

NARRATIVE REVIEW / PHYSICIAN'S ETHICAL COMMENTARY

Humanity Before Geopolitics

Iranian Lives Are Not Bargaining Chips

Human rights, medical solidarity and the Lion and Sun movement across political divides

EVIDENCE / IMPARTIAL CARE / DEMOCRATIC ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr Peyman Bakhshayesh

MD, PhD, MBA

Consultant Trauma and Orthopaedic Surgeon

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Secular Democratic Movement and National Consolidation

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A referenced argument for protecting Iranian lives across political divisions, with a selected chronology, evidence tables and a practical humanitarian compact.

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Independent narrative review and physician's ethical commentary. The author's political position is declared. No original patient dataset or journal peer review is claimed. Evidence reviewed to 12 October 2026.

Abstract

Background: The repression of protests that began in Iran on 28 December 2025, including the mass killings of 8-9 January 2026, has created an urgent human-rights and healthcare burden. International discussion frequently combines separate questions: protecting victims, endorsing an opposition leader, supporting foreign governments and approving military action. This conflation can obstruct cooperation.

Objective: To examine whether the humanitarian purpose of the Lion and Sun movement can support cooperation across political divisions, while preserving impartial medical care, democratic choice and consistent protection of civilians.

Design: A critical narrative review and physician's ethical commentary. The analysis uses dated human-rights investigations, United Nations findings, official political statements, medical ethics and relevant writings by the author. It distinguishes documented findings, attributed positions, interpretations and proposed actions. Evidence was reviewed to 12 October 2026; no original patient dataset or survey of government motives was collected.

Findings: The reviewed evidence supports an urgent need to protect injured people, medical personnel, prisoners and families. It also shows that solidarity is broader than a single political camp: British, European, bipartisan American and German liberal institutions have expressed support for Iranian rights. Human-rights cooperation can therefore proceed without agreement on every question of leadership or foreign policy. A movement's humanitarian credibility depends on its conduct, including protection of dissenters and acceptance of electoral choice.

Conclusion: Iranian suffering should be addressed through a shared minimum programme of impartial care, protection from execution and torture, documentation, lawful assistance and democratic accountability. I support Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi's transitional role because I support these goals. Assistance to a patient must remain independent of that patient's political allegiance, and the same civilian-protection standards must apply to Iranian authorities and foreign powers.

Keywords: Iran; human rights; medical neutrality; Lion and Sun movement; Reza Pahlavi; political polarisation; executions; democratic transition; humanitarian assistance.

1. A physician's starting point

As a trauma and orthopaedic surgeon, I understand suffering through its effects on a person's body and life: an injured limb, an infection, an inability to walk, the loss of work, a family struggling to pay for care. A political argument does not close a wound. A declaration of solidarity does not provide rehabilitation. The first practical question is how a person can reach safe, competent treatment and continue recovering afterwards.

This professional responsibility shapes my political position. I support a secular democratic Iran, the rule of law, equality before the law and the Iranian people's freedom to choose their future. I support Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi as a leader during transition. These commitments should make the defence of human beings more demanding and more consistent. They cannot make treatment conditional on a patient's agreement with me.

The World Medical Association's Declaration of Geneva places patients' welfare, autonomy and dignity at the centre of the physician's responsibilities. It explicitly excludes political affiliation and other characteristics from interfering with the physician's duty. That principle also protects

the credibility of physicians who speak publicly about political violence. Our advocacy should help people obtain care and preserve their rights. [1]

The people injured during Iran's January protests have histories, hopes and obligations that extend beyond a geopolitical debate. Some seek a monarchy, some a republic, and some have not made a constitutional choice. Many families need an immediate answer about a detained relative, treatment for an injury or protection from a threatened execution. Their entitlement to concern does not depend on whether an overseas observer recognises their preferred leader.

My central argument is therefore both humanitarian and political. Iranians should be able to pursue democratic change, and people suffering during that struggle should receive assistance according to need. I ask international partners to distinguish the protection of human beings from endorsement of an entire political programme. This distinction can create cooperation where comprehensive agreement remains impossible.

A person's right to treatment and protection survives every disagreement about leadership, alliances and the future constitution.

2. Method, evidence and the limits of this argument

This article is an independently published narrative review and ethical policy argument. It is not an original clinical study, a systematic review or a judicial determination. Sources were selected for relevance, identifiable authorship, clear dates and direct support for the claims made. Priority was given to investigating organisations, official documents, medical ethics and first-hand statements of political positions.

