

NCRI-US's New Book, Expert Panel Make Case to Hold Ebrahim Raisi to Account for Crimes Against Humanity, 1988 Massacre

Discussions focus on the challenges of advancing an effective and appropriate Iran policy following the inauguration of Ebrahim Raisi.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, August 10, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On August 5, 2021, the U.S. Representative Office of the National Council of Resistance of Iran ([NCRI-US](https://www.ncri-usa.org/)) held an online briefing entitled "Challenges Posed by Ebrahim Raisi, a Recognized Mass Murderer" and released its new book, *IRAN: Call for Justice; The Case to Hold Ebrahim Raisi to Account for Crimes Against Humanity*.



NCRI-US's panel makes the case to hold Ebrahim Raisi to account for crimes against humanity, 1988 massacre. From top clockwise: Alireza Jafarzadeh, Hon. Michael Mukasey, Geoffrey Robertson QC, Hon. Joseph Lieberman.

The online briefing featured prominent human rights, international law, and Iran policy figures, whose discussion focused on the challenges of advancing an effective and appropriate Iran policy following the inauguration of the Iranian regime's new president, Ebrahim Raisi. The panel emphasized the imperative of bringing Raisi, internationally recognized for his crimes against humanity and his key role in the massacre of some 30,000 political prisoners in 1988, before an international tribunal to face justice.

The event's speakers were the Honorable Michael Mukasey, 81st U.S. Attorney General; former U.S. Democratic Senator from Connecticut, Joe Lieberman; and Mr. Geoffrey Robertson, QC, a distinguished human rights barrister, and an expert on the 1988 massacre in Iran. Alireza Jafarzadeh, deputy director of the Washington Office of the NCRI, and author of *The Iran Threat*, presented the NCRI's new book and moderated the briefing.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Jafarzadeh said, "Our new book elaborates on Raisi's role in the mass murder and the suppression of dissent, and presents in some detail the global call for his

accountability. The tide has turned. The book also explains how Raisi was selected as the new president when, out of absolute desperation, Supreme Leader Khamenei cleared the field for him to assume the presidency of this repressive regime.”

Mr. Robertson, who served as the first president and appeals judge in the UN International Court for War Crimes in Sierra Leone, and conducted his own independent investigation of the 1988 massacre, joined the briefing from London. He explained:



Mr. Geoffrey Robertson QC
Geoffrey Robertson QC at NCRI-US’s panel “Challenges Posed by Ebrahim Raisi, a Recognized Mass Murderer” held on Aug 5, 2021.

“In July 1988, as the war with Iraq was ending in a truculent truce, prisons in Iran crammed with government opponents suddenly went into lockdown. All family visits were canceled, televisions and radios switched off, prisoners were kept in their cells and disallowed exercise... There were thousands of prisoners who had been jailed since 1980 for adherence to the Mojahedin Khalq Organization, the [MEK](#)...

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Our administration here in Washington really should speak out and condemn [Ebrahim] Raisi... And our silence really brings us down to his level, and that's nowhere where any of us want to be.”

Joseph Lieberman, former U.S. Democratic senator from Connecticut

“This was the worst crime against humanity committed against prisoners since the death marches of American and Australian soldiers by Japan at the end of the Second World War. Those who ordered those death marches were convicted and punished by international tribunals in Tokyo. But those who ordered the Iranian massacres have not only been allowed impunity, but they've also risen high in the country's government. And one of them, Ebrahim Raisi, has risen to the presidency.

“His role, proved beyond any reasonable doubt, was to sentence prisoners to death without any right to trial, to be represented by a lawyer, without any rights at all. He was primarily responsible for the murder of thousands of inmates. Many of them had already served their sentences. They were being held after their time had passed. Most of the sentences had been for protesting as students, or for handing out pamphlets. Raisi was a member of the death commission, which supervised two waves of executions in Iranian prisons. The first wave, in July and August 1988, was of the oppositionists belonging to the MEK group...

“The [death commission] had one question for these young men and women, most of them

detained merely for street protests in 1981. And upon that question, although they didn't know it, their lives would depend. Those who by their answer indicated any continuing affiliation with the MEK were blind-folded and ordered to join a conga line that led straight to the gallows. They were hung from cranes, four at a time, or in groups of six from ropes hanging from the front of the stage in an assembly hall... By mid-August 1988, thousands of prisoners had been killed in this manner by the state, without trial, without appeal and utterly without mercy...

"International crimes of this magnitude can't be forgotten or forgiven. And the very idea that a leading perpetrator might years later have been given a path to the development of a nuclear weapon is truly unconscionable...

