Berlin conference: Maryam Rajavi on inevable regime change in Iran

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Maryam Rajavi: The Overthrow of the Clerical Regime Is Inevitable

Dear friends,

I am pleased to be with you today in Berlin. At the outset, I wish to pay tribute to Professor Rita Süssmuth. Her passing is a profound loss for me and for members of the Iranian Resistance.

For two decades, she was a steadfast defender of the Iranian people's rights to achieve freedom and democracy, a great supporter of the Resistance and a dear, noble sister to me personally.

She was a thinker whose speeches, writings, and books—and, above all, whose political action—charted a new course, one uncompromised by appeasement of dictatorships.

She was among those rare, consequential figures whose presence the world today truly needs.

I ask you to observe one minute of silence in her memory.

A Profound Transformation

At no time in Iran's long history, from ancient times to the present, has the situation been as critical and turbulent as it is today. Iran and the Middle East region stand at the heart of a profound transformation.

This transformation is evident in the regime's strategic failures across the region, in war, in the great January uprising, and most starkly in the regime's nationwide mass killing of the Iranian people. This is an earthquake that is still unfolding. Despite the crimes he has committed, Ali Khamenei is incapable of preserving the system of clerical rule.

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The Uprising Was Foreseeable

Today, any serious discussion of Iran and its future revolves around three fundamental questions:

First: Has change of Iran's political system become inevitable?

Second: If such change is necessary, how can it be achieved?

And third: How can chaos be prevented in the aftermath of the regime's overthrow?

The January uprising has provided clear and decisive answers to these questions. During this uprising, millions of people rose up across all 31 provinces of Iran. The slogans were unmistakably political. From the very first hours, chants were directed against the religious dictatorship, and the people openly demanded the overthrow of Khamenei.

The January uprising differed from previous protests in two crucial ways:

First, it was significantly organized. Second, rebellious youth confronted the Revolutionary Guards in defense of the protesters, and in several instances succeeded in disarming them.

The events of this uprising revealed unmistakable signs that the overthrow of the regime is inevitable. The reasons include:

First, the uprising was foreseeable. The Leader of the Iranian Resistance, Massoud Rajavi, declared on November 18, weeks before the protests began, that "the people's front is one step away from uprising."

Regime officials cautioned that public anger was approaching an explosive point. Nevertheless, the regime proved incapable of taking even a single step to alleviate popular grievances.

The regime's president despite his reformist claims took four major actions during his short tenure that further inflamed public anger: sharp fuel price increases, rising wheat prices, the removal of subsidies for essential goods, and the devaluation of the national currency.

Sensing the approaching footsteps of revolt, the regime resorted to a massive repression.

Second, the Tehran Bazaar, this time the starting point of the protests, demonstrated that the bazaar is harmed by the continuation of the status quo, especially as they hear the regime's president openly admit in official forums that he has "no solution" to the country's crises.

Third, the most significant development, the mass killings during the January uprising, demonstrates that the process of overthrowing this regime is both irreversible and inevitable.

The regime implemented a carefully designed and coordinated campaign of repression, delivering a rapid and brutal blow to ordinary people in the streets. Its main aim was to terrorize the people and drive them off the streets.

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It committed horrifying atrocities: shooting unarmed civilians in the head and torso, executing wounded protesters at close range, storming hospitals, and killing teenage girls, boys, and innocent children.

These events demonstrated that the regime has lost the capacity to govern and can sustain itself only through mass slaughter.

Fourth, amid this boundless atrocity and bloodshed, Khamenei anticipates an even greater and more explosive uprising. Today, even the so-called "reformists," who for years defended the system, openly declare that reform efforts within this regime have reached an impasse and have produced no results.

The January uprising answered the question of how change in Iran can be achieved because it demonstrated that, even under relentless and brutal repression, it is possible for a mass uprising to emerge in conjunction with an organized force.

The Need to Recognize the Struggle of Rebellious Youth Against the Terrorist IRGC

Twenty-two years ago, in a speech at the European Parliament, I emphasized that neither appeasement nor war are the solution to Iran's crisis. The only solution is the overthrow of the regime by the Iranian people and their organized resistance.

