

*Speech by Maryam Rajavi on the anniversary of the massacre in Ashraf on September 1, 2013*

The massacre in Ashraf is a chapter directly tied to the Resistance, freedom and human rights in Iran  
August 30, 2017

Honorable friends, dear sisters and brothers,

We have come together to pay homage to the epical resistance and sacrifice of Ashraf residents on September 1, 2013.

This ceremony coincides with Eid Al-Adha.

On the occasion of this Eid and this anniversary, we have come together to strengthen our vows to the 52 PMOI members who sealed their pledges by sacrificing their lives.

We pledge to always remember their sacrifice and wage an unrelenting battle that will overthrow the mullahs' religious dictatorship.

Indeed, each moment in that historic confrontation in Ashraf that September day was astonishing.

My beloved sister, Zohreh Ghaemi, commanded the confrontation to the last breath.

In another scene of the videos captured, we witnessed four PMOI members whose hands were cuffed behind their backs.

All of them had been shot in the head, and their lifeless bodies laid next to each other.

The assassins shot even the wounded laying on beds at the clinic.

A glance at each and every one of them shows that they were fighting to the last moment, to their last breath and to the last drop of their blood.

Let us remember the words of Massoud Rajavi, the Resistance's Leader, who said, "If you were to ask me to give a simple definition of the word Mojahed, I would say that being a Mojahed means adhering to one's pledge through eternal sacrifice in the history of Iran."

Among these martyrs were also pioneers from Iran's younger generation:

Rahman Mannani, Amir Nazari, Saeed Akhavan, Nasser Habashi, and Yasser Hajian. These were pioneers for the younger generation of Iranians. Selfless and knowledgeable freedom fighters who chose to fight on the frontlines equipped with full sincerity and honesty.

Nor will we ever forget the seven residents of Ashraf who were taken hostage. The government of Iraq never informed us of their fates. Unfortunately, the UN, US, EU and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees did not compel the puppet government of Iraq at the time to hold itself accountable for this abduction.

The mullahs and their puppet, former prime minister Nouri al-Maliki, were complicit in this kidnapping, but have cowardly refused to claim responsibility.

But we will not forget or relent until we take the mullahs' religious tyranny and their agents and mercenaries in Iraq to the courts to face justice.

Some human epics need the passage of time to reveal their true message. But there are also epics that immediately inspire action and regenerate themselves. The Epic of Ashraf was one such example because it immediately created a large impact led by the perseverance of the 42 brave surviving PMOI members.

You were witnesses to the scenes of the massacre. You emerged from that battle, eager to fight on under the command of Maryam Akbari in those moments of life and death. Indeed, she fulfilled her historic duty in the best way possible. At the time, you were not just 42 individuals, but representatives of an enchained nation that wishes to bring down the mullahs' tyrannical regime. You lived to fight the murderers.

You represented the honorable history and dignity of Ashraf. Your role was crucial in exposing the massacre before the UN representatives.

Your fight in those difficult days changed the entire landscape. You conveyed your message to every political prisoner and rebellious youth in Iran and showed them the way. The message has been: Rise up and resist.

The clerical regime wanted to compensate for its nuclear retreat with the executions of a long line of the Iranian people's vanguards. But you turned this massacre into a legendary episode of perseverance, which inspired hope and rekindled the spirit of resistance among the people of Iran.

The mullahs wished to annihilate this resistance all together. They wanted to put an end, once and for all, not only to the story of Ashraf, but to the PMOI and the Resistance and even the leader of this Resistance.

The clerical regime and its allies had long been planning for this plot, which ultimately led to that great crime committed on September 1, 2013.

During the grand gathering of Iranians in Paris in July 2013, I spoke about the orchestrated choir of Khamenei, former UN envoy to Iraq Martin Kobler and Maliki who had specifically targeted the Resistance's leader.

The story was that in July 2012, upon the requests and mediation of a group of prominent personalities from the US and Europe, I accepted to have a meeting in their presence, with Martin Kobler. This meeting was held before the very last meeting I was to have with him. I had stopped meeting with him for some time because he was biased and openly took sides in favor of the mullahs.

Kobler had already met and held lengthy talks with officials of the mullahs' Intelligence Ministry prior to our meeting. In addition to his deceptions with respect to the PMOI's relocation from Ashraf to Liberty, he relentlessly asked questions and sought information about the Resistance's Leader Massoud Rajavi.

