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24 December 2014

Dear Foreign Secretary,

MINISTERIAL
SUPPORT UNIT
05 JAN 2015
DEPT: IRAN DEPARTMENT
REF: MIN 178479/2014
DUE: 15/01/2015

On the occasion of the International Day of Human Rights, we are writing on behalf of the British Parliamentary Committee for Iran Freedom (BPCIF) to raise very serious concerns with regards to the appalling human rights situation in Iran and in Camp Liberty, Iraq.

The BPCIF was founded more than two decades ago by the late Lord Corbett of Castle Vale to help towards achieving a close understanding about the nature of Iran's clerical regime, which has so diminished the reputation of its own nation as well as damaging the international community. Since its formation, the BPCIF has been closely following and examining the situation in Iran, the ruling regime's illegitimate ambitions as well as the situation of the Iranian democratic opposition groups including the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) and members of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI) in Camp Ashraf and Liberty.

For more than three decades, the regime has been a major concern for the international community due to its unacceptable violations of human rights, and the suppression and annihilation of its opponents even outside its borders. Camp Liberty residents are victims of this repressive approach, and its illicit nuclear activities and its destructive state-sponsorship of world-wide terrorism are the terrifying implements of this rogue regime.

i. Human rights

Since Rouhani took office there has been expectation in the West that Iran will change its behaviour and that the human rights situation will improve. The reality is sharply different. Over the past one and half years the human rights situation in Iran has deteriorated. The number of executions has increased, often for political dissent or for actions which would not be crimes elsewhere in the world. Attacks on women have been on the rise with dozens of women being attacked with acid and knives following extraordinary new legislation to protect those who take the laws in their hand supposedly to prevent vice and promote a heretical version of Islamic religious expectations including dress codes.

The Iranian regime under Rouhani is heavily engaged in disseminating false information and propaganda about the human rights situation in Iran. Their lobbies in Europe and elsewhere constantly repeat the same false information.

Amnesty International's report of 6 November 2015 is very revealing:

"On 31 October 2014, a high-profile Iranian delegation, headed by Mohammad Javad Larijani, the head of Iran's High Council for Human Rights, part of the country's judiciary, appeared before the

UN Human Rights Council to defend Iran's human rights record since the country's first UPR in February 2010. The delegation presented a distorted picture of the human rights situation in Iran, which bore little resemblance to the realities on the ground. Issues of concern for Amnesty International include the claims by the delegation that Iran strictly adheres to international fair trial standards; fully respects freedoms of expression, association and assembly; guarantees full equality between men and women in law and practice; and ensures the enjoyment of human rights by members of Iran's ethnic and religious minorities."

Amnesty added: "In stark contrast to the fiction presented by Iran, the review session pointed to a dire state of human rights, with an ever increasing number of executions, including juveniles put to death and public executions; widespread torture and other cruel, inhumane and degrading treatments or punishments committed with impunity; violations of international fair trial standards; entrenched discrimination on the basis of gender, religious belief, ethnic identity, sexual orientation and gender identity; and restrictions on freedoms of expression, association and assembly."

In the FCO press release of November 26 issued following the adoption of Iran Resolution in the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly, it was stated: *"The situation remains dire and urgent action is required." We believe too that action is necessary and there is no good just to issue statements expressing concern about human rights violation in Iran and then business as usual by pursuing the policy of appeasement.*

Therefore, we urge the government to take an initiative as a permanent member of the UN Security Council for Iran's human rights dossier to be referred to the UNSC. Action is required to hold Iranian authorities accountable for their crimes and to make them respect their international obligations.

ii. Nuclear Programme

A second deadline for nuclear talks between Iranian regime and the P5+1 (or E3+EU3) passed on November 24 without a deal (or any realistic sign of a deal) to curb the regime's nuclear programme. The Iranian regime has continuously refused to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) regarding past suspect nuclear weapons activity and research. However, the parties agreed to extend the talks for a third time and set out a new deadline for reaching a comprehensive deal to the end of June next year.

A report by the International Committee in Search of Justice, published in late November concluded that the Iranian regime's nuclear programme had a military intention from the outset and that all of its apparent civilian activities were in the cause of building a nuclear bomb. The report points out that the regime never reported these nuclear activities voluntarily to the IAEA under the Non Proliferation Treaty and it was the Iranian Resistance that for the first time revealed the regime's nuclear and enrichment programme.

