country and the revolution, and the master of people with the absolute right to rule."⁷

4. The mullahs' religious tyranny has deprived the people of Iran from the right to enjoy the rule of law, putting in place an absolute totalitarian state instead. Article 57 of the regime's Constitution has added the word, "absolute" to the "rule of the jurisprudent", granting unlimited powers and authority to the mullahs' supreme leader.⁸ In practice, all public power in Iran emanates from this individual. In fact, arbitrary use of power is a perpetual reality under the rule of the clerical regime sanctioned by numerous articles in the Constitution. In general, any law in today's Iran inherently violates the rule of law because it must be ratified by the Guardian Council whose members are appointed by the supreme leader. The Iranian people have been denied their fundamental rights and essential freedom, reflected in the following measures:
 - Arbitrary decision-making by a life-time ruler and his clique that run counter to Iran's national and popular interests. The flagrant violations of the Iranian people's human rights have been indispensable to such abuses.
 - The ruling mullahs have always refused to be held accountable by the people of Iran. Regime officials and their affiliates have enjoyed a free rein in committing all sorts of financial fraud and corruption and trampled upon the rights of the people without suffering any consequences or prosecution. They have transformed the Judiciary into a sword in the hand of the mullahs' supreme leader. The Iranian people have no leaving judicial security nor do they enjoy the principle of presumption of innocence. The mullahs have turned the parliament into a club for the ruling factions where no legislation is passed unless it serves the interest of that "exclusive minority." They have transformed the executive branch into "a facilitator" for the supreme leader, and turned law enforcement agencies into institutions of suppression, espionage and murder.
5. The ruling theocracy has denied the Iranian people "the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion." Since the onset of its rule, the Iranian regime has harassed, arrested, and purged dissidents and adherents of other religions, including Christians, Jews, Baha'is, Sunnis, Ahl-e Haq and Gonabadi dervishes, as well as Shiites who have opposed the principle of the Velayat-e Faqih. Inquisition is an institutionalized procedure for employment and

⁷ Letter to Ali Khamenei by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Dolat-e Bahar, November 28, 2017.

⁸ Constitution of Iran's clerical regime, Article 57: "The ruling branches of the Islamic Republic of Iran are the Legislative Branch, the Executive Branch and the Judiciary Branch act under the supervision of the absolute guardian of affairs and the nation's leader according to the future articles of this law."

educational opportunities. Religious excommunication and charges of apostasy are the important regime tools for suppression.

The first sentence of Khomeini's fatwa for the massacre of PMOI members in 1988 was the false claim that "The hypocrites [PMOI]... do not believe in Islam whatsoever and whatever they say is out of duplicity and hypocrisy; their leaders have confessed that they are apostates..."

Khomeini and his successor, Khamenei, executed 30,000 members of the PMOI and other combatant organizations in 1988 as well as many others throughout their rule with such slanders to justify their crimes against humanity under the banner of Islam. The ruling regime's demagoguery and lies in fabricating such labels notwithstanding, such bloodshed and slanders run counter to the spirit of Islam.

6. The people of Iran are denied "the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals" (article 8 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). No such courts exist in Iran. The courts do not observe due process and act at the whim of religious judges, or torturers and suppressive agents.

Article 167 of the regime's Constitution subjected the fate and the rights of the accused or the plaintiffs to the personal whims and intentions of judges appointed by the mullahs' supreme leader⁹. Every judge can make a decision based on his own interpretation of the so-called "credible fatwas" -- the alias for Khomeini's book, *Tahrir Al-Vasileh*.

Those arrested do not enjoy any rights. Trials do not last more than a few minutes, even in sensitive cases where death sentences are issued. Many of defendants do not have lawyers or have to accept court-appointed lawyers who often act against the interests of their clients. In some cases, lawyers are denied access to files of their clients and if they insist, they will be prosecuted and sometimes sentenced to long prison terms.

7. The regime's civil laws are based on gender discrimination. The regime's Penal Code – the Islamic Punishment Act – has been drafted entirely on the basis of corporal punishments such as execution, torture and flogging. In addition to stipulating inhumane punishments such as crucifixion, pushing off of cliffs, limb amputation, etc., the Act has specified death penalty for more than 100 offenses and flogging for 50 other offenses.

