

IRAN : Over 130 religious Leaders condemn Iran regime

The former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Rowan Williams, has led over 50 British bishops and nearly 80 US church leaders to condemn the Iranian Regime for its human rights abuses and mistreatment of religious minorities in a statement released today.

Mohabat News (27.06.2018) – <http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=4027> – The statement called on the international community to pay more attention to the plight of the Iranian people, particularly religious minorities, who have long suffered at the hands of the dictatorship.

The Rt Rev. John Pritchard, former Bishop of Oxford and one of the signatories of the statement, said: “Today, we announce the initiative by Dr. Rowan Williams and supported by more than 50 bishops in the UK along with 78 US church leaders, which highlights the plight of the Iranian people and the religious minorities in Iran, particularly the Christians, calling on the international community to act to defend their rights in the face of government harassment and persecution.” The Iranian Regime has been condemned a massive 64 times for its human rights record by the United Nations and many more times by various international human rights organizations. While the majority of those targeted by the Regime are Shiite Muslims, who make up the majority of Iran’s population, religious minorities are targets specifically for their faith. Worse still, the situation is not getting better.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres told the United Nations Human Rights Council in February: “No improvement was observed concerning the situation of religious and ethnic minorities, who remain subject to restrictions. [I] remain concerned by reports of persistent human rights violations of and

discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities.”

While, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom’s 2018 report revealed that religious freedom in Iran has continued to deteriorate, with many Christian converts and house church leaders given least 10 years in prison, and many religious reformers facing “prolonged detention and possible execution”.

This abuse of human rights is justified by the Regime under their warped version of Islam, but is not recognised by any true believer.

Indeed, Maryam Rajavi, who leads the Iranian opposition and will be the keynote speaker at their June 30 gathering in Paris, states that Islam does not approve of any form of compulsion, coercion and forcible prohibition, including the use of flogging and terror, imposing the compulsory veil, and especially imposing the rule of a government under the name of God and Islam.

The statement reported that the nationwide anti-regime uprising in Iran showed that the Iranian people want democracy in their country and the religious leaders agreed that the West should support that.

The statement read: “”We call on all countries to take into consideration the deplorable situation of human rights in Iran, particularly the painful situation of religious minorities, in navigating their relations with Iran. We urge them to base any improvement of relations with Iran on a cessation of oppression of minorities and on a halt to executions in Iran. The time has come for us to listen to the Iranian people’s demand for freedom, including religious freedom.”

This statement is the latest in a series of public condemnations of the Iranian Regime for its human rights abuses and of support for the Iranian opposition and their

Free Iran rally.

IRAN: 'Returnees' from Al Mustafa Int'l University for foreigners pose a danger to human and state security abroad

HRWF (19.02.2018) – Foreign forms of controversial Islamic teachings introduced in various ways in Muslim majority countries threaten their traditional culture of tolerance and the peaceful relations between their various religious communities.

Iran attracts and trains foreign Shia theologians to export its theocratic model and Sharia practices which are incompatible with UN human rights standards.

Salafists and Wahhabis backed by Saudi Arabia and other states of the Arabic Peninsula are increasingly disturbing the homegrown peaceful Islam in Indonesia, the Maldives, and other countries in Central Asia.

The implantation of their Islamic universities and other educational institutions in such countries, in addition to the granting of scholarships for foreign education of imams and young students in theology, are part of their diversified strategies to export forms of Islam that are alien to local Islam, challenge the secular nature of some states and the separation of state and religion.

'Returnees' from universities such as Al Mustafa University in Iran pose a real danger to human and state security in their respective countries of origin.

Sentencing 'returnees' to prison terms, as it is the case in Azerbaijan or Kazakhstan, because they have been educated abroad in 'suspicious universities' is a violation of human rights. However it is the right of a state to protect its population against radicalization and foreign ideologies that promote segregation between Muslims and non-Muslims as well as between men and women, discrimination on such a basis, physical punishments, degrading and inhumane treatments, as it is the case in Iran, Pakistan or Saudi Arabia.

