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## **Maryam Rajavi: Ramadan; a call to revolt against the government of hunger, homelessness, and religious tyranny**

*Ramadan Conference: United Against Fundamentalism and Warmongering, for Peace and Tolerance*

**April 4, 2022**

The Iranian Resistance held a conference entitled, “Ramadan, United Against Fundamentalism and Warmongering, for Peace and Tolerance,” on Monday, April 4, 2022. The conference featured distinguished religious and political personalities from various countries and the Arab World. The conference was held online and in connection with the PMOI members in Asrhaf-3, in Albania, and a gathering at the headquarters of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) in Auvers-sur-Oise, France.

Maryam Rajavi opened the conference by extending her congratulations to Muslims and the dignitaries participating from around the world on the advent of the holy month of Ramadan. In her remarks to this conference, she expounded on the distressful conditions of Iranian society under the rule of the mullahs, and underlined the clerical regime’s failure to advance its reactionary outlook under the banner of Islam.

The full text of her speech follows:

Dear friends of the Iranian people’s Resistance,  
Fellow Compatriots,  
Valiant members of Resistance Units,  
Members of the People’s Mojahedin of Iran,

At the outset of the holy month of Ramadan, I pray for the liberation of my compatriots from the clutches of religious tyranny.

We pray that our Muslim sisters and brothers in the Middle East are freed from the clerical regime's fundamentalism, terrorism, and evil incitement to war. And we pray that people across the globe, especially the steadfast people of Ukraine, achieve peace and tranquillity.

### **The underlying philosophy of Ramadan**

The month of Ramadan (is the month) in which the Quran has been sent down as guidance for mankind containing clear signs which lead (to the straight road) and distinguishing (the truth from falsehood).

Ramadan is the month of emancipating piety; it is the month of solidarity and the intimacy of hearts, a month to rush to aid the pain-stricken and the poor. Therefore, it is a month when hearts and affection suffer greater pain over the impoverishment and destitution of our fellow compatriots and human beings.

In this sense, fasting goes beyond individual worship for self-cleansing, and nurtures responsibility and accountability to society in humankind.

If fasting is limited to abstaining from eating and drinking for a few hours, and if it does not awaken the conscience of society to rebel against oppression, poverty, and hunger, it would fall short of its objective.

Is fasting not an attempt to attain emancipating piety and deter factors that harm and waste human capabilities? So how could those who fast remain silent and ambivalent vis-à-vis the ruling theocracy that is destroying Iran's wealth and people and is the embodiment of injustice, plunder, and corruption?

Ramadan and fasting inherently educate and inspire individual and collective capabilities to fight compulsion and misfortune.

On the surface, Ramadan appears to mean abstaining from eating and drinking. In its essence, however, it is a call to awakening. It is the month of tipping the prevailing balance and embracing evolutionary discontent. It rejects being content with the status quo and is a battle cry for what must become. It does not tolerate the status quo and propels rebellion and transformation.

### **Iranian society's calamitous predicament**

Truly, why are the Iranian people grappling with poverty and hunger today, despite our nation's abundance of wealth and resources?

Because an entirely illegitimate and detested regime –set apart from Iranian society by an ocean of blood– preserves its power at the cost of people’s lives, flesh and blood.

Last year, the Coronavirus death toll in Iran exceeded half a million. Had Khamenei not deliberately paved the way for the spread of the disease, and had he spent a fraction of his predatory foundations’ \$1 trillion fortune on containing Covid-19, the death toll in Iran would have been several times lower.

Today, intolerable poverty has afflicted at least 70 to 80 percent of the country’s population. Every minute, eight people fall under the absolute poverty line,(1) which is said to be unprecedented in the last 100 years.(2)

Every year, 1.2 million people attempt suicide,(3) 40,000 of whom die. Some have been forced to sell their body parts. Some destitute women sell their new-borns for eight million rials or only \$32—shame on Khamenei, the mullahs, and his cronies in the IRGC.