"There is certainly one American initiative that should be followed in Raisi's case -- the Magnitsky law, which was pioneered by John McCain, President Obama in 2012, and then the global Magnitsky Act in 2016. And it's been used by President Trump and President Biden recently against perpetrators of human rights and atrocities in Belarus and Myanmar. The importance of the Magnitsky law... is that last year Britain adopted one. And so did the European Union. And there are now 31 democratic countries that have these targeted sanctioned laws for use against perpetrators of human rights abuses.

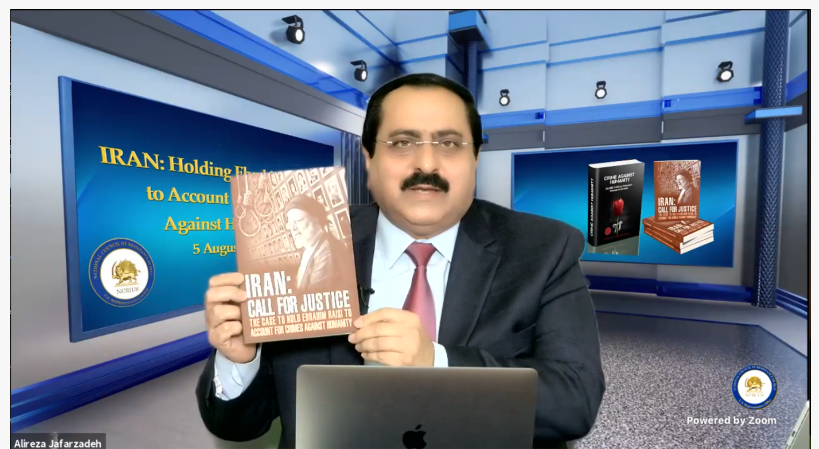
"I have to say that there could be no



Hon. Michael Mukasey at the NCRI-US's panel "Challenges Posed by Ebrahim Raisi, a Recognized Mass Murderer" held on August 5, 2021.



Hon. Joseph Lieberman at the NCRI-US's panel "Challenges Posed by Ebrahim Raisi, a Recognized Mass Murderer" held on August 5, 2021.



NCRI-US deputy director, Alireza Jafarzadeh, presents the new book, "IRAN: Call for Justice" at the panel "Challenges Posed by Ebrahim Raisi, a Recognized Mass Murderer" held on August 5, 2021.

individual whose name should be higher on every country's Magnitsky list, than Ebrahim Raisi... He should be put on trial wherever, whenever he can be apprehended. And at least his name on the targeted sanctions list would prevent his atrocities from being forgotten. ..."

In response to a question, Mr. Robertson stated that "There is some evidence that the killing of the MEK was predetermined--that it didn't just emanate from the rage of the Ayatollah. And I think it is remarkable in a way that this has gone from something no one knew about to something that is now on the international agenda and is understood."

Alireza Jafarzadeh noted that:

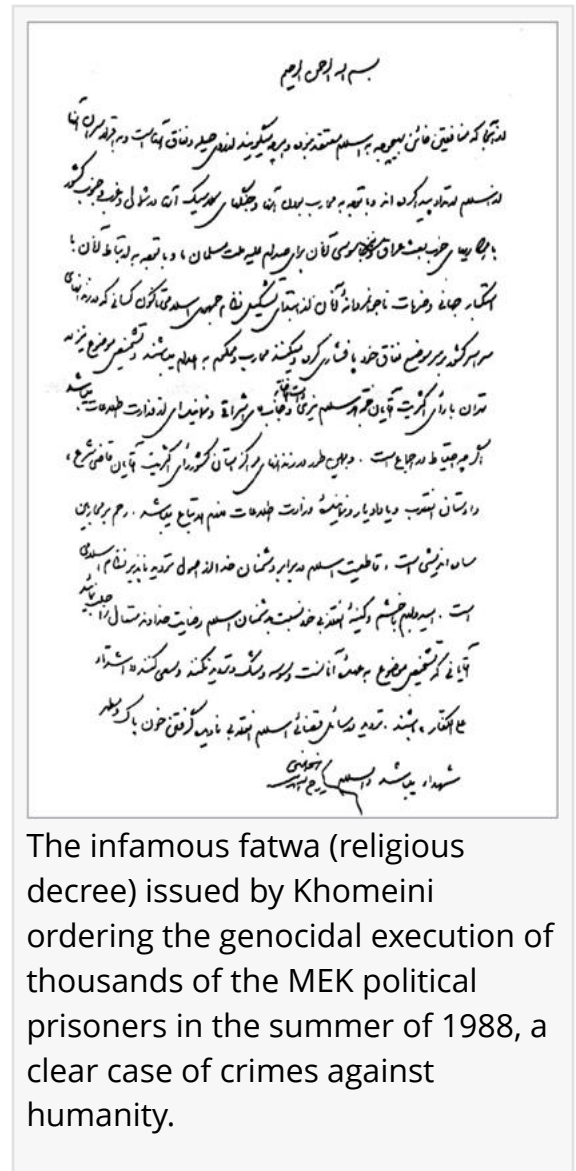
"I want to talk about [Khomeini's fatwa which triggered the 1988 massacre], which we covered in our new book... The decree was issued against the MEK. It describes who will carry out the task and names some individuals, basically the formation of the death commission. It is very specific, that the decree was issued against the MEK.