Hassan Dai's study entitled by "Iran's global network of Islamic schools public" published by the Iranian American Forum in 2016 highlights the extent of the strategy used by Tehran to export its theocratic system. In his paper, the author addresses the following issues:

- Foreign clerics in Iran and the creation of Al Mustafa
- Al Mustafa's network: Africa – Al Mustafa School in Congo
- Tuition and support for students and their families
- Number of students and graduates
- Al Mustafa's goal: export of Revolution
- Shiism
- Promoting hatred against Israel
- Al Mustafa, a recruiting pool of Quds force

Human Rights Without Frontiers is presenting below several excerpts from this paper that is available at <http://iranian-americans.com/irans-export-of-islamic-fundamentalism-al-mustafa-global-training-centers-2/>.

Summary

In February 1979 Ayatollah Khomeini and a group of clergymen attached to him, seized the power in Iran. From the onset, Khomeini's regime utilized all the means and tools in its

disposal to establish and fortify its brand of fundamentalism in Iran and export it throughout the Islamic world.

For the past 37 years, the Iranian regime has pursued a two-faceted strategy to export its revolution; in one hand, it has created and supported radical armed groups across the Middle East, on top of them the Lebanese Hezbollah. On the other hand, various "Cultural" and "religious" organizations were created in Iran to disseminate the regime's ideology in the Islamic world.

Al Mustafa international university founded in 2007 is one of the most important among these organizations. Funded and controlled by the Iranian regime, Al Mustafa trains foreign Shia clerics, scholars and missionaries. Its main campuses are in Iran and has more than one hundred seminaries, Islamic schools and religious centers around the world. The Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei is the highest authority of Al Mustafa University.

Al Mustafa has currently over 40.000 students, half of them studying in University campuses in Iran. There are nearly 10.000 female students and 3500 teaching staff.

Since 2007, nearly 30.000 clerics and Islamic scholars have graduated from Al Mustafa branches, a good portion of them have been hired by the university as teaching staff or missionaries sent to different countries around the globe.

Al Mustafa's vast global network and its growing army of clerics and missionaries is a formidable tool to generate grassroots support in foreign countries for the Iranian regime's ideology, its foreign policy, its position in the Islamic world and its quest to dominate the Middle East. Al Mustafa is also a recruiting pool for the Revolutionary Guards' Quds Force or other Iranian Institutions responsible for terrorism or military activities abroad.

Number of students and graduates

Al Mustafa does not report the exact number of its students in Iran or in foreign branches. However, by examining Al Mustafa's current and old website available in web archives, news reports or the declarations by the University's executives, we reach the approximate numbers of 40.000 current students of which 10.000 are women. Half of Al Mustafa's students are in Iran campuses. The University has had 30.000 graduates and employs 3500 teaching staff.

For example, Alireza Aarafi, Al Mustafa's President declared in August 2014 that 40.000 people study at the University. In February 2016, the head of "Information Science" department at Shiraz University gave an interview and detailed the number of foreign clerics studying in Iran and declared that 20.000 foreigners study at Al Mustafa campuses in Iran. In a speech on February 2015, President of Al Mustafa declared that 30.000 students had graduated since 2007.

Al-Mustafa has a distinct department for its female students called "Bent-ol-Hoda High Education Institution" with campuses in Ghom, Isfahan and Mashhad. According to an August 2013 report 9000 female students were studying in Al Mustafa, of which 6500 students in foreign branches. According to Hojatoleslam Safouraei, president of Bent-ol-Hoda, the new campus under construction in Ghom will open in the summer of 2016 with a capacity for 2000 female students.

Al Mustafa's goal: export of Revolution

Al Mustafa's vast global network and its growing army of clerics and missionaries is a formidable tool for the Iranian regime to export its brand of Islam and generate grassroots support for the Iranian regime's ideology and assist its quest to dominate the Islamic world.

In his speech to Al Mustafa students and staff on October 25, 2010 in Qom, the Supreme Leader explained the Iranian mandate to spread "pure Islamic thoughts" and liberate the Islamic

nation from the jug of global arrogance led by the United States. He emphasized the role that Al Mustafa plays in carrying out this mission: (English translation by Khamenei's official website)

“The first lesson that the Islamic Revolution and the auspicious Islamic Republic taught us was that we should think beyond our borders and turn our attention to the vast arena of the Islamic Ummah. Our magnanimous Imam taught us that our attention should be focused on the great Islamic Ummah. Although Iran was extremely frustrated under the pressure of tyranny and colonialism during the rule of Shah, was being crushed by the pressure, and it needed to be saved but, the essential pressure and historical aggression was focused on the Islamic Ummah.

For several centuries, the great Islamic Ummah, which has been in one of the most strategic locations in the world, was suffering from weakness, defeat, backwardness, colonialism and material and scientific poverty due to the interference of superpowers, greed of powerful governments and belligerence of the arrogant powers. The attention of our Islamic Revolution was focused on the Islamic world. Its attention was focused on helping the Islamic Ummah get rid of the arrogant powers' hand of oppression and aggression. We learned this from our Imam, and this has been the clear path of the Islamic Republic up until now. Part of the great work is what you are doing. You have gathered here from nearly one hundred countries in order to become familiar with the pure teachings of Islam.”

On February 8, 2016, Al Mustafa's vice President declared: “Export of revolution has always been one of the most important goals for the Islamic Republic. Al Mustafa plays a role in preparing the ground and attain this goal. Al Mustafa has used the Islamic soft power in the region and prepare the ground for Iran's hard power (military) to be present in the Middle East and successfully oppose the global arrogance.”

Similarly, the dean of language and culture department at Al Mustafa has also declared that “our goal is the export of revolution.” In February 2015, the Supreme Leader’s representative in Isfahan emphasized that “Al Mustafa has taken effective steps for the export of our revolution.”

Al Mustafa, a recruiting pool for Quds force

Since the start of civil war in Syria and the Iranian military intervention to save the Bashar Assad regime, there have been numerous reports about Al Mustafa’s students killed in Syria funerals held in Iran for them. In March 2016, one of Al Mustafa’s directors declared that “some of the fighters deployed to Syria are the University’s students and clerics.”

Alireza Tavassoli, the chief commander of Fatemiyon, the Afghanis division of revolutionary guards fighting in Syria who was killed in 2014, was one of Al Mustafa’s clerics.

The Iranian revolutionary Guards employs different tactics to recruit new members or fighters for Syrian war. Each year, hundreds of thousands of very young Iranian students are organized in tours labeled as “Caravans of light” (Rahian -e- Noor) and sent to the old Iran-Iraq war battle field where the martyrs are venerated and the cult of martyrdom is promoted. The preachers remind the visitors that the war with Iraq was in fact part of the fight against global arrogance, a fight that continues today. The visitors are told that the martyrs are alive and watching them and asking them to join this holy war against the US and its surrogates.

Iranian regime uses the same tactic to recruit among Al Mustafa students or graduates. Each year thousands of Al Mustafa students from Iran campuses or branches outside Iran are sent to these battle field. This is a report on 700 Al Mustafa students visiting the battle fields and, another report about a 250 students and families. In this report by Iranian press, an Argentinian graduate of Al Mustafa who is

teaching at the University branches, is taking a group of Latin American students to the battle fields to “venerate the Martyrs of war between Islam and global arrogance”.

As a result of Al Mustafa’s ideological teaching and financial incentives provided to the students, a good part of Al Mustafa clerics gradually become unconditional supporters of Iranian regime. It is not surprising that many of them are sent to Syria and other places to assist the Quds force. Al Mustafa students in Iran are also ordered to participate in state-organized rallies such as the protest against Charlie Hebdo magazine for drawing Muhammad cartoon or the rally against Bahrain government.