The author's homepage and relevant sections of eight accessible Drive documents were consulted to establish continuity with earlier arguments about human-rights pragmatism, Britain, national reconciliation, the medical movement and strategic autonomy. These writings inform my interpretation and proposals. They do not independently establish casualty totals, foreign governments' motives or public support for an opposition leader. The wider Drive archive was searched for relevant material; this was a purposive selection, not an exhaustive review of every file. [2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7]

The evidence is assessed at four levels. An investigation supports the findings it actually documents. An official statement establishes what its issuer said. A political interpretation connects observations through an argument that can be challenged. A proposed programme sets out what I believe ought to be done. Moving from one level to another requires explanation, rather than an assumption that every statement is an established fact.

Table 1. How claims are treated

Evidence or claim	Appropriate use	Important limit
Investigations by the UN mission, Amnesty, IHRNGO and Human Rights Watch	Establish dated findings about repression, injuries, executions and barriers to care	Access restrictions and incomplete records prevent a complete national account
Government, parliamentary and foundation statements	Record public commitments, policy actions or the terms of an award	A statement is not proof of implementation, private motive or public consensus
Reza Pahlavi's own statements	Describe his declared principles and proposed role	A declaration does not itself confer an electoral mandate
The author's earlier writings and professional standpoint	Explain this article's values, reasoning and proposals	They are not independent verification of external events
Interpretations of ideological selectivity	Identify a possible obstacle to cooperation and propose ways to examine it	This review does not measure the motives of entire parties or societies

Some dates in public discussion require precision. The Green Movement followed the disputed presidential election of June 2009. The nationwide protests spanning December 2017 and January 2018 fall in Dey 1396, while Aban 1398 corresponds to November 2019. Correct chronology helps identify continuity without treating different protest waves as identical events.

The principal uncertainty concerns completeness, rather than whether serious abuses occurred. Communications restrictions, fear of retaliation and restricted access complicate documentation. Source-specific counts are therefore retained with their reporting periods. Figures from different organisations are not averaged, and executions are not added to protest deaths to manufacture a single combined total.

There is also an interpretative limitation. The evidence does not establish that all European governments, British officials, American Democrats or people on the left oppose Iranian freedom because they fear a political victory for Washington or Israel. Specific conduct can be criticised. A collective motive cannot be inferred from disagreement about military action or recognition of Reza Pahlavi.

3. Forty-seven years of repression: continuity without historical simplification

Iran's contemporary experience contains repeated episodes in which political dissent, social protest and demands for accountability were met with coercion. The pattern did not begin in January 2026. Early revolutionary executions of senior imperial officials, the mass repression of political opponents in the 1980s, and subsequent crackdowns provide a history through which many Iranians understand present danger.

Amnesty International's early account of law and human rights under the Islamic Republic records the executions of senior officials in February 1979 and examines the procedures of

revolutionary courts. Its contemporaneous reporting in 1988 described a new wave of political executions against a background of thousands of executions earlier in that decade. Later investigations documented the mass killing and disappearance of political prisoners associated with the People's Mojahedin and leftist organisations. [8, 9, 10]

The principle connecting these episodes is the protection of people from arbitrary state violence. It applies to an official of the former monarchy, a socialist, an Islamist dissident and a present-day constitutional monarchist. Defending a person's right to a fair trial does not require endorsing that person's political organisation or historical conduct. Allegations of crime require investigation and adjudication; they do not cancel the right to humane treatment.

Table 2. A selected chronology of repression

Period	Documented episode	Relevance to the present argument
February 1979	Early executions of senior imperial officials and revolutionary-court proceedings [10]	Due process must protect defeated political opponents
Early 1980s and 1988	Large-scale political executions; the 1988 prison massacres and concealed fates [8, 9]	Victims' rights extend across ideological divisions
May-June 1992	Mashhad unrest associated with deprived neighbourhoods and demolition; subsequent executions [11]	Poverty and social protest cannot erase legal protection
July 1999	Attacks on student demonstrators and dormitories, followed by repression [12]	Universities and civic expression require protection
June 2009 onwards	Repression following the disputed presidential election and the Green Movement [13]	Electoral participation and peaceful assembly are linked rights
December 2017-January 2018 and later in 2018	Nationwide protests and wider repression of dissent [14, 15]	Economic grievances and civil rights overlap
November 2019 / Aban 1398	Lethal suppression after fuel-price protests; Amnesty later documented 321 deaths [16]	Verified minimums can increase as documentation develops
September 2022 onwards	Suppression of Woman, Life, Freedom following Jina Mahsa Amini's death [17]	Women's rights, civic liberty and accountability are inseparable
December 2025-January 2026	Nationwide mobilisation and mass killings, particularly on 8-9 January [18, 19, 20, 21]	Immediate care and protection must accompany political attention

This chronology is selective. It is not a complete history of repression, nor a claim that every participant, grievance or state's response was the same. Different communities have suffered in different ways. Recognising Kurdish, Baluch, religious-minority, women's and labour

experiences helps prevent a national narrative from making some victims less visible than others.