We believe that impasse in negotiations by the United States and the five powers with the Iranian regime is due to unjustified concessions to the regime and over-generous flexibility exercised in dealing with the regime. Continuing with negotiations which have been going on for 12 years instead of decisiveness and intensifying sanctions amounts to taking a dangerous path which will lead to nuclear bomb.

Over 100 MPs in the House of Commons have signed Early Day Motion 342 on Iran and its pursuit of nuclear weapons, calling on the Government to take a robust position in Iran nuclear talks. Therefore, we welcomed your remark of "No deal is better than a bad deal" in the last round of negotiations.

The failure of the November 24 negotiation is a reminder to the international community that a new approach is much needed. The regime came to negotiation because of fear of domestic uprisings and also under international sanctions.

We feel that one of the main reasons that no agreement was reached at the last round of negotiations was that Iran is under insufficient pressure.

That is why we believe that there must be increased intensity of pressure on the regime, including comprehensive sanctions. In due time, this will lead to the real solution to this problem, which is regime change in Iran. This is why we support that part of the Iranian opposition which is advocating a free, democratic and non-nuclear Iran.

III. Camp Liberty

The situation of Camp Liberty residents remains a matter of serious concern. They are refugees and protected persons under Fourth Geneva Convention with undeniable rights under international law. But beyond that they are powerful in their suffering and silence as the leading advocates of freedom and democracy in Iran and thus, the source of inspiration for the enchained people of Iran. They represent the desire of a nation for change, for freedom and for democracy. They are exemplars to the many in Iran who are aware of their plight.

The Iranian regime resorts to attempts to eliminate them because they fear their impact inside Iran and on the Iranian people. This is despite the fact that they have neither weapons, nor freedom of movement.

We ask you to intervene and make it clear to the Government of Iraq that one of the yardsticks which distances this government from Maliki is the treatment of the residents of Liberty. All restriction on access to medical care must be lifted. There should be no restriction on how many people may go to hospital every day. All other restrictions must also be lifted.

The Government of Iraq must remove those from their Camp Liberty team all who were responsible for previous crimes. This responsibility must be given to a new team which would respect Iraq's obligations.

iv. ISIS

The current situation in the region and rise of the ISIS is of course a real concern. But to successfully confront this phenomenon, it is vital to understand some fundamental issues in this regards, otherwise the crisis will deepen.

First, ISIS did not emerge overnight. It is to great extent the outcome of misguided policy in Syria and Iraq which finds at least part of its roots in the wrong policy towards Iran. The failure of the Western powers to support the moderate Syrian opposition when the uprising started in Syria allowed the Syrian dictatorship to suppress people by massacring some 200,000. That created a vacuum allowing extremist and terrorist groups such as ISIS to find a foothold there.

The failure of the US policy in Iraq, by supporting Nouri al-Maliki's repressive behaviour at the behest of Tehran, resulted in annihilation of the Sunni population to the extent that opened the way for ISIS to take advantage of the people's grievances for its own objectives. The West and in particular the US administration was warned on several occasions, including regarding the repeated attacks on residents of Ashraf and then Camp Liberty, but all was ignored, until Mosul fell.

Both in Iraq and in Syria, the Iranian regime has been at the roots of the problems. It was Iran and its revolutionary Guards who helped Bashar Assad to remain in power. It was the mullahs' regime which provided arms, money and logistics to Syria. It was revolutionary Guards and commanders of notorious Quds Force commanding the war against Syrian people. In such circumstances, the most damaging approach is to engage in any cooperation with Iran under the false perception that Iran can be helpful in confronting the ISIS. Iran is the core of problem and must be evicted from Iraq. Cooperation, coordination or even silence about regime's meddling in Iraq is a strategic mistake and recipe for disaster.

In addition to the important aspiration of regime change, the situation must also be confronted culturally. The Iranian Resistance, headed by a Muslim woman is an appropriate antidote to this phenomenon. A tolerant and democratic Islam which advocates gender equality, respect for international conventions, and full respect for religious and ethnic minorities is the cultural challenge to the extremists which the international community should support.

Given the above arguments, we hope that the long-standing experience and knowledge of the BPCIF will be helpful to the FCO in reaching a revised policy in relation to Iran.

In these circumstances we request a meeting with you to discuss the above issues. We look forward to hearing that this can be arranged.

Yours sincerely



Lord Carile of Berriew CBE QC for the British Parliamentary Committee on Iran Freedom