

**Organization of Iranian Americans**  
**Sept. 20, 2021**

**Thank you for inviting me to address you today. I am honored to participate in a program to once again to stand with each of you and the Iranian people in their quest for a Secular, Democratic and Non-Nuclear Republic of Iran, the quest for fundamental human rights for the Iranian people and the quest to hold the Iranian regime accountable for human rights abuses and their support for terrorism. I say address you once again because it was indeed an honor for me to address the 2021 Iran Human Rights & Democracy Conference this past July.**

**I noted then that the global conference was coming at an important time as democracy around the world is under tremendous stress while authoritarian powers and autocracies are on the rise. Likewise, the conference today is also coming at a important time, a time when the United Nations is once again assembling and Iran's new leader is set to address the General Assembly albeit virtually rather than in person. The timing of this conference is important because it demonstrates the continued drumbeat for freedom and justice and democracy that is the hallmark of The Organization of Iranian Americans. You are continuing the drumbeat directed to the UN that the rise of Iran as a purported world power is somewhat illusory as it is clear that those**

**in power in Iran are not there because of the support of the Iranian people, but because they continue to repress dissent and manipulate the levers of government. Such manipulation was on full display with the so called election of Ebrahim Raisi as Iran's president.**

**With this conference you are continuing the drumbeat for the the UN and the world to know that by allowing Raisi to speak on a world stage the UN is turning a blind eye to over three decades of mounting evidence regarding Raisi's rise to power through repression and injustice and his role in the execution of literally thousands of political dissidents dating back to the 1988 Massacre.**

**I have read that Raisi's remarks to the UN will focus on laudable themes of justice and freedom and ending corruption. But actions speak louder than words. Justice and freedom have certainly not been the experience of the Iranian citizens at the hands of a corrupt, brutal theocracy whose economic incompetence has plundered the country's wealth, pushing 80% of the population into poverty. The regime has continued to repress the Iranian people through imprisonment and execution. With Raisi's appointments and legislative confirmations of high level government officials whose terrorist credentials match those of Raisi himself there is nothing to suggest that Raisi will be a leader for change. Many in his cabinet**

**are, like Raisi himself, under sanctions by the United States and the European Union. One has even been criminally charged and has an outstanding Interpol warrant for his role in a 1994 bombing in Buenos Aires that killed 85 people.**

**Frankly, although he is the President of Iran, in my view the United Nations should be leading the calls for Raisi's prosecution or at a minimum calls for an independent inquiry into the allegations of the state ordered executions of literally thousands of political prisoners in 1988 and the role Raisi played in those executions rather than giving him a global forum to carry out a charade of legitimacy.**

**Calls for an independent inquiry have been growing each year. From UN experts to Amnesty International. Just this past summer on the eve of Raisi's predetermined election and reports that mass graves were being destroyed as part of the cover up concerning the 1988 executions, the UN investigator on human rights called for an independent inquiry noting that over the years his office has gathered testimonies and evidence that he is ready to turn over to the United Nations Human Rights Council or other impartial investigation.**

**The drumbeat for justice, for accountability grows louder each day.**

**So rather than allowing him to speak, perhaps the UN should simply Zoom him in on their big screen and announce that an investigation is exactly what they are going to do and demand full cooperation by the Iranian government.**

**Accountability is the first, and perhaps most important step, toward democracy in Iran.**

**And we hear that drumbeat from across the globe, particularly from Albania. As you know, since 2016 some 2,500 Iranian dissidents (nearly 1,000 of them women), were relocated from their camps in Iraq to Albania. They were relocated in order to save their lives, after repeated attacks by the**

**Iranian regime and its Iraqi proxies. A third of the residents are former political prisoners, others are political activists wanted by the regime in Iran. Still others joined them from around the world to build a united force for change.**

**Once in Albania, the residents built their own large facility, known as Ashraf-3, near Tirana. It is clear that Tehran considers Ashraf 3 as the beacon of hope for change in Iran. It was [Iranian operatives who were detained](#) on charges of terrorism by Albanian authorities following a foiled terrorist plot against the MEK in Tirana in March, 2018. The regime's ambassador, who was a senior Ministry of Intelligence and Security official, was expelled along with 3 other "diplomats."**



**Because of the significant leadership role of 1,000 women in Ashraf 3 and their inspirations for women in Iran, as well as hundreds of witnesses to Iranian regime's crimes who are now in Ashraf 3, Tehran remains focused on physical elimination of Ashraf 3 residents while demonizing them with misinformation and propaganda.**

**And in light of recent events in the Middle East, it should also be noted that the women of Ashraf-3 are not just inspirations for women in Iran, but are now the inspirations and hope for women in Afghanistan and throughout the Middle East.**

**But as I have said before change will not and should not come to Iran because other countries want it or even demand it. No my friends, change must come – and I believe will come – from you and the people of Iran. By continuing the drumbeat for freedom and democracy you and those in Ashraf-3 are the source and instrument of change. You are the inspiration for change.**

**And as you know there is blueprint for change and an alternative to theocracy. [Mrs. Maryam Rajavi](#) has introduced a Ten-Point Plan for the future of Iran which calls for the universal right to vote, free elections, and a market economy. Her plan advocates for separation of church & state; gender, religious, and ethnic equality; a foreign**

**policy based on peaceful coexistence, and a nonnuclear Iran.**

**The people of Iran are demonstrating time and time again, year after year, that they are willing to make the sacrifices for freedom.**

**But change – true change, lasting change – does not come quickly or easily. True change, lasting change will come only through continued determination, ongoing commitment and lasting sacrifice – characteristics possessed by all freedom loving Iranians. It was the same determination, commitment and sacrifice seen and heard during America's civil rights movement, a movement in**

**which Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., once described himself not as a leader but as a “Drum Major for Justice.”**

**The challenges for a secular, democratic and non-nuclear Iran still lie ahead. So you can never give up, never lose sight of the quest for freedom, continue that drumbeat for a free Iran knowing that each of you and everyone in Ashraf-3 are Iran’s “Drum Majors for Justice.”**

**Thank you!**

