

NATION BUILDING

Pahlavi Plus, equal citizenship
and the constitutional
reconstruction of Iran

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A documented political and constitutional essay

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The argument

Abstract

Iran's most urgent political task is to renew the common life of an ancient nation through a modern, sovereign and secular democratic state. Forty-seven years after the establishment of the Islamic Republic, the central question reaches beyond opposition to a government: how can Iranians recover trust in one another and establish institutions that protect every citizen? This article argues for nation building through equal citizenship, territorial integrity, accountable transitional leadership, constitutional choice and practical preparation for government. It interprets Pahlavi Plus as the author's future-oriented framework: the modernising and nationally integrative aspirations associated with Pahlavism, strengthened by enforceable human rights, democratic consent and institutions capable of correcting their own failures. Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi can, in this argument, provide a focal point for cooperation across political traditions. Such leadership acquires democratic legitimacy through public consent and binding constitutional limits; family inheritance alone cannot supply it. The article examines religious and ethnic discrimination, historical judgement of the Pahlavi period, the distinction between a transitional mandate and the final form of government, and the relationship between economic recovery and civic belonging. It proposes a rights-based transitional compact, a programme for protecting essential services, and a system of independent scrutiny and public learning. Iran already possesses a deep historical identity. The work ahead is to make that shared identity a reliable guarantee of freedom, security and opportunity for all.

Scope and evidence

This is a documented political and constitutional essay, written from the author's stated constitutional-monarchist perspective. It combines primary legal texts, UN findings, published transition proposals, historical scholarship and the author's earlier essays. It presents proposals rather than a prediction of when or how political change will occur. References to a post-Islamic Republic transition are conditional. Sources were checked on 15 October 2026; each document retains its own publication date and evidential limits. No new survey or independent estimate of political support is claimed. Pahlavi Plus is used as the author's framework, rather than the title of an officially adopted programme.

THE CENTRAL COMMITMENT

A sovereign Iran, equal citizenship, secular democracy and a constitutional future decided freely by its people.

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This edition contains 15 sections, three practical tables and 23 linked references. The PDF and the complete online article use the same manuscript.

1. An ancient nation and a new civic settlement

Nation building is the most important matter before the Iranian people because every other political ambition depends on the quality of the common home we construct. Freedom needs a state that protects it. Prosperity needs institutions that people can trust. Territorial integrity needs citizens who experience the country as their own. A national movement succeeds when these objectives become mutually reinforcing commitments in ordinary life.

Iran does not need to invent a national past. Its historical depth, languages, literature, scientific traditions, cities and cultural relationships connect generations across many centuries. Its civilisation has developed through exchange as well as conflict. UNESCO's Silk Roads work emphasises the commercial, cultural and scientific interaction through which societies have enriched one another.^[5] Our inheritance should encourage confidence, intellectual openness and responsibility towards humanity. Historical achievement carries an obligation to contribute again.

Yet historical continuity and contemporary political trust are different things. A person may feel profoundly Iranian while fearing the police, distrusting courts and expecting discrimination from an employer. A family can love the country while believing its children's future lies elsewhere. A patriotic slogan cannot by itself repair these experiences. Nation building must connect belonging to credible guarantees: a school place, a fair hearing, an accountable public official and an equal opportunity to participate.

Three tasks therefore belong together. Nation building renews the willingness to share a political future. State building develops the capacity to deliver security, justice and public services. Democratisation makes the exercise of that capacity answerable to citizens. A capable state without accountability can become oppressive; democratic aspiration without administrative capacity can become a disappointment. Iran needs both capacity and restraint, held together by an inclusive understanding of national identity.

This also clarifies what unity requires. Iranians need agreement on the rules within which they can disagree. They need no single approved memory, religious conviction or party identity. A shared state becomes durable when different citizens can pursue different good lives under the same protection of law.

