

*Excerpts from remarks by Maryam Rajavi at Ashraf 3 on the anniversary of the  
founding of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran  
September, 2019*

Fellow compatriots!

Courageous members of Resistance Units inside Iran!

Mothers, fathers, honorable men and women who have supported and protected the Mojahedin with your sacrifices, lives, and hearts!

Sisters and brothers!

Congratulations to you and to the people of Iran on the beginning of the 55<sup>th</sup> year of the auspicious existence of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI/MEK).

The founding of the PMOI marks a rebellion in Iranian history, which incessantly shakes the foundations of the Shah's palace and the Sheikh's (the regime's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei) Beyt (office).

It marks a rebellion against what should not be; from the talk of reform and expediency by those who lay claim to politics, to the reactionary ideology and deception of those who lay claim to religion.

And, rebellion and uprising for what should be; from freedom to justice and equality, for which resistance units and the Army of Freedom have risen up.

Let us send thousands of salutes to the great founders of the PMOI/MEK, the great martyrs of the history of resistance for freedom and equality, Mohammad Hanifnejad, Saeed Mohsen, and Asghar Badizadegan.

**PMOI founders shattered the impasse in the Iranian people's struggle**

The founders of the PMOI/MEK stepped into a difficult and uncharted territory, but they broke through the historical impasse with admirable faith and conviction. They built everything from scratch, including a professional struggle based on an ideal that rejects exploitation, and promotes sacrifice and selflessness.

Ayatollah Seyyed Mahmoud Taleghani put it eloquently when he said that the PMOI founders blazed the trail and from their blood sprang floods that eventually overthrew the monarchic dictatorship.

The PMOI/MEK has gained such prominence in Iran's political landscape and liberation struggle that would have been inconceivable six decades ago, from enduring the great blow by the Shah's secret police SAVAK, to overcoming the betrayal of pseudo-leftist opportunists, and from blocking the path of Khomeini and the monster of religious tyranny to confronting fundamentalism in the region; from epics created in Khomeini's torture chambers and the massacre of thirty thousand political prisoners, to promoting the Iranian people's democratic alternative.

It is thanks to this capacity for perseverance that the PMOI/MEK have been able to rise like a phoenix from their ashes many times, building everything anew multiple times and advancing to new heights, from the uprising of June 20, 1981 and the establishment of the democratic alternative (National Council of Resistance of Iran) to forming the National Liberation Army, and from the 10-year-long period of perseverance in Ashraf (Iraq) to building a thousand Ashrafs and Resistance Units in Iran.

Of course, today, the great founder of the PMOI, Mohammad Hanifnejad, is watching us from above and is present amongst us. He can see that the seed he planted has now turned into a flourishing and blossoming forest.

I am truly proud to be a member of an organization founded by the greatest revolutionary leader in Iran's contemporary history. I am proud to be a member of an organization and a resistance movement that has been led by Massoud Rajavi for five decades in the context of a formidable struggle against two dictatorships, ever advancing on the path towards progress and evolution.

## **A long line extending to Tehran**

From the bottom of my heart, I am proud to be a member of an organization and a movement where women have been and still are at the helm for over 30 years of its 54-year existence. The Secretary Generals leading the PMOI/MEK throughout these years are my dear sisters: Fahimeh Arvani, Shahrzad Sadr, Mahvash Sepehri, Beheshteh Shadrou, Mojgan Parsaii, Sedigheh Hosseini, Zohreh Akhyani and Zahra Merrikhi.

Qualified and competent women hailing from Azerbaijan, Tehran, Kurdistan, Gilan, Khuzestan, Semnan and Mazandaran. Every single one of them embodies liberating values in the ranks of the organization. They have been

symbols of sincerity and integrity, energy and exuberance, strength and firmness, a fighting spirit and resilience, selflessness, modesty and humility, accountability, unity, honesty, and vanguards of steadfastness, patience and triumph.

Indeed, aside from being the Secretary Generals of the PMOI/MEK, they are the sources of hope for the people of Iran.

And now, they have been replicated in the ranks of the Central Council of the PMOI/MEK, which is made up of 1,000 women and is charged with the leadership of this organization. Each and every one of them is a symbol of novel and creative values of humanity and struggle, both in their present battle and for building the future of Iran.

How lucky are the PMOI/MEK and the people of Iran for having a dynamic organization that has a long line of Mojahed men, who have been liberated from ideological chains and the culture of patriarchy; an organization that is restless and passionate about freeing Iran and saving it from the devastations caused by the Shah and Khomeini.