I became irritated and objected to this line of questioning, but he remained stubborn and continued with the queries. He even claimed at one point that his real intention was to provide protection for Massoud in the course of the relocation to Camp Liberty.

His malign and awkward questions even outraged the personalities at the meeting. Some of them literally rose up in protest and inquired why Kobler was asking such suspicious questions and why he needed the information. The meeting ended in a tense atmosphere.

A week after the atrocious crime on September 1 in Ashraf, the deputy commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) rephrased Kobler's intentions and unmasked their corrupt and botched intentions. He said, "Massoud Rajavi has yet to react [to the massacre]. This means that either

he is dead and they are not saying anything about it, or that he has suffered a psychological breakdown.” Of course, this is a dream that they would have to take with them to their graves...

Mr. Tahar Boumedra, former director of the UN Human Rights Office in Iraq, had experienced first-hand the plots and conspiracies of the clerical regime and its puppet government in Iraq and their complicity with Kobler. He had information about many of their plans at the time. Twenty days after the massacre in Ashraf, he revealed that the main objective of the Iranian regime was to locate the Leader of the Resistance in Ashraf who was to be subsequently arrested and extradited to the regime along with 200 others [in Ashraf and Liberty].

On November 15, 2013, Mr. Boumedra reiterated that the regime had assumed that they would get a hold of the Resistance’s Leader during the September 1 massacre.

Of course, neither the Shah nor the mullahs have succeeded in taking Massoud's life or in annihilating the generation he educated.

Hossein Ali Montazeri, the former designated heir to the regime's first supreme leader Khomeini, had accurately pointed out that “the Mojahedin should not be considered merely as individuals; they represent a school of thought and a philosophy. Killing them would not destroy but promote this.” Yes, those who were martyred in Ashraf are being replaced by dozens of others in every corner of our country.

We even saw that Ward 350 of Evin Prison turned into a bastion of rebellion and another Ashraf. And the brave Mojahed, Gholamreza Khosravi, created another wonderful epic in that ward.

Those slain in Ashraf on September 1, 2013 were the trailblazers of 1,000 Ashrafs and paved the way for freedom and victory. They created soaring and towering values. Their presence is still felt and their martyrdom continues to have an impact. They continue to lead the way on the frontlines of our battle.

Distinguished guests, dear sisters and brothers,

Four years have passed since the mass executions of PMOI members in Ashraf. This massacre, however, does not fade in the past. It is an unresolved chapter directly tied to the Resistance, and freedom and human rights in Iran, today.

The chapter of Ashraf is where three things coincided:

First, the clerical regime’s senseless efforts to destroy Resistance forces and the alternative to the regime;

Second, the former US administration’s policy of appeasement, which harmed the PMOI/MEK and the entire region through betrayals;

And, finally, the glorious perseverance and resistance of the PMOI/MEK.

On the anniversary of the September 1 massacre, I would like to speak about three issues. One is the true motivation behind the mass executions of the PMOI/MEK; another is the link between the dossier of Ashraf and the nuclear talks and the JCPOA; and finally, the need to activate the dossier of Ashraf and Liberty and seek justice.

Consider the 14-year history of the steadfast perseverance in Ashraf and Liberty.

Both during the years that Ashraf was under US forces’ protection and also during the years when the puppet government of Iraq controlled Ashraf, the PMOI/MEK showed maximum flexibility in order to facilitate a political resolution. They repeatedly declared that they would accept any option but surrender.

The relevant parties, including the former US administration, the UN, and the Iraqi government under Maliki, had no response but betrayal.

In 2011 alone, the PMOI/MEK offered 14 plans to the US and UN for relocation and transfer out of Iraq.

The Iranian Resistance published at least 50 legal opinions and well-documented legal reports on the legal status and rights of the residents of Ashraf, which refuted the hollow claims made by the Iranian regime.

But none of these were issues of concern. I have said on several occasions over the past years that “the regime’s real demand was not the departure of the PMOI from Ashraf and Iraq. What they sought was to either physically annihilate the PMOI/MEK or to force them to surrender. And that left no other options.”

