

سپیدار حزب زنان ایران

**We are the Sepidar,
standing tall while our roots reach ever deeper.**

We become a sheltering canopy.

We endure both frost and scorching heat.

In mourning broken branches,

we do not bend in defeat;

instead, we rise again, renewed, and in bloom.

SEPIDAR
WOMEN'S IRANIAN PARTY

Managing Editor: M.H. Labafbashi



Weekly magazine

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Woman Iranian Party

Friday, September 11, 2026

The Collapse Puzzle: Does The Islamic Regime It Still Govern?

By M.H. Labafbashi

I am much more sympathetic today than I was in the past to the proposition that the Islamic Republic has effectively entered a stage of collapse; however, I still distinguish between the “beginning of collapse” and “complete collapse.” What is currently being seen in Iran is, above all, a functional and legitimacy collapse; a government whose economy is losing its ability to survive, whose national currency is collapsing, whose oil exports have fallen sharply under the pressure of blockade and sanctions, and whose large segments of society no longer envision a future for this structure. At the same time, the machinery of coercion has not yet completely ceased to function. This is precisely what explains why a government may have collapsed from within, while its buildings remain open, its security forces remain present in the streets, and its officials continue to speak of “victory.” According to a Reuters report, Iran’s oil exports, which stood at around two million barrels per day in March, fell to approximately 220,000 to 255,000 barrels per day in August; meaning that the government’s main source of foreign currency is effectively under unprecedented pressure.



Under such circumstances, Donald Trump’s recent statements take on particular importance. He wrote on Truth Social that the United States has almost complete control of the Strait of Hormuz, that Iran’s economy is “completely collapsing,” and then asked: “When are the people of Iran going to rise up and fight?” This statement should not be viewed merely as a political post; at the same time, the U.S. government has intensified economic pressure, while new military strikes have also been carried out against infrastructure connected to the IRGC, air defenses, radar, communications, and Iran’s mine-laying capabilities. Washington

therefore now finds itself in a position where it is simultaneously pursuing military pressure, economic blockade, and expectations for a change in the behavior of Iranian society.

On the economic front of this pressure, Scott Bessent’s remarks are even more explicit than Trump’s. The U.S. Treasury Secretary has spoken of Iran entering a “Death Spiral” and outlined the scenarios facing the government, ranging from a popular uprising and divisions within the IRGC to accepting a new agreement. At the same time, the U.S. government has announced that it is expanding pressure beyond banks and oil to target shipping and aviation networks and digital assets connected to Iran as well. This is no longer a conventional sanctions regime; the objective is to restrict the channels through which the Islamic Republic can move money, oil, and foreign currency. The consequences of such pressure are felt by the Iranian people more clearly than by any economic report: smaller household budgets, rising prices for essential goods, the collapse of the currency, and the growing inability of families to cover the ordinary costs of living. When an economic crisis moves beyond economic charts and enters the daily lives of millions of people, it is no longer merely an economic problem; it becomes a crisis of political legitimacy.

At the same time, the behavior within the government does not present an image of a unified and confident structure. Pezeshkian, speaking in Bishkek, says that Iran is prepared to return to its commitments under the June understanding if the United States returns, while Washington explicitly says that the previous agreement is no longer a viable basis for return. Pezeshkian then meets with Putin and describes relations between Tehran and Moscow as strategic; Putin also announces Russia’s support for Tehran and describes the failure of the June understanding as “fragile and unstable.” On the other side, reports emerge about conditions allegedly imposed by China on Tehran concerning the Strait of Hormuz, relations with the United States, and Saudi Arabia; although these conditions have not been officially confirmed by Beijing and have even been denied by the Iranian side. But even without accepting those claims, one reality is clear: Russia and China may help the Islamic Republic, but neither is necessarily willing to bear the economic and geopolitical cost of its collapse forever. The Islamic Republic may give concessions to Russia in order to buy time; it may even surrender substantial economic and geopolitical concessions, but this is different from having the ability to save an exhausted structure.



