

HAMBASTEGI

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The Red Cross and Swiss Government Conference was Defeated

A 6 May conference called for by the Swiss immigration authorities and the Red Cross and in collaboration with the Islamic Republic of Iran ended in disgrace for the Red Cross and the Swiss government as a result of the resolute intervention of the International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR), the Worker-communist Party of Iran, Iranian asylum seekers and other opponents of the Islamic regime.



The Red Cross, acting on behalf of the Swiss government, had earlier issued an official letter inviting asylum seekers to the conference and promising 2000 francs to those 'returning' to Iran. According to the letter, the Islamic Republic was effectively deemed safe for asylum seekers. Organised protests and our intervention turned the conference into a scene of protest against the Swiss government and Red Cross and a tribunal against the Islamic Republic. The Red Cross representative apologised several times and declared that the organisation would distance itself from this policy.

Mehrnoush Moosavi and Farshad Hussein, members

of IFIR's International Secretariat, exposed the Islamic Republic and the right wing and reactionary policies of the Swiss and Western governments. Moosavi also condemned the Red Cross, pointing to its track record in collaborating with the Islamic regime in returning Afghan refugees from Iran to Afghanistan under the Taliban, and declared that the IFIR would not allow the repetition of this inhuman and reactionary policy. Both representatives exposed the repression and lack of rights under Islamic rule, demanded that Iran be declared unsafe, that all rejected cases be reviewed and that all women fleeing Islam-ridden societies be granted asylum. The Red Cross representative agreed

to submit IFIR's demands to the Swiss government.

A conference that was to portray the Islamic Republic in a positive light and to set the backdrop for the deportation of Iranian asylum seekers to the nightmarish Islamic Republic was turned into an expose of the Islamic regime and the inhumane policies of the Red Cross and Swiss government. The conference ended successfully with the 250 asylum seekers and opponents shouting slogans of 'Down with the Islamic Republic'. The Swiss media immediately announced the defeat of the conference. Several Swiss media outlets interviewed Farshad Hoseini; Zurich Radio interviewed

Mehrnoush Moosavi.

As a follow up to this defeat, the Swiss government is now holding a conference facilitated by its personnel on 27 May at 3:00pm in Solutorn. The IFIR Swiss Branch is organising a protest at this conference as well. The IFIR reiterates its steadfast opposition to any attempts by the Islamic Republic and Western governments to legitimise the Iranian regime and play with the lives of those who have fled from it.

For information on the campaign, contact Mahmood Rahbari, IFIR-Swiss Branch director at Riedhofstr. 250, 8049 Zürich CH, Switzerland. Tel. +41 78 795 75 81. m_rahbary@hotmail.com.

Sample Letter of Protest to Swiss Government and Red Cross' 'Return to Iran Program'

Bundesamt für Flüchtlinge (BFF)
 Quellenweg 6
 3003 Bern-Wabern
 Fax: +41 31 325 93 79
 E-mail: info@bff.admin.ch

Sozial-, Rechts- und Rückkehrberatung
 Kronenstrasse 10
 8006 Zürich
 Fax: + 41 1 360 2851
 E-mail: info@srk-zuerich.ch

I/My Organisation strongly condemn(s) the Swiss government's 'Return to Iran Program' for Iranian asylum seekers, supported by the International Red Cross. Iranian asylum seekers have fled a brutal and repressive regime, which grossly violates civil rights. They must be granted asylum and protection from deportation or programs intending to coerce return.

I/We demand an immediate end to the 'Return to Iran Program'. Needless to say, I/we hold the Swiss government and Red Cross responsible for the lives and security of Iranian asylum seekers.

Signed
 Name, E-mail, Date

cc: ifir@ukonline.co.uk

Support Protesting Asylum Seekers in Port Hedland, Australia

According to Ardeshir, an International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR) member 'detained' in Port Hedland 'Detention Centre' in Australia, 10 Iranian asylum seekers have begun a sit-in since 26 April to demand their freedom and information regarding Afghan asylum seeker, Shirwan Marzrui. Marzrui leapt from a tree and split his head in a bid to gain the attention of immigration department officials investigating camp conditions

on 24 April. The 10 Iranians have camped outside in the burning heat using their sheets as shelter. They are refusing to return to the block.

IFIR fully supports their sit-in and demands and calls on the Australian government to immediately release all asylum seekers. IFIR will continue to advocate and organise until the Australian government backs down and ends its brutal and medieval practice of detaining innocents who have fled.

