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EU Reporter: “The Iranian people are ready to overthrow the regime”, opposition leader tells MEPs

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The EU Reporter reported on May 24, 2023, on a conference at the European Parliament featuring Mrs. Maryam Rajavi, the President-elect of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, who briefed MEPs on the situation in Iran and the future prospects. Following is the EU Reporters’ report by Nick Powell.

The President-elect of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, [Maryam Rajavi](#), has urged MEPs to support a much tougher stance by the EU and its member states against the theocratic regime in Tehran. She said the people of her country had risen against religious fascism and she criticised European inaction in response to the executions of protesters, writes Political Editor Nick Powell.

Maryam Rajavi returned to the European Parliament four years after her last visit, a period that has seen a massive growth in popular resistance to the rule of the mullahs in Iran. She is now President-elect of the preeminent opposition body, the National Council of Resistance of Iran. Her struggle has lasted a lifetime, since she took part in student protests against the dictatorial rule of the last Shah.

Dozens of MEPs from different political groups came to hear Maryam Rajavi. She said 112 prisoners had been executed by the regime since the beginning of May, in an attempt to create an atmosphere of terror to prevent further uprisings. The people had responded with protests against these brutal killings but Europe’s response had been disappointing.





"Unfortunately, we are witnessing a lack of action from the European Union and its member states," she said. "Isn't opposing executions one of the well-known principles of the European Union? So why when it comes to Iran, economic interests and political considerations downplay the importance of the human rights situation?"

"I am here today to be the voice of the protesters in Iran, especially women, who have risen up against religious dictatorship," she added, saying that her message was that the Iranian people have risen to overthrow religious fascism. "They reject tyranny in all its forms and will persist in their fight until they achieve freedom and democracy."

Stanislav Polčák from the EPP group said the European Parliament must support the creation of a democratic and secular republic in Iran and described the National Council of Resistance as the only active opposition to the regime. Another EPP MEP, Ivan Štefanec, said that under Maryam Rajavi's leadership, people in Iran are "closer than ever to their freedom." He urged those who still thought it possible for the EU to have a constructive relationship with the regime to remember the lesson of history that "when facing fascism, appeasement does not work".



Ryszard Czarnecki from the ECR group condemned those who still hoped for business as usual with the Iranian regime, saying the mullahs should pay a high price for supplying drones to Russia for use in its war in Ukraine. But Jan Zahradil, also from the ECR, warned that some EU and US politicians are comfortable with the status quo, as still believed that they could do deals with the regime.

Inside Iran, organised resistance is growing. The National Council of Resistance and its core constituent, the People's Mojahedin Organisation (MEK), has tirelessly sought democratic change. Its 10-point programme calls for a republic with separation of religion and state, full individual and social freedoms, gender equality, autonomy for ethnic nationalities, elimination of the death penalty, an independent judiciary, a free market, dissolving the Revolutionary Guard, and a non-nuclear Iran with international and regional coexistence and cooperation.

Maryam Rajavi called on the European Union to include the Revolutionary Guard in its list of terrorist organisations, to trigger the so-called 'snapback mechanism' in the 2016 Iran nuclear deal that would restore UN sanctions against the regime, to designate the regime as a serious threat to global peace and security and to recognise the Iranian people's right to struggle to overthrow the regime, as well as what she called "Iranian youth's legitimate struggle" against the Revolutionary Guard.

The protests, she said, had rejected both the present clerical dictatorship and the Shah's dictatorship which preceded it; they were false alternatives. "The Iranian people are ready to overthrow the regime."

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