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Another important sign inside Iran is the growing distance between the government's display and social reality. Government-organized nighttime gatherings intended to project an image of strength and public support are themselves encountering incidents that, even if not all of them can be interpreted as deliberate or organized actions, are highly meaningful from a symbolic perspective. At the same time, Iran's online space is filled with complaints from people about the collapse of purchasing power, rising prices, unemployment, the pressure of living expenses, and shrinking household budgets. The issue is no longer whether people are dissatisfied with the situation; that has been clear for years. The main question is when scattered dissatisfaction will turn into collective action. Trump is targeting precisely this gap: on the one hand, he says that the Iranian government is weak and its economy is collapsing, while on the other hand, he asks why the people have not yet taken to the streets. The likely answer to this contradiction must be found in the same point that has appeared repeatedly in recent analyses: the Islamic Republic may no longer have the ability to govern a normal country, but it still has the ability to frighten, suppress, and postpone the moment of explosion.



and Leila Bahmani, one of the figures associated with the legal and transitional justice aspects of the project. Almost simultaneously, Australia's political coalition invited Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi to visit Australia, and he accepted the invitation; meetings that are expected to address the situation in Iran, the demands of the Iranian people, and the democratic transition toward a secular Iran. These developments do not yet amount to recognition of a future government, but they demonstrate that Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi's name is increasingly present in international political discussions about Iran's future.

And perhaps this is why today we must distinguish between "governing" and "not having fallen yet." The Islamic Republic has not officially collapsed; however, there is growing evidence that its collapse began long ago at deeper levels and has now reached the economy, legitimacy, foreign relations, and capacity to govern. What remains is the struggle to preserve appearances and buy time; time for repression, negotiations, receiving foreign assistance, limited oil sales, and perhaps surrendering further concessions to powers such as Russia and China. But history has shown that governments fall when people no longer see their future in them, while at the same time a part of the power structure reaches the conclusion that continuing the status quo is no longer possible. At such a moment, the main question is no longer "Will the Islamic Republic fall?"; the question is who will fill the vacuum afterward and with what plan. This is where the existence of a well-known figure for the transition period and a practical roadmap for rebuilding the country becomes important. Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi can assume the role of leader of the transition at such a stage; not to impose the final form of government, but to take Iran from the Islamic Republic to the free choice of its people. And that final choice (monarchy or republic) must be entrusted to the Iranian people themselves through a free and genuine referendum.

However, another development is taking shape outside Iran that may be even more important for Iran's future than the war itself: preparations for the day after the Islamic Republic. In Düsseldorf, the F.I.E conference titled "A Free Iran and Europe" was held, and its subject was not merely opposition to the Islamic Republic; discussions also focused on economic opportunities, investment, technology, the rule of law, institutional development, and strategic cooperation between a future free Iran and Europe. Among the speakers were Saeed Ghasseminejad, director of the Iran Prosperity Project and an adviser to Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi,



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Gen Z; The Generation That No Longer Fears and No Longer Forgives

By Leila Fathali

You can no longer understand the movement on the streets with old analyses of reformist versus hardliner. Everything we have seen in these past four years has been the work of a new generation. A generation that has spent its entire life in the queue for VPNs, the dollar rate, and humiliation. We are talking about those born in the 2000s, a generation that makes up about twenty percent of Iran but is one hundred percent of the voice in the streets.



The difference of this generation is fundamental. The previous generation still had hope in the ballot box, in statements, in charismatic leaders, and its chant was "Where is my vote?". But Gen Z no longer believes in anything or anyone in this structure. It does not accept any party, any faction, or the repeated

promises of reform from within. For them, the issue is no longer just hijab and inflation, the issue is life itself. That's why its slogan is not death to this or salute to that, its slogan is Woman, Life, Freedom. It means I want to be myself, to wear what I want, to live my own life, and you have no right to decide for my body and my life.

The tools of this generation are just as uncontrollable as itself. You learned how to dissolve a party, shut down a newspaper, and put a leader under house arrest. Now what will you do with a hashtag? What will you do with a fifteen-second TikTok video? This movement has no leader for you to arrest. Every high school girl taking off her headscarf in the street is the leader of that day. Its new weapon is humor and memes. When you come with batons and threats, it answers you with dance and laughter, and that is exactly where your machinery of repression crashes.