Condemn EU's Policy towards the People's Mujahedin Organisation of Iran

The International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR) strongly condemns the recent decision by the European Union to place the Iranian opposition organisation, the People's Mujahedin Organisation of Iran, on the list of terrorist organisations.

This move is a doomed attempt by the EU to exonerate the Islamic Republic of Iran of its criminal

and inhuman treatment of the Iranian people. This is an attack on the Iranian opposition and all those who are struggling to overthrow the Islamic regime of Iran.

The IFIR calls on all political organisations and parties, regardless of their stance towards the policies of the PMOI, to oppose the EU's decision.

Ferdous B. has been sentenced to Death by Stoning in Iran

According to Entekhab newspaper, a woman named Ferdous B. has been sentenced to death by stoning in Iran. This is the third such sentence in the past weeks, coming on top of the sentencing of Ameneh Laval in Nigeria and Zafaran Bibi in Pakistan. There is also the case of Sima, sentenced to stoning in Iran a while ago. These women were sentenced for having sexual relations outside of marriage. They are experiencing the nightmare of waiting to be stoned to death. This medieval and brutish

treatment is happening in front of our eyes and the Islamic government of Iran is one of the main supporters and promoters of this brutality, a crime against women.

To oppose and abolish stoning, send letters to the European Union protesting against their lack of action against this brutality. Put pressure on the media to report news of sentences to, and execution by, stoning around the world. We must put pressure on the governments



of Iran, Pakistan, Nigeria and the Sudan to stop and abolish the law of stoning.

Letters of Protest can be

sent to:

Romano Prodi, President
European Commission

Fax: +32 22956336

Email: civis@europarl.eu.int

Join an International Protest against Stoning

In the 21 century, stoning men and women to death is a hideous fact; stoning means burying men and women up to their waist or neck in the ground and killing them by gradual torture. Their crime, according to Islamic law, is having voluntary sexual relations outside of marriage.

Recently, Islamic governments in Islamic-stricken countries have practiced this brutal and medieval sentence more often. Men and women living under the rules of Islamic regimes and Islamic groups are always in danger of being stoned to death.

Right now, Ameneh Laval in Nigeria, Sima and Ferdous B. in Iran and Zafaran Bibi in Pakistan are in prison and

facing the nightmare of being stoned to death. Progressive and pro-freedom individuals and organisations must join forces to end this brutality.

In protest against this brutal treatment of women and men, the International Committee against Stoning is calling an international protest action against stoning. On May 31, we will be gathering in front of the embassies of Iran, Pakistan, Nigeria and the Sudan to express our outrage and protest against stoning. Also, there will be a rally in front of the European Union's office in Brussels. Representatives of the International Committee against Stoning will meet with EU officials to express its strong protest against stoning. Stoning and all cruel Islamic

punishments must end all over the world immediately. The European Union must break its silence regarding this brutality. They must condemn stoning and take serious action to abolish stoning.

The International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR) is a member of the International Committee against Stoning. We call on progressive groups and individuals to participate in these demonstrations to stop stoning and to defend women's rights.

**Friday
31 May 2002
at 10:30am**

**Rue de la Loi
Nr. 200,
Brussels (In
front of
European
Parliament)
Metro: Station
Schuman**

For more information, contact: Mina Ahadi, Coordinator, E-mail: minaahadi@aol.com, Tel: +49 177 5692 413, Fax: 0049 2012 488 510 or Shiva Mahbobi, Public Relations, E-mail: shiva_mahbobi@yahoo.com, Tel: +44 07984445278.

Are Iran and other Middle Eastern Countries Safe for Asylum Seekers?

IFIR - UK Branch Annual Conference on UK Asylum Policy

Speakers: Maryam Namazie, Imran Khan, Suresh Grover, Bruce Burson, Chris Randall, Dashty Jamal, Saeed Arman, Mehrnoush Moosavi, Farshad Hussein, Nasrin Ramzanali and others

Friday 24 May 2002

5pm - 10pm

University of London Union (ULU)

Room: 3E, Mallet Street

London WC1E

In English

Saturday 25 May 2002

10am - 10pm (Music and Food
from 6pm onwards)

The Peel Centre, Percy Circus

London W-C1X 9EY

Nearest Tube: King's Cross

In Persian

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latest international
refugee news, urgent
actions and press
releases:
www.hambastegi.org

**Join IFIR!
Defend Asylum
Rights!**

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