

Iran Freedom March

Washington, DC
March 08, 2019



Speakers

1. Madam Maryam Rajavi, NCRI President Elect
2. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX)
3. Congressman Brad Sherman (D-CA)
4. Honorable Linda Chavez
5. Ambassador Adam Ereli
6. Mr. Amir Emadi (OIAC)
7. Ms. Hasti Hashemi (OIAC Youth)
8. Mrs. Shokofeh Sharif (OIAC Women)
9. Mr. Eskandar Filabi (Member, NCRI)
10. Media Reports (Partial)

Iranian Americans Call for:

1. Recognition of National Council of Resistance of Iran as Democratic Alternative to religious tyranny.
2. Designation of Iranian Regime's IRGC and MOIS as FTOs
3. Complete Oil and Arms Embargo on Iran.

What Iran Freedom March Called For?

On Friday, March 8, 2019, thousands of Iranian Americans participated in a historic march demanding that the United States recognize the right of the Iranian people to overthrow the religious dictatorship in Iran. Iranian Americans urged policymakers to recognize the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) and called on the U.S. to designate Iran's

Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and Intelligence Ministry (MOIS) as a Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO). Participants called on the U.S. administration to pursue a maximum pressure policy on Tehran, including a complete oil and arms embargo on Iranian regime. They also expressed support for nationwide popular uprising in Iran.

Opening Remarks:

Mr. Amir Emadi (OIAC)

Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to the Iran Freedom March. On behalf of the organization of Iranian-American communities, we welcome all of you. Communities from California, Hawaii have come here in this cold, all of you have come to the cold in Washington, D.C. to gather and march for a free Iran.

We're here today to declare our support for the nationwide movement in Iran that's calling for freedom and democracy. Just like the people in Iran, we denounce the 40 years of religious dictatorship. The people of Iran have seen decades of economic deprivation, political repression, and social injustices from the mullahs' regime.

The uprising that began December of 2017 has continued. Its demand is to end the religious dictatorship. And our native land, Iran, has witnessed several waves of unprecedented nationwide protests, strikes, and demonstrations in both large and small cities. Where the public is calling to end terror, poverty, corruption, repression, and abuse of the environment and Iran's natural resources and regional. Slogans such as "Down with dictators," such as, "Leave Gaza. Leave Syria. Think of us," such as, "We will die. We will fight. We will take our Iran back," have been heard all over Iran. Thousands of



Lawyers, students, women, journalists, human rights defenders, environmentalists, union leaders, and religious and ethnic minorities have been arrested. Amnesty International announced 2018 will go down as a year of shame for Iran and reported more than 7,000 arrests, several killed under torture, and 50 protestors killed during demonstrations. And the regime is heightening the repression. One clear indication is the new appointment of the head of judiciary, Ebrahim Raisi, a repressive mullah, infamously known for his role in the death commission, the 1988 massacre of 30,000 political prisoners, mostly members of the MEK.

Yet the people of Iran are not giving up. As we stand here today, teachers and retired workers are protesting in Isfahan, Kermanshah, Kadesh, and many other Iranian cities. There's not a day that goes by in Iran where posters of Iranian leaders are not set on fire. There's not a day that goes by where slogans in favor of the Iranian resistance is not written on the walls. These are just a few of the examples of the efforts by the resistance units inside Iran. This is the work of the underground resistance council in every city. And we are so proud to stand here and support and ensure their voices heard here in Washington, D.C.

We are gathering here on the Freedom Plaza, which reminds everybody that it is all about freedom. And our gathering here and speeches will lead to a march named Iran Freedom March, which would end across the White House. Our event also coincides with International Women's Day, so we congratulate everyone on that, and we're also going to hear from the President-Elect of the moment for democracy, also from women activists, scholars, and young generation in Iran. We will hear voices of reason and support in America, as well as from members of Congress. We are here today in solidarity with the people of Iran. And let us begin this rally with Iran's national anthem.

Friends, today also marks the 2019 International Women's Day. It is not by accident that our rally has fallen on this important day, because the people of Iran are calling to end this anti-women regime. We, both men and women, stand her in support of the women's movement inside Iran. The equality movement belongs to all of us.



Congressman Brad Sherman (D-CA)

Hello. I'm Congressman Brad Sherman from California's best-named city, Sherman Oaks. It's my pleasure to speak with you, and I regret that I'm not able to join you today in person at the Iran Freedom March.

