



*Belgian Committee of Parliamentarians and Mayors for a Democratic Iran*

*Comité Belge des Parlementaires et Bourgmestres pour un Iran Démocratique*

*Belgisch Comité van Parlementsleden en Burgemeesters voor een Democratisch Iran*



For immediate release – Tuesday 18 November 2014

## **Belgian Parliament: Strong condemnation of violation of human rights and repression of women in Iran**

A meeting was held today in the Belgian federal parliament to discuss the recent cases of human rights violations in Iran and particularly the wave of acid attacks against young girls and women for “mal-veiling”.

Mayor **Dirk Claes** (CD&V), President of the ‘Belgian Committee of Parliamentarians and Mayors for a Democratic Iran’ who was chairing the meeting said : “After more than one year that Hassan Rouhani became President, all those nice words about him are gone and it is very clear that it was quite an illusion to regard Rouhani as a moderate. It is quite clear that if we really want to see a free, democratic Iran, this could never be possible with the current dictators in power. The only solution is therefore to support the Iranian opposition for a regime change.”

Claes added: “We hope that U.S. and Europe will not make concessions to this regime as we are approaching the deadline of 24 November. The nuclear threat is real and the mullahs want us to end the sanctions because the Iranian economy is in a very bad situation under the sanctions and because of the low price of oil. We have to make sure that this regime will not be able to make a bomb.”

**Nele Lijnen** MP (Open VLD) said: “In October dozens of Iranian women were victims of acid attacks by organized criminal gangs affiliated to the government. Millions of Iranians were shocked and outraged of the news of execution of Ms Reyhaneh Jabbari, Iranian 26-year-old student and decorator who was kept in jail in the past 7 years, when she was only 19, for having defended herself against a sexual aggression by an intelligence officer of the Iranian regime.”

She added: “We are also very worried about the women members of the Iranian opposition in Iraq. The Iraqi government has imposed a medical blockade on camp Liberty and many of these women are prevented from going to hospital for urgent treatments. And so we are witnessing a slow death. 22 PMOI members have died so far because of this inhuman medical siege. We call on the new EU High Representative Mrs Federica Mogherini to urge Iraqi government to end this blockade and restriction. I am glad that women have key responsibilities in the Iranian resistance and Mrs Maryam Rajavi’s position as the President of this movement is indeed a political, cultural and ideological challenge to the mullahs and other Islamic fundamentalists.”

Dr **Alejo Vidal-Quadras** a former vice-president of the European Parliament said: “Best chance to fight against Islamic fundamentalism is to have a regime change in Iran. As long as Tehran is

controlled by the mullahs, Iran remains the center of exporting fundamentalism and extremism. If Europe and USA are serious about fighting radical Islam and ISIS, the real solution is to have a democratic government in Tehran. Iranian regime is part of the problem and not a solution. I have realized that the movement under the leadership of Maryam Rajavi, is the main enemy of the mullahs and the only organised opposition. I have found PMOI and the NCRI to be the only democratic alternative to this regime. I have attended their annual rallies in Paris with over 100.000 people.”

Professor **Eric David** a renowned expert on international law from the Free University of Brussels (ULB), spoke about the recent victory of the Iranian opposition PMOI in the French courts after 11 years of harassments and pressures against Iranian dissidents since June 2003. “The actions of the French judge at the time against the PMOI had no meaning from a legal point of view. The new French judge has now closed the file and put an end to this, because there was absolutely no substance in this dossier.”

**Paulo Casaca** a former European MP and an expert on Middle East affairs said: “We just saw the people of Iran calling their own government to be like ISIS. This is very true because people here tend to forget that the first government that systematically used these brutal methods against its own population and continues to do so still today is the so called Islamic republic of Iran. So they are the real ideological roots and role models for this so called ‘Islamic State’. Therefore to solve the root of the problem in the region the only real solution is to help the people of Iran for a regime change.”

**David Clarinval**, MP (MR) said: “I have been supporting the campaigns of the National Council of Resistance of Iran for a number of years now to try to achieve a free and democratic Iran. It is true that we had some hopes that the situation would at least improve somehow with the new president but unfortunately with the news that I keep receiving in recent months it looks as it is going worse and it is becoming more clear that Rouhani is only wearing a mask that is perhaps more acceptable to the west but his actions are exactly the same and sometime even worse than his predecessor.”

The meeting was also attended by members of the Iranian communities and associations in Belgium as well as journalists from Belgian media.

**Dirk Claes** (CD&V)

President of Belgian Committee of Parliamentarians and Mayors for a Democratic Iran