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# HAMBASTEGI

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# 130

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## The EU's 'Commemoration' of June 20

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June 20 is International Refugee Day. In 'commemoration' of this day, EU governments are planning to further restrict the right to asylum at the Seville Summit during 21 to 22 June. In Seville, they want to further combat 'illegal immigration' (the new catch phrase for asylum seekers) and plan a common asylum policy. In fact, though, they already have a common asylum policy of closed borders and repressive measures that deter, refuse and deport. They only want to enhance

and develop it. June 20 is also a day that commemorates the victims of the Islamic offensive against the Iranian revolution. Beginning on this day in 1981, the Islamic regime attacked, suppressed, threw acid in the faces of unveiled women, and daily executed hundreds of people in order to secure its rule. As a result, 100,000 people were executed and more than two decades of Islamic reaction took hold in Iran. In 'commemoration' of this genocide, too, European Union foreign ministers have agreed to open trade and political talks with Iran. In fact, though, they already have 'talks' with Iran. (In 2000, bilateral trade exceeded 12 billion dollars with the EU being the Islamic regime's main trade partner.) They only want to enhance and develop it.

These EU 'commemora-

tions' are nothing more than two sides of the same coin. One denies protection to the survivors of repression, labelling them illegal, bogus, criminal and terrorist while the other offers a helping hand to an illegal, criminal and terrorist government that represses and is the root cause of the Iranian and the region's refugee flow.

All the sanitized justifications for the Seville Summit and their 'talks' with Iran cannot hide the fact that they are advancing a policy that puts profits and repressive regimes first, and denies justice for the victims and people fleeing, living under and resisting Islamic rule. In fact, the EU's 'commemoration' is a continued tribute to repression and a further affront to humanity.

Instead, on June 20, we socialists, asylum seekers, pro-

gressive humanity, trade unionists, labour organisers, and rights activists are holding our own commemoration of this day. We are organising our own demonstrations, festivals and summits and issuing our own declarations that remember those murdered and killed by repressive regimes and racist asylum policies and that defend humanity and the right to live lives worthy of human beings whether in Iran, Northern Iraq, Iraq, Afghanistan, or in the EU, Australia, or elsewhere. Instead of political and trade 'talks' with the Islamic regime, we are calling for the prosecution of the Islamic regime's leaders, both right wing and so-called reformist, for their crimes against humanity. Instead of higher walls for fortress Europe, we are calling for equal rights for all those who seek freer, safer, better lives. This is our commemoration of June 20.

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## Declaration of Refugee Rights

The last two decades are undoubtedly comparable to regressions the likes of World War I and the rise of fascism in the 40s in its adversity for billions of human beings around the world. During these past two decades, human misery, brought on by Thatcherism and Reaganism of the 80s, were truly immense. Widespread

imposition of poverty and hunger, the emergence of brutal and anti-human nationalistic and ethnocentric wars, the unleashing of unbridled political Islam and this most reactionary and right wing religious-political tendency's atrocities against millions, European government attacks and step by step limitations on refugee

rights, the assault on welfare and social gains and attempts to replace universal rights with cultural relativism are the most important regressions of the past two decades.

Since our establishment, the International Federations of Iranian and Iraqi Refugees have predicted the regressive

trend of this era, warned against its destructive effects on people's lives at various junctures, clarified the practical ways in which to resist, and been at the forefront of the struggle for defending human values and refugee rights. Our starting point in the struggle for refugee rights is ever always the inalienable right of human beings to a better life. The

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effort and struggle to secure free and equal rights is an ongoing vast social movement with various dimensions and forms. Our philosophy of existence and daily activities are connected to this very struggle to secure and guarantee the rights of human beings. We believe, first and foremost, in the unconditional freedom of travel and movement and freedom to choose one's place of residence for all. Furthermore, we believe that eliminating the calamities of today's world is linked to the abolition of capitalism, a system that reproduces poverty, hunger, war and flight on a daily basis for billions of people and owes its survival to these very social inequalities. Until the refugee question remains, however, we are duty-bound to continue our struggle to secure and guarantee the most extensive refugee rights.

The following Declaration of Refugee Rights aims to raise the banner for a more effective and purposeful struggle for said rights. The demands in the Declaration have not been limited to the existing international framework, including the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. The basis of our demands is the rights and needs of 21 Century human beings. Diminishing human misery and creating a safer and better life for millions on the move determine our political stance.

### Definition of a Refugee

1. A refugee is anyone who seeks refuge in another country for a safer and freer life as a result of various political, social, and economic pressures. While the causes of flight are numerous, reasons are similar in nature and indicative of despotic economic and social systems and regimes. Consequently, anyone who flees war, violence, discrimination, rightlessness, despotism, and the domination of repressive religious, nationalistic and rights violating states or groups - whether state or non-state - must be granted refugee status.