For the past 22 years, I've served on the House Foreign Affairs Committee where I have fought for an American foreign policy that reflects our values, our dedication to democracy and human rights. And there is nowhere in the world where these issues are more important than in Iran. I've always fought for human rights in Iran, and it starts by advocating for a nonnuclear Iran that is democratic, secular, and free. So, let me take this opportunity to wish you and your family a happy Nowruz and to say a Shomma Mubarak.

For years, we've worked together, first to remove the MEK from the so-called terrorism list, now to continue our work for a free and democratic Iran. At the same time, I've worked hard to increase sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

The regime has demonstrated time and again that it is no friend of the United States and no friend of the Iranian people. As you know all too well, since it first came to power, the Islamic Republic has exported terrorism around the world. Just last summer, the Iranian Islamic Republic tried to bomb your rally in Paris. Thankfully, that plot was foiled. This bomb plot once again underscores the need to strengthen sanctions against the Iran Revolutionary Guard Corps for its nefarious actions.

Besides terrorism, the IRGC has helped proliferate nuclear weapons. That's why I've worked to enact the Counter America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, which would require the IRGC to be treated

as a terrorist organization. Due to the long tentacles of the IRGC, I continue to work to ensure that it is not only that entity, but also its front groups and its false facades. Because an important—because to do business in Iran, often companies are forced to do business with the IRGC, so sanctions against the IRGC will hurt the regime.

Well, the regime has continued to conduct mass executions, to jail journalists, and to fuel extremism across the region. Every day, Iranians have stood up and said, "Enough." At great risk to themselves and their families, they've come to the streets to shout, "No Gaza, no Lebanon, no Syria. My life for Iran." Your fight is our fight. And we stand with you as you face down a regime that cares nothing for its own people's freedom or prosperity.

I want to commend Madam Rajavi for continuing her advocacy for democracy, human rights, and women's rights, and minority rights in Iran. Democracy and equality are not just principles we hold dear. They are rights that belong to all people around the world. And once again, I want to thank Madame Rajavi and her organization for being the first to bring Iran's nuclear weapons program to the attention of the world almost 20 years ago.

A prosperous Iran must be a peaceful Iran where the Iranian people's freedoms and human rights are restored. You believe in this future. I believe in this future. And together we won't stop working until our vision of a secular nonnuclear and democratic Iran has become a reality. Iran has historically been one of the world's great civilizations. And with your hard work, it will be restored to that level of glory. So happy Nowruz.



Congresswoman Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX)

My brothers and sisters, no rain, no sleet, no snow will weaken the strong commitment of freedom that all of us believe in. I salute your courage for being here, even in a nation where we can speak freely, and that we stand again oppression.

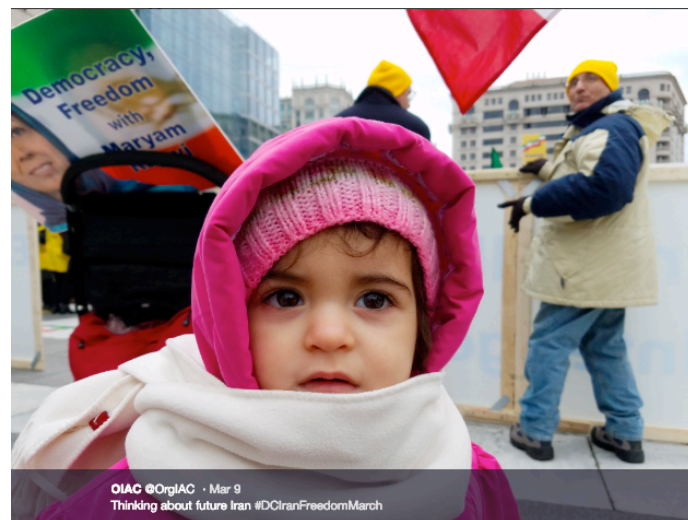
I am committed to a free and democratic Iran where all people can speak, where young people can grow up and select their careers and jobs and be free to speak and to run in a democratic society.

I am delighted that my sister [Madam Maryam Rajavi], when we were in Paris together, indicated her strength that she would never give up, never give out, and never give in to any oppression. I am delighted that she stands strong in Paris and will continue to stand for the Iranian people.

