
Maryam Rajavi: The PMOI's 55-year history is intertwined with the suffering of the Iranian people and their desire for freedom and justice

Speech marking the anniversary of the foundation of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI/MEK)

September 5, 2020

Fellow compatriots,
Families of martyrs and political prisoners,
Supports of the PMOI/MEK,

The People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI/MEK), the outcome of the Iranian people's perseverance against the Shah and the mullahs, and a definite hope for the future, will begin its 56th year of existence tomorrow. Congratulations to everyone!

The Shah, relying on his ruthless secret police, backed by world powers and superpowers, and clinging to his dream of a "great civilization," was finally toppled as a result of the Iranian people's uprising.

By the same token, the mullahs will be overthrown by the Iranian people, the Iranian Resistance, and the great army of freedom, even though they rely on their Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and despite their inhuman suppression and massacres while clinging to their dream of establishing an "Islamic caliphate."

What has stood fast firm and proud, and will continue to do so, is the Iranian people's Resistance for freedom, with the PMOI/MEK at its epicenter.

We honor the great founders of the PMOI, Mohammad Hanifnejad, Saeed Mohsen, and Asghar Badizadegan who took the initiative for this historic breakthrough.

How inspiring it is that the Iranian Resistance's Leader, Massoud Rajavi, revived and revitalized this organization despite the crushing blows of two dictatorships, leading it to the pinnacle of its struggle against the reactionary mullahs. Massoud Rajavi protected this movement from colonial deviations, opportunism and raids, placing it at the center of a democratic alternative. He also elevated this organization to the level of a liberation army, which is celebrating its fourth fundamental rejuvenation.

From Hanifnejad, the founder, to Massoud

From Hanifnejad (in 1965) to Massoud, whenever we speak of an organization (PMOI/MEK), an army (the National Liberation Army), and an alternative, we are not simply playing with words and writing a prose from a distance. Every one of you knows the real price and you have experienced it for years. You must pass this on to the next generation of protesters. Organization, army and a truly democratic and nationalist alternative, represent the triangle of fundamental deficiencies of our people's struggles since the Constitutional Movement, despite all the sacrifices made. They have suffered from their absence and they have paid a heavy price.

When a qualified organization and a leadership structure does not exist, there can be no fundamental change or transformation. During the Constitutional Revolution (of 1906), people rose up and compelled the authoritarian monarch to accept the constitution, but there was no guarantee to sustain that state of affairs.

It is inconceivable to wage a professional and full-fledged struggle without a devoted organization. This is one of the first lessons Hanifnejad taught PMOI/MEK members in the early days. The antimonarchic revolution (of 1979) also lacked a leading organization. The pseudo-leftist opportunists had destroyed the PMOI/MEK and the Shah had executed their founders.

Even today, we see that the clerical regime is admitting it in a thousand different ways that its main problem is the structure of the PMOI/MEK. So, it must be obliterated and beheaded to guarantee the regime's survival. This is the common goal pursued by all the regime's mercenaries.

The same is true with the National Liberation Army (NLA). In its absence, the historic fate of Mossadeq would be doomed to repeat. The Nationalist Movement was defeated and left defenseless when confronting the reactionary and colonial *coup d'etat* despite all sacrifices.

The same is true with the concept of a democratic and independent alternative. The historical experience of the usurpation of the leadership of the antimonarchic revolution is revealing. And the people of Iran have been paying the price for 42 years.

The remnants of the Shah are proud of the crimes committed by Reza Khan and his son and claim that the problem was in the revolution itself. They ask: Why did the people not appreciate puppet dictators?

What we say is that "revolution" is essential to progress and is the dynamic force of evolution. The problem was never the revolution itself. The problem was in the lack of an alternative. The problem was in the leadership of the revolution, not the revolution per se.

This is the first lesson we learned from the antimonarchic revolution. Massoud Rajavi developed this theory and advanced our understanding of it. Then, he offered the solution for this problem to the people of Iran. The solution was the National Council of Resistance of Iran

(NCRI) as the only democratic and independent alternative.

