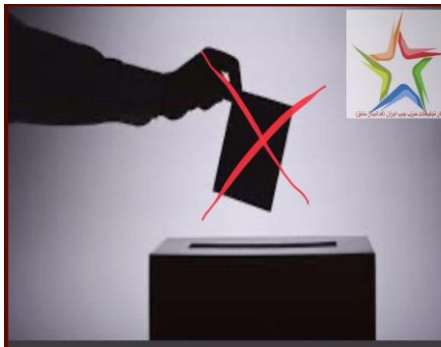




This is Issue No. 3 of the "IRAN: View from the LEFT" which will be published for those who want to get to know the Left Party of Iran (People's Fadaian) positions. Each issue contains selections of the party's positions on a monthly basis. The current issue covers February 20th to March 20th, 2020.

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



## Elections with Expected Results

The eleventh term of the Islamic Republic's parliament was held in Iran on February 21, 2020. It can be said that the results of these elections lacked any new and unexpected outcomes. Inefficiencies and unfulfilled promises during the 41 years of the Islamic Republic's rule and in particular events one to two months before the election, have eroded people's hope for change in the grave state of society through the ballot box. On the other hand, the denial of many opposition political forces to run in the elections, as well as the Council of Guardians' overwhelming disapproval of the reformist candidates and moderates had revealed the intention of the regime to hold an elections without any sort of competition. In addition, it is important to categorize the future developments in the Islamic Republic's power structure and their challenges ahead by the state's increasing reliance on the IRGC and the IRGC's increasing share of political power. Thus, every single realistic assessments predicted that:

- 1- The limited presence of people at the ballot box;
- 2- The "victory" of far-right forces;
- 3- The strengthening of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' in the parliament.

The predictions came true:

First, according to the official statistics the turnout of people voting across the country was 42.57%, nearly 20% lower than the previous election. According to the same election results in Tehran - an important indicator of the affiliation between the government and the people - participation did not reach 23%. This is the first time in the history of the Islamic Republic of Iran that the electoral results in the whole country falls below 50% and in Tehran it falls to less than a quarter. Second, the distribution of seats in the next parliament indicates the lion's share of the far-right forces, in the assembly by 80 percent of the total seats. And thirdly, off the 80% of the seats mentioned above 56 percent was taken by IRG Corps.

The executive -politics of The Left Party of Iran (People's Fadaian) before the official announcement of the full results on February 23 issued a statement declaring the end result of the election was "People's victory in boycotting the elections". The statement elaborated in details:

*"The widespread protest of the people and the" NO "to the elections is in continuation of the November protests, and in the wake of the uprising that began in January 2018. This the continuation of the civil movement against all forms of discrimination by the Islamic Republic which has grown into a popular uprising. This is a big "NO" to the Islamic Republic, to Khamenei's invitation to vote and to the dictatorship LPI (PF) congratulates the vigilant people of Iran on the success of the boycott of the fake elections. The boycott of the bogus elections is an important step in the continuation of the civil struggle of the Iranian people in transition from the Islamic Republic, putting an end to the religious dictatorship and to emphasize the fact that freedom and democracy could not be*



*achieved while the Islamic Republic exists, but was not it, to come. "*



## **A global threat, but more dangerous in Iran**

On February 22, 2020, the day after parliamentary election, state media reported the outbreak of coronavirus and the death of two people in Iran. However, the presence of the Coronavirus and its spread had been known to the authorities two weeks before the election. Unfortunately, they once again put their own benefits ahead of the lives of their citizens. Even after the announcement, instead of organized action to prevent the spread of the disease, they started to detain several people for "spreading rumors".

LPI (PF) in its first reaction to the news on February 22, 2020 while criticizing the quality of the work done by authorities, stated:

*"At the present moment, all the emphasis should be on minimizing the casualties caused by this disease because the value of human life is paramount to everything else. We declare that excuses such as shortage of drugs or preventative apparatus or reception centers ... are not determining factors especially since the experience of other countries fighting the disease is available to everyone. "*

It can be said that in the days and weeks that followed community life was overshadowed by the Covid-19 epidemic more and more. Apart from the difficulties faced by most of the countries involved in this epidemic, numerous factors have caused the aggravation of the situation in Iran. LPI (PF) has reacted to this special situation on several occasions. When President Hassan Rouhani declared normal

situation as the virus spread and called on students in schools and universities to attend their classrooms, many student organizations and the Iranian Teachers' Association along with worried families protested. The party's political board issued a statement with the title "Let's defeat Corona by popular initiatives and supporting each other!" which contains:

*While supporting the students, teachers, and families for continuation of closure of universities and schools, LPI (PF) welcomes popular initiatives and establishment of public institutions for cooperation. We appreciate the country's first respondents for putting their lives at risk in these dangerous conditions and sacrifice all they have for the well-being of others. Iran should not be deprived of international assistances.*



*The Islamic Republic is obliged to accept the assistance of international institutions to the Iranian people, rather than ruining the international relations. The government is obliged to open the country's gates to the international aid associations. It is important that political, cultural and civil rights activists abroad seek assistance, including the international institutions for humanitarian assistance and the delivery of preventive and medical equipment and supplies to Iran. By expressing our sympathy to the families of the victims of the Corona virus, we hope that with the support and popular initiative we could mitigate the devastating effects of the disease. "*