Our voice is one of light and one of strength, and I believe in what you believe in. The Iranian people want regime change. We want it in a peaceful manner. We want people to do it in a democratic manner and a strong manner. We want the nuclear capacity to be contained so that we can focus on the investment in the people of Iran. We thank you so very much for the leadership that you've given.

I am believer in democracy. I believe in your strength. I believe in your determination, your perseverance.

Never give up in the democracy and in peace, of strength. Remember the children. Never give up on the children. I am here to support the young people of Iran. We will live on forever, and freedom will come.





Keynote Speaker:

Madam
Maryam
Rajavi

(President Elect, NCRI)

“On this day, Iran and Iranians take pride in the women of Iran who have risen up and waged one of the greatest resistances of modern era.”

Distinguished personalities, honorable friends of the Iranian people's Resistance, freedom-loving Iranians, I salute you all. I salute you for your determination to make Iran free, for your love of Iran's captive people, and for your faith in the glorious future of Iran. Today is March 8, International Women's Day. I congratulate all the women the world over who fight for equality.

Especially my sisters and daughters in Iran, who have combined their struggle to overthrow the misogynist regime, with their efforts to achieve equality.

On this day, Iran and Iranians take pride in the women of Iran who have risen up and waged one of the greatest resistances of the modern era.

They have given tens of thousands of martyrs, prisoners and torture victims, and for four decades have been active on all the fields of battle.

Women in Iran are on a mission to establish freedom and equality; they are fighting full force to bring down this regime.

The religious fascism that today inflicts such suffering on the world

with its terrorism, crimes and warmongering, will ultimately be defeated by these women.

I salute you, my compatriots who are striving to make the voices of Iranian women seeking freedom and equality heard.

On March 8, I call on all women in the United States and around the world to support the fight of their sisters in Iran to overthrow the ruling regime.

Dear friends, fellow compatriots, Over the past year, our people have staged thousands of strikes and demonstrations.

Members of various professions have staged numerous nationwide strikes. Workers, teachers, nurses, students, farmers, retirees, defrauded investors, and families of prisoners.

Iranian society is standing up to the criminal ruling mullahs. Iranian society is demanding fundamental political change.

The younger generation's enthusiastic response to resistance units demonstrates Iranians' will to overthrow the regime.

Resistance units are young people and activists who have been organized. Their activities are expanding rapidly throughout Iran.

As the Iranian Resistance's Leader Massoud Rajavi has said, the resistance units are "the tip of the spear and guiding light for the uprisings. They are the critical component in continuing and guaranteeing advancement and victory. The historic destiny of the Iranian people in their battle for liberation will be decided with the resistance units and rebel cities."

Yes, change in Iran without being organized is impossible. Change in Iran without sacrifice is impossible.

They are the source of the endurance and prosperity of the organized resistance of the Iranian people inside Iran. And they are the reason those pretenders who neither want nor can afford to pay the price of freedom lack all credibility and fail.

Dear compatriots, Under the rule of the criminal mullahs, economic and social problems have grown to catastrophic proportions.

Extreme poverty, water

(Continued on next page)



Continued from previous page, Madam Maryam Rajavi:

shortages, environmental decimation, the health crisis, 40% inflation, a 50% deficit and 40% unemployment.

So long as the clerical regime is in power, none of these ills will be resolved. The ruling mullahs will become ever more dependent on their devastating policies, namely the suppression of Iranian society, warmongering and destructive meddling in the region, money laundering, terrorism in Europe and the United States, and plundering the assets of the people of Iran. The velayat-e faqih regime will continue all these policies until the day of its overthrow. Today, that regime has appointed Ebrahim Raisi, a hated mass murderer and one of the most brutal agents of the massacre of 30,000 political prisoners in 1988 as the head of its Judiciary!

In looking to install a bloodthirsty goon, Khamenei seeks to hide the regime's weakness in the face of the arisen people of Iran. But he will fail.

Today, the mullahs face a deadly paradox. They need to continue their warmongering and terrorism, but these policies have undermined their regime.

The regime now faces one of the most difficult periods of its rule. The continued uprisings have destabilized the ruling structure. And there is no

going back. Change in Iran is within reach more than any other time.

Pay no heed to the absurd assertions of the mullahs and their international supporters, who say that with the overthrow of the Iran regime, there would be no force capable of controlling the situation. That is a bald-faced lie to preserve the religious tyranny; and it is an insult to the people and resistance of Iran.