Amnesty's September 2026 investigation into the 2022 uprising identified a state apparatus implicated in serious abuses and called for investigations into 87 officials. Its relevance here lies in the relationship between unresolved accountability and later repression. The persistence of impunity creates a serious concern about repetition; this review does not establish a single causal explanation for every subsequent act. [17]

I regard the history as an argument for institutional change. A humane transition needs independent courts, protected expression, equal citizenship and constraints on coercive power. Reversing the identity of the people in authority while retaining arbitrary punishment would reproduce the injury. A constitutional future must protect the rights of political losers as well as winners.

4. January 2026: mass killings, executions and the discipline of counting

The protests began on 28 December 2025 and developed from economic grievances into demands for political change. The UN Fact-Finding Mission identified 8-9 January as the deadliest period of repression and found serious violations, many amounting to crimes against humanity. Its September report applies an investigative standard of reasonable grounds to believe. It is not a criminal conviction of any named individual. [18]

Iran Human Rights' September report documented 4,219 deaths in the January protests, including at least 3,356 on 8-9 January. Its investigation describes patterns involving military-grade weapons, lethal fire and people shot while fleeing. These are documented minimums within that report's scope, not a definitive census of all deaths. [19]

Amnesty and Human Rights Watch independently described widespread unlawful killings and the use of lethal force. Their investigations support the urgency of protection while showing why precise attribution matters. A reference to military-grade rifles must remain linked to the evidence for particular incidents and weapons; the appearance of a weapon does not by itself establish every shooter's identity, orders or chain of command. [20, 21]

Table 3. Selected figures and what they mean

Measure and reporting period	Dated source	Reported finding	Interpretation
Deaths documented in the January 2026 protests	IHRNGO, 17 September 2026 [19]	4,219	Documented minimum; the report includes different levels of identity corroboration
Deaths on 8-9 January 2026	IHRNGO, 17 September 2026 [19]	At least 3,356	The two-day concentration; not the total for the entire protest period
Executions during calendar year 2025	Amnesty International, 18 May 2026 [22]	At least 2,159	Executions across criminal categories; not all protest-related

Measure and reporting period	Dated source	Reported finding	Interpretation
Executions during calendar year 2025	IHRNGO/ECPM annual report, April 2026 [23]	At least 1,639	A different published documented minimum; not a number to average with Amnesty's
Protest-related executions from March to 31 August 2026	UN mission's September findings [18]	At least 29 men	A specified reporting period, not an up-to-date October total

The difference between the two published annual execution counts should remain visible. Their publication dates and reporting processes differ. This article does not claim to have reconciled their underlying case lists, and cannot identify the exact cause of the discrepancy from aggregate figures. Both describe an exceptionally grave situation. Amnesty's figure substantiates the statement that more than 2,000 executions were recorded in Iran in 2025, with that source and year specified. [22, 23]

Executions following a court process, extrajudicial killings in streets, deaths in custody and people at risk of a death sentence require different documentation. Calling every death an execution can obscure the mechanism of harm and the legal response needed. Similarly, the year 2025 must not be presented as a rolling count covering all of 2026.

The execution figures in this article are attributed to Amnesty, IHRNGO/ECPM or the UN human-rights mission. They are not attributed to UNHCR. Distinguishing the refugee agency from the UN's human-rights mechanisms protects the reliability of the account and helps readers find the actual evidence.

Amnesty's July 2026 reporting described continuing arbitrary executions and death sentences connected to the protests, including profoundly unfair proceedings. The immediate objective is to prevent further irreversible harm: secure access to lawyers, challenge torture-tainted proceedings, protect families and demand a halt to executions. My position also supports abolition of the death penalty. This is an explicit ethical and political commitment, extending to opponents of my own movement. [24, 6]

Counting remains essential, but it should serve protection. An incomplete death registry is a reason to continue investigation, not a reason to postpone assistance. Conversely, urgency cannot excuse invented numbers. A credible public appeal can convey the enormity of documented suffering while being precise about uncertainty.

5. When care becomes dangerous

The injury burden extends beyond people who died. Survivors may face damaged limbs, impaired vision, repeated treatment, loss of earnings and psychological distress. The public record cannot tell an overseas medical organisation how many people need a particular operation. That requires confidential clinical assessment, investigation where appropriate and a feasible plan for continuing care.