In Iran today, per capita consumption of protein and dairy products is less than half the world’s standard.(4) After meat, dairy and eggs are now disappearing from many tables. Women breadwinners say they can no longer eat even bread and yogurt.

Five to eight million innocent children have been driven to the cruel labor market. They work with meager wages in polluted and unsanitary environments, without any insurance or support. At least 5,000 of them spend 10 to 11 hours a day scavenging garbage in the capital so that businessmen affiliated with Khamenei could profit several thousand trillion Rials every year.

Under such circumstances, compared with all Middle East nations, Iran has the largest number of billionaires who, directly and indirectly, profit from their connection to Khamenei.

The population of people without income, jobs, and shelter is increasing daily. In 2020, 490,000 homeless people sought refuge in Tehran’s heated shelters. A year later, their number increased to 700,000.(5)

A large part of the country’s population does not have a place to spend the night. Between a quarter and a third of the country’s population live in 3,000 slums plagued by poverty, oppression, and deprivation.

Current wages no longer provide for living expenses or medical care and medicine. Families are displaced individually or collectively and spend the night in canals, construction debris, cemeteries, graves or subways, and abandoned buildings.(6)

The homeless pay to spend the night in buses and sleep while sitting upright. Some spend the

night on rooftops, in construction debris, or in garbage dumps. This is the calamity, which Khamenei and his bloodthirsty regime have inflicted on the Iranian people.

### **Khamenei's horrific policy**

In reality, under the rule of a brutal tyranny, Khamenei pursues five ominous policies simultaneously:

He forces people to work without pay and has turned Iran's labor force into the world's cheapest. He starves the vast majority of people. He plunders public wealth and properties, drives sick to death and people from their homes.

Yes, this is a dirty and cruel war against the Iranian people that arouses the wrath of God.

These are examples of those who love wealth fervently and are aggressors, who have been harshly chastised in Sura Fajr in the Quran. Because not only do they not urge one another to feed the poor and orphans, but they devour their inheritance greedily.

In Sura Maun, the Quran has described them as those who deny God's religion, who repulse the orphan, and who do not encourage the feeding of the poor. So, woe to those "hypocrites" who pray, yet are unmindful of their prayers; those who only pretend but refuse to give even the simplest aid. Those who use the wealth of the people and nation to their own benefit.

Yes, it is a matter of the people's plate and property, which are openly looted by the mullahs. In his book, A Ray of the Quran, Ayatollah Taleghani said, "Public wealth is for the benefit of everyone ... So to return to the original and natural state, which means the distribution of wealth to everyone, those who act as obstacles and aggressors must be cast aside."

Yes, it means the hands of looters and ruling oppressors must be cut off from violating the rights of the Iranian people. And the rule of injustice, plunder, and despotism must be toppled.

In the Sura Al-Isra, the Quran reminds believers of their commitment to support the deprived and urges them to fulfil their pledge because they would be questioned about it.(7)

Yes, fulfilling one's pledges to God and the people in defending the rights and freedoms of the oppressed and achieving freedom, justice and equality is the greatest act of piety in our time. This explains why the People's Mojahedin have been waging a struggle against the Shah and the mullahs for five decades. For thirty years, they have given up their homes and families to wage a relentless battle against sexism and self-praising individualism. They have embraced this great test of piety in our time to overthrow the ruling religious fascism and establish freedom and

popular sovereignty.

In Sura Balad, God mentions human beings who, after passing through difficult and tortuous trials and tribulations, and faced with contrasting options, choose the path of virtue and evolution, free the captives and protect the poor and the destitute.

### **The democratic Islam**

In the PMOI's worldview, a person with a liberated and independent character, finds him/herself capable of, and responsible for, removing the shackles from others and liberating them. And this is a struggle for freedom.