The failure and damaging consequences of appeasement have long been proven. Appeasement has been one of the greatest obstacles to change in Iran. The blacklisting of the PMOI/MEK by Western governments at the regime's request is a case in point.

Likewise, the bombing of PMOI centers in the Iran-Iraq border region followed by the consolidation of the National Liberation Army's weapons in 2003, resulted in the shackling of a ready force capable of toppling the regime or at least posing a major barrier to its regional aggressions, all to the benefit of religious fascism. This development solely benefited the religious fascism.

Developments over the past year in Iran, and over the past two decades in the region, have also demonstrated that foreign war cannot resolve Iran's crisis, bring about regime change, or replace it with a democratic system.

The designation of the Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organization was a necessary step away from appeasement, albeit taken with years of delay, one that this movement had tirelessly advocated for over the years. Now, the struggle of the people of Iran to overthrow the regime and the fight of rebellious youth against the terrorist IRGC must be recognized.

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Promoting a Return to the Past Serves the Regime

Beyond the savage repression of the January uprising, the Iranian people faced another destructive factor.

In recent months, certain circles and media outlets, through engineering and the use of online fabrication and fraud, have attempted to present the former Shah's son as an alternative.

Investigations of a number of media and cybersecurity institutions have exposed the political and intelligence networks behind the creation of fake social media accounts and artificial amplification of this current.

Yet outside the virtual world, in reality, this current has no organizational or structural capacity on the ground, particularly inside the country.

Such engineering, whatever its stated purpose, has in practice worked against the uprising.

The Shah's son not only refuses to distance himself from his father's despised one-party dictatorship, but his plans effectively reconstruct that same dictatorship, supplemented by elements of clerical authoritarianism.

The Future Outlook

Some ask: what happens after the regime falls? What guarantees exist to prevent chaos?

This question is particularly pertinent in light of the painful experiences of Iraq and Libya in this century. In Iran's case, however, multiple factors exist that can guide the post-regime period toward an orderly and democratic path.

Foremost among them is the existence of a credible, long-standing democratic alternative: the National Council of Resistance of Iran. This alternative relies on an extensive, nationwide network of its members across cities in Iran. As a result, the Resistance movement will not be starting from scratch on "day one" after the regime's fall.

This alternative also has the capacity to serve as a unifying axis among diverse political forces and parties, bringing together different ethnic nationalities and followers of various religions around a shared goal: the establishment of a democratic society.

Already today, in practice, the National Council of Resistance maintains close relations with many resistance groups, shares fundamental principles, especially the clear rejection of the Shah and the mullahs, and undertakes joint actions.

Regarding the future program, let me state clearly: according to the NCRI's plan, several immediate and essential steps must be taken after the regime's overthrow.

The most urgent is the formation of a provisional government with a maximum mandate of six months, tasked with organizing elections for a Constituent Assembly.

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Following the January uprising, we are witnessing for the first time extraordinary political reactions that reflect international acceptance of the regime's impending downfall.

I refer in particular to the positions taken by senior German officials, who, with realism, have emphasized that the regime's end is approaching.

Once this regime falls, a free and democratic Iran can elevate fair political and economic relations to their fullest potential and become a pillar of peace and stability in the region and in its relations with Europe and the wider world.

Now that world leaders have heard the voice of Iran's bloodstained uprising, it is expected that they also heed the legitimate demands of the Iranian people and the Resistance, and act swiftly to implement them. I presented these demands yesterday at the great gathering of Iranians:

1. Recognizing the Iranian people's struggle to overthrow the regime, and the battle waged by rebellious youth and Resistance Units against Khamenei's mercenaries and repressive forces.

2. Undertaking immediate action by the UN Security Council to halt executions of uprising detainees and political prisoners and to support the nationwide "No to Executions" campaign that has been ongoing for over two years.

3. Taking measures to facilitate the Iranian people's access to a free and uncensored internet.

4. Referring Khamenei and other regime leaders to the UN Security Council for prosecution before an international tribunal for crimes against humanity and genocide and pursuing legal action in national courts under the principle of universal jurisdiction.

5. Closing the regime's embassies and expelling its diplomats, as well as agents of the IRGC and Ministry of Intelligence, from countries around the world.

6. Severing completely the financial lifelines of the clerical regime.

These are the minimum demands of the Iranian people and the Resistance.ple of Iran.

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