The UN mission documented interference with access to healthcare and threats, arrests and detention of staff providing treatment. IHRNGO reported at least 35 doctors, nurses and other medical personnel arrested for treating protesters by 3 February. These findings establish

persecution of medical solidarity. They do not provide a verified nationwide count of clinicians killed specifically because they treated wounded people. [18, 19]

Human Rights Watch described overwhelmed medical facilities and barriers to treatment during the crackdown. Amnesty reported injured people being pursued and intimidation around healthcare. A hospital becomes less effective when a person fears that seeking help will expose them or their relatives to detention. Fear can also obstruct follow-up, leaving a person alive but unable to recover safely. [20, 21]

From a clinical perspective, the treatment episode must include more than the immediate intervention. A patient may need specialist review, rehabilitation, appropriately fitted mobility aids, wound surveillance, psychological support and assistance with the costs of reaching care. The WHO's emergency medical team work treats rehabilitation as part of emergency response and recovery. Its guidance supports planning across that pathway; it does not validate a specific Iran-wide estimate of disability. [25]

Table 4. A patient-centred response to the injury burden

Domain	Need to assess	Organisational responsibility
Limb and soft-tissue injuries	Diagnosis, function, pain, complications and specialist requirements	Fund a verified care plan and continuity rather than an isolated procedure
Visual and other disabling injuries	Appropriate specialist assessment and functional support	Include disciplines beyond orthopaedics and avoid a single-specialty response
Rehabilitation and mobility	Individual goals, therapy, fitting of aids, maintenance and follow-up	Provide suitable support with instructions and continuing access
Psychological distress and bereavement	Safe assessment, consent and culturally appropriate support	Offer qualified services without coercing testimony or publicity
Access, poverty and security	Travel costs, lost income, safe communication and risk of exposure	Treat practical barriers as part of the care pathway

These are proposed assessment domains, not instructions for treating an individual injury. Clinical decisions belong to competent treating professionals who can examine the patient and work within local conditions. Overseas supporters should strengthen their capacity without requiring unsafe communication or public association with a political organisation.

Privacy is a clinical and human-rights issue. A donation appeal should not expose a patient's identity, location or treating clinician merely to demonstrate activity. Consent to treatment must be distinguished from consent to fundraising, testimony or evidence preservation. Refusing publicity should have no adverse effect on eligibility for care. The Istanbul Protocol provides a professional framework for documenting alleged torture; participation in forensic documentation must remain distinct from receiving assistance. [26]

In my earlier humanitarian strategy for Iranian Patriotic Doctors, I proposed controlled verification, accountable funding and a care pathway extending into rehabilitation. Those proposals remain relevant here. Trust in an individual doctor is valuable, but programmes also need records, independent review, transparent responsibilities and a way to investigate concerns. Clinical courage deserves organisational protection. [5]

6. Human rights, humanitarian purpose and political change

Some international disagreements arise because the same words carry different meanings. Human rights describe entitlements and limits on power. Humanitarian action focuses on relief and protection. A democratic movement seeks a change in the political order. These activities can reinforce one another, but they have distinct responsibilities and organisational forms.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights protects life, liberty, fair trial, conscience, expression, assembly and equality. It also addresses participation in public affairs. The right to resist arbitrary power through civic activity is therefore not rendered illegitimate by its political content. Peaceful demands for a different government concern human rights as well as political institutions. [27]

In its formal operational sense, humanitarian action is governed by humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. The last two principles help aid organisations protect access, confidence and decisions from the interests of parties to a conflict. A politically committed medical network should not describe itself as neutral in every political respect simply because its members provide care. It can nevertheless provide impartial, professionally independent care with enforceable safeguards. [28]

Table 5. Definitions that make cooperation possible

Concept	Meaning in this article	Practical consequence
Human rights	Entitlements to dignity, protection and participation that do not depend on allegiance	Defend a person's rights while disagreeing with their politics
Humanitarian purpose	Reducing suffering and protecting people exposed to serious harm	Judge assistance by patients' needs and the reliability of delivery
Humanitarian neutrality	An operational commitment not to take sides in hostilities or political controversies	Respect the mandates of organisations that cannot endorse a transition leader
Clinical independence	Professional judgement protected from political, financial or security pressure	Keep treatment decisions separate from campaign demands
Democratic transition	A change in institutions whose legitimacy ultimately depends on free choice and protected rights	Require accountable procedures and protection for political dissent
International humanitarian law	Rules applicable in armed conflict, distinct from ordinary protest policing	Do not classify a January incident as a war crime merely because a military-style weapon was used

I describe the Lion and Sun movement as humanitarian in its moral purpose because I believe its democratic aspiration is directed towards ending coercion and restoring the dignity of people living under it. That is a defended interpretation of its aims, not a claim that every participant or action automatically meets humanitarian standards. The description must be tested against conduct.

Five tests follow. Does the movement protect people who reject its preferred constitutional outcome? Does it oppose torture and arbitrary execution by its own supporters? Does it keep clinical assistance independent of loyalty? Does it tolerate lawful criticism and equal citizenship across religious and ethnic differences? Does it accept that political authority must be constrained by accountable institutions and free elections?

A movement that passes these tests can credibly unite political change with humanitarian purpose. Public slogans or external endorsements cannot replace them. If a supporter threatens a republican, a religious believer, a leftist or a minority community, that conduct damages the very claim the movement advances. The same ethical standards should govern how we address supporters and opponents of the Islamic Republic.

