

What has remained from global solidarity and common responsibility?

By Shadi Sadr

Exactly, three months from now will be the anniversary of the biggest demonstration of the people of Iran, protesting the results of the election of the 2009 Presidential election. Even according to the Government authorities more than 2 millions of the 10 millions of people living in Tehran participated in that demonstration. More than 2 million people with diverse beliefs, social standing and classes under security conditions, while fear and hope was in their hearts came to the streets and organized one of the most magnificent peaceful demonstrations in the history of Iran. However, in the afternoon of that day, while the demonstration was still ongoing, a significant number of demonstrators were killed by the bullets fired from a Basij base or from other places. From that same moment, increasing the oppression has become the fundamental strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran for silencing the voice of opposition and ignoring that the public wish for democracy and freedom of thought . From my point of view, the demonstration of the 15th of June, is still one of best tools for answering to the questions such as the number of supporters of the Green Movement and identifying the strata and active classes of the movement. And on the other hand, comparing that with the present condition, the silencing and bringing to standstill the street demonstrations, is the evidence of the effect of the oppression, during the past nine months. Today, in the threshold of the first anniversary of the new movement entitled "the Green Movement", the Human Rights condition in all places have become worse than before.

In promoting the politics of this oppression, the most basic rights of the people in the past few months to a large extent have been violated. From the right of the freedom of expression and public gathering to the right for a fair trial, forbidding of torture, and also forbidding of summary arrests. And because of this, the requirements of Human Rights as a fundament requirement have been proposed by the opposition. Not only, that the government of Iran have to abide with its internal and international obligations in the field of Human Rights, but also, more than that, because of the fact that it is only through improvement of present Human Rights conditions that the government's violence will lessen and the Green Movement will be able to continue its life and activities. In fact, human rights is the channel and the path that the Movement will be able to breed through it. And exactly it is because of this reason, that talking about ending of the violation of the human rights in Iran, will be essential for the Green Movement. Specially in the situation that civil society is the first target.

The day-by-day increase of this hostility, i.e. the violation of Human Rights on a daily basis becomes more widespread and more intense, how could the Human Rights be established inside of Iran, without cooperation and assistance from the international

community? When we talk about the international community, we talk about a complex structure that reacts to the smallest happenings in every corner of the world and it gets affected by that. In this complex and sensitive structure the struggle to promote Human Rights is a common world's responsibility. What I mean by international community, are all the agencies that have a duty to oppose the violations of Human Rights, from United Nations and its organizations to the European Union, the governments that see themselves as supporters of Human Rights and democracy, international Human Rights organizations, the civil societies of different countries, the public press, and in summary all international foundations, governmental and non-governmental, that somehow have a relation with the question of Human Rights. However, in action, after the passing of 9 months from the start of the widespread opposition of the people of Iran to reach freedom and democracy, what has remained from global solidarity and shared responsibility?

Last week, here in Prague, the United States president and Russia president signed an agreement to reduce nuclear armaments. In the press conference after the signing of the treaty, both governments announced their positions about Iran's nuclear file and spoke about sanction and further international pressure on Iran because of Iran ignoring its acceptance of its international responsibilities on nuclear energy. But these countries speak much less about the absolute lack of attention to international commitment of Islamic Republic on human rights issues. Conditions are in this way, that we, except for countries violating the Human Rights, almost have an international consensus, that the government of Iran continuously and in a widespread way, violates the rights of its own citizens. However, this international consensus, aside from some very beautiful political declarations but lacking the guarantee of execution since those who issue such statements want to continue such as before their cultural, financial and political relations with the Government of Iran as previously. Even for a government such as the United States, that from legal and formal point of view, has no possibility of continuing economic relation with the government of Iran, its only topic of discussion is the nuclear energy. The only issue that appears to have a serious political will to change, is that of the political view of the government of Iran about nuclear energy and not the government of Iran changing its method about its international Human Rights obligations.

And the question is: If today the Government of Iran announces that it will accept the demands of the international community in the issue of nuclear energy, would it mean that all the other demands of the international community to normalize its situation with Iran will be met? Would the issue of violation of Human Rights in Iran be important for the international community? Will there ever be a clear strategy to achieve this? Or will it be said that whenever the nuclear issue in Iran will be resolved, then we will precede with Human Rights issues? Iranians can continue in the queue being crushed, all their rights violated, and that does not matter. We have a more important issue to deal with

Iran. When we finished with that, maybe it will be the turn of those who are in the queue. How come no one remembers that a government beats wounds and kills its own citizens who protest in the streets in front of the cameras and the international public opinion cannot be reliable for negotiations on an important issue such as the nuclear issue. And, in fact, the nuclear energy is the only issue that interests the Iranian Government to continue negotiating over it since through it the Government acquires its legitimacy, it addresses the biggest countries of the world, and whenever it wishes, it can increase its flame to distract the international community from the violation of the rights of the Iranian citizens.

