



Speech at the European Parliament, Strasbourg

18 June 2025

Maryam Rajavi: What is the Fundamental Issue in Iran?

Honorable Members of the European Parliament,

Dear friends,

I am honored to once again stand before you — the elected representatives of the people of Europe — who have stood firmly with the people of Iran and the Iranian Resistance in their struggle for freedom and democracy.

Seven months have passed since I had the privilege of addressing you here in the European Parliament on the situation in my homeland, Iran, in late November 2024.

Today, I would like to begin by reaffirming and expanding upon the message I shared with you on that occasion.

1. The crisis of overthrow has now engulfed the entire clerical dictatorship — a reality that is visible to all. It is especially evident to those who witnessed the fate of Bashar al-Assad and the turning point in Syria this past December. No one anticipated it, yet it was real, and it came to pass.

The war that broke out at dawn on Friday, June 13, 2025, marks the beginning of a critical new chapter — both in Iran's internal crisis and in the broader dynamics of the region.

Yet it is essential to emphasize that the central and ongoing conflict — unfolding over the past 44 years since June 20, 1981 — is the struggle of the people of Iran and the Iranian Resistance against the ruling religious fascism.

The only viable solution remains the overthrow of this regime by the people of Iran and the Iranian Resistance.

Twenty-one years ago, I stood in this very parliament and declared that the solution for Iran lies neither in appeasement nor in war, but in a third option: regime change by the people of Iran and the organized resistance.

I warned that “the policy of appeasement encourages the clerical regime to persist in its policies and, ultimately, imposes war upon Western nations.” I said: “Let us not allow the Munich experience to be repeated—with clerics armed with nuclear bombs.”

And today, we see that appeasement has indeed led to the imposition of war. Once again, I emphasize lasting peace and security in this part of the world require regime change in Iran, brought about by the people of Iran and the Iranian Resistance.

2. From the outset, our Resistance made it clear: a viper never gives birth to a dove — and religious dictatorship is inherently incapable of reform.

This regime thrives on exporting terrorism and fundamentalism, relentlessly pursues nuclear weapons, and will never relinquish its uranium enrichment program.

These truths have been proven.

3. We said from the outset that negotiations with and appeasement of this regime would lead nowhere — that it would serve only to buy time and offer the regime new opportunities to strengthen its grip.

This, too, was a reality — and it has been definitively proven.

4. It was our Resistance that, for the first time in August 2002, exposed the clerical regime’s secret nuclear facilities.

At the time, the President of the United States, along with the Vice President, the Secretary of State, and the National Security Advisor, repeatedly acknowledged this fact: that the world had been unaware of the regime’s bomb-making project, and it was the Iranian Resistance that alerted the international community. Otherwise, the regime would have built its nuclear bombs in secrecy.

On that day, the question before the world was clear: what must be done?

Since that time, I have consistently emphasized the Third Option: neither appeasement nor war, but regime change at the hands of the Iranian people and their organized, legitimate, and just Resistance.

It is a bitter irony that this very Resistance was the one blacklisted by Europe and the United States— rather than the regime and its Revolutionary Guards.

Until finally, the European Union in 2009, and later the United States in 2012, annulled and revoked the designation of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, the People’s Mojahedin Organization of Iran, and the National Liberation Army of Iran.

I offer this reminder to underscore the legitimacy and authenticity of the Third Option.

We have made it clear: we do not seek money, nor do we ask for weapons. What we have always wanted is to resist — just as you Europeans once did — against religious fascism. We only ask that this Resistance be recognized. Nothing more.

Yet even this most basic right has been denied to our people and to our Resistance to this day.

Nevertheless, you — the members of this Parliament — along with your colleagues, more than 4,000 legislators across both sides of the Atlantic, and principled political and academic figures, have consistently and courageously defended this right.

5. The conclusion is clear: the solution to this war and crisis lies in the overthrow of this regime and regime change by the Iranian people and their Resistance.

Yes, there is a concrete alternative — one with a clear program and a long history of relentless struggle against this religious dictatorship. That alternative is the National Council of Resistance of Iran, which turns 44 this year.

An alternative cannot be imposed from above, as was done a century ago when Britain installed a monarch by appointment. Nor can it be forced upon the people like the 1953 coup d'état by the United States against the nationalist government of Dr. Mossadegh and through repression, executions, and torture.

Had there been a legitimate nationalist and democratic government in place, the course of Iran's history — and indeed the fate of this region — would have been profoundly different. Khomeini and the mullahs would have never seized power.