⁹ Constitution of Iran's clerical regime, Article 167: "The judge is duty bound to make effort to find the verdict for every dispute in the drafted laws. If he does not find any, he can issue a verdict by citing valid Islamic sources or credible fatwas."

According to one of the articles of this inhumane act, implemented frequently every year, the punishment for stealing is amputating four fingers for the first-time offenders. For a “repeat offender, the left leg is amputated from the ankle down.”¹⁰

According to another article, the punishment for “Moharebeh (waging war on God)”, a charge usually used for the PMOI, is one of the following four punishments: a. execution; b. crucifixion; c. amputation of the right hand and the left foot, d. banishment.”¹¹

In the case of political opponents, the regime has invented and implemented 74 forms of torture in its prisons. Raping female prisoners has been ongoing in the regime’s prisons as a systematic method of torture. Denying access to medical treatment causes death by attrition among sick prisoners. Political prisoners are often subjected to this form of punishment.

8. The clerical regime has eliminated the Iranian people's right to have free access to information and freely disseminate their ideas.

Online publications and websites not affiliated with the regime are not allowed to operate. All books are censored. Telephone conversations are monitored. Satellite television broadcasts are systematically jammed. Blogs, websites, emails, and social media activities are under complete surveillance.

A Security Police Network called FATA reconnoiters and prosecutes opposition activities on the social media in Tehran and dozens of other cities. These surveillance activities have so far led to the arrest, torture and harassment, and even deaths of many youth such as Sattar Beheshti.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, the Bassij, the State Security Force, the ministries of Communications, Intelligence and Guidance, the Judiciary, presidential directorate and several other institutions are involved in filtering websites and controlling social media activities. In 2016, the regime's Public Prosecutor admitted that they block between 15 to 20,000 online networks and channels every week.¹²

9. While Iran is a multi-ethnic country, the clerical regime has deprived Iran’s national minorities, including the Arabs, Turks, Kurds, Turkmens, Baluchis, Ghasghaiis, Lors and Bakhtiaris of equal rights, welfare, medical treatment, education, urban and rural services, suitable housing and communicating in their mother tongue.

¹⁰ The Islamic Punishment Law, adopted in 2013, Article 278

¹¹ Ibid, Article 282

¹² Mohammad Ja'far Montazeri, General Prosecutor, state media, February 16, 2017

The Arabs have faced inhumane efforts by the mullahs to change the ethnic blend in their region. The Baluchis and Kurds are usually targeted in indiscriminate shootings by Revolutionary Guards in the border areas resulting in the death of their children.

10. Iran's women have fought for freedom and equality for more than 150 years. However, they are deprived of equal rights in all political, economic, educational, judicial and family arenas. They are prohibited from assuming professions such as judgeship, studying in dozens of educational fields in college, entering sports stadiums to watch the games, and activities in some athletic fields.

Women's participation in the job market is limited to 12 or 15 percent at most.¹³ Women receive much lower wages compared to men for equal work. They are constantly pressured by various rules and directives to reduce their working hours or abandon their jobs altogether and join millions of unemployed women. The first victims of economic bankruptcy in Iran are working women as they are being increasingly laid off. Instead, the regime actively and ceaselessly controls and humiliates women particularly under the pretext of improper veiling. Twenty government agencies monitor women's compulsory veiling. State-backed gangs target women in acid attacks. A harrowing wave of such acid attacks took place in Isfahan in autumn 2014. In addition, women are not safe from salacious aggression by the Revolutionary Guards, Bassij forces and plainclothes agents.

11. Violations of human rights of the people of Iran intended to consolidate the mullahs' repressive rule are also accompanied by flagrant violations of property right. This is in violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, particularly Article 17.

Confiscating houses and all properties of political opponents; gouging public lands, pastures, forests and mountains; seizing a large number of houses, pieces of Real Estate and properties by the "Setad Ejraii" (Executive Headquarter) of the mullahs' supreme leader (often without any reason or pretext); looting most of the public profit-making companies and institutes are but some examples of the clerical regime's flagrant violations of property rights in Iran. This has enabled Khomeini and the Revolutionary Guards to control more than half of the country's Gross National Product. In the first weeks of his rule, Khomeini, the regime's founder, who viewed the Iranian people's wealth and properties as spoils of war, said they must be confiscated by the Revolutionary Council and Revolutionary Guards Committees.¹⁴