For secular democracy, protection of conscience is especially important. Opposition to clerical coercion should secure freedom for Muslims alongside Baha'is, Christians, Jews, other believers and people without religious faith. A national movement gains moral strength when equal citizenship governs its treatment of difference. My support for constitutional monarchy belongs within this wider commitment to democratic choice. [29, 2, 3]

7. Reza Pahlavi, the Freedom Prize and the people's mandate

Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi's declared principles provide a basis for the political position I defend: territorial integrity, individual freedom and equality, secular democracy, and the people's right to determine their form of government. His September 2026 Toronto address invited participation across the left, right, republican and monarchist spectrum on the basis of these principles. These are statements of intended direction, which require implementation and public accountability. [29]

I see his potential transitional contribution in coordination, international access and a public commitment to the people's choice. In my judgement, this places him within a broad constitutional project capable of attracting the political centre. Political centrism here describes a proposed practice of pluralism, institutional restraint and cooperation. It is not a statistically established position for the entire movement or a guarantee about future conduct.

The Friedrich Naumann Foundation announced on 14 September that its Freedom Prize 2026 will be awarded to the Iranian people on 7 November at St Paul's Church in Frankfurt. Reza Pahlavi is to receive it in trust on their behalf until it can be presented to freely elected representatives. The announced laudatory speaker is Bijan Djir-Sarai of the liberal Free Democratic Party. [30]

This is important recognition of Iranian civic courage and a significant role for Pahlavi. The prize belongs to the people. It does not create an electoral mandate, settle monarchy versus republic, or establish a universal ranking of human-rights advocates. Its liberal institutional setting also provides a concrete example of solidarity beyond a simple right-wing classification. [30]

The strongest way to honour the award is to connect recognition to protection. A ceremony can increase visibility, but the decisive questions concern the injured person needing care and the prisoner facing an unfair death sentence. An award dedicated to a people should direct attention towards those whose names and experiences remain difficult to document safely.

My support is clear, and its constitutional basis is equally clear. A transition should transfer authority into accountable institutions, preserve the freedom of opposition and allow a credible choice of government. A leader's success should include acceptance of limits, criticism and an outcome that may differ from supporters' preferences. This is how a political aspiration can serve human rights rather than claim ownership of them. [2, 3]

8. Iran between geopolitical camps

The relationship between Iranian democratic aspirations, Israel, the United States, Britain and Europe is politically sensitive. Foreign governments have security interests, domestic constituencies and different approaches to diplomacy, sanctions and force. Their support for some opposition objectives can be important. It can also affect how other audiences interpret the movement.

In my earlier writing on strategic autonomy, I argued that Iranians should cooperate internationally while retaining responsibility for Iranian constitutional aims and consistent protection of civilians. External relationships should be assessed by their contribution to freedom, security and the public welfare. They must not reduce an Iranian movement to an extension of another state's political identity. [3]

I am concerned that some observers encounter the movement first through its connections with President Trump's administration or Israel. They may then treat support for Iranian victims as though it necessarily endorses every policy of those governments. A similar distortion can occur when supporters excuse an external government's harmful conduct because that government opposes Tehran. Both responses shift attention away from the affected person.

The appropriate distinction is practical. An organisation can defend Iranian protesters and criticise Israeli policy. A politician can oppose a US military decision and support Iranian democratic rights. A donor can pay for verified treatment without endorsing Reza Pahlavi. A supporter of Pahlavi can insist that American, Israeli and Iranian military conduct remain subject to civilian-protection standards.

The September UN mission also found reasonable grounds to believe that US strikes in Minab and Lamerd involved war crimes. Those are investigative findings requiring accountability, not final court judgments. Taking them seriously is compatible with condemning the Islamic Republic's crimes against its own people. Human rights lose consistency when scrutiny changes according to the identity of an ally. [18]

Physicians for Human Rights and Human Rights Activists in Iran warned in April that attacks on civilian energy infrastructure threatened public health in a health system already strained by repression, damage and shortages. The implications extend to hospitals, medicines and the conditions in which people live. Supporting democratic change cannot mean disregarding the survival needs of the people expected to live through it. [31]

Similarly, demands for restraint and negotiation need to be assessed by what they protect and deliver. Opposition to war can be principled. Diplomacy can reduce danger. Neither should leave executions, prisoners or treatment barriers outside the agenda. Negotiations should include measurable civilian protections, independent access, preservation of evidence and a clear challenge to repression.

The political standard I propose is consistent concern for people exposed to coercion. Iranian, Palestinian and Israeli civilians, and other communities affected by regional violence, possess rights independently of a government's strategy. Recognition of one population's suffering

should enlarge our capacity to respond to another population's suffering. It should never become a reason for forgetting Iranians.

