

No To Warmongering: Statement by a Group of Iranian Civil Rights Activists

May 2, 2024



NP editor's note: This statement was originally published in Persian on April 16. We share this translation from Iranian Progressives in Translation.

At a time when the tensions between Iran and Israel have climaxed and concerns about a wider war are prevalent, it is doubly necessary for democracy advocates to come together in solidarity and say “no to warmongering”.

As a group of Iranian civil rights and other activists, we believe that in the current situation, saying “no to warmongering” is a necessary position both to reject the militarist structure of the Islamic Republic and to clearly delineate a stand against war and bloodshed in the region.

At a time when Iran is facing multidimensional economic, political and economic crises, an increase in the tensions between Iran and Israel will hurt democracy-seeking movements. The current climate of war covers over the lack of accountability of the established political system in the face of these crises. Furthermore, it has also created the basis for the intensifying repression of protest movements in Iran. Just a few hours before the attack on Israel, The “Morality Police” of the Islamic Republic unleashed its street warfare against women. In the past few days, Numerous summonses were issued for the interrogation of political and media activists. Judgments against various civil rights activists were enforced. These are all proof of the fact that the repressive climate of war has expanded the crackdown and has facilitated the effort of authoritarians to put more pressure on civil society activists in Iran.

As civil rights activists, we believe that the discourse of democracy is intertwined with saying “no to war.” This discourse is in no way related to warmongering currents, whether in the Islamic Republic or in the guise of the opposition. The experience of war in the Middle East and Central Asia has shown that war, not only endangers the lives of citizens, but also destroys a country’s infrastructure

and is not a suitable solution for long-term development. Thus, there is no justification for defending war.

As the signatories of this statement, we believe in the need for promoting the discourse of peace in the war-torn and blood-soaked region of the Middle East. We are deeply concerned about any action by the Islamic Republic that would fan the flames of war in the region, crack down on people inside Iran and increase repression. We also warn against the jingoistic attitudes of other states. We condemn any assault on our country, Iran, under any pretext, and insist on the need for a ceasefire in Gaza and the promotion of peace negotiations.

At a time when the Islamic Republic's policies of internal repression on the one hand and its inefficient and anti-democratic foreign policy on the other, have pushed the country to the verge of destruction, we believe it is the responsibility of anti-war activists to take a stand against warmongering and insist on the will of protesting citizens and the use of protest spaces to put pressure on governments.

Thus, we call on all civil rights and other activists to come together decisively and wholeheartedly insist upon "no to warmongering" and stay on the course of advocating democracy.

April 16, 2024

Translated by Frieda Afary