

António Guterres

UN Secretary General

17th December 2019

Dear Secretary General,

UNSC REPORT ON IRAN

May we respectfully draw your attention to certain issues in Iran, prior to the imminent UNSC discussion on that country? Before we do so, please allow us to repeat the words of Greta Thunberg, the young climate change activist, who in a recent speech said: *“Until you start focusing on what needs to be done rather than what is politically possible, there is no hope. We can’t solve a crisis without treating it as a crisis.”* Greta Thunberg’s words were, of course, referring to climate change, but they contain a powerful message echoing the prevailing situation in Iran. We believe it is a message that should be listened to by the UNSC.

The forthcoming meeting of the UNSC is, we believe, about non-proliferation. We understand from sight of the paper that the UNSC will also discuss Iran within this context, including a detailed discussion on the US withdrawal from the JCPOA, the resulting breaches perpetrated by the Iranian regime, the attacks on Saudi oil facilities and oil tankers in the Strait of Hormuz and the shooting down of an American drone. There is a clear apprehension that the situation could get worse and the resulting proposal for action by the council suggests: *“Should tensions escalate further, the Council could consider making a more formal pronouncement urging restraint on all sides.”* Sadly, a formal pronouncement urging restraint on all sides will cut no ice with the repressive Iranian regime. Given that the High Commissioner for Human Rights – Michelle Bachelet – has expressed her grave concerns over the carnage in Iran, we urgently ask that you include these atrocities in your discussion.

We sincerely believe that it would be remiss in future if any discussion on Iran in the UN failed to mention the recent nationwide uprising, which, over the course of the past month, has seen the regime and its revolutionary guards (IRGC) gun down thousands of young protesters on the streets of Iran’s towns and cities, murdering an estimated 1,500, wounding more than 4,000 and arresting over 12,000. We have already seen a list of names of 504 of those killed and know from Amnesty International and other sources that the final death toll is much, much higher. These are appalling crimes against humanity that require an immediate response from the international community, involving, at the very least, a UN fact-finding mission to establish the truth about the numbers killed and injured and to ascertain the treatment of those imprisoned. The UN must hold those responsible for these crimes accountable in the international courts of justice. There can be no impunity for those guilty of such chilling atrocities.

About ISJ:

International Committee In Search of Justice (ISJ) was initially formed in 2008 as an informal group of EU parliamentarians to seek justice for the Iranian democratic opposition. In 2014 it was registered as a non-profit NGO in Brussels expanding its membership beyond elected parliamentarians to former officials and other dignitaries with an interest to promote human rights, freedom, democracy, peace and stability.

It is important that the council should understand that the recent protests have fundamentally changed the situation in Iran. The international community can no longer proceed on a 'business as usual' basis. The theocratic regime has lost what little legitimacy it had after these nationwide demonstrations and the brutal crushing of the unarmed, civilian protesters. Can we draw your attention to a statement by Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of the Iranian regime's Supreme National Security Council, in remarks broadcast on the state radio & TV and published by the state-run news agency, IRNA, on December 12, when he claimed in reference to the protests: *"Infiltrators carried out these acts;"* He added: *"more than 85 percent of those who lost their lives in the recent incidents in cities in Tehran Province did not participate in any of the protest gatherings and were killed under suspicious circumstances with firearms and other weapons not issued by the [security] forces. Thus, the opposition [groups'] project of piling on casualties in this region is certain."*

It is this sort of ludicrous assertion that makes us fear there will an even greater brutal crackdown on any future protests, which are now certain to occur in a country that has reached the tipping point, where the ordinary citizens have lost their fear and are prepared to risk their lives to bring down this pariah regime. That is why it is of such vital importance that the UNSC acts decisively now. The vicious crushing of the nationwide protests in Iran cannot and must not be treated as a separate issue from the JCPOA and Iran's belligerent activities in the Gulf and wider Middle East. They are directly related.

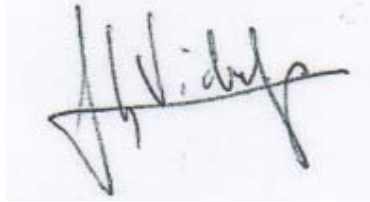
The uprising was triggered by the regime's decision to triple the price of gas. This was the last straw for a nation whose citizens have been impoverished by the venally corrupt regime that for 40 years has stolen Iran's wealth for the benefit of its rulers and to wage proxy wars across the Middle East, in Syria, Yemen, Lebanon and Iraq. That is why many protests involved arson attacks on banks and other institutions related to the IRGC and the security forces. That is why the protesters have chanted on the streets: *"Forget Syria, what about us?"* Indeed, the current uprising raging across the country has taken on a new and uniquely political dimension, with young protesters demanding regime change and calling for the ousting of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and president Hassan Rouhani, chanting *"The enemy is here; they are lying when they say it is America."*

For years the West has peddled the myth that Iran's president, Hassan Rouhani, is some sort of moderate, smiling for the cameras, while holding the line against the hard-core mullahs. Now we see that Rouhani has authorised the ruthless shoot-to-kill policy being savagely implemented by the IRGC and we hear that IRGC thugs are scouring Iran's hospitals, detaining anyone with bullet wounds. It is also worth noting that since Rouhani took office in 2013, he has presided over the execution of more than 4,000 people, many of them political prisoners, including numerous women and even children. Iran is now the world's leading per capita executioner under Rouhani's 'moderate' presidency.

The US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has called the Iranian regime a *"thuggish police state"*, saying that *"Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps are the cudgels of a despotic theocracy, with the IRGC accountable only to a Supreme Leader. They're the vanguard of a pernicious empire that is expanding its power and influence across the Middle East."* We hope that the UNSC will heed his words. The international community cannot continue to treat the theocratic regime in Iran as a normal nation state. The belligerent

behaviour of the regime proves that attempts at negotiation or appeasement are pointless. The West must show support for the oppressed Iranian millions, who now look to the UNSC for urgent help.

Yours sincerely,



ALEJO VIDAL-QUADRAS

President ISJ

Alejo Vidal-Quadras, a Spanish professor of atomic and nuclear physics. Vice-president of the European Parliament from (1999-2014).



STRUAN STEVENSON

Chair ISJ Committee on the Protection of Political Freedoms in Iran

Member of the European Parliament representing Scotland 1999-2014. President of the European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with Iraq (2009-14) and chairman of Friends of a Free Iran Intergroup (2004-14).



GIULIO TERZI

Chair ISJ Committee on the Protection of Human Rights & Justice in Iran

Minister Foreign Affairs Italy 2011-2013, Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations in New York between 2008 and 2009 and Ambassador of Italy to the United States between 2009 and 2011.

CC: All members of the UNSC

Mme. Michelle Bachelet Jeria, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Attached: Detailed NCRI Report on the Iranian uprising