There is a democratic and competent alternative, the National Council of Resistance of Iran. A Resistance deeply rooted in Iran, which is capable of overthrowing the regime and managing affairs during the transition so that the Iranian people can choose their true representatives through free and fair elections.

The Iranian nation, with 120,000 martyrs, has proven it is worthy of freedom.

The international community is duty-bound to respect the struggle of the Iranian people to overthrow the clerical regime. This is essential for global peace and security.

It is time for the State Department to designate the Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) and the infamous Ministry of Intelligence as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO). Doing so would be a positive message to the Iranian people, and a decisive message against the clerical regime.

It is time for the United States to recognize the trampled rights of the Iranian people to overthrow religious fascism. The Iranian nation will not rest until it achieves freedom. And surely, it will.



Thank you.

It is wonderful to see you in this very aptly named Freedom Plaza.

What all of you want, what I want, what the American people want, and most importantly, what the people of Iran want is freedom. But that freedom will not come unless there is regime change in Tehran. We have heard for too long promises that there was moderation coming to Iran, that the current leaders of Iran, Mr. Rouhani, would bring a measure of moderation, but that has not happened.

What has happened is a regime that continues to engage in extrajudicial killings, that continues to oppress the Iranian people, and in this much, a march when we celebrate women's freedom, it is important to remember that more than half of the people of Iran do not have equal treatment. The women of Iran are under the heel of the Rouhani regime and the clerics who run that regime.

The only way that we will see freedom there is if, in fact, the Iranian people unite and press for change. And all of you, I know, have been involved in this fight for decades, but what we have seen is that the Rouhani regime does not seem to listen, even to its own people.

As Iranians gather in cities around the country and ask for economic change, for freedom, for equal treatment of women, for a judiciary that is free and fair and gives equal treatment to all, what we see this month alone is that the man who was responsible for the killing not of 300 people, not of 3,000 people, but of 30,000 people in 1988, Ebrahim Raisi, has been named to the head of the judiciary. How can there be

freedom when you have a monster who killed people? He killed people of all ages. He killed people who were both men and women. Pregnant women were executed under Raisi. So were children. Young girls, 15-year-old girls tortured and then executed by this monster. So, we must say, "No!" to this regime.

We must press for freedom for all of the things that Madame Rajavi has promised the Iranian people—free elections, a free press, the separation of religion and the state, equal treatment for both men and women, an independent judiciary. All of these things are necessary, but they will only come from the activities of people like you in every city across America, because many Iranians have made their home here. But it will also take the people of Iran.

I have been very pleased to work with you for many, many years, going back to the early 1990s when I was at the United Nations. I have stood by and sponsored your resolutions and spoken out for the horrible regime in Tehran.

And I have been proud to do so and to stand with all of you. And again, I am happy to welcome you here to Washington, D.C., the capital of the United States of

Honorable Linda Chavez

“As Iranians gather in cities As around the country and ask for economic change, for freedom, for equal treatment of women, for a judiciary that is free and fair and gives equal treatment to all, what we see this month alone is that the man who was responsible for the killing not of 300 people, not of 3,000 people, but of 30,000 people in 1988, Ebrahim Raisi, has been named to the head of the judiciary.”

next year would we meet in Tehran. Lovely people, Iranian people.



Ambassador Adam Ereli

It's a little bit chilly out here, but I don't think you're going to let a little cold weather stop you, are you? By the way, they need to hear you in the White House. They need to hear you on Capitol Hill.

There are millions of Iranians who don't let prison or torture or hunger or death stop them from protesting. Do you stand with them? Yes or no? I didn't hear you. Are you afraid of the mullahs in Tehran? Yes or no? Do they speak for the people of Iran? Are you ready to take your country back?

We're here today to call for a brighter future for Iran. Forty years of clerical rule have destroyed a once proud and prosperous nation. For 40 years the Iranian people have been suffering...Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei controls hundreds of billions of dollars. His former minister of justice, Larijani, who was in charge of prosecuting corruption, has 63 bank accounts, personal bank accounts with tens of millions of dollars. I ask you, is this fair? Is this something we should just accept and do nothing about? Of course not. That's why since December 2017, millions of people in all 31 provinces of Iran have taken to the streets to call for the end of the Iranian revolution and to say goodbye to the mullahs in Tehran.