¹³ In March 2017, Omid Ali Parsa, head of Iran's Statistics Center, claimed "palpable increase in women's economic participation" and said, "The rate has reached 14.9 per cent in 2016." (The state-run ISNA news agency, March 13, 2017)

¹⁴ Khomeini's order, February 28, 1979, on confiscation of properties remaining from the former regime: "To all the Islamic Revolution's Committees across the country, I order that whatever they obtained from these spoils, they can deposit it in the bank under a specific number. Instruct the government that these spoils have nothing to do with the government and it would be taken care of by the Council of Revolution. Whatever obtained by government agents must be handed over to the bank in the same account." Khomeini's Sahifa, Vol. 6, page 267

Later on, he wrote to his President, "The government may unilaterally revoke its contracts with the people. It can prevent any undertaking which contradicts 'the interests of Islam.' "¹⁵

Similarly, the people of Iran have been deprived of the right to free choice of employment and the right to equal pay for equal work. A small minority comprised of the regime's officials and their affiliates, as well as members of security agencies and the armed forces enjoy huge incomes and tremendous wealth. But the greater majority of the population receive incomes that do not provide for their most basic needs. More than 90 percent of the labor force in Iran has to work with temporary contracts without any job security. Hundreds of thousands of poor youths, especially in the Kurdish areas, have had to work as porters but they are repeatedly shot and killed by the Revolutionary Guards while doing their cumbersome job.

A large number of people have resorted to peddling on the streets of Tehran and other major Iranian cities but are constantly attacked by the regime's repressive forces who confiscate their meager belongings.

12. Under the mullahs' rule, the people of Iran are deprived of the right to form independent blue and white collar workers' syndicates and trade unions, and independent student associations. Instead, the clerical regime has created fake and phony unions which are part of its security and intelligence apparatus to control blue and white collar workers and students. Many of those who tried to create independent associations, particularly workers and teachers, have been arrested, sentenced to long-term imprisonment and deprived of their social rights.
13. The people of Iran suffer from major discriminations under the clerical regime. Members of the ruling factions have taken over everything and accumulated astronomical wealth and status. They are exempted from paying taxes and enjoy countless benefits in every field. There are no administrative or security red tape that affect them and they are never prosecuted for their countless breaches and corruption. In contrast, the greater majority of the people of Iran are
14. always the inferior party in the so-called courts and do not enjoy any rights; any share or even a small share of employment, educational, and economic opportunities. They are have no choice but to pay bribes and endure various forms of humiliation and oppression.
15. Adequate housing is a fundamental human rights of which many Iranians have been deprived. Today, some 20 million Iranians live in impoverished suburban shanty towns, or so-called unlicensed residences, which do not receive minimum city services. Due to pervasive government corruption and theft, the average safety and security ratio of urban and rural houses is dangerously low, particularly in recently-built houses. Millions of Iranians are left defenseless in the face natural disasters, particularly earthquakes. Some 500,000 Iranians have

¹⁵ The letter was written on January 11, 1988, Sahifa Noor, Vol. 20, pp. 451-452

lost their lives over the past quarter century due to natural disasters, and the regime's inaction and delay in sending relief.

16. The people of Iran are deprived of many of their rights. This includes being deprived of the right to know of the names of their children who were massacred in 1988, or in the executions that took place in the 1980s. They are deprived of knowing where their mass graves are.

Since the 1988 massacre, whenever the families have discovered any trace of the mass graves, the clerical regime has either desecrated or covered them by concrete, or constructed buildings over them.

17. The Shah's dictatorship perceived by the outsiders as an island of stability was overthrown when it buckled under international pressure and stopped its abuse of human rights, the floggings and executions. Having learned its lessons from the previous dictatorship, the mullahs are maintaining and stepping up their brutal violations of human rights which they consider vital to their survival. Nevertheless, the continuing repression and the relentless confrontation between the population and the clerical regime will bear no result other than the regime's certain downfall.

The Iranian Resistance is striving to bring freedom, equality and democracy to Iran. It has been working to establish a republic based on separation of religion and state. It has pledged to restore human rights and abolish the death penalty after the overthrow of the mullahs' religious dictatorship. It is committed to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention Against Torture, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It also seeks to create a modern Judicial System based on respect for the principle of innocence, the right to defense, the right to appeal, the right to public trial, and full independence of judges.

May our people experience "the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want" in tomorrow's Iran "as the highest aspiration of the common people."¹⁶

¹⁶ The preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights