



# IRAN: View from the LEFT

July 2023

NO.43

## **Word of the Month**

*Reversing the Trend toward Middle East Stability?*

*For the past seven months we have been witnessing a protest movement in Israel of unprecedented strength and tenacity, demonstrating a deep divide within Israeli society. The crisis revolves around a new law to limit the Supreme Court's power to check government and legislative action. This law has now passed the first of three readings in the Knesset.*

*This political divide is of historic importance. A significant number of military personnel, especially reservists in the army and air force, along with labor unions, professional organizations and hundreds of thousands of ordinary Israelis, oppose this fundamental lurch away from democratic principles of governance in internal Jewish Israeli affairs.*

*This change is the product of the current coalition government, the most right-wing that has ever ruled Israel. In addition to their anti-democratic moves within internal Israeli politics, the coalition consistently and openly ignores international rules, sensitivities and norms. They have intensified the country's racist and supremacist agenda, including formally annexing the West Bank of the Jordan River and open trampling the rights of Palestinians living under occupation.*

*There is no sign whatsoever of this crisis abating. On the contrary, its expected further development has serious implications for the region as a whole.*

*Netanyahu is caught between a rock and a hard place. Experience has taught him that he must slow down this process to take into account international reaction to these policies. Meanwhile, his coalition partners are focused solely upon their supremacist goals and are hell-bent on forging ahead as fast as possible. They appear to be oblivious to the implications for the developing normalization of relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel -- indeed between Israel and the Arab world at large! With Netanyahu's political power in the balance, it is all too easy to imagine an international confrontation suddenly developing in the hope of saving the Prime Minister's political skin once again, further destabilizing the region.*

■ The sword of Damocles still hangs over the heads of protesters



The Islamic Republic of Iran's sword of Damocles still hangs over the heads of the "Women, Life, Freedom" movement protesters and previous protests: from the continued public executions and the issuing of new death sentences to new cases against prisoners who have been in jail for up to 13 years and long-term convictions for religious minorities, especially Baha'is, to intensified pressure on political and civil activists.



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The political-executive committee of the Iranian Left Party writes about it:

"The issuance of death sentences, summoning and arresting political and civil activists, pressuring trade unionists and transgender shows that the Islamic Republic is concerned about its future and afraid of the emergence of a new wave of the revolutionary "Women, Life, Freedom" movement, and is striving to revive the cemetery-like calm in the country through intensified suppression. But every step it takes sows the seeds of other storms. No detention, prison, or execution will protect the regime from the people's renewed explosion of anger.

The Iranian Left Party supports campaigns for the immediate and unconditional release of Toomaj Saleh and all political and ideological prisoners and condemns the regime's efforts to silence Toomas Saleh. Death sentences against protesters must be cancelled and political

prisoners must be released. We call on political and civil forces to join us in the joint struggle against executions and for the freedom of political prisoners." Read more:

<https://bepish.org/node/9705>

## Land dispute



The joint statement of Russia and the Arab Gulf countries and the reintroduction of the issue of their disputes with Iran over the three islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Abu Musa has once again raised discussions about the ownership of these islands and Iran's relations with Russia. A similar statement was also issued last year by China and the Arab Gulf countries. The occupation of these islands by Britain in 1948 and the modality surrounding the exit of this country from the Persian Gulf in 1971,

which found strategic importance in the oil economy, caused ambiguities about the ownership of these islands.

The Political Executive Committee of the Iranian Left Party states in this regard:

The Iranian Left Party considers the islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Abu Musa as part of Iranian territory and considers them non-negotiable. At the same time, we welcome bilateral and independent negotiations over the dispute. We believe that turning the dispute over the three islands into a subject of joint statements with other governments does not help solve the problem. Such a policy undoubtedly has a negative impact on mutual relations with other governments, who are seeking to benefit from this dispute. We believe that any attempt to play with Iran's card against the national interests of the Iranian people is unacceptable and doomed to failure. We emphasize



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that our country's interests will be secured by adhering to diplomatic relations, preserving friendly relations with neighbors, and resolving disputes based on mutual interests. Read more:

<https://bepish.org/node/9720>

**Semi-militants of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) in Iranian universities**



The head of Tehran University, on July 8th, which commemorates the bloody suppression of student protests in 1999, announced the support of the Islamic Republic for an agreement with the semi-militant group of the PMF in Iraq to begin the education of their members at Tehran University. Following this news, student groups have announced their disagreement with the

presence of this semi-military group affiliated with the Islamic regime in universities through statements. A group of Tehran University students in their statement called the acceptance of the PMF an invasion of universities. The Association of Free Students of Polytechnic University has called the use of the PMF by the regime to suppress the student movement a new war and the regime's latest attempt to show power.