Over the past years, in the context of the choice between giving up or continuing the fight, the PMOI/MEK has always chosen to persevere and fight on, the very choice that has been the secret to the movement’s survival and advancement.

In all these years, particularly in the midst of these attacks, those who had already surrendered and those who had already denied the value of resistance, assailed the residents of Ashraf by posing questions such as, “What is the use of perseverance in that place? Is it really worth it?”

Either truly terrified or due to having ties with the religious tyranny in Iran, they were unable to understand the truth that a liberation movement’s ability to fight and persevere is its most effective weapon. Whenever a movement lays down this weapon, it loses its honor, dignity, credibility, and popular backing; and ultimately, it would not be able to maintain its physical existence.

If our judgment were to be based on a selfish vision, then it would not seem reasonable to disrupt a safe and healthy life. From this vantage point, none of the episodes of perseverance in Ashraf and Liberty, and none of the struggles of other nations has any worth or value.

Therefore, we must hail Ashraf and its residents who have been the epitome of rebellion against despotism, tyranny and exploitation.

From this standpoint, Ashraf represents the spirit and symbol of struggle. As such, it is the main issue of concern for Iran and every Iranian; it is the spirit of this era which will continue to live on.

Dear sisters and brothers,

Another issue I would like to address is the link and relationship between the September 1st massacre in Ashraf and the nuclear talks.

In fact, the mass executions of Mojahedin in Ashraf on September 1, 2013 was the hidden half of the regime’s retreat in the nuclear talks and the JCPOA.

On November 24, 2013, the Iranian regime’s representatives engaged in the nuclear talks in Geneva, signed an agreement.

Before the start of these talks, in September 2013, Khamenei took action through his puppet, former Iraqi prime minister Maliki, and committed the massacre in Ashraf.

Two years later, on October 21, 2015, Khamenei wrote a letter to Rouhani and approved the nuclear agreement. Eight days after that, on October 29, 2015, Camp Liberty was attacked by rockets as a result of which 24 PMOI members were killed and hundreds were wounded.

Khamenei’s final step in preparing for the carnage in Liberty was supposed to take place in October 2016 during the mourning days of Ashura (marking the martyrdom of the third Shiite Imam, Hussein AS) or 40 days later around November 20 during the mourning ceremonies of Arba’in. But the PMOI

completed its major relocation earlier and thus foiled the regime's strategic plan before they could carry it out.

Let me summarize. All the stages of the nuclear agreement, starting from secret talks to the signing of JCPOA, were accompanied by attacks on and slaughter of Ashraf residents because the regime was focused on the annihilation of the PMOI and the Iranian Resistance, namely its alternative, in order to guarantee its survival. All this is because the Iranian Resistance, as the alternative, poses an existential threat to the regime.

This is why, in the wake of the massacre in Ashraf, the IRGC issued a congratulatory declaration. Additionally, Qassem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC Qods Force, told the Assembly of Experts that the attack on Ashraf was more important than the regime's counterattack against the PMOI's 1988 Eternal Light Operation (which shook the regime to its foundations). The acting commander in chief of the IRGC said, "This incident has a far-reaching strategic impact on future developments in the region with monumental dimensions."

Yes, this was the crux of the matter: the regime's efforts to annihilate its alternative. This is why the clerical regime, the government of Iraq and their international accomplices, particularly Martin Kobler, planned to turn Camp Liberty into a killing field for the PMOI/MEK or at least a place for its political destruction or organizational disintegration. But the Mojahedin turned the barren desert of Camp Liberty into a lush garden. They compelled the international community to open the way for their relocation out of Iraq.

"Fain would they extinguish Allah's light with their mouths, but Allah will not allow but that His light should be perfected, even though the Unbelievers may detest [it]."

(The Holy Quran, Chapter 9, Repentance, verse 32)

Accordingly, the events that took place behind the scenes of JCPOA with respect to Ashraf and the Iranian Resistance, and about freedom and human rights in Iran, must be brought out to light. What were the treacherous amendments to this agreement which have not been made public yet?

Sisters and brothers,

The last topic I would like to speak about is the need for activating the legal dossier on Ashraf. You are aware that the US policy over the past 16 years, especially the Obama administration's policy, helped secure windfall gains for the mullahs' regime. The overwhelming portion of the disasters caused by the regime in the Middle East were enabled by such concessions. Now that the world has discovered the horrible consequences of such a policy, it is essential to open the most important dossiers in this regard, including the dossier on Ashraf.