"Isn't it ironic that now, after 33 years, the same killer, Raisi, emerges with the same mission: to annihilate the MEK...In a word, it's now the showdown between the entirety of the regime on the one side – all those responsible for the murder of 30,000 political prisoners in 1988, more than 90% of them members of the MEK -- and on the other, the people of Iran, those who are involved in the protests and above all the MEK."

The next speaker was Judge Michael B. Mukasey, who said:

"... there is, as Geoffrey Robertson suggested, ample precedent in history for holding high government officials responsible for the kinds of crimes that the record shows Ebrahim Raisi participated in, particularly during the summer of 1988, but even afterwards. We should also not overlook the fact that his crimes have been known -- at least an outline of them -- for decades. And increasingly in detail, as the years have passed...

"The overwhelming majority of those tortured and executed, and as you've seen from Alireza's remarks, the targets of this fatwa were principally members of the MEK. This committee in which Ebrahim Raisi participated, delivered its judgements against prisoners in proceedings that were a



The infamous fatwa (religious decree) issued by Khomeini ordering the genocidal execution of thousands of the MEK political prisoners in the summer of 1988, a clear case of crimes against humanity.

mockery of the concept of a trial, involving simply asking a few questions of the accused mainly involving their beliefs and political affiliation, and then directing that they be killed...

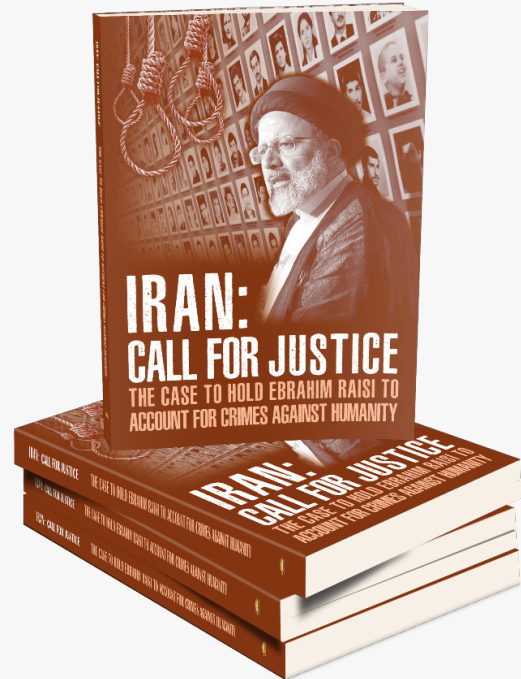
"The NCRI has published its volume, IRAN: Call for Justice, focusing particularly on the role of Ebrahim Raisi and on his case and calling attention to some of his activities since 1988, including directing the killing of about 1,500 protestors in Iran during demonstrations that erupted in November of 2019. What, then, can be done to answer this call for justice? Before what tribunals can Raisi be brought to answer for his crimes?...

"We can rely on civil penalties in the Magnitsky Act and similar statutes, which would impede the ability of Raisi to function. Such an effort would serve at least two further useful purposes... Indirectly creating a further public record of the crimes of the president of Iran would weaken the regime even further, both internationally and within Iran. Additionally, it would seem that perhaps the most likely criminal tribunal, and I think in some ways the most fitting one, before which Raisi might ultimately be made to answer for his crimes, would be a tribunal convened by the Iranians themselves, following a change in regime that I think all of those participating in this meeting would welcome. The best way to speed that up, is to keep assembling and publicizing the evidence of what Raisi and others in the government have done...

"I don't think we should rely on the EU; the United States could press forward. Rallying other democracies who have passed, as Mr. Robertson pointed out, Magnitsky acts of their own, implement the Magnitsky Act, make it difficult for Raisi and other members of the regime to travel and to function economically, which is very important to them because they've enriched themselves at the expense of the Iranian people..."