9. Beyond the claim that only the right supports Iran

The frustration expressed by many Iranian activists deserves to be heard. They may encounter caution, slow responses or an unwillingness to endorse their preferred transitional leadership. These experiences can create a sense that foreign institutions recognise geopolitical interests more readily than Iranian suffering. My appeal seeks a response that is concrete, timely and measurable.

The public evidence nevertheless requires a more accurate account of political support. On 13 January, British Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper condemned the killing of protesters, rejected the regime's portrayal of them as foreign-instigated terrorists and described diplomatic steps. This establishes an official condemnation. It does not demonstrate that every medical need was met or that the government endorsed Pahlavi as leader. [32]

The European Parliament's 22 January resolution condemned brutal repression, including mass killings, executions, detention and restrictions on communications. The G7 foreign ministers' joint statement likewise called for respect for Iranian rights. These are identifiable institutional positions across several governments, with responsibilities for subsequent implementation. [33, 34]

In the United States, Democrat Jeanne Shaheen and Republican Jim Risch issued a joint statement on 13 January supporting the Iranian people and condemning the reported killing of peaceful protesters. The German liberal foundation's Freedom Prize supplies a further example. Such evidence makes a blanket description of Democrats, Europe or the left as indifferent to Iranian rights untenable. [35, 30]

These statements do not resolve the gap between concern and assistance. They show where cooperation can begin. Instead of treating every disagreement as a refusal to care, activists can ask each institution to identify the practical action it will support, the people responsible and the safeguards needed. Shared condemnation should become an entry point for work.

Table 6. Separate questions, separate decisions

Question	Legitimate scope for disagreement	Shared duty or opportunity
Who should lead transition?	Political actors may support, question or decline to endorse Pahlavi	Protect patients and prisoners regardless of leadership preference
What should the future constitution be?	Monarchists and republicans may advocate different arrangements	Secure free choice, equal citizenship and rights for electoral losers
What should relations with Israel and the US be?	Foreign-policy choices can be debated on their merits	Avoid using those disagreements to deny the reality of Iranian suffering

Question	Legitimate scope for disagreement	Shared duty or opportunity
Is military action justified or effective?	Legal and political evaluation requires evidence of conduct and consequences	Apply civilian-protection standards consistently to every actor
How should aid reach people?	Organisations have different mandates, lawful routes and capacities	Agree on verified need, clinical independence, privacy and accountability

For liberals and the political centre, Iranian demands for equal citizenship and limited government can provide a basis for cooperation. For left-wing organisations, protection from torture, arbitrary execution and repression of workers and women can provide another basis. Religious organisations can cooperate through the protection of life and freedom of conscience. None should be required to abandon its wider political identity to undertake a defined human-rights task.

The corresponding responsibility falls on my own movement. We should avoid demands for blanket loyalty, hostility to entire political camps and the assumption that aid is meaningful only when accompanied by recognition of our leader. A limited agreement can save a life while leaving larger constitutional disagreements open. I developed this approach in my earlier argument for active pragmatism in human rights. [2]

10. Transnational repression and the right to organise safely

The danger to Iranian civic activity is not confined to Iran. In his October 2025 threat update, MI5 Director General Sir Ken McCallum reported that the service had tracked more than twenty potentially lethal Iran-backed plots during the preceding year. This is an attributed security-service assessment, not a statement that twenty completed murders occurred or that every allegation had resulted in a conviction. [36]

Such threats create a public responsibility to protect people who engage in lawful journalism, advocacy and community life. They can also affect the willingness of families and medical personnel to communicate, testify or contribute to organisations abroad. A humanitarian programme must therefore consider the security of those inside Iran and the safety of its overseas participants.

The practical response includes safeguarding, minimising identifiable data, controlled access to records and clear routes for reporting threats to competent authorities. Organisations should preserve information relevant to credible threats and avoid exposing people through public membership lists, patient photographs or loosely managed messaging groups. Fear should not be dismissed as political reluctance.

At the same time, protecting a movement does not authorise harassment of its critics. Lawful disagreement, scepticism about a leader and criticism of foreign policy must remain protected. Allegations of acting for Tehran require evidence and appropriate investigation. Branding every dissenter an agent can endanger people and reproduce the coercive habits the movement opposes.

Medical and civic organisations need confidence on both fronts: protection against intimidation and protection of legitimate dissent within their own networks. An organisation becomes more reliable when it can hear criticism, investigate concerns and correct mistakes without humiliating or threatening people. That reliability also helps international partners cooperate.

11. A minimum humanitarian and human-rights compact

I propose a compact that allows organisations to act together on defined protections while retaining their political independence. Its purpose is to turn solidarity into measurable benefit and make disagreement manageable. The compact should be public in its principles, careful with individual information and explicit about responsibilities.

