



Iran: stoning and executions must stop

Public Meeting on stonings and Executions in Iran at House of Commons

A public meeting will be held on stonings and executions in Iran with Mina Ahadi and Maryam Namazie as speakers representing the International Committee against Stoning and the Campaign against Executions in Iran. The London meeting will be held at the House of Commons, Committee Room 8 on Tuesday 11 February 2003 from 3-5pm.

Executions have always been one of the mainstays of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Islamic regime established itself from 20 June 1981 with widespread executions and murders. Since then, and particularly in 1988, the regime has

executed 100,000 political opponents, progressives, communists, women, labour activists, people attributed to religious and ethnic minorities, youth and gays and lesbians in what has come to be known as one of the greatest crimes of the 20th Century. During the past two decades, the regime has massacred innumerable human beings to remain in power. There are ample statistics, documents and witnesses to prove this. With escalating protests against the entirety of Islamic rule, the regime has once again stepped up its executions in order to intimidate the protesting public.

According to Maryam

Namazie, the Campaign against executions in Iran's Coordinator, 'While the Islamic regime has stepped up executions, it has at the same time been forced to temporarily suspend execution by stoning in early January 2003 as a result of local and international pressure, spearheaded by the International Committee against Stoning. But this is nowhere enough. Ashraf, Sima, Ferdows and Shahnaz, four women with pending sentences of death by stoning and Nosrat Abouie who managed to escape during her stoning and is now in prison are all still at risk of alternative forms of punishment including execution.

Latest News: Four young men, Mohammad Saadat Fath, Nader Ebrahimi, Ali Farsameh and Davoud Jafari were publicly hanged in Arak, western Iran on 30 January 2003. They were accused of 'raping people's honour'. There has also been a news report that a young woman and man who have been accused of 'adultery' and 'murder' are to be executed in Karaj rather than stoned to death. This is the first case of an alternative form of execution since stoning to death was temporarily suspended by the Islamic regime in Iran.

Numerous women, men and

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The war on terrorism: a war on civil rights and humanity

Maryam Namazie



The 'war on terrorism' is a war on civil rights and norms

Since the September 11 tragedy, there have been alarming and far-reaching changes in civil and international human rights standards and norms in Europe. While the 'war on terrorism' has been the context for these changes, many of the laws passed have

had nothing to do with actually countering terrorism and raising people's security but are rather concerned with redefining rights and norms, expanding controls and restrictions, restricting asylum seekers, protests and protestors, and forming USA-EU cooperation on border controls, immigration, extradition and other matters.

Changing definition of

terrorism

The expanded definition of terrorism in the EU Framework Decision on Combating Terrorism which came into effect on 23 June 2002 and is binding and must be incorporated into national laws is evidence enough to corroborate this claim. According to this definition, 'terrorist offences' include

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youth are currently awaiting execution. International public pressure can and must remove this brutal means at the Islamic regime's disposal and impel it to immediately stop all executions.

The Campaign against Executions in Iran unequivocally opposes capital

punishment and calls for its abolition in all countries. The Campaign aims to:

- * mobilise international protest against and condemnation of executions in Iran

- * galvanise public pressure against the Islamic regime in Iran and its Western government supporters

- * save the lives of those under execution sentences
- * stop executions in Iran



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acts that compel 'a Government or international organisation to perform or abstain from performing any act, or (iii) seriously destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organisation'. Offences mentioned in the Decision include: 'causing extensive destruction of a Government building or public facility, a transport system, an infrastructure facility, including an information system, a fixed platform located on a continental shelf, a public place or private property likely to endanger human life or result in major economic loss'. While EU governments have refused to explicitly remove any potential use of the Decision

against those exercising their democratic rights to protest, free expression and assembly and to exclude liberation struggles fighting against repressive and authoritarian regimes, it clearly stated that 'actions by the armed forces of a State in the exercise of their official duties are not governed by this Framework Decision.' This Decision has been complemented by other measures that have further extended the definition of terrorism to include 'active or passive' support for organisations deemed terrorist. Europol has also produced a Situation and Trends report on terrorist activity in the European Union which includes 'eco-terrorism', i.e. radical environmentalists and animal rights movements and 'anarchist terrorism' which

they say could be a symptom of the possible 'resurrection of left wing terrorism'.