The former Attorney General was followed by the Honorable Joe Lieberman:

"No single act, in my opinion defined the regime in Tehran more clearly and tragically and painfully than the murder of as many as 30,000 people in Iran - Iranian citizens - for only one reason, that they were political opponents of the regime..."



NCRI-US's new book, "IRAN: Call for Justice; The Case to Hold Ebrahim Raisi to Account for Crimes Against Humanity," released on August 5, 2021

"Now Judge Mukasey and Barrister Robertson have spoken of the difficulty of actually bringing Raisi before a tribunal in The Hague, for instance, to try him for crimes against humanity, which he has admitted and would surely be found guilty of. But that's not an excuse for not taking action. And I think that suggests the political course of action, political in the best sense of a rising up of public opinion, beginning here in the United States, beginning today, at this gathering, sponsored by the NCRI, to focus the world's attention on Raisi's crimes... In fact, there was only one group and one person that constantly was calling out for Raisi to be held accountable for the genocide he oversaw in 1988. Of course, that organization was the National Council of Resistance of Iran. And that leader was Mrs. [Maryam Rajavi](#)...

"Here in the United States, I think we have a critical leadership role to play, thanks to the grassroots work of the Iranian American communities and the representatives of the NCRI in Washington. There is a great stirring in both houses of Congress. In the House of Representatives, 250 members from both parties have signed a resolution calling for an investigation of Raisi's human rights violations and genocidal acts. In the Senate, the support for a similar action is building, led by Senator Bob Menendez of New Jersey, who's the chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and supported by Senator Jim Rush, a Republican Ranking Member.

"I know that the administration has seemed to want very much to renegotiate and have another agreement of the Iran nuclear agreement, the JCPOA of 2015, but really, how can the Biden administration be consistent with its upholding of human rights and democracy in our foreign policy, if it continues to negotiate with a government that is led now by Raisi, a man who is guilty of genocidal acts and who has been a serial human rights oppressor? The administration will lose its credibility... Our administration here in Washington really should speak out and condemn Raisi because he represents everything that is unacceptable to the United States of America. And our silence really brings us down to his level, and that's nowhere where any of us want to be.

"The reality is that this regime needs to be changed. We have tried everything else we could, and the selection by the Supreme Leader of Raisi as president is the ultimate rejection of the values of the world community, and certainly of the United States... Today, the day on which a man responsible for the genocide of 1988 becomes president of Iran, if the U S leads, will also be noted in history as the day on which the world began to hold Raisi and the regime accountable, when we began to investigate him and the regime and to bring him and it to justice for the crimes they have committed, to see him removed from the presidency, and most significantly of all, to see this government removed from power in Tehran, so that the people of Iran, the gifted people of Iran, can again choose their own leaders and enjoy political and economic freedom and opportunity."

In his closing remarks, the NCRI-US deputy director, Alireza Jafarzadeh stated that:

"As Mr. Robertson mentioned just now, this whole massacre was premeditated. It was intended to eliminate the MEK. As you all stated, the culture of impunity for the mass murders who rule

Iran must end, and the US must take the lead in bringing to justice the leaders of the regime who have committed crimes against humanity for four decades, particularly those responsible for the 1988 massacre. Khamenei, Raisi, and Eje'i (the new Chief Justice) are basically at the top of the list of those who need to be brought to justice.

"Second, we really need to subject the Iranian regime to international sanctions under chapter seven of the UN charter. As we saw over the past year, the mullahs will never give up their nuclear weapons program, export of terrorism or aggression in the region. So that's what needs to be done. And most importantly, we really need to implement a zero-tolerance policy, if you will, regarding the torture and execution of the Iranian people, the killing of dissidents. The perpetrators really must be made to answer for their crimes, and you have discussed a lot of ways that could be done.

"And when it comes to the broader threat of the Iran regime in terms of bomb-making, enrichment and all of their nuclear facilities, they really need to be closed. Any agreement that doesn't oblige the regime to withdraw the Revolutionary Guards from Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Lebanon, you name it, is going to be ineffective and reckless. It's not going to have any results. And any agreement that doesn't target the missile program, as Judge Mukasey said, will lead to an escalation of the regional threat... They need to be held to account for that as well. That's the other side of their human rights violations, and we shouldn't be rewarding the Ayatollahs with more concessions.

"And finally, a truly good outcome will only come when the Ayatollahs are gone, so really, the world has a duty and responsibility to stand on the side of the Iranian people and recognize their struggle to overthrow this regime, establish freedom and democracy, and help them develop a secular, democratic, non-nuclear republic in Iran."

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