### **PMOI, a flag-bearer of liberation of Iranian society from tyranny, discrimination and injustice**

In two years, the solar calendar will end its 14<sup>th</sup> century. The latest century in Iran's history can be summed up in the shifting of power among four despots and two dictatorships of kings and mullahs, who were complicit in creating a savage tyranny.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, the Iranian people's movement entered the scene with the Constitutional Revolution (1906), creating a new equation in which Iran's destiny was no longer determined by the ruling despots, colonialist powers and the mullahs. Rather, the Iranian people's coalition to obtain freedom and sovereignty took shape and rose up.

The PMOI/MEK has played an important role in this revolutionary progress over the past century. Its history chronicles the strengthening of the prospect of freedom, popular sovereignty, justice and equality in Iran.

### **The essence of the PMOI's quest is freedom and equality**

The PMOI/MEK has stored and nourished the Iranian people's historical perseverance. And I assure you that this organization spearheads the Iranian society's quest for liberation from tyranny, discrimination and injustice, and it will realize the true aspirations of the people of Iran for a glorious future.

This has been the subject of the PMOI's 54-year struggle. It has been the goal of 120,000 of the best children of the people of Iran. This is what hundreds of thousands of political prisoners have been tortured and suffered for, and for which millions of dissidents have endured pain under oppression. The essence of the PMOI's quest is freedom and equality.

In contrast to the one-dimensional outlook of various opposing views and schools of thought over the past two centuries, the PMOI set both freedom and equality as their goals. They have risen up for breaking the chains of repression, and also for eliminating discrimination and injustice.

The PMOI's enormous sacrifices over the past 40 years in the struggle for freedom have made its name synonymous with the word "freedom." At the same time, this is a movement determined to obliterate oppression and exploitation.

Just 17 days after Khomeini usurped the Iranian people's sovereignty in 1979, he issued an order to confiscate all public assets and declared them as booties of his own forces.

Over the past 40 years, claiming assets belonging to the Iranian public as war booty has been the consistent policy of the mullahs' regime.

They have taken over public lands, forests, natural resources, water reserves, banks, the national money market, factories, public companies, the lion's share of oil, gas and petrochemical revenues, communications, and the market of internet software.

Of course, Khamenei has occasionally issued calls to fight corruption, fearing public outrage. This is while Khamenei himself is the biggest thief in Iran's history.

Through unforgiving pilfering, he has set up enormous private cartels. The outcome of this organized corruption has been destitution, poverty and homelessness for the Iranian people.

Today, the situation in Iran is so catastrophic that people have to sell their kidneys to survive; they have to sleep in cartons on the streets; women sell their infants, and homeless women are deprived of all forms of support. All honorable Iranians are deeply upset by such tragic conditions. The PMOI started its struggle with two simultaneous mottos to save the people of Iran: freedom, and refuting all forms of discrimination and oppression.

The results of this outlook have been the advancing of the liberation and equality of women in the PMOI's ranks that expanded over three decades, the assumption of responsibilities by women in the movement, and the liberation of men from a patriarchal culture.

This organization is the force and essence of solidarity and national unity. Without wanting anything in return, it defends all ethnicities, groups and

political, ideological and religious affiliations within the Iranian people's front. It is also a defender of any blood spilled by the regime from the body of any Iranian.

The organization which was founded by Mohammad Hanifnejad and led by Massoud Rajavi, has been a flag-bearer of, and paved the way for, a democratic Islam.

Over the past half a century, the PMOI/MEK has acted as a formidable barrier against the onslaught of medieval, despotic and misogynistic thoughts exploiting the name of Islam.

Since the beginning, Hanifnejad rejected those interpretations of Islam which promoted exploitation. He showed that Islam does not defend oppressive classes, but stands on the side of the deprived and the oppressed.

Also since the beginning, the PMOI/MEK rejected and discredited the mullahs' exploitation of Islam. They showed that the dynamism of Islam and the Quran could be understood only in the course of a political and social struggle.

A decade later, Massoud Rajavi underlined the threat posed by reactionary religious outlooks, and drew firm lines between the Islam espoused by the PMOI and the reactionary version that later seized power.

### **The PMOI's greatest mission was to stand up to Khomeini**

The greatest mission of the Mojahedin (PMOI/MEK) was to stand up to Khomeini, who for the first time in Iran's history held, all at the same time, religious authority, political power and legitimacy emanating from a popular revolution. And this is how he turned into the most monstrous force in the history of Iran.