### General Principles

2. Anyone who faces state or non-state discrimination, harassment, persecution, violence, intimidation, abuse, and rights violations because of race, ethnicity, sexuality, sex, religion, or political, social, and economic reasons must be granted refugee status.

3. No government has the right to close its borders to asylum seekers.

4. Children who flee under any circumstance either with or without their parents must be immediately granted refugee status. Enjoying access to housing, education, health care, sports and recreation equivalent to those provided to citizens must not be deferred until the granting of refugee status, especially for children and youth under

the age of 18.

5. Women who face psychological, physical, cultural, and 'honour' killings, violence, and harassment from misogynist and reactionary states and non-state groups, laws, customs, and traditions must be granted refugee status.

6. In countries where military 'service' is compulsory and refusal to serve is prosecutable and punishable, objectors must be granted refugee status.

7. The criteria for breaking the laws of the country of origin is not determined solely by transgressions of discriminatory, misogynist, religious, and anti-children laws. Political, cultural and union activities cannot be deemed crimes under any circumstances. Universal rights laws in existence in the most advanced Western European countries must be the criteria used.

8. Anyone who may face detention, arrest or persecution if returned to her/his country of origin because her/his private life and political activities outside the country of origin are deemed contrary to the laws of that country must be granted refugee status.

9. War criminals, heads of states and those who have committed atrocities and murders must not be deported to their countries of origin as long as execution and torture exist. However, they must

be tried and sentenced in accordance with the laws of a country where execution and torture have been abolished.

10. All women and girls and children under the age of 18 who have fled Islam-stricken societies must be unconditionally granted refugee status.

### Asylum Determination Procedures

11. Lack of identification or evidentiary documentation and or even use of fraudulent and illegal documentation by asylum seekers are not a crime and must not have an adverse effect on the granting of refugee status. Furthermore, having a passport and legally exiting country of origin cannot prevent someone from being granted refugee status.

12. Every asylum seeker has the right to have her/his claim reviewed in the country in which s/he has applied for refugee status. Passing through other countries cannot prevent the granting of refugee status in the country in which the claimant has applied for refugee status. Choosing one's city and place of residence is the right of all asylum seekers and must not be violated.

13. All asylum seekers must have the right to the most fair determination procedures. All asylum seekers must be granted free legal services, namely attorneys and interpreters, and must have

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comprehensive information on the determination procedures. Entitlement to existing social and welfare rights, including the right to work, education, health care, and unemployment is part of the basic rights of every asylum seeker.

14. No asylum seeker can be prosecuted or imprisoned for being an asylum seeker and or entering without proper or legal documentation. If an asylum seeker commits a criminal offence in the country where s/he has applied for asylum, s/he must be tried in accordance with the laws of that country in that country itself.

15. All refugees have the right to family reunification. The refugee's family must automatically obtain the refugee's status.

16. Former political prisoners

and persons who have been tortured must be granted refugee status without taking into consideration whether they have a fear of persecution at the time when they applied for asylum. A certification letter from a political opposition party or group must be considered adequate by the determining authorities in granting refugee status. In cases when the asylum seeker is unable to obtain a certification letter from the organisation or party s/he was active with in the past because of political differences, a certification letter from other opposition parties or organisations must be accepted by the determining authorities.

17. No asylum seeker can be detained or deported under any circumstances or justifications.

**Political and Cultural**

### Rights

18. Freedom of speech, assembly and organisation and political and social activities equivalent to standards in the country of asylum for citizens must be granted all asylum seekers. Governments are duty-bound to secure the security of activists from any form of terrorist or racist attack.

19. All state or non-state racist and xenophobic propaganda against refugees and asylum seekers must be prohibited.

20. Governments must provide the necessary resources in a systematic and planned manner in order to expedite the assimilation of refugees and asylum seekers in society and ensure individual and social rights equal to citizens for asylum seekers and refugees. Refugees and asylum seekers

must not be segregated and isolated from society and progressive culture under the name of cultural relativism based on nationality, culture and religion. The creation of ghettos for refugees and asylum seekers must be prohibited as must implementing a culturally relativist policy towards asylum seekers and refugees.

The International Federations of Iranian and Iraqi Refugees expect all freedom loving people, organisations, parties, labour organisations and those supporting refugee rights to play a more effective role in the struggle for securing these rights by reiterating and actively defending the above demands and defending the Federations in their struggle for refugee rights.

## Why is the Islamic Republic of Iran Unsafe? *Conference on the Swedish Government's Policy of Dialogue with the Islamic Regime*

The International Federation of Iranian Refugees - Sweden Branch is holding a two-day conference during **28-29 June 2002** entitled 'Why is the Islamic Republic of Iran unsafe? On the Swedish Government's Policy of Dialogue with the Islamic Regime.'

The Conference will be held in Spån gatan 37B, **Malmö**.  
Friday 28 June: 13.00 – 18.00; Saturday 29 June: 09.00- 19.00.

For more information on the Conference, please contact: Ismail Moloodi, +46 0704920349 / 040-6116109.

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