You think you can force this generation to stay home by making filtering more expensive and threatening them with expulsion and criminal cases. You are wrong. This generation has nothing to lose. It has no job, no future, its savings evaporate every day with the dollar. When you left no future for them, they are no longer afraid of your threats. In fact, because they have nothing, they stand more fearlessly than any generation before them.

Yes, this generation is scattered, it has no party and gets tired quickly. But its strength is also in that. Because it has no party, it cannot be traded. Because it has no organization, it cannot be infiltrated. This protest comes from the heart of everyday life, from the heart of being humiliated every day in the metro, at university, and in the street. That's why even if the street is quiet today, its engine has not gone cold. It is not turned off, it has just gone under the skin of the city, inside schools, inside cafes, and inside phones.

The issue in Iran today is no longer a simple political divide, it is a generational and existential rupture. On one side stands a generation that wants to live, and on the other side a structure that only knows how to say resist, endure, and obey. These two languages will never meet.

This generation is no longer waiting for anyone's permission. It is not waiting for analysts, nor for the opposition abroad, nor for its father to tell it not to go. It has decided on its own not to be afraid. And a generation that sheds its fear, nothing can stop it anymore.



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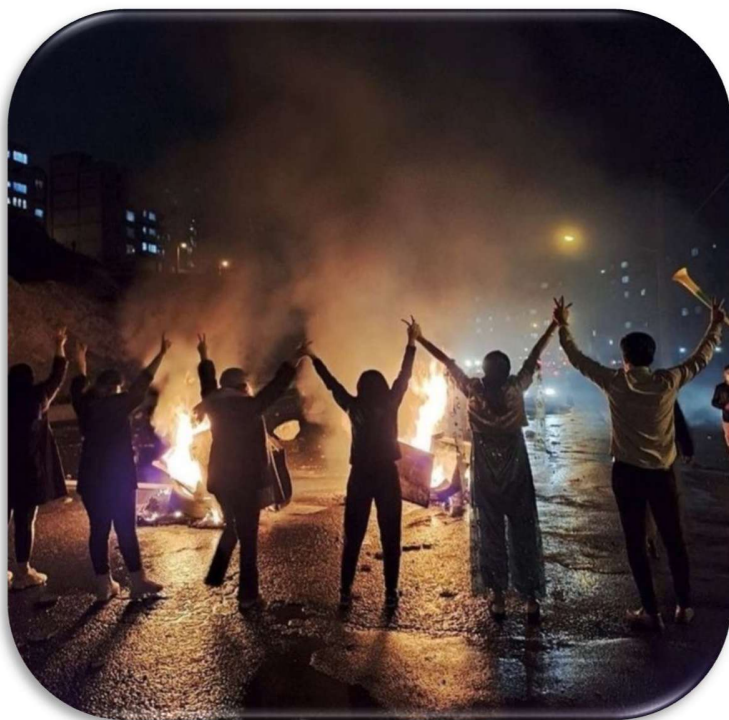
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We Need Each Other: Mental Health in a Society Shaped by Years of Crisis

By Mahshad Fadaei

We sometimes think of mental health as an entirely individual matter, something each of us must manage on our own: worrying less, thinking more positively, exercising, practicing mindfulness, or seeking help from a psychologist when necessary. But can a person's mental health really be separated from the society in which they live? For a society that has spent years confronting war, violence, the killing and execution of young people, migration, loss, and different forms of insecurity, the answer cannot be purely individual. What happens to a society will, sooner or later, find its way into the psychological experiences of the people who live within it.



Living through a crisis does not necessarily mean that everyone will develop a mental disorder. Nevertheless, fear, sadness, anger, sleep disturbances, exhaustion, hopelessness, and irritability are understandable responses to prolonged and intense psychological pressure. The World Health Organization also emphasizes that almost everyone exposed to serious crises will experience some form of psychological distress, although only a proportion of people will go on to develop a persistent mental disorder. In such circumstances, the boundary between "my problem" and "the circumstances in which I live" is not always as clear as we might think.