*The scope of the prevalence of COVID-19 disease in Iran and the current quality of work and capabilities cannot be called a disaster. What has so far prevented the catastrophe was*



*primarily the efforts and sacrifices of physicians, nurses, and other staff in the Iranian health system. However, this cannot be sustained in the context of the situation briefly outlined above and sooner or later it wouldn't be enough to prevent the disaster. Unfortunately, the signs of failure already appeared. The severe shortage and the lack of medical staff as well as the facilities for diagnosis and treatment have recently appeared at large scales. The Iranian health system and the Iranian people need the help and involvement of the World Health Organization in the ongoing fight against the Corona virus.*



*In our view, this involvement can be enhanced by the wider presence of your organization in Iran and the strengthening of independent information channels as well as official request to the Iranian government to ask for outside assistance. The government's pleas could attract many organizations and the proper use of all their capabilities. We would like to request that your organization helps us to lift the "medical embargo" and the general restrictions imposed by the sanctions.*

Then, in a letter to the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, from the International Relation's office we emphasized the

devastating effects of the sanctions. We asked that Mr. Guterres to:

*- Use all his power in the United Nations and the Security Council to halt all restrictions on medical and health care trade resulting from sanctions against Iran; and,*

*- At the same time, encourage the Islamic Republic of Iran to promote transparency, inclusiveness and prioritize its actions for the health of all citizens in the fight against the Corona virus.*

The aftermath of the Koruna outbreak was not limited to a shortage of medical facilities. We are concerned about the economic impacts on the society, people's livelihoods, and especially less fortunate portions of the society. The party issued a in a statement entitled "The Government is obliged to provide assistance for those unemployed by Corona". It stated that:

*LPI(PF) ... demands assistance for those unemployed as a result of epidemic, free treatment for fellow citizens contracting the virus, and provide protective and safety equipment to protect the health of doctors, nurses and hospital staff. Official recommendations for protecting the health of individuals and asking people to stay home are appropriate and essential but these instructions can only be implemented when the government provides medical equipment and food to the low-income and the poor.*

Central to the party's relationship with the three other Iranian political organizations - the Republican Union of Iran, the Iranian National Front abroad, and the Republican Solidarity of Iran - were also the outbreak of the Corona virus and its disturbing impacts in Iran. These were reflected in several joint declarations.

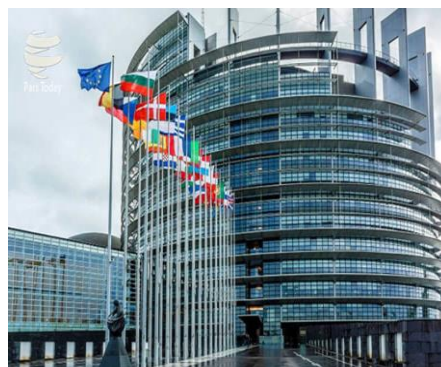


## Life goes on

Nowruz on March 21 is the first day of the solar calendar year. The year that passed was full of great difficulties for the Iranians. It started with flood and ended with Corona but for Iranians, Nowruz is inherently important. In spite of all the disasters Nowruz should be celebrated as a symbol of the rejuvenation of nature and life, itself. In a message to the Iranian people, the party reviewed the good and the bad of the past year:

*Our wish is that this New Year blossoms in our victory against the black pest of the corona virus and we hope our pains are less as we step into the New Year. We wish to celebrate the well-being of humans by staying at home. This is the best way to celebrate Nowruz this year because it can lessen our worries about ourselves and those around us. No New Year present is worth more than honoring the day-to-day efforts and sacrifices of our nation's medical staff particularly in providing financial assistance to struggling nurses who have repeatedly been protesting for better working conditions over the past few years despite deaf ears of the government. However, they have not stopped rescuing lives at these critical times. Like Jeanne d'Arc they sacrifice their lives without asking anything in return. Also, let's try to get in contact with the families of our fallen citizens without putting our lives in danger. May we celebrate Nowruz this year by honoring any effort to*

*defeat this disease and removing whatever evil from the lives of the people.*



## Meeting

On Wednesday, February 19, a meeting was held between the representatives of LPI (PF) and the European Parliament members of 'Iran group' at its headquarters in Brussels. The meeting was held at the request of the party, with previous discussions on issues of mutual interest and importance to both parties.

The European delegation was led by Ms. Cornelia Ernest, Head of the Iran Group in the European Parliament, and Ms. Karin Schutz Pelz, expert on Iran's issues both from the left faction in the European Parliament. The party's delegation consisted of Ms. Ayandeh Azad, Mr. Ahmad Nejati, Mr. Ali Pour Naqawi and Mr. Mehdi Ebrahimzadeh.

Following the brief introduction of the LPI (PF), the two sides discussed the dreadful human rights situation in Iran and the complexities of pursuing a comprehensive approach towards this issue.

The meeting took place two days before the 11th parliamentary elections in Iran. Therefore, the parties with enthusiasm and passionately examined the situation on the eve of the election, its results and possible future changes resulting from the elections.

The meeting was held in a very pleasant atmosphere and at the end both sides expressed their interest in the upcoming meetings.

Roland Marshall, and all political prisoners of the Islamic Republic's prisons.