The European Parliament has approved a resolution on Iran last February. Article 20 of this resolution requires all European countries to prohibit the movement of the perpetrators of Human Rights violations and to close their personal accounts. From the time of the approval of this resolution, at least two of the closest officials to the Presidency of the Republic of Iran, have travelled to Germany, and no discussion about forbidding the entrance of these people or limiting their financial activities took place among the politicians or the media. I am certain that the situation is no better in other countries of the European Union. In fact, not only this resolution, but also the resolution of the United Nations Security Council against individuals and institutions who are working in helping Iran to obtain nuclear weapons is a good instrument to limit the activities of the violators of rights in Iran; for example the revolutionary guards (Sepah Pasdaran) is one of the institutions involved in the nuclear energy issue, and also manage Basij Milisia and the Ministry of Intelligence (responsible for the detention of the demonstrators), and limiting the access of the citizens to Internet, as well. It seems that the problem, more than the lack of appropriate legal measures, is in the absence of political will.

In fact, when the Human Rights activists speak about sanctions against Iran's government because of the violation of Human Rights, in the Western World, everyone becomes concerned about the quality of life of the Iran's people. The very same people who do not seem to raise this concern when economic sanctions are being considered because of Iran's lack of collaboration on the nuclear issue. However, I would like to raise two questions here:

The first question is: In case the perpetrators of extensive violation of Human Rights in Iran are not able to travel to European countries, invest their money in European companies or banks, sign contracts with Western companies and governments, and send their children to go to study or their employers to pursue the financial interest or to propagate their politics or to halt the opposition activities, would the quality of life of the Iranians decrease? It surprises me that whenever the Human Rights activists speak about the need for taking more effective steps to make the violators of the Human Rights in Iran realize that they are not safe in any part of the world, a group of people in

Western countries show their concern for the quality of life of the people. And hence the second question arises: What is the agreed definition for quality of life? Has quality of life to do only with bread and water that people need or does it include the feeling of security, liberty, and easy access to Internet and information? Does quality of life also include the fact that you do not fear that in the middle of the night they can burst into one's house and take a person together with his most personal belongings to an unknown place? Does quality of life only means that the price of food and gaz does not increase or does it also include free access of people to satellite media without the fear that the interference waves will affect their health? Do not worry, without your economic sanctions millions of Iranians live under the threshold of poverty and official statistics show that the level of inflation in Iran is more than 23 percents. Let us be honest: Is the "quality of people's life in Iran" the only excuse for not going a step further than issuing the political statements about the violation of Human Rights in Iran? An excuse that allows the violators to be free and strengthens the economy of the Government of Iran. According to me, it should better be named "the economy of oppression", since with the oil income and contrary to the people's will, it purchases the necessary internet filter software, a control technology that rises the walls in front of the Human Rights activists. It imports the second hand weapons of the Western countries police, and sends its own satellite televisions to Western countries and yet remains immune to all its violations of Human Rights.

It is not surprising that many Iranians do not have any hope in the international mechanisms or in international support when they see that the individuals and the institutions responsible for the oppression, violation of the rights of the citizens, torture, detention of tenths of thousands of people, execution of some demonstrators, and that after 9 months, none of them have been taken to court, and no punishment has been applied to them outside the borders of Iran. The continuation of the violation of Human Rights in Iran is not only an indicative of the lack of independence of the judiciary from the Government, but also shows the weakness and the lack of political will among the international organizations themselves.

I am being frequently asked about ways through which common citizens can support the struggle of the people of Iran and help them to improve the situation of Human Rights in their country. I think that the most important way is to use democratic structures to change the politics of your countries with regards to the situation of Human Rights in Iran. Each one of you has representatives in your City Council and Parliament. Different political parties have their share in politics. Perhaps the simplest way would be through writing letters demanding them to do their utmost to stop the violation of Human Rights in Iran, to take more effective steps, to pursue more serious sanctions, not to allow violators of Human Rights to the country, not permitting them to work in different political, cultural, and financial activities, and to offer a secure place for the defenders of

Human Rights who are in danger in order for them to continue with their activities.

As long as the international community continues with its double standards applied to the nuclear energy and the violation of Human Rights, and until the subject of Human Rights does not position itself as a priority, government's oppression will easily continue, in the sense that, the International Community, not only does not strengthen the democratic movement which is the wish of the people of Iran, but with its passivity it somehow supports this violence.

Beneath the heavy shadow that the nuclear issue in Iran is casting upon the international community, my daily efforts, together with the rest of Human Rights activists, is in helping the weak to be heard in loudspeakers; maybe this way the international community conscience will be disturbed from hearing the sound of daily suffering of the people, and to reach the conclusion that today is a day of action.

Thank you