2. The wound of discrimination and the repair of citizenship

The Islamic Republic's institutional order gives a particular religious doctrine constitutional privilege. Article 12 establishes Twelver Ja'fari Islam as the official religion; Article 13 recognises Zoroastrians, Jews and Christians as the recognised religious minorities. Articles 19 and 20 contain equality language, while Article 20 conditions rights on Islamic criteria.^[1] Recognition of some communities has therefore coexisted with a hierarchy of political and legal standing. The constitutional position of recognised minorities also differs from that of Baha'is and people whose beliefs fall outside those categories.

These concerns extend beyond constitutional wording. The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination's 2024 concluding observations identify discrimination affecting ethnic and ethno-religious communities, barriers to public office and unequal conditions in some provinces.[2] The UN Fact-Finding Mission's March 2026 consolidated findings document continuing structural discrimination and describe arbitrary detention, restrictions on education and employment, and confiscation of property affecting Baha'is.[3] The point is not that every community has suffered in an identical way. It is that public power has failed to provide a dependable common floor of equal protection.

Religious exclusion and ethnic disadvantage can intersect, but ethnicity cannot be reduced to religion. Language, regional development, class, gender, local administration and the security treatment of border areas also shape experience. Nor did Iranian diversity begin in 1979. The injury is the conversion of difference into unequal standing and mutual suspicion. Describing the country itself as irreparably divided would surrender the very civic possibility we need to recover.

The remedy begins with a simple principle: no Iranian should have to pass a theological examination to belong fully to Iran. A Shia Muslim, Sunni Muslim, Baha'i, Jew, Christian, Zoroastrian, believer in another tradition or non-believer must enjoy the same civic dignity. Secular government protects the person's freedom to believe, practise, change belief or decline belief. It must also protect religious people from retaliation for the conduct of a clerical state.

Our political criticism should address institutions, discrimination and abuses of power with precision. It should never assign collective guilt to Shia citizens or assume that all clerics share the same conduct. A secular democratic movement demonstrates its confidence by protecting freedom of conscience even where it strongly disagrees with a belief. The relevant international baseline includes equality before the law, political participation and minority cultural rights in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.[4]

3. Historical judgement and the Pahlavi inheritance

I regard the Pahlavi period as an important inheritance of national reconstruction, modernisation and engagement with the wider world. The development of education, professional opportunity and state institutions deserves serious attention. Ahmad Ashraf's historical account documents the expansion of women's education during the period and their entry into fields including medicine and law.[6] These achievements belong in the national memory, alongside the work of the teachers, workers, administrators and families who made them possible.

Historical precision strengthens this argument. The Pahlavi state pursued substantial secularising reforms, but the constitutional order it inherited retained an official Shia religious identity and religious provisions. The Supplementary Fundamental Laws of 1907, in the text incorporating the 1925 amendments, make that distinction clear.[7] A future secular democracy can draw inspiration from modernising achievements while making freedom of conscience and equal citizenship more explicit and more secure.

Judgement must also be contextual. Iran's rulers faced the strategic weight of the Soviet Union, foreign intervention, regional insecurity and revolutionary movements. Contemporary diplomatic records document the difficulty of the 1946 Azerbaijan crisis and Soviet withdrawal.[8] Scholarship on the Fada'ian-e Khalq places armed revolutionary activism within the international politics of the Cold War.[9] Islamist and Marxist currents, armed struggle and geopolitical rivalry formed part of the difficult environment in which state decisions were made. The opposition also included people who sought peaceful reform; those differences matter.

Context helps explain decisions and constraints. It does not remove the need to examine the treatment of individuals. Amnesty International's contemporary 1976 briefing raised concerns about arbitrary arrest, torture and inadequate trial safeguards.[10] Acknowledging that evidence allows supporters of the Pahlavi inheritance to state a stronger future-oriented position: the achievement of modernisation should be carried forward with more effective constitutional protection against the misuse of power.

Historians should have freedom to investigate the whole period, using archives and competing interpretations. Politicians should support that freedom and draw practical lessons. Today's political coalition should not require every Iranian to endorse a single historical verdict. We can honour public service, recognise suffering, reject propaganda and still agree to build institutions