The following commitments form its minimum content:

1. Support access to treatment, rehabilitation and psychological care according to verified need, without political or religious conditions.
2. Oppose torture, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and unfair execution, including when the victim disagrees with the signatories.
3. Protect the independence and safety of clinicians, lawyers, journalists and families helping victims.
4. Keep consent for treatment separate from consent for testimony, fundraising and public representation.
5. Use accurate, dated evidence and correct errors publicly when correction will not expose people to harm.
6. Apply civilian-protection standards consistently to Iranian authorities, foreign powers and opposition actors.
7. Maintain independent organisational mandates, transparent finances and a lawful route for assistance.
8. Protect equal citizenship, freedom of conscience, peaceful political activity and the right to choose a constitutional future.
9. Pursue individual accountability through competent institutions and fair proceedings; reject collective punishment and revenge.

The compact need not settle the leadership question. A signatory could support Pahlavi, remain undecided or prefer another democratic arrangement. Its specific commitments would remain enforceable. Equally, signing a treatment agreement should not be represented as endorsement of a party, prince, military campaign or governmental claim.

A politically committed network and a formally neutral humanitarian organisation can cooperate if their agreement respects that difference. A partner may supply professional expertise, rehabilitation equipment, verified funding or protection advocacy without adopting the network's political identity. The tasks, decision authority, reporting requirements and permitted public descriptions should be agreed beforehand.

For a UK charity, the Charity Commission's guidance makes the relationship between charitable purposes and political activity important. Campaigning can advance a charity's purposes, but party-political support and a political purpose raise different restrictions. This is

a reason to design governance carefully and respect a prospective partner's mandate. Refusal to fund a political campaign is not evidence of refusal to help a patient. [37]

Sanctions also require precision. A charitable purpose does not automatically authorise a prohibited transaction, and sanctions do not amount to a universal ban on every form of humanitarian assistance concerning Iran. The relevant people, ownership and control, goods, banks, jurisdictions, exceptions and licences must be assessed before action. This article proposes compliant assistance; it offers no method for bypassing restrictions. [38]

Trustworthy structures can include a defined clinical programme with independent oversight, clear separation from campaigning expenditure and confirmation of treatment delivery. The appropriate legal form depends on jurisdiction and circumstances. Donors should receive a proportionate account of verified use while patients and clinicians remain protected. No programme can honestly promise that controls eliminate every risk of diversion. [5]

12. Turning the compact into action

The immediate agenda should focus on decisions that partners can actually deliver. A broad appeal for freedom has moral importance, but a funded care plan, a protected clinician, a legal intervention or a corrected evidence record gives that appeal a practical form. Existing organisations should be approached through their documented mandates and capacities; no grant, referral or endorsement should be assumed.

Table 7. A practical programme for cooperation

Workstream	Concrete output	Safeguard and measure of progress
Clinical access	A limited, verified pathway for assessment, treatment and continuing care	Count completed care episodes and follow-up; publish no identifying patient details
Rehabilitation and disability support	Individually appropriate therapy, aids and support for daily function	Confirm suitability, delivery, fitting and continuing access
Protection of medical personnel	A confidential process for documenting threats and obtaining qualified support	Assess safety before gathering or sharing identifiable information
Prisoner protection	Dated case summaries for qualified legal and human-rights organisations	Separate allegation, sentence, execution risk and verified outcome
Evidence and accountability	A secure, consent-based record linked to competent investigative mechanisms	Preserve provenance and corrections; make no premature finding of individual guilt
Parliamentary and public engagement	A short evidence brief with specific requests for protection and lawful assistance	Record the requested action, responsible office and response; do not equate a meeting with support
Funding and governance	A defined budget, approved lawful route and independent financial review	Verify providers and end use, report discrepancies and stop unsafe or unlawful routes

I would begin with a small programme whose commitments match available funds, clinical capacity and security. The first weeks should establish the governance team, verified evidence brief, partner mandates and a feasible care pathway. The following period should test delivery, review complaints and assess whether an expansion is justified. These are proposed management steps, not a promise that a national service can be created within a fixed number of days.

Medical priorities require competent assessment and should not be set by media visibility. A patient whose injury attracts little publicity may have greater need than someone whose photograph circulates widely. A donor's preference for an inspiring story must not displace clinical judgement. Rehabilitation and follow-up need protection in budgets because their value can be less immediately visible than an operation.

Public communication should make the request understandable without exploiting the patient. A concise brief can state the finding, the source and date, the practical consequence and the action requested. It should distinguish a documented minimum from an estimate, describe what remains uncertain and show how assistance will be verified. This approach builds confidence across ideological differences. [4, 5]

Political conversations should end with a defined next step. Can the partner help secure a lawful funding route, support independent documentation, raise a verified prisoner case, protect a threatened clinician or connect the programme with suitable expertise? The answer may be limited. A clear limited contribution is more useful than a broad expression of sympathy with no responsibility for delivery.

