



گروه پزشکان و کادر پزشکی مدافع حقوق بشر در ایران- اتریش  
Medical Professionals for Human Rights in Iran – Austria



Vienna, 06.20.2023

## Open Letter to the Presidents of Venezuela, Nicaragua and Cuba

Dear President Maduro,

President Ortega,

President Diaz-Canel,

We have learned with indignation from the international media that precisely those Latin American states that boast and claim to pursue a social and internationally solidary policy have received the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mr. Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, with the greatest honours in their countries. The Islamic regime in Iran has been brutally oppressing its own population for over 40 years. It allows neither freedom of opinion, nor freedom of the press, nor freedom of vote. Any criticism of the religious system is severely persecuted: Kidnappings, torture, heavy prison sentences and executions of political dissidents from the left and the right are widespread and systematically applied in Iran. Courts impose corporal punishments that amount to torture, such as floggings and amputations. The right to a fair trial is systematically disregarded.

Women and members of ethnic and religious minorities in particular suffer discrimination and violence. The death penalty serves as a means of intimidation, even political repression, in the Islamic Republic. Human rights organisations have found that more than 200 people were executed between 1 January and the end of May 2023 alone. In 2022, 582 death sentences were carried out.

Komitee zur Verteidigung der Menschenrechte im Iran,  
Österreich

جامعه دفاع از حقوق بشر در ایران-اتریش

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The nationwide protests sparked by the death of 22-year-old Mahsa (Zhina) Amini in the custody of the morality police on 13 September 2022 are being brutally put down by the Iranian authorities.

In the process, Iran's supreme military authority has instructed commanders of the armed forces in all provinces to "crack down" on protesters. Nearly 600 people, mostly young, including at least 23 children, have been killed in the brutal crackdown on protests.

Moreover, President Raisi's personal background is marked by violence, his past in the Iranian judicial apparatus is devastating: In his responsibility as a member of a five-member "death squad" appointed by Ayatollah Khomeini, thousands (more than 4,000) of mostly young people already sentenced to prison terms were executed for political reasons in the summer of 1988, for which he even claimed a human rights prize at his first press conference as newly elected president. In this context, he is criticised by international human rights organisations such as Amnesty International for crimes against humanity with well-documented evidence, and he is under international investigation in this regard. Many Latin American dictators like Pinochet or Videla should learn their trade from him.

Against this background, we as human rights organisations with Iranian roots strongly condemn the invitation of Ebrahim Raisi to the state visit and, moreover, the bestowal of the highest dignities on this notorious violator of elementary human rights, such as the right to life. Whatever the motivation behind this honour, you cannot be excused for doing so at the price of despising human rights.

With best regards

**Dr. Behrouz Bayat**

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