

To:

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran HE Mohammad Javad Zarif
Khonsari

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Netherlands HE Mr. Alireza Kazemi
Abadi

First Counsellor of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Netherlands Mr.
Saeid Asadi

Ambassador of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Iran, HE Jaap Werner

Open letter

Bussum, the Netherlands, May 10th, 2021

Subject: A World in Which All Children Can Play – Palestine, Yemen and Iran

Your Excellencies,

For the last four years, Peace SOS has been visiting diplomats of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the Netherlands. Despite the fact that we may hold different views, we are grateful that we can exchange our points of view.

Our mission is to stimulate peace via peaceful means, to stimulate human rights and to combat poverty. We hope to see soon: A World in Which All Children Can Play. In order to achieve this, adults should live in harmony with each other. At Peace SOS, we believe it is important to respect all people of all religions or people of no faith, of all races, of all sexes and of all sexual orientations. The freedom of an individual to express themselves ceases where it hurts other people.

Recently, Mr. Asadi of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Netherlands sent us a document entitled *20 Facts on the Occupation of Palestine*. At Peace SOS, we also hope to see peace in this region. It is very saddening to read about the suffering of all the people in this region, in Gaza, the West Bank and, as we are seeing now, in Jerusalem.

According to Save the Children, since mid-April, over 200 Palestinians – including at least 11 children – and a dozen Israeli settlers have been injured in clashes. Like Save the Children, Peace SOS is concerned about reports of children being detained, injured, and exposed to tear gas in these violent conflicts.

In 2017, the chair of Peace SOS traveled to Tel Aviv to attend public peace negotiations organized by Minds of Peace. The public peace negotiations were attended by people from Israel and people from the West Bank. Deep in their hearts, they are all longing for peace. Subsequently, the founder of Peace SOS traveled to Bethlehem on the West Bank where the holes caused by bombing were still visible, she saw the wall and visited a refugee camp. A refugee told her that because of the situation and because there is nothing to do in the camp, the youth sometimes throw stones. That is why it is important that there are activities for the youth and jobs for the adults. Furthermore, she was given a tour by a Palestinian peace activist at the Church of Nativity. She finds it remarkable that Jesus plays such a big role in several religions. Religions which are all longing for world peace. After the visit in Bethlehem, she traveled to Jerusalem where she also met someone who is active in striving for peace. At Peace SOS, we hope that there will soon be peace in the whole Middle East and all over the whole world. That is why we give a voice to local people speaking out for peace – such as Women Wage Peace – which bring Israeli and Palestinian Women together.

In another letter sent to you, we address the importance of peace in Yemen, since this is the biggest humanitarian disaster in the world. As is stated in that letter, we urge all parties to respect life. We hope that Iran will encourage Ansar Allah to let humanitarian aid pass through to everyone in need, to reach a new peace agreement under auspices of the United Nations, to halt their attack on Marib, to release all child soldiers from their ranks, and to raise awareness of the bad condition of the Al-Safer oil tanker which is located close to Hodeidah port. Approximately 200 million liters of oil can leak into the Red Sea. It is important that Yemeni women and peace organizations are included in the talks. Local people know their situation best. At Peace SOS, we also do our best to get in contact with the other parties involved in the war in Yemen.

Furthermore, we hope for a world free of nuclear weapons. Peace SOS supports the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Therefore, we also hope the nuclear deal, the JCPOA, will be revived and that sanctions are lifted for the Iranian people.

Hopefully, you will also allow us to share our thoughts on the domestic situation in Iran. We hope that Iran will abolish the death penalty. At Peace SOS, we find it important that life is respected, that is why we advocate a worldwide ban on the death penalty.

We hope that prisoners who didn't use violence will be released, such as the scientist Dr. Djalali, Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, Nasrin Sotoudeh and all other human rights activists. In addition, we hope that all the prisoners in Iran – and everywhere around the world – will be treated well and with respect. They all need food, medical care and should not be subjected to torture. A person's integrity should not be violated by means of torture. In addition, the evidence 'gained' from torture or mental pressure can lead to false claims.

We are also concerned about the situation of prisoners in Qarchak, approximately 30 km from Tehran. The situation there is inhumane, the prison hosts a large number of inmates despite its small size. Inmates are subjected to all forms of torture, including rape. The prison's management insults and beats up prisoners, thus causing and worsening psychological problems. In addition, we have heard that this building was not built for humans at all but for animals. We hope that this prison is closed soon and that better circumstances will be created for these inmates and all the inmates in Iran. As we mentioned, we hope that all prisoners will get proper food, medical care and no longer be subjected to torture, whether physical or psychological.

Thank you so much for your attention. If there is anything we can do to help you to contribute to peace via peaceful means or to improve human rights or end hunger, please let us know.

We hope to see soon: A World in Which All Children Can Play.

Peace and all the best,

May-May Meijer and Loris Cornelissen