



PRESS RELEASE

THE FIRST 'MEMORY, IDEA, HOPE' MEETING'
THE HAGUE, NETHERLANDS, 29 OCTOBER 2023



INTRODUCTION

The first in a series of 4 planned meetings entitled, 'Memory, Idea, Hope' by the Iranian Centre for Policy Studies (ICPS) was convened in The Hague, Netherlands, on 29 October 2023.

Prior to that, ICPS had held two prior meetings on 18 March, and 15 July 2023 in which the topic of '*Searching for a common language and strategy for the pursuance of the struggle for freedom and democracy*' as well as '*An analysis of poasitive and negative actions during the 'Women, Life, Freedom Movemenet of 2022-2023'*'.

An important feature of these meetings was the active participation of a number of prominent political, civil society, human rights activists with different tendencies in Iran.

Based on the two previous seminars, focus in The Hague was concentrated on the search for finding practical ways for moving forward in the context of promoting transitional change in Iran. To this end, the quest for consensus building was begun with the seminar in The Hague that is planned to be followed up with similar events in Stockholm, Vienna and Koln with the active participation of experts residing in those localities.

The first of these gatherings, held in The Hague on 29 October.

THE MEETING

Given that the start of the seminar coincided with the announcement by the Islamic regime of the untimely death of Armita Geravand, the meeting that was rightly named after her and began with a minute of silence in honour and memory of all the victims of the 'Women-Life-Freedom Movement' in every corner of Iran.

This was then followed by playing a specially made and most moving video entitled, "Memory, Idea, Hope".

Then in a brief talk, Dr. Mehrdad Khonsari (ICPS Co-ordinator & Senior Consultant) explained the reasons why the title "Memory, Idea, Hope" had been chosen to depict this series of meetings. DR. Khonsari elaborated that 'Memory' was in honour of the more than 500 people who had sacrificed their lives in the course of the nation-wide protests of last year and whose families were now being prevented from even mourning the loss of their loved ones. Indeed, honouring was not limited to just the sacrifice of those who had lost their lives but the thousands who had been indiscriminately shot at and blinded with pellet guns as well as the more than 20 thousand people who had been arrested and imprisoned solely for peacefully

expressing their shame and horror in the aftermath of the brutal killing of Mahsa Amini.

According to Dr. Khonsari, in the current atmosphere this was a task that Iranians in exile were perhaps in a unique position for undertaking on behalf of their threatened and intimidated counterparts inside the country. Dr. Khonsari said that by focussing on 'ideas', the intention was to learn from previous experiences for purposes of coming up with new and forward-looking "ideas" that can accelerate the process of change for freedom and democracy in Iran. Finally, the seminar envisioned that "Hope" which is a constant precursor of any political movement demanding change should with a revived outburst of energy arise from new ideas along with the practical means for achieving them.

Following Dr. Khonsari, Ms. Farah Karimi, a prominent member of the Netherlands Senate, spoke about the sensitive topic entitled, "In remembrance of those who gave their lives and the duty and expectations now thrust upon us".

In the first of the two panels (Chaired by Messrs. Reza Alijani and Mohammad Javad Akbarin) that followed the speech by Senator Karimi, the eminent scholar, Dr. Touraj Atabaki and the feminist scholar and activist, Mansoureh Shojaie presented their views on how the women's movement in Iran might have ignited the torch of hope and improved prospects for all Iranians'.

The second and final panel examined the way forward for the attainment of ultimate victory for liberation of the country, a number of speakers representing different political affiliations (Messrs. Damon Golriz, Darioush Madjlessi and Behzad Karimi) also addressed the meeting

CONCLUSION

Despite the variety of views that were raised in this gathering, important consensus was reached on a number of key issues. Prominent amongst those was the notion that the main thrust of any political action must be organized and carried out inside the country as well as general disdain for any kind of military attack aimed at promoting political change inside Iran.

In the end, the meeting concluded with a call for the joint action amongst all political forces in line with the ICPS crafted slogan of "one goal, one slogan": "replacing the sovereignty of the nation instead of the sovereignty of the province".



IRANIAN CENTRE FOR POLICY STUDIES (ICPS)

مرکز ایرانی مطالعات سیاسی

Info@icps.uk / www.icps.uk