The Political Executive Committee of the Iranian Left Party states in this regard:

The Iranian Left Party rejects the regime's use of the mercenary semi-militant Popular Mobilization Forces to suppress the student movement. We announce our support for the actions taken by students in this regard, along with student organizations that have opposed the entry of the Popular Mobilization Forces into universities under the name of students. We also invite all

freedom-loving defenders of the student movement and the "Women, Life, Freedom" movement to support the practical actions of students in universities.

On the occasion of the 24th anniversary of July 8th, "Solidarity for the Secular Democratic Republic in Iran" elaborates on the student movement, the government's methods of suppressing it, and the stability of the said movement in a detailed statement and writes:

"Hamgami for the Secular Democratic Republic in Iran" appreciates the efforts of the forces that created the July 8th protest movement against the attack on the university community and emphasizes the necessity of continuing the demand for truth and justice in this important historical case.

"Hamgami" considers the student movement as one of the main pillars of the democracy movement in Iran and once again declares its support for



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the demands of the students.

In our opinion, repressive and contractionary actions in universities must be stopped as soon as possible, imprisoned students must be released, and sentences of deprivation of education and student facilities must be unconditionally lifted.

<https://bepish.org/node/9722>

## ■ **The Hijab's Grip on the System**

Following the "Women, Life, Freedom" movement, the presence of the morality police on the streets had come to a halt. However, this pause was accompanied by various discussions and internal struggles within the regime regarding how to control women's hijab, which led to the proposal of "controlling the hijab through smart cameras." This proposal was immediately defeated upon its announcement. Now, the "Moral Security" police have announced the re-establishment of the Guidance Patrol on the streets, even though the



"Chastity and Hijab Bill" is still under review in the Islamic Republic's Parliament and has not been approved yet.

Although the duties of the morality police are not limited to "monitoring the observance of Islamic affairs in women's clothing," it has become a symbol of widespread, overt, and governmental oppression of women. The political-executive committee of the Iranian Left Party writes in this regard:

"The Iranian Left Party denounces the war that the government has waged against women. The women of our country, with the support of freedom-seeking men, just as they have defeated

the regime in this field before, will undoubtedly defeat this invasion as well. We are confident that the brave and rights-seeking women of Iran will be victorious in their struggle against discrimination and tyranny with steadfastness and determination. The medieval and demeaning punishments, such as whipping, torture, and execution, have never been and will never be effective. Forcing women to wear hijab is a backward move that has been pushed out of the streets, and the Islamic Republic will eventually be besieged by the national movement against compulsory hijab. Enforcing compulsory hijab will tighten the



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noose around the regime's neck, and with each attack, the rope's loop will tighten." Read more:

<https://bepish.org/node/9727>

The "Hamgami for the Secular Democratic Republic in Iran" also evaluates the Morality Police as a failed project in its statement and writes:

"Hamgami" once again condemns the government's intervention in the citizens' clothing style.

"Hamgami" is confident that the people will not allow the imposition of compulsory hijab through civil disobedience and collective resistance. Security forces are expected to refrain from implementing this oppressive and regressive directive.

## **Disruption in the Non-Violent Struggle**

On July 8th, an armed attack on the 16th police station in Zahedan, in the southeastern province of Sistani and Baluchistan, resulted in the death of the attackers, one law

enforcement officer, and one, foot soldier. The "Jadish al-Adel" group - a Sunni militant group - claimed responsibility for the operation. This violent action takes place while the people of Baluchistan, especially Zahedan, have been demanding their human and legal rights and freedoms through non-violent protests for the past year.

The "Hamgami for the Secular Democratic Republic in Iran" statement reads:

"Hamgami for the Secular Democratic Republic in Iran" condemns the terrorist attack on the 16th police station in Zahedan and warns the Islamic Republic that suppressing and massacring the people of Zahedan, like other parts of the country, will not lead anywhere. These measures only increase tensions in the region and deepen the central-periphery crisis. In addition to these, "Hamgami" supports the freedom-seeking, democratic, and just demands of the people of

Sistani and Baluchistan province within the framework of violence-free methods and explicitly supports Moldavia Abdul Hamid's position in condemning "any kind of violence, armed attack, and any movement that causes insecurity."

***IRAN: View from the LEFT" is published for those who are interested to know the Left Party of Iran stance on current issues on a monthly basis.***

***IRAN: View from the LEFT may occasionally contain news from Iran that media might not have drawn attention to.***

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