The PMOI's ideological and political mission will continue until the religious fascism ruling Iran is overthrown.

In line with this mission and in response to this great responsibility, the PMOI/MEK demonstrated their complete opposition to the ruling religious tyranny by emphasizing women's equality and liberty.

The PMOI believes in Mohammad's pure faith, whose emancipating message rejected class oppression as well as racial and gender discrimination. It defends women's equality and the autonomy of oppressed ethnic groups. It advocates people's sovereignty and does not accept any form of coercion or compulsion on people.

### **What is the PMOI's message for the younger generation?**

What is the PMOI's message today for the younger generation? What message does it carry for the Iranian society at large as it begins its 55th year of existence?

The message is clearly this:

It is possible to break the chains of repression and exploitation.

It is possible to liberate society from gender discrimination and to create new arrangements based on gender equality and human solidarity.

Freedom and justice are mutually necessary. It is possible to establish freedom, justice and equality, and the PMOI/MEK has risen to realize this goal.

It is possible to have a genuine antithesis, based on democratic Islam, to ignorance, superstition and reactionary thought disguised in the cloak of Islam.

Having compensated for the shortcomings of the revolutions of the past century, the Iranian Resistance rises to the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and has flourished in the course of its struggle for freedom and equality.

This is the organization, the tradition, the path and practice of the deprived but aware youths of Iran who unleashed the uprisings of December 2017 and January 2018.

This is the movement and ideal of youths who have formed Resistance Units inside Iran, who have kept the flames of Iran's uprising alight, and are waging resistance in every city across the country and inside the cells and wards of Khamenei's prisons.

Relying on its people, the great Army of Freedom will also take the same path and will turn this dark page of Iran's history.

One day, Khomeini addressed the PMOI/MEK and said, "If I knew that there was even the slightest possibility that you would give up on what you are planning to do, I would have compromised with you." (May 12, 1981)

Yes, neither then, nor now has there ever been even the slightest possibility that the PMOI/MEK would give up on their plan for freedom and popular sovereignty and the overthrow of the mullahs' religious dictatorship.

And this is a source of pride that illuminates the history of the PMOI/MEK.

They have endured captivity in prison cages and coffins;<sup>1</sup> during the 1988 massacre, they proudly went to the gallows by the thousands; they lied down

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<sup>1</sup> PMOI prisoners were kept for months in small containers similar to cages and coffins to torture and break their spirits.

in front of Humvees and bulldozers in Ashraf; their bodies were hanged from the cliff of Charzebar<sup>2</sup> and from beams in half-constructed buildings in cities across Iran; but there never was even the slightest possibility that they would give up their fight. And they will not do so until the day Iran is free. In the contemporary history of Iran, the PMOI/MEK is known for their commitment to carry any burden on their bloody shoulders that is necessary for the advancement of this struggle.

Yes, this is the mission and responsibility of our times. And we will forever be proud of taking on these responsibilities, and will be prepared to take on more, regardless of their difficulty.

Today, I would like to share the good news that as it marks its 55th year of existence, members of the PMOI have conquered new heights in the advancement of their struggle and their relations and arrangements based on sacrifice, honesty, hard work, and selflessness for the benefit of their people, while wanting nothing in return.

Today, I want to give assurances to the people of Iran that the PMOI/MEK is capable of overthrowing the regime by relying on their own people. They are capable of replacing religious tyranny with freedom, democracy, and separation of religion and state. They can replace distrust with trust, insecurity and fear with security, and injustice with equality.

They are capable of leading Iran towards freedom, prosperity and progress.

Hail to freedom.

Hail to the great founders of the PMOI. Hail to Mehdi Rezai,<sup>3</sup> the "Red Rose" of the anti-monarchical revolution on the day of his martyrdom. And, hail to the PMOI.

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<sup>2</sup> Charzebar is a narrow valley in the mountainous regions of Kermanshah. In 1988, Sara Tolou was stabbed in the heart and hanged from a tree atop a cliff in Charzebar by Khomeini's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

<sup>3</sup> Mehdi Rezai, a member of the PMOI, was a 19-year-old democracy activist who was brutally executed by the Shah's regime in 1972. The young man's killing provoked public outrage, and prompted massive social sympathy with his cause and character. The Iranian people referred to him as the "Red Rose" of the Revolution. Prominent poets, such as Ahmad Shamlou, wrote popular poems about him. While being tried by the Shah's judiciary, Mehdi said in his defense: "I am being tried here on charges of loving my people and struggling on their behalf."