Indefinite Detention

Britain's Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 adopted in December contravenes the European Convention on Human Rights and allows for the detention of foreigners, including EU citizens, without being charged or prosecuted and without access to appeal. The European parliament recently criticised Britain for the erosion of civil liberties after September 11. The USA has adopted similar legislation and can indefinitely detain non-citizens.

European Arrest Warrant

The EU Framework Decision

on the European Arrest Warrant which came into effect on 13 June 2002 is another alarming decision which does away with almost all precautions related to the extradition process. The requesting state will simply now have to say that a person is wanted for one of the 32 offences, after which this person can then be arrested, their homes searched and property seized, and deported to stand trial. There is no appeal and no rights for the suspect.

Exchanging 'Information'

A Recommendation proposed by the Spanish Presidency, adopted without debate by EU Justice and Home Affairs Ministers on 13 June 2002, for the 'introduction of a standard

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Mansoor Hekmat (1951-2002)

With the bloody suppression of the revolution in Iran and the imposition of an ultra-reactionary life on the people, tens of thousands of human beings, alone and without organisation, fled the Islamic Republic of Iran in search of security and tranquillity. Organising this vast human mass around the most modern and humane advances of humanity, unconditionally defending their right to asylum, and creating an international organisation without taking into consideration people's nationality, religion, sex and or political affiliation became an immediate necessity. Creating the International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR) was Mansoor Hekmat's response to these conditions. As he said: 'Our entire life story is changing the lives of human beings.'

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form for exchanging information on terrorists' says that information on 'individuals with a criminal record in connection with terrorism as defined in the Framework Decision on combating terrorism' can be exchanged. Its purpose is to prevent 'activities carried out by terrorist organisations to achieve their criminal aims at large international events' or 'organised groups run by terrorist organisations for the purpose of achieving their own destabilisation and propaganda aims'. The intent of this is clearly to counter protests and protestors. The Recommendation did not have to be submitted for scrutiny to national or European parliaments. The exchange of information adds to the measures already in place to counter protests.

Telecommunications Surveillance

On 20 September, the EU Justice and Home Affairs Minister Council adopted a number of measures, including access to telecommunications data by law enforcement agencies for the purpose of 'criminal investigations' thus eliminating privacy protection rules that traffic data had to be erased. While the new provisions are non-binding and it is up to each member state to adopt laws at a national level, EU governments are drafting a binding Framework Decision on the retention of data.

The US-EU Bush letter

A October 16, 2001 letter from Bush to the EU raised 47 demands for EU-US cooperation against 'terrorism' of which most dealt with crime and immigration, including the exchange of telecommunications data, the direct exchange of personal data with Europol, the establishment of common border control policies including data on asylum seekers and a new category of "inadmissibles" to be refused entry by the US and the EU. Since then there have been numerous meetings between EU-US and US and Canadian officials are sitting in on many EU working party meetings.

Refugees and asylum seekers

Many governments have publicly equated the 'war against terrorism' with the 'fight against illegal immigration'. After September 11, asylum legislation is being examined 'with reference to the terrorist threat'. On 27 December, the Council of the European Union adopted several Acts on 'terrorism'. The 'Council Common Position on combating terrorism', Article 16 says: 'Appropriate measures shall be taken in accordance with the relevant provisions of national and international law, including international standards on human rights, before granting refugee status, for the purpose of ensuring that the asylum seeker has not planned,

facilitated or participated in the commission of terrorist acts.' Under EU law this Common Position is binding on all members and will mean that all asylum seekers and refugees are subject to vetting by the police and security services before their status can be granted. In effect a file will have to be created on each person or family as to their political and trade union activity in their country of origin or any other country they have stayed in. Article 4 of the EU Common Position covers 'any form of support, active or passive' for terrorist activities. Moreover, surveillance and intelligence-gathering to combat terrorism and 'illegal immigration' can easily be combined. At the end of December, the UK placed undercover MI6 operatives inside Sangatte in northern France to monitor the activities of specific 'foreign' national or ethnic groups resident in the UK.