The first lesson when Mohammad Hanifnejad founded the PMOI 55 years ago was about creating an organization and being organized. If this organization wants to lead a revolution, it must inevitably develop a revolutionary theory and ideology. It must undertake the responsibility and endure the pain of leading revolutions against the Shah and the mullahs.

The past 55 years have seen a story of relentless struggle with unlimited sacrifice; an ocean of blood and mountains of obstacles along with great hardships, difficulties and suffering, with which we are all familiar.

Yes, indeed, overcoming each one of those obstacles, after every blow and after every conspiracy, needed great capacity and strength. It needed vigilance accompanied by a deep political, social and historical foresight. This is where we need a cause and an ideology, otherwise we could have never traverse this path. Just as (the third Shiite leader) Imam Hossein said, "life is believing in a cause and struggling for it." Yes, the PMOI/MEK could not have survived without believing in a cause and fighting for it.

This is why the Shah and the mullahs as well as their accomplices, followers and allies so hysterically despise the PMOI/MEK and their ideology.

The Shah said, "You are saboteurs; you are Islamic-Marxists." Khomeini said, "You are hypocrites and worse than infidels." In the cultures of the Shah, the mullahs and their allies even when relished with a strong, leftist, socialist-bourgeois overtones, you are not entitled to have a cause or an ideology.

You can only follow the Shah or the mullahs and stay within their field of gravity. The PMOI women are specifically not entitled to choose their own attire. The mullahs say, "either the veil or a slap in the face!" Years before them, Reza Khan used to say, "removal of the veil or a slap in the face!"

Both rationales are profoundly reactionary and against freedom. In our view, every woman must make her own choice.

Similarly, the broader population must be free in choosing their faith, religion, creed and rituals.

In the resolutions adopted by the NCRI regarding the separation of religion and state, it is stated: "No citizens shall enjoy privileges or be subject to deprivations in respect of nomination for election, voting, employment, education, becoming a judge, or any other individual or social rights, on the grounds of belief or non-belief in a particular religion or faith."

Similarly, the people of Iran, women and men, must choose the new republic based on their own free, equal and direct vote.

Wiping off the dust from religion

Therefore, the 55-year history of the PMOI/MEK and the 40-year history of the NCRI are intertwined with the suffering of the people of Iran and their desire for freedom, justice and national sovereignty.

The uprisings in Iran since December 2017 up until now clearly demonstrate that the protests are the scene of public support for the views and policies of the PMOI/MEK, especially among the younger generation. They are also the venue for the PMOI/MEK to make progress and the place for increasing activities by Resistance Units.

As Dr. Manouchehr Hezarkhani has said: “A revolution is in the making in Iran. Regardless of our own views, we must do as much as we can to assist the PMOI/MEK so that they can achieve this revolution as soon as possible.”

Dr. Hezarkhani is indeed one of the most prominent contemporary writers and intellectuals. His political and cultural activities over the past 60 years are well-known.

On the leading role of Massoud Rajavi against Khomeini’s reactionary religion, he said: “Massoud offered his own interpretation of Islam as opposed to Khomeini’s reading of Islam. And this was a very significant development. Enduring the ensuing difficulties, outcomes and consequences of this measure was not easy either. But by doing so, he turned the movement into an ideological movement which is politically aware of what it seeks and how it wants to achieve it. I believe the secret to the PMOI’s advancement was in this very act, and in wiping off the dust from Islam.”

People’s desire: the regime’s overthrow

My fellow Iranians,

Today, Iran is plagued with poverty, repression and the coronavirus pandemic. Socio-economic gaps have never been wider. The suppressive machine does not stop for a moment in protecting the mullahs’ religious fascist regime. The regime’s Judiciary has been handing down a barrage of death sentences.

Inspired by the sacrifices of thousands of PMOI martyrs, upheavals and rebellions have been sprouting across Iran. Uprisings are on the horizon.

With its historic perseverance and its martyrs in all corners of Iran, Ashraf has multiplied in the form of Resistance Units. The "nightmare" of the Eternal Light Operation has become more dreadful for the regime’s leaders with every passing year.