And what has the head regime done? Everything in its power to stop them and to silence them. They have arrested tens of thousands. Fifty, more than 50 have died in prison, many of them as a result of torture. But still the protests continue. And what this tells us is that the regime cannot stop the people of Iran. And why is that? Why? Because the people of Iran have had enough. They prefer death to the corrupt unjust rule of the mullahs. Like you, they're willing to sacrifice everything for a brighter future. And what does that future look like? Well, the National Council of Resistance of Iran has a pretty good idea. Just take a look at the Ten Point Plan of NCRI President-elect Maryam Rajavi. What does it call for? It calls for separation of church and state. It calls for abolition of the death penalty. It calls for

It is also why the regime in Iran has appointed Ebrahim Raisi as its new minister of justice. The man who was a member of the death committees which was responsible for the deaths of 30,000 of your fellow Iranian citizens. That tells us more than anything the direction that the Iranian regime is going and why, because they're afraid. They're afraid of losing their jobs... It is also why the regime of Iran has launched a demonization campaign against you, against the NCRI, against the MEK. They've produced in the past few years hundreds of books and videos demonizing the MEK. They offered a Canadian thinktank 80,000 to refer to the MEK as a cult.

What does all this tell us? It tells us that the MEK, the NCRI, and all of you are affected. You're having an impact. Nothing speaks to the success of your efforts than that the Iranian regime wants to silence you, wants to kill you, wants you to go away. It tells us that the Iranian regime is willing to use every power they have to destroy you. Are they going to succeed? The more they attack you, the more they strengthen you, and the more they strengthen our resolve. That's what they need to understand, and that's why we're here today—to send them an unambiguous message. We will not go away. You cannot make us go away. The only people who are going to go away are you.

My message to you and to the government of the United States today is very simple. Empower the people of Iran. They are strong. They are capable. And they're determined to succeed in overthrowing this evil and illegitimate regime. The future is in your hands. Nothing and no one can stop you. Thank you very much.

NCRI and its millions of supporters want to see an Iran that is free, that is democratic, and that is nonnuclear. That's what we're fighting for. And that's what the regime of Tehran fears the most. That is why it views NCRI and the Mujahedin-e-Khalq as an existential threat. That is why they tried to bomb the Free Iran rally in Paris last June.

That is why the regime orchestrated three major terrorist attacks in the United States, France, and Albania. It is why President Rouhani personally called French President Macron to demand that he limit the activities of the NCRI in France. Macron refused.

Remarks by Hasti Hessami

March 8th 2019

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of OIAC youth committee, we salute you for coming together today on International Women's Day and being the voice of the youth, women and the brave Iranian people who are saying no to the regime in Tehran. Some of us on this stage were born and raised in the United States; others were born in Iran, and raised here. I want to tell you my story today. My name is Hasti, and I was born and raised in Iran and lived in the capital, Tehran. I finished high school in Iran before coming here to the United States.



During the 2009 uprising, we joined the protests. My dad was arrested and beaten by the Basiji's. My dad was lucky to be released but many had a different fate.

I am here to tell you that what we see in Iran today is very different than in 2009 or even the previous uprising. We see the brave youth, men and women, pushing back on the regime in every protest and every demonstration across Iran. We see the slogans that is calling to end this regime. We see the reflection of the Iranian resistance movement in Iran that is represented by Mrs. Maryam Rajavi.

I experienced firsthand as a young girl how I was not allowed to express myself. I remember when the Basiji women, would rush to force me to cover my hair in the streets of Tehran. One time one of them grabbed my hand so tight and threaten to arrest me if I did not fully obey their dress code. My friends and I were in

constant fear of getting arrested because we simply dared to wear something a little more to our likings. I always knew that even if I get my degree in Iran, there is no guarantee that I would get a decent job and can have a decent life, unless you are somehow tied to the ruling elite of the Iranian regime.

As a young girl I witnessed many of the injustices in the society and naturally my opposition to the regime grew when I learned about the history of the resistance, about the mass killings and arrests that took place during the 1980's.

This is what we call the resistance units. They are the change agents in Iran, and I am here to commit to them that I will be their voice here in the United States.