Recently, Tony Blair has also warned that Britain may withdraw from the European Convention on Human Rights because it prevents the UK from deporting asylum seekers who represented a threat to national security to a situation where they may face torture and cruel and inhuman punishment.

The list of repressive and restrictive measures goes on and on and creates a disturbing picture of what is in store for people living in Europe and the world. Repressive measures adopted in the USA are even

more far-reaching; people originally from the Middle Eastern are being treated reminiscent of 'enemy aliens' during the first and second world wars. Also, the distinction between terrorism and resistance to oppression and political dissent, between resistance/liberation struggles against authoritarian and undemocratic regimes and terrorist groups has become blurred. Freedom of expression and assembly and the rights to privacy, due process, the right not to be tortured, detained indefinitely and ... have been restricted and fundamentally changed.

Why now?

While the assault on rights and norms has been stepped up since the September 11 tragedy, it began long before that. In fact, it started at the end of the cold war; September 11 just gave governments the justification to do what they had been planning to do all along and to do it a lot quicker. These changes are also the result of a New World Order as well, which is bringing with it naked barbarity. Every right can be denied. Everything is permissible. 'Security' and 'combating terrorism' precedes all rights and standards.

Combating terrorism needs other measures

It is clear that most of the measures taken have nothing to do with combating terrorism. In fact, while EU

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and Western governments restrict civil and human rights and carry out their war against the people of the Middle East and people originally from the Middle East, they continue to wheel and deal with political Islam. While the Islamic Republic of Iran is one of the most fundamental pillars of Islamic terrorism, the European Union's action plan to combat terrorism includes strengthening relations with Iran, 'in particular by consultations with a view to negotiation of a Trade and Cooperation Agreement and by means of political dialogue.' From Afghanistan to their plans for a post-Saddam Iraq, political Islam continues to be maintained. Their policy in the Palestinian territories actually strengthens and provides a

recruiting ground for Islamic terrorism. Furthermore, the USA and its allies are themselves one pole in the escalating war of the terrorists. An end to the attack on Iraq and economic sanctions, an end to all political support of the Islamic Republic of Iran and other Islamic states and movements, the establishment of a Palestinian state, support of asylum seekers fleeing political Islam and an end to Islamic schools and veiling of girls under 16 are some of the important steps to end terrorism. Restricting rights will not combat terrorism and raise security, rather it will promote intimidation, terrorism and insecurity.

Is there any hope?

While the assault of people's rights and freedoms is becoming a norm in the New World Order, there is much that can be pushed back and changed with people's intervention. The tragedy of September 11 allowed the world to see the monstrous face of political Islam and feel some affinity with the people in the Middle East who daily live under Islamic terrorism and repression. In the USA's impending attack on Iraq too, protest against the attack is higher than has ever been against a war that has not yet even begun. But much work still needs to be done to strengthen these links, particularly in the face of efforts by the so-called left to defend political Islam to promote their one-sided anti-imperialism.

These are telling times. Often when barbarity is as naked as Islamic terrorism and USA-led terrorism are, the opposite - we who represent civilised humanity - can establish itself. In these times, when even the pretext of defending rights and people is no longer feigned by governments and attacks are so overt, people can more clearly see naked barbarity for what it is. Whether the 21st century will be the century of naked barbarity or a world free of terrorism is of course up to us.

Information gathered from Amnesty International, Statewatch, EU Directives and media outlets.

Two deported from Canada to Iran

Mrs. Nateghi and her son Mr. Esmat whose deportations had been staved off when Mrs. Nateghi managed to escape, were deported after Mrs. Nateghi turned herself in to the Canadian authorities.

The International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR) is outraged at the Canadian government's refolement of those at risk of torture and persecution in Iran. IFIR holds the Canadian government accountable for

their lives and safety. No one must be deported to Iran. Anyone fleeing the brutal Islamic regime must be granted asylum.

We call on all progressive individuals and organisations

to telephone Rob Johnson at Immigration Canada at 604-666-5946, and/or email the Minister of Immigration, Denis Coderre at minister@cic.gc.ca to condemn the deportations to Iran.

ASYLUM IS A RIGHT!

Visit IFIR site for latest international refugee news, urgent actions and press releases:
www.hambastegi.org

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