The truth is that the disarmament of the National Liberation Army of Iran in 2003, as well as the US transfer of security and protection of Ashraf to the government of Iraq and its evacuation of Ashraf, were the biggest American concessions made to the regime.

If the PMOI had not been disarmed, the Iranian regime would have never been able to infiltrate Iraq to the extent that it has.

This legal dossier must be opened to deprive the regime of all the concessions and aids that have delayed its downfall.

For example, it must be made clear why the US military forces were ordered not to intervene during the savage attack on Ashraf by Maliki's government on July 28 and 29, 2009. Why were they instructed to assume the role of observers and spectators?

Why did the US military unit leave its position near Ashraf on April 8, 2011, a few hours before the Iraqi Army launched its attack?

It must also become clear which parties drafted and published false and biased reports against Ashraf residents in the name of the United Nations and what were the deals made that enabled such reports?

Another important question is why did the United Nations not undertake its responsibility of carrying out an independent inquiry into the massacre in Ashraf?

Why didn't the United Nations even investigate the assassination of Amer Kobaissi, the UNAMI director in Diyala Province, Iraq? Mr. Kobaissi had visited Ashraf the day after the mass executions of the PMOI members in Ashraf despite threats made by the regime's forces and subsequently published a report on the massacre.

The pillage of hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of the PMOI's properties in Ashraf is another issue that must be seriously investigated. It is the responsibility of the US and UN to oblige the government of Iraq to reimburse the PMOI for its assets and properties, all of which were at the disposal of this government.

US House Resolution 650, adopted by the Foreign Affairs Committee, and a similar resolution adopted by the Foreign Relations Committee in the Senate, have called on the US administration to take the necessary measures.

Dear friends, sisters and brothers,

I would like to sincerely thank the honorable personalities, friends and supporters of Ashrafis and the Iranian Resistance, who have published valuable books and papers about Ashraf over the past years.

I appreciate Mr. Juan Garces's efforts for his defense of the PMOI in the Court of Spain;

I thank Mr. Paulo Casaca for his elucidations and great efforts in defense of the rights of Ashraf residents, including the report he prepared on behalf of the European Parliament;

I thank Mr. Tahar Boumedra for his book, the Untold Story of Ashraf;

Mr. Stevenson for his book, Self-Sacrifice;

Mr. Tanter for writing and publishing numerous reports, statements and declarations in defense of the rights of Ashraf residents;

Mr. Alejo Vidal Quadras for publishing a report on his visit to Ashraf.

I must also mention the publication of a comprehensive report regarding the September 1, 2013 massacre in Ashraf, which contains numerous documents as well as wide-ranging, accurate and in-depth political revelations. This report has been published by the National Liberation Army of Iran.

Distinguished guests,

Under pressure from international sanctions and encircled by a disenchanting society, the mullahs' religious dictatorship senses its imminent downfall. That is why it retreated from its nuclear program.

The more important fact, however, is that two years after the signing of the JCPOA, the regime's crises have not been resolved and the ruling mullahs have not been able to mend schisms at the top of the establishment. The regime is not capable of pulling the country's economy out of bankruptcy, nor is it capable of responding to the demands of a defiant society. And it cannot find any way out of the quagmire in Syria.

In contrast, today, the blood of the martyrs of Ashraf is more inspiring and responsible than ever for motivating protests and strengthening social efforts to establish the Army of Freedom.

At this very moment, the courageous and persevering political prisoners in Gohardasht Prison are on a hunger strike. Their long hunger strike has drawn extensive sympathy and solidarity from people all across the country and around the world. We urge the United Nations and Western governments to pressure the religious tyranny ruling Iran to end torture and mistreatment of prisoners. We salute these brave political prisoners.

Yes, the spirit of martyred residents of Ashraf continues to inspire people to establish the Army of Freedom.

Today, the mission of Ashraf has been rekindled in 1,000 Ashrafs and 1,000 bastions of rebellion inside Iran.

The mission is regime change and the overthrow of the religious dictatorship in Iran. The mission is the establishment of freedom. In all certainty and without the slightest doubt, this mission will be accomplished.

Hail to the martyrs of Ashraf

Hail to the people of Iran