The Iranian society is in an explosive state. The rebels and protesters are waiting in the wings. Young people are the decisive force in this uprising. Rebellious youths open the way for the eruption of the great energy of the oppressed people.

Look at the uprisings in November 2019 and January 2020.

Those who took to the streets left no doubt that the solution for all problems lies in the overthrow of the mullahs' religious dictatorship. The people do not want anything from the regime, except its overthrow.

They are not looking back to the past. They have set their sights on the future. They chant, "Death to the oppressor, whether it is the Shah or the (mullahs' Supreme) Leader."

They target all the manifestations of the mullahs' rule. They have felt with their flesh and blood that the regime is incapable of reform and it must be overthrown in its entirety. Everyone knows that the mullahs will not peacefully give up their power.

Indeed, these are the policies and political demarcations that the NCRI has been representing since 1981.

They confirm the authenticity of the PMOI's path and long-time traditions marked in every step with the blood of more than 100,000 PMOI martyrs.

The regime's treatment of detained protesters is similar to what it has done since 1981 regarding PMOI/MEK members in its prisons and torture chambers.

The accounts of tortures of Navid Afkari and his brothers, and the double execution and long prison sentences for them have shocked and outraged not only the people of Iran but the entire world.

Today, we learned that the regime has changed their place of detention. This is what we say, and what our people and the world public say: Do not execute! Free them!

Another harrowing incident which deeply moved our nation last month was the image of the young son and daughter of Mostafa Salehi standing on both sides of the poster of their father who was recently executed.

In the last week of June, Khamenei's Judiciary issued death sentences for three detained protesters, but they had to temporarily retreat from it after millions of people campaigned to "stop the executions."

Therefore, the PMOI/MEK are proud that their tradition of struggle and resistance has proliferated among millions across the country.

The regime is stuck in a whirlpool

From Beirut to Basra, to Najaf and Karbala, the clerical regime is in a quagmire. Young people in Beirut chant: They must all leave!

And the youths in Iraq set fire to the centers and headquarters of the mullahs' evil regime and their mercenaries and cry out: Iran (regime) must leave!

Yes, as the PMOI/MEK starts its 56th year of existence, the clerical regime is stuck at an

impasse, and in the throes of political, economic and international crises.

Khamenei is incapable of offering any change or opening to reduce the society's discontent. His decision to appoint criminal IRGC officials at the helm of various institutions, including the parliament, does not come from a position of strength, but out of utter weakness. It is an attempt to exert more control over various branches and to prevent the regime's collapse. Just like Qassem Soleimani, major projects like the JCPOA nuclear agreement and the so-called reformist and moderate government of Rouhani have failed, with nothing remaining of them but lifeless bodies.

The regime's followers who dreamt of reforms are now seeing the nightmare of being overthrown.

The followers and advocates of the clerical regime who hoped for the protest movement to die down, have now become disillusioned.

The chains of delusions are broken and the feeling of inability to bring about change has faded away.

Fear has switched sides. Today, the mullahs and their IRGC are trembling with fear.

The values and traditions of the PMOI/MEK, particularly the value of making sacrifice to realize the regime's overthrow, are guiding the younger generation on the streets.

The people who suddenly rose up in 200 cities, demonstrating an excellent example of unity in action, have established their national solidarity in the battle field.

Yes, the uprisings in the past three years have offered a brilliant image of future confrontations, of the battles waged by Iranian protesters and the great Army of Liberation which will uproot the regime.

Dear compatriots,

The tragic coronavirus pandemic has cast a dark shadow over our nation for the past seven months. Most conservative estimates indicate that there have been 100,000 fatalities in Iran.

Khamenei, Rouhani and the gangs ruling our country do not spend even a small portion of the hundreds of billions of dollars they have usurped from our nation.

The majority of fatalities could have been easily avoided.

Some state officials admit that the regime's conduct during the coronavirus crisis was not a political mistake but is tantamount to deliberate murder.

Khamenei and Rouhani seek to prevent their overthrow by creating a wave of human casualties. This horrendous crime, however, will only stoke the fury of the people and will further motivate them to overthrow the regime.

The regime does not even pay the salaries of the nurses, physicians and healthcare workers

who have been working round the clock without leaving their posts and by risking their own and their families' lives to save infected patients.

