

Protest at UN against Ahmadinejad

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By Alireza

On September 23, 2009, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the blatant thief of the June Iranian presidential elections, visited New York City to attend the United Nations summit conference. In opposition to his presence there, thousands of Iranian exiles, students, youths, activists, and women, young and old alike demonstrated in front of the United Nations building.

We saw and heard slogans like:

"Murderer at the UN,"

"Down with Islamic Republic,"

"Hey, Hey, Ho, Ho, Ahmadinejad has got to go,"

"We stand for freedom and democracy in Iran,"

"Free all political prisoners in Iran,"

"Long live Socialism, long live revolution,"

"Iranians against reactionary and theocratic regime of Iran,"

"Iranians against invasion and occupation,"

"30 years of dark age suppression has produced one "united" movement for democracy in Iran,"

"In solidarity release all prisoners of conscience,"

"Civil human rights for Iran,"

"Iran carnival for peace and democracy,"

"Democracy in Iran,"

(People of Mojahedin slogan) "Democratic change in Iran. No to Ahmadinejad, yes to Maryam Rajavi,"

"No to Ahmadinejad, Yes to human rights,"

"A free and democratic Iran is only possible with the fall of the Islamic Republic,"

"More power to the voices (Nedas) of the brave Iranian women in their struggle against the misogynistic regime of Iran,"

"Down with Islamic Republic of Iran," (I heard this slogan even among some of those with the green movement. It was interesting that the leadership of the green movement was opposing this slogan, while the younger generation was passing by them.),

"Support the separation of state and religion in Iran," and

"Iranian government doesn't represent Iranian people."

There were up to fifteen thousand Iranian activists participating in this demonstration in front of the United Nations building. I can say, however, that the left's presence was light, even though they had interesting ideas. Monarchists were also not that many and mostly aging. The green movement, with the addition of the national front, was almost nine thousand people. The people of Mojahedin were up to three or four thousand.

One problem I observed was that, except for the left tendencies, no other groups had literature tables or any books to sell. Instead they were selling a lot of T-shirts to support democracy.

Supporters of the green movement were young, mostly women and youth, and in my view were very impressive even though their leadership is trying to limit this movement to reform.

Despite all our differences, we were all united against Ahmadinejad and Ayatollah Khamenei. And importantly the people acted in a civilized manner toward each other. I wish the sectarian tendencies among the left, those who did not participate in this event, could learn a lesson from those who are for democracy. The fact is that socialism without democracy is one-sided.

Today it is obvious that Ahmadinejad and Khamenei are the leaders of the Islamic Republic's crime machine. We all witnessed how civilians were shot to death by the orders of these two murderers. They are also responsible for the systematic abuse and torture in Kahrizak prison of those women and men who were arrested during the recent protests. They are guilty of humiliating the arrested protestors and for show trials, torture and rape. Yet despite this, since June millions of people have taken to the streets and chanted "Death to the dictator" while continuing the movement for democracy and freedom.

It is no accident that the biggest Iranian demonstration in U.S. history did not get any coverage. (There were nine thousand Iranians who were demonstrated against Shah of Iran and President Carter in 1977.) It is a shame and it has important meaning. The rulers of both Iran and U.S. are afraid of these kinds of independent gatherings.

It is very true that 30 years of dark age suppression has produced one "united" movement for democracy in Iran. In my view, the political crisis is far from over. Behind the blatant theft of the election were political and economic reasons. Both factions of the Islamic regime support the continued existence of the Islamic Republic and the Islamic constitution. The reformers' side may talk about revising the constitution, but they don't support the complete abolition of it.