Yet the people of Iran and their freedom-loving children never surrendered. We are now in the sixtieth year of struggle and resistance by the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran, confronting two dictatorships: the monarchic dictatorship of the Shah and the religious dictatorship of the mullahs.

In this struggle, we have never had a single day of pause or interruption. Likewise, the prisons, torture chambers, and firing squads of both the Shah's regime and the clerical regime have operated without interruption — until the day they are finally overthrown.

That is precisely why we say: neither the Shah nor the mullahs — the people of Iran will accept no form of dictatorship and demand freedom.

Yes, a free Iran. That is exactly why I am here today.

The Outcome of Appeasing the Regime

Dear friends,

Allow me to remind you of a statement I made here on December 15, 2004:

“The policy of appeasement emboldens the clerical regime to persist in its dangerous agenda, ultimately imposing the burden of war on Western nations. We must not allow the tragic lesson of Munich to be repeated with the nuclear-armed mullahs.”

We have repeatedly told Khamenei — and we say it once more today: go ahead, negotiate, and make concessions. Follow in the footsteps of Khomeini and drink from the poisonous chalice of abandoning the nuclear bomb and warmongering.

But we know Khamenei will never accept this, because he sees any concession as the quickest path to his own downfall.

He does not fear death enough to take his own life, yet he is willing to plunge the defenseless Iranian people into war, terror, and insecurity — all to cling to his fragile and failing regime.

However, the people of Iran will not give any more chances to this regime.

What is the Fundamental Issue on Iran?

Dear friends,

The issue of the day in Iran—and the war that has been waged over it—is the nuclear question.

Yet the issue of Iran in its entirety goes far beyond this regime’s nuclear program.

At its core, the conflict is between the people of Iran and the Iranian Resistance on one side, and religious tyranny on the other.

Last year, the United Nations special rapporteur classified the mass executions of political prisoners in the 1980s and in 1988 as acts of genocide and crimes against humanity.

Now consider the toll over just the past year: since Pezeshkian assumed office in August 2024, more than 1,350 prisoners have been executed.

Iran has the highest per-capita execution rate in the world — unmatched by any other country. Yet, Western governments and media have largely ignored this grim reality.

Nowhere in the world are protests and resistance for change as widespread and persistent as in Iran.

Every day, workers, civil servants, teachers, nurses, and pensioners take to the streets in cities across the country.

Over the past year alone, Resistance Units have carried out more than 3,000 operations against the regime’s repression.

And yet, Western governments and media deliberately turn a blind eye to what is unfolding on the ground.

At the same time, this very Parliament has adopted several resolutions over the past year condemning executions and human rights abuses in Iran. Nevertheless, the European Union continues to refrain from designating the Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist entity.

This reflects the continuation of a failed policy spanning three decades: sacrificing human rights and the Iranian Resistance, while deliberately demonizing it, has done nothing to curb the regime's aggression, its acts of blackmail, or its practice of taking Western citizens hostage.

This is a Resistance that has seen more than 100,000 of its members and supporters give their lives in the struggle for freedom and democracy.

The people of Iran want the overthrow of this regime.

We have risen up to bring about that change — to replace the regime with a democratic republic, free of nuclear weapons, founded on the separation of religion and state, gender equality, equal rights for all ethnic groups, an independent judiciary, and the abolition of the death penalty.

These have been outlined in the platform that the NCRI adopted and ratified over four decades ago. We advocate for a pluralistic system that consistently upholds peace in the Middle East .

This is the vision of a free Iran — a radiant future born from the courage and uprising of its people.

The Legitimacy of the Fight of Iran's Defiant and Freedom-loving Youth

Dear friends,

According to the platform of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, no later than six months after the overthrow of this regime, a National Constituent and Legislative Assembly will be established through free elections — based on universal, direct, equal, and secret suffrage of the Iranian people.

As soon as this Assembly is formed, the mandate of the National Council of Resistance and its transitional government comes to an end. The Constituent Assembly will then be responsible for drafting the new constitution of the future republic.

As Massoud Rajavi, the Leader of the Resistance, has stated:

“The outcome of this just struggle is already clear. We will not return to the past, nor will we remain stuck in the present — the future will undoubtedly be realized. Yes, a democratic and free Iran.”

The time has come for the European Parliament to call on the European Union and its member states to recognize the Iranian people's struggle to overthrow the regime.

We urge them to acknowledge the legitimacy of the resistance being carried out by Iran's defiant and freedom-loving youth against the clerical regime and its repressive forces, especially the Revolutionary Guard Corps, and stand with the Iranian people and Resistance to establish a free Iran.