Today, I have high hopes and boundless dreams for a free Iran. I am inspired by the story of the families and girls my age who have given their lives for freedom in Iran. Let me tell you about the Mesbah family. The Iranian regime killed 8 members of this family. Fatimeh Mesbah, was 13 years old when she stood up to this regime and said no to tyranny. She was killed along with her siblings all aged from 15-19 years old in the early 1980s. Their story lives on and inspires all of us. They have paved the path to freedom for us. I am forever indebted to their sacrifices. It is their sacrifice that guarantees a free Iran. Thank you.

Mrs. Shokofeh Sharif

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor to join you on 2019 International Women's Day. How fitting it is that we have come together on this day as the Iranian people fight a the most misogynous regime in power. As Mr. Massoud Rajavi, the leader of the Iranian resistance, said, women face "double oppression" under the mullah's regime first as an Iranian citizen and second as women. He rightfully articulates it is "women's oppression that is a national and historic tragedy" for Iran. Over the last 40 years, the Iranian women that have paid the heaviest price, but their struggle dates to more than 110 years ago in Iran.



Women's movement in Iran has seen two revolutions in the past century. During the constitutional revolution, Iranian women formed Women's National Movement, many public and underground organization to push for women's rights (Marriage laws, divorces, child care, etc.), but in the constitution that was adopted in 1906, women were deprived of their right to vote. Iranian women did not give up. They fought along the side of Sattar Khan, they forced various reforms including raising funds to establish Iran's first National Bank. Iranian women played a pivotal role in energizing the education system, they published many newspapers and magazines for their awareness campaigns and when it was time, they picked up arms to fight for freedom and against the foreign forces.

In the 1970s, women joined opposition groups and fought against the Shah's dictatorship. Among those brave women, we see Marzieh Uskowi, Fatemeh Amini, Ashraf Rajavi and many more, who made the ultimate sacrifice for the cause of Iran's freedom.

Khomeini stole the leadership of the 1979 revolution and turned the clock back on women. Since then every day Iranian women push back on political, social, economic, religious and cultural repression. Institutionalized violence against women reaches to the point of crime against humanity. Iranian regime holds the highest number of female execution in the world. Iranian regime is the only government that practices stoning, Iranian regime executes pregnant women and hangs women in public. The violence that we see in Iran are not seen elsewhere. But the bravery, the courage, the leadership and tenacity that we are see in the women of Iran are not seen elsewhere. It is no wonder the movement for democracy and freedom in Iran is led by a woman. It is no wonder that we see women leading the protests and daily uprisings through the country. It is no wonder we see mothers, daughters, sisters and wives urge the men to join them in this fight for a Free Iran. It is no wonder that we see 1000 women of Ashraf pave the way for equality and democracy all at the same time.

As. Maryam Rajavi said in her remarks on International Women's Day last year in Paris, "Women did not take to the streets to demand anything from the regime; they want to eliminate the clerical regime. Women have not risen up to demand only their own freedom; they have risen up to liberate the entire nation."

Ladies and Gentlemen, We are about to witness another revolution in Iran and this time it is led by women. A free Iran where women enjoy fundamental freedom and rights, equality before the law, freedom to choose their own clothing, equal participation in political, economic, cultural, social including the leadership. Iranian women are indeed the force for change and what we about to witness in Iran today is the dawn of a new era where equality will be front and center of all affairs. Thank you.



**Mr. Eskandar
Filabi**

**(Olympian & Iranian
National Hero,
Member - NCRI)**

Due in large part to around-the clock-efforts of you, the supporters of the Iranian resistance, the reign of Iran's Velayat-Faghih regime is nearing its end. Over the last 14 months, with their ongoing uprising and protests in cities across the country, the people of Iran have shown their resolve in overthrowing this putrid regime....

With your efforts and PMOI/MEK leadership, and by operations of the thousands of resistance units aligned with the National Liberation Army across Iran - these cable hands of the Iranian people, will soon and forever uproot this criminal regime.



@OrgIAC, #FreeIran

The Washington Times

Iranian-Americans rally near White House for regime change in Tehran

By [Lauren Meier](#) - *The Washington Times* - Friday, March 8, 2019

Hundreds of Iranian-Americans gathered just blocks from the White House to rally Friday for a regime change in Tehran.

With Iranian flags and banners promoting democracy in [Iran](#) in hand, the demonstrators with the Organization of Iranian American Communities (OIAC) called for an end to the Islamic Republic's hard-line theocracy. Rally organizers said the goal of the event, which included speeches from [Maryam Rajavi](#), president-elect of the National Council of Resistance of [Iran](#), and Rep. Brad Sherman, California Democrat, is to spur debate in Washington and increase U.S. support for the uprising for democracy in the country.