One of the most important consequences of prolonged crises is psychological exhaustion. The human mind is designed to respond to

danger, but constant exposure to violent news, worry about loved ones, and a persistent sense of insecurity can prolong this state of alertness. Under such circumstances, a person may find themselves following the news more than before, experiencing disrupted sleep, becoming more easily angered, or, conversely, feeling indifferent or emotionally numb toward events that once affected them deeply. These reactions are not necessarily signs of weakness or moral indifference; sometimes, they are part of the mind's attempt to cope with overwhelming levels of pressure.

Alongside psychological distress, there is another issue: grief. Over the years, our society has experienced countless losses, yet many of these losses have not been accompanied by a safe and meaningful opportunity for collective mourning. Grief does not always appear as visible sadness or tears. Sometimes it manifests as anger, silence, withdrawal, guilt, insomnia, or even an inability to experience pleasure in life. Mental health, therefore, is not simply about "staying strong." Sometimes being psychologically healthy means allowing ourselves to grieve what we have lost, to speak about it, and at the same time to allow life to continue.

This is where the role of community becomes important. Mental health is not built solely in the therapist's office; it is also shaped through human relationships, families, friendships, and social spaces. In its responses to mental health needs during crises, the World Health Organization recommends strengthening social support and community-based self-help alongside professional services. Research conducted in communities affected by war also suggests that community-based psychosocial interventions can play a role in reducing certain symptoms and improving well-being and social functioning.

Perhaps, then, one of the things we can do today is simple but important: learn again how to be there for one another. Ask each other, "How are you, really?" and take the time to listen to the answer, without immediately offering advice or minimizing another person's pain. Create spaces for conversation, art, music, sport, and collective activities. Manage our exposure to the news in a way that does not allow it to completely take over our daily lives. And, most importantly, when psychological distress becomes severe or persistent and begins to interfere with everyday functioning, seek professional help. Support from friends and the community is valuable, but it cannot replace professional treatment when such treatment is needed.

Perhaps, ultimately, caring for mental health in a society that has lived through years of loss and crisis is not only about caring for the "self." We need one another to continue living, to grieve, to hold on to hope, and even to continue working toward justice. The mental health of a society becomes stronger when people do not feel alone in their suffering, when they know that they are heard, seen, and not alone. Perhaps one of the most important forms of resistance to exhaustion and indifference is precisely this: staying together and refusing to let suffering separate us from one another.



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The Killing and Intimidation Machine: An Instrumental Analysis of the Death Penalty in the Islamic Republic

By Asal Anderson, Human Rights Department

The rapid and staggering rise in executions in Iran is less an indication of a legal or judicial process than the starkest display of state repression by a regime whose survival is fundamentally built on instilling fear and controlling society. Gallows across Iran are not instruments of justice; they are the regime's primary tool for drawing red lines and silencing every dissenting voice.



Execution as a Political Weapon: The Islamic Republic's judiciary criminalizes civil protests and political dissent by invoking fabricated and religiously based charges such as *Moharebeh* (waging war against God) and *Efsad fel-Arz* (corruption on earth), sacrificing the lives of protesters to preserve the foundations of its power.

Feeding the Death Chambers: Systematic torture, forced confessions obtained under pressure, and show trials lasting only a few minutes, without the presence of a lawyer of the defendant's own choosing, are merely parts of a systematic process that takes citizens from detention centers to the gallows.

Structural Discrimination and Targeting the Dispossessed: The disproportionate rate of executions in marginalized regions and among disadvantaged social classes demonstrates the deliberate use of society's most vulnerable segments to regulate and intensify the level of fear across the country.

Projecting Power at the Height of a Legitimacy Crisis: Whenever economic and political challenges, along with nationwide unrest, shake the foundations of the regime, the authorities respond by accelerating executions in an attempt to create the illusion that they remain in control of the situation.

Executions cannot extinguish the Iranian people's desire for freedom and justice. A regime that has built its survival on prisons, torture, and the noose fears nothing more than the united voice of its people. Today, it is the duty of all of us to be the voice of those sentenced to death and to ensure that their names and fates are not forgotten amid the daily flow of news.

No to executions. No to a regime of fear and repression. Yes to freedom, justice, and the right to life.