Success should be judged through both protection and accountability. Appropriate measures include timely access to assessment, completion of agreed treatment, functioning follow-up, safety incidents, complaints addressed and funds reconciled. Political recognition, media exposure and audience numbers can support the work, but they are not substitutes for benefits delivered to people.

13. Objections that deserve an answer

One objection is that a movement seeking regime change cannot have a humanitarian character. This treats moral purpose and organisational neutrality as interchangeable. Political change can be pursued to protect rights and reduce suffering. The necessary test is whether its methods, institutions and treatment of opponents serve that purpose. A movement should state its political commitments honestly and preserve independent clinical decisions.

A second objection concerns Pahlavi's international relationships. They are legitimate subjects of scrutiny, including questions about sovereignty, dependence and civilian harm. They do not remove the rights of people injured in Iran. The appropriate response is to assess foreign relationships and military conduct on their merits while continuing protection and care. A patient cannot be made responsible for every political association of a movement.

A third objection is that assistance may strengthen an undesired political outcome. Effective humanitarian governance answers this through impartial eligibility, transparent purposes and independent decision-making. It does not ask donors to agree that monarchy should return. A rights-based programme should remain able to treat people who oppose that outcome and protect their freedom to campaign against it.

A fourth objection is that strong advocacy could overlook abuses by allies or by the opposition. This risk is real. The answer is consistent scrutiny, protected criticism and fair procedures. No actor should obtain exemption from civilian protection through friendship with the author. My earlier argument against revenge is relevant: justice should establish individual responsibility while protecting defendants, families and political communities from collective punishment. [6]

A fifth objection concerns evidence quality under repression. Restricted access should lead to careful attribution and continuing verification. It should not turn uncertainty about the final total into uncertainty about every documented victim. Medical programmes should verify individual needs, and accountability organisations should maintain their own evidentiary standards. Each can act within its competence without claiming complete knowledge.

Finally, some supporters may regard cooperation with the left or with critics of US and Israeli policy as a retreat from national commitment. I regard cooperation on enforceable rights as a practical expression of that commitment. An Iranian democratic future needs people with different convictions to live under shared rules. Demonstrating that capacity now can improve both humanitarian delivery and confidence in the proposed transition. [2, 7]

14. Conclusion: the person at the centre

Iran's injured people and prisoners should not bear the cost of international disagreements about leadership, alliances or military policy. The January killings, the continuing threat of execution and the persecution of medical solidarity demand a response measured in protection, treatment and accountability. They also require evidence that is accurate enough to sustain public trust.

I support the Lion and Sun movement's humanitarian purpose and Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi's role in a transition towards secular democracy. My support rests on the freedom and dignity that I want Iranians to possess. Those principles require equal protection for people who reject my preferred leader or constitutional model. They require consistent scrutiny of Iranian authorities, foreign governments and our own conduct.

The international community need not resolve every political question before acting. Liberals, centrists, the left, the right, religious organisations and medical professionals can agree on a patient's need for care, a prisoner's right to protection from torture and unfair execution, and a family's right to seek truth safely. A defined, accountable programme can begin with those commitments.

As a physician, I want public concern to reach the examination room, the rehabilitation service and the home where an injured person is trying to recover. As an Iranian, I want institutions that prevent another generation from experiencing the same coercion. The common task is to protect life now and build a future in which political power answers to the people.

Declarations and source notes

Author's position: Mr Peyman Bakhshayesh supports secular democracy, constitutional monarchy and Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi's transitional leadership. This standpoint is declared because it informs the interpretation. Medical care and protection of rights are advocated without allegiance requirements.

Article status: Independently published narrative review and physician's ethical commentary, prepared from the author's commission and a purposive review of public sources and relevant

author writings. It has not undergone journal peer review and contains no original clinical research dataset. The professional designation identifies the author's standpoint; no employer, professional institution or named organisation is presented as endorsing the article.

Ethics and privacy: No private patient records, identifying clinical cases, private witness details or unpublished signature lists are reproduced. Proposed workflows require appropriate consent, confidentiality, qualified clinical judgement and lawful operation. Clinical examples are general assessment domains, not invented case reports.

Evidence cut-off: 12 October 2026. The Freedom Prize ceremony is a scheduled future event as of this date. Counts retain their own reporting dates and populations. In particular, 2025 execution counts differ between sources, and the UN's protest-related execution figure covers March-August 2026.

Public and private author sources: Relevant Drive drafts were used for intellectual continuity; the references below link to public homepage editions where available. Earlier analyses are cited for the author's outlook, not to authenticate current events. All named possible collaborators retain their independent mandates; no outreach, agreement, grant or medical service is claimed as a result of this article.

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