The OIAC is a grass-roots arm of the National Council of Resistance of [Iran](#), an exile Iranian dissident group that has long called for a democratic government in Tehran and criticized the Islamic Republic's human rights record.

The National Council of Resistance of [Iran](#) backed the ouster of the Shah of [Iran](#) with other revolutionary groups in 1979 but clashed with the Islamist forces led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini afterward. After losing a vicious power struggle, NCRI leaders now say they renounce violence. The group is credited with exposing secretive Iranian nuclear facilities in the early 2000s. It also has had a contentious relationship with Washington, and was listed it as a terrorist organization by the State Department until 2012. But it has gained new clout and visibility under President Trump, with several top aides, including presidential attorney Rudolph W. Giuliani and National Security Adviser John R. Bolton, having deep ties to the exile group.

Linda Chavez, who served in the administrations of Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush and spoke at the rally, told *The Washington Times* that while she is a "frequent critic" of President Trump, she wanted "to support what the Trump administration has done in terms of its refusal to take part in [the [Iran](#) nuclear deal] that I think was very ill considered."

In May, Mr. Trump announced plans to pull out of the Obama-era deal that lifted economic sanctions on [Iran](#) in return for Tehran halting its nuclear program until 2025.

The administration has since restored sanctions aimed at [Iran](#)'s shipping, energy and financial industries, but concerns continue about the country's missile program, support of terrorism and ability to rush into the production of nuclear weapons by the time the deal would have ended. Mr. Trump's decision to pull out of the deal saw renewed support on Capitol Hill last week, when Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman James M. Inhofe said he intends to include language in the next defense authorization act to cement the president's decision to exit the deal and reinstate economic sanctions on Tehran.

Supporters who attended Friday's rally expressed support to eliminate [Iran](#)'s nuclear program. "What the [Iran](#) agreement did was supposedly to halt the development, but it did not require that a complete denuclearization take place. And that's what we hope to aim for," Ms. Chavez said. Jamal Khoshnood, who came to the U.S. after being detained in [Iran](#) for nearly a decade, told *The Times* that a denuclearized [Iran](#) "is helping the process of the peace." "They cannot have that kind of nuclear weapons because it's threatening all of the world," he added, "not the just the Iranian people."

Other demonstrators saw hope in [Ms. Rajavi](#)'s plan that calls for "complete gender equality in political, social and economic arenas," and women's rights to education, employment, marriage and clothing. "The fact that this whole event is led by a woman is just really exciting to see," said a student who attended Friday's event. "Gender equality I think is something that every country strives for these days."

Iranian-Americans call for Tehran regime change in D.C. protest

March 08, 2019, Danielle Haynes



March 8 (UPI) -- Iranian-Americans rallied Friday in Washington, D.C., to call for a regime change in Tehran and ask the U.S. government to label Iran's military and intelligence agency as terror organizations.

Members and supporters of the Organization of Iranian American Communities gathered for speeches at Freedom Plaza on Pennsylvania Avenue about two blocks from the White House. The group seeks an uprising in Iran and regime change to establish a democratic, secular and non-nuclear nation.

U.S. lawmakers such as Reps. Sheila Jackson Lee, D-Texas, and Brad Sherman, D-Calif., spoke at the event in person or by video feed, as well as Maryam Rajavi, president-elect of the opposition National Council of Resistance of Iran.



In prepared remarks, Rajavi noted that the rally was held on International Women's Day and congratulated women fighting for equality under a "misogynist regime."

"On this day, Iran and Iranians take pride in the women of Iran who have risen up and waged one of the greatest resistances of the modern era," she said. "They have given tens of thousands of martyrs, prisoners and torture victims, and for four decades have been active on all the fields of battle."

The Organization of Iranian-American Communities is calling for regime change to bring down the ruling religious party. Photo by Kevin Dietsch/UPI | [License Photo](#)

Rajavi called on the U.S. State Department to designate Iran's military, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and the Ministry of Intelligence as foreign terrorist organizations. "Doing so would be a positive message to the Iranian people, and a decisive message against the clerical regime," she said. After the speeches, the protesters marched down Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House.