Let us use this opportunity to once again appreciate them and their tireless efforts to save coronavirus victims. Let us applaud those who have lost their lives in this sacred effort.

Resistance Units spark uprisings

Compatriots,

The instruments of lighting the flames of the movement and uprisings are more prepared than ever before:

The volatile state of the society and the public awareness, particularly among the younger generation; dozens of rebellious cities have the potential to liberate themselves from the clutches of the IRGC, which was proven during recent protests; hundreds of thousands of selfless youths across the country with incredible fighting spirits; and a liberating mechanism, the Resistance Units, who shatter the wall of repression and spark the uprisings.

Yes, the clerical regime is surrounded by uprisings to overthrow it, more than any other time.

May the People's Mojahedin of Iran – hand in hand with their beloved people -- accomplish their great historic mandate and commitment, namely, the overthrow of the ruling regime in its entirety and establishing freedom and people's sovereignty in Iran.

Today, you heard the story of the founding of the PMOI as well as the PMOI's suffering and sacrifice from the first day until now. We briefly touched upon the unrivaled and irreplaceable efforts of Massoud Rajavi.

We recalled the honesty and sacrifice of the PMOI during all occasions, on the battle fields, in all tests and turning points. The issue of PMOI's internal revolution, especially in remarks by my dear sister, Zahra Merrikhi.

Nevertheless, why all these efforts, sacrifices and selflessness? Just for one noble ideal and objective, namely to free and liberate the Iranian people from any form of dictatorship, suppression and exploitation.

So, glad tidings to the people of Iran that today, the guarantee for their liberation from the clutches of this murderous and religious dictatorship is the PMOI/MEK. Only this selfless, cohesive, enlightened and honest organization can guarantee for the day after the overthrow and the free Iran of tomorrow, for resorting trust in the oppressed people and for bringing freedom, prosperity, welfare and health to the Iranian people.

I assure you that although the people of Iran are enduring suffering, suppression, torture, disease and poverty, they have vanguards comprised of the best women, men and children of this nation, who are working round-the-clock to establish freedom, equality, social justice, people's sovereignty and the freedom of choice for all Iranians from every creed and religion, who will be a strong barrier against all reactionary and fundamentalist currents who want to

turn back history and oppose progress and evolution.

These vanguards will create a new society with fitting human yardsticks so that the Iranian people can attain and take pride in their real stature in the world, especially in the Middle East.

That day is near. The Iranian people have an organization and a precious treasure which for the past five decades has not abandoned the ideal of liberating the people of Iran in the face of fierce storms, difficulties, and pain, and has overcome all the obstacles and difficulties. Certainly, the PMOI/MEK will also accomplish this great commitment and for doing so, it is more than ever prepared.

At this point, please allow me to extend my special gratitude to all sympathizers, members and officials of the PMOI/MEK.

I would like to thank the brothers, a generation of men who have rebelled against the ideology of gender-based perspectives and narcissist egotism. Over the long years of this formidable struggle, they have made and advanced a conscious choice. They have set excellent examples for the younger generation and the brave youths in Iran with respect to gender equality.

I would also like to thank my sisters in the Central Council who are vanguards and symbols of rebellion and prowess, and of undertaking heavy responsibilities and breaking the chains.

I thank all the PMOI secretaries general, their deputies and assistants at various junctures, including Fahimeh Arvani, Shahrzad Sadr, Mahvash Sepehri, Beheshteh Shadrrou, Mojgan Parsaii, Sedigheh Hosseini, and Zohreh Akhyani.

I would also like to extend my special gratitude to my dear sister, Zahra Merrikhi, who led and spearheaded the PMOI efforts particularly after their relocation from Iraq to Albania with great patience, prudence and power and with maximum success especially during the uprisings. Years ago, Massoud described her as a commander motivated by patience to achieve victory.

I salute you, all the Mojahedin who fight relentlessly for the overthrow of the mullahs' religious tyranny, and those who will not rest until the people of Iran are free from the clutches of the bloodthirsty mullahs' regime.

Once again, congratulations to you all.