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No to war, no to the theocracy! Oppose homophobia! Mehdi Kazemi must stay!

Hands off the People of Iran (Hopi) fully supports Iranian gay asylum applicant Mehdi Kazemi and his struggle to remain within the UK.

Mehdi's case highlights the homophobic record of the Iranian theocratic regime against lesbian, bisexual, gay and transgender (LGBT) people. Mehdi must be granted immediate asylum in the UK. In Iran, homosexuality is treated as a crime and is punished by death. It is estimated that there have been around 4,000 executions of gays and lesbians since the victory of the Islamist counterrevolution in 1979.

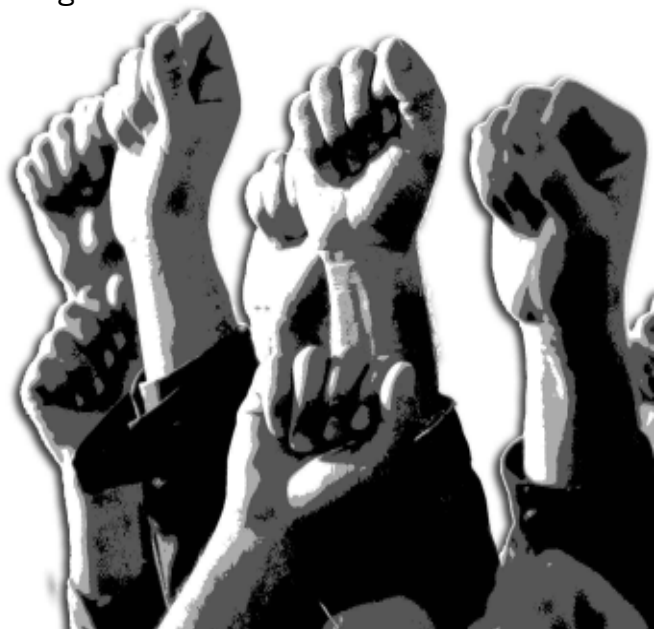
This case also highlights the hypocrisy of the British ruling class. Jacqui Smith might try to pass herself off as the voice of reason by granting Mehdi a review of his case, but the British state continues to back regimes like Jamaica, Saudi Arabia and Uganda that repress homosexuals and sends other asylum-seekers back to face poverty, imprisonment and worse. The government's change of policy in this case is the result of a successful LGBT campaign.

But it is also true that sections of the establishment and the media have seized upon this case to win support for their threats against Iran. Only a year ago the British media couldn't care less about cases such as that of the persecuted Iranian lesbian, Pegah Emambakhsh. This propaganda effort is inexorably linked to the war drive as the sanctions that are currently strangling Iran.

And it is seeking to influence sections of the

workers' movement. For example, the March 6 'global day of action' in support of arrested Iranian trade unionists Salehi and Ossanlou made no mention of the fact that Iranian workers are suffering under the burden of UN sanctions, let alone are faced with the prospect of being bombed! (You can find our full leaflet on our website.)

In contrast, Hopi calls for solidarity that is independent of both imperialism and the Iranian theocracy. We reject the hypocritical talk of democracy and freedom amongst our rulers, as they step up their war threats. Neither will we act as apologists for the reactionary Iranian regime and its brutal counterrevolutionary agenda. Principled opposition to war and sanctions against the people of Iran necessitates telling the truth.



That is why Hopi condemns those within the anti-war movement who are using Kazemi's case to attack LGBT activists in Iran and Britain. Respect MP George Galloway said on *The Wright stuff* (Channel 5) on March 13 and 14: "All of the papers seem to imply that you get executed in Iran for being gay: that's not true." He then stated that Kazemi's boyfriend was hung "not for being gay, but for committing sex crimes against young men ... What I can't accept is the propaganda that says you get hanged for being gay in Iran: you don't."

This apologia led him to suggest that Hopi steering committee member Peter Tatchell represents the "the pink end of the khaki war machine - that's what Peter Tatchell has become, by attacking Iran in the way that he does". He repeated those charges at the March 15 anti-war demonstration in London.

Hopi utterly condemns this appalling homopho-

bia and rejects the implication that if one supports the LGBT community in Iran, one also supports imperialism.

This is nonsense, as anybody who has taken the time to even glance at the social dynamics within Iranian society will soon realise. Many of the militant movements in Iran - such as those of the workers, women and students - fight against war *and* the theocratic regime. Their struggles demonstrate that there is another way forward for Iran and the Middle East: real democratic change comes from below - and can never be delivered from above through imperialist surgical strikes, sanctions, occupations or faux-democratic movements.

Hopi calls on members of the Stop the War Coalition and the Respect party to condemn Galloway's homophobic and insulting remarks and fight to reverse the decision of the STWC officers' group to ban Hopi from affiliating.

Our campaign demands:

- **No to imperialist war! For the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of US/UK troops from Iraq and all the Gulf region!**
- **No to any imperialist intervention. The immediate and unconditional end to sanctions on Iran!**
- **No to the theocratic regime!**
- **Opposition to Israeli expansionism and aggression!**
- **Support to all working class and progressive struggles in Iran against poverty and repression!**
- **Support for socialism, democracy and workers' control in Iran!**
- **For a nuclear-free Middle East as a step towards a nuclear-free world!**

If you oppose the war plans of the imperialists - but support the struggle for an Iran free of the oppressive clerical regime - join us! Individuals: £10 or £5 unwaged (organisations see website).

Name _____

Organisation/union _____

Mobile phone _____

Address _____

Email _____

Please return to address above

Supporters include:

- **Diane Abbott** Labour MP
- **John McDonnell** Labour MP
- **Peter Tatchell** OutRage
- **Caroline Lucas** Green Party MEP
- **Tommy Sheridan** Solidarity
- **Ken Loach** filmmaker
- **John Pilger** journalist
- **Naomi Klein** writer and activist
- **Dr Hilary Rose** scientist
- **Haifa Zangana** writer
- Cllr **Rania Khan** Respect
- Cllr **Lufta Begum** Respect
- Iranian Workers Bulletin
- Workers Left Unity - Iran
- Communist Party of Great Britain
- Green Party
- Organization of Revolutionary Workers of Iran (Rahe Kargar)
- Communist Students