

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy and grateful that as a female journalist from inside Iran I can talk to you in this gathering tonight and I want to thank you for this opportunity and your recognition of my work.

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Journalists are the mirror of today's societies of humanity. They have the duty to identify and expose the facts and reflect the facts as they happen, even if it is bitter and unbearable; Something that will never be tolerated by authoritarians and dictators.

Publishing news gives awareness. Awareness is the beginning of the fight against ignorance and darkness. Undemocratic and autocratic governments always prevent the correct circulation of information, and in all countries with such governments, journalists are among the first groups to be suppressed.

Repressing journalists anywhere in the world is one of the main pillars of dictatorship. And the government of Iran is one of the clear examples of these governments in the world. In the current atmosphere of Iran, it is pointless to talk about the physical and psychological safety of journalists. Because the principle of journalistic work is deprived of its meaning and content in the absence of freedom, security, legal care and legal protections, and people do not go to the media inside Iran to get the truth, because they know that the truth is forbidden, media's freedom has been dismantled and the ways to reach the truth have been blocked.

A living and objective example of the behavior of this religious authoritarian government can be seen in the recent events of Iran after the jhina revolution and the woman life freedom uprising, the brave resistance of women for a free life and against the bloody suppression of the people.

The Islamic Republic has always restricted women in all aspects in the name of religious rules with an anti-feminist approach, and in the meantime female reporters and journalists were under more pressure than ever before.

The women who covered the violence and killings were arrested and imprisoned on false charges. Journalists such as Elaheh Mohammadi, Nilufar Hamedi, Vida Rabbani, who are still in prison.

And I must mention prisoners like Narges Mohammadi, to whom we owe the brave pursuit and publication of issues related to prisons and prisoners.

The current situation of media dictatorship and censorship in the government of Iran has suppressed independent media and independent journalists for years.

Widespread closure of media outlets and unemployment of journalists, security threats and forced immigration, prisons and finally silent murders are part of the results of the media dictatorship of the Islamic Republic.

It can be said with certainty that there is no such thing as real journalism in Iran anymore, free and independent platforms have been confiscated or closed by the regime and the security apparatus. The Islamic Republic seizes and exploits these tribunes for the benefit of its propaganda.

On the other hand, if there is any resistance from the people involved in independent institutions against the

government's media dictatorship, the place of the resisters is in prison. Keyvan Samimi as the head of the Iran Press Freedom Defense Association and me as the vice-chairman of this association and a small member of Iran's journalism community has tasted the bitter taste of this prison for many years.

Finally, it must be said; In order to survive, the dictator needs more tools than creating terror in the hearts of the people; He survives only by instilling terror with unconditional praise. The dictators of today's world have no way without creating the illusion of a popular base, without the cheers of their terrified

supporters. And this is the end of their work.

And finally, in respect of all the brave citizen journalists who were the main narrators of Iran's ups and downs history during these years without any name or address, I stand with pride and bow to all of them.

Woman life freedom continues...

Thank you.

Aliieh Motallebzadeh

Vice President of Iran Press Freedom Defense Association September 2023

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