The PMOI's role model is Imam Ali, who said: "God has taken a pledge from enlightened human beings not to remain idle in the face of the satiety of the oppressor and the hunger of the oppressed." (8)

In a letter to the governor of Basra, Imam Ali wrote, "How could I seek to benefit from material wealth while there may be someone in Hejaz or Yamameh who does have a loaf of bread and has never had an adequate meal?" (9)

The remark by Imam Ali, which says justice opens the way, (10) has been the guiding principle for the PMOI since the very beginning.

A few months after the overthrow of the Shah's dictatorship, Khomeini and his mullahs were busy drafting a new constitution by the regime's Assembly of Experts to consolidate the rule of Velayat-e Faqih. At the same time, Massoud Rajavi began a series of lectures at Tehran University. Citing the guidelines, positions, and practices of Imam Ali during his five-year rule, he explained the PMOI's views on the most important economic and social issues, domestic and foreign policies, the issue of nationalities, freedom, and popular sovereignty.

"Our ideal society is one in which human talents do not wither away; all talents flourish without facing any obstacles and man's unmatched personality flourishes," he said. (11)

When the PMOI founded their organization, its legendary founder, Mohammad Hanifnejad, declared that the ideological cornerstone of the organization was the rejection of exploitation.

The Islam espoused by the PMOI underscores freedom and rejects exploitation, drawing its qualitative lines with all reactionary and class-based ideologies under the banner of Islam.

As such, the PMOI raised the banner of equality and the struggle against all forms of discrimination and oppression. Hence, it has stood up for gender equality and throughout their history; it has defended the freedoms and equal rights of oppressed ethnic groups, and followers of different religions.

Similarly, as followers of Islam, it has opposed all aggressive expansionism and intervention in other countries under the pretext of exporting revolution.

It is a source of historic pride for the PMOI that, under the leadership of Massoud Rajavi, it has been able to defeat Khomeini's medieval thinking under the banner of Islam. It has done so by drawing the ideological and historical redlines of democratic Islam and presenting a powerful antithesis to religious fascism. Therefore, it has been able to protect Iranian society from the scourge of fundamentalism.

Khomeini and his followers invoked the name of Islam to establish religious despotism, and governance through torture, plunder, misogyny, and terrorism. For a period, they inflicted heavy damages on all political, intellectual, cultural, and social fabric of Iran and of countries in the Middle East.

Their religious deception, however, was defeated in the face of the PMOI's ideological perseverance and the sacrifice of generation after generation of its members. They are on borrowed time. After the regime's overthrow, the destiny of Iran will be entwined with freedom, equality, and the separation of religion and state.

Dear friends,

On the occasion of Ramadan, the month of fasting, I recounted the unbearable conditions in which the mullahs have imposed hunger and homelessness on the Iranian people. Thus, they have clearly revealed the nature of reactionary Islam and its enmity to Islam, justice, and equality. At the same time, I must add that the poor, those fed up with the current situation, and those plundered, form the powerful force of rebellion and revolt against Khamenei's vulnerable rule.

This explosive situation empowers the forces of the uprising and the valiant members of the Resistance Units. No doubt, the religious tyranny, having failed in all intellectual and ideological spheres, will not survive in the face of this enormous force, the Resistance Units and the great Army of Freedom. And this is how the Iranian people's destiny will be decided.

### **Prayers**

O' God Almighty!

Bring victory to the Iranian Resistance, uprising and the great Army of Freedom over the ruling religious tyranny, and rid the people of Iran and the Middle East of the evil of this regime.

Establish peace and friendship in the Middle East and throughout the globe.

Bestow the PMOI greater strength to adhere to its ideological values and principles of struggle so that it can preserve the largest organized movement against the clerical dictatorship in its struggle to overthrow the regime.

O' God Almighty!

Bless Massoud Rajavi, the leader of the Iranian Resistance, who has shown this generation the path to genuine freedom and Islam, and protect him from all harms and conspiracies.

God Almighty and his angels pray to the Prophet, O you who believe pray for him and give peace, peace be upon him.