

## **PRESS RELEASE / OPEN LETTER**

**To His Excellency, Minister Berendsen**

**Minister of Foreign Affairs**

Your Excellency,

For more than a month and a half, we have held a daily sit-in demonstration in front of your ministry. During this period, we have sought to draw attention to the situation of the people in Iran through peaceful and democratic means. Throughout these actions, we have submitted several petitions and sent numerous letters to members of the government and relevant policymakers.

We are now seeing that these efforts are beginning to bear their first fruits. An important recent development is the decision by your ministry to temporarily relocate the operations of the Dutch embassy in Tehran to Azerbaijan due to the increasing security risks for its staff. The remaining diplomats have now safely departed and are continuing their work from Baku.

The fact that this decision has been taken demonstrates that the Netherlands recognizes the seriousness of the situation in Iran and is willing to take responsibility when circumstances require it. This gives us hope, and for that we would like to express our appreciation.

At the same time, we must acknowledge that we are not there yet.

The situation for the people of Iran remains extremely grave. Many live under a regime that suppresses fundamental freedoms, denies democratic rights, and systematically violates human rights. For them, daily life means living under threat, repression, and uncertainty.

For that very reason, we believe this is the moment to move forward together and take the next steps.

In this light, we believe that a logical next step would be the closure of the embassy of the Islamic Republic in the Netherlands. This would not only serve as a powerful political signal of solidarity with the Iranian people in their struggle for freedom but would also be a necessary measure in the interest of the national security of the Netherlands.

In recent times, serious concerns have arisen regarding activities linked to the Iranian regime in European countries, including incidents and thwarted attack attempts. Furthermore, recent threats issued by the regime have explicitly suggested that so-called sleeper networks and sympathizers in Europe could be activated. In such a context, it is justified and necessary for the Netherlands to protect its national security and democratic rule of law with the utmost vigilance.

The Netherlands has an international reputation as a defender of democracy, freedom, and human rights. In the dark times in which the Iranian people live under a murderous regime, the Netherlands can be a light that offers hope and direction. We are convinced that our country—together with international partners—can and must play a stronger role in supporting the voice of the Iranian people.

With full respect for the responsibilities of your office, we therefore make an urgent appeal to you, Your Excellency, to continue to seriously consider the recommendations that we and many other concerned citizens have put forward, and to now take the necessary next steps.

This is the moment to continue and strengthen the movement that has been set in motion. By acting clearly and with principle, the Netherlands can contribute to hope, justice, and freedom for people who today have little access to these values.

We will continue our efforts—peacefully, resolutely, and in the spirit of democracy—until the values for which the Netherlands stands are defended where they are needed most.

We hope that you, Your Excellency, will carry this responsibility together with us and move forward decisively.

With the highest respect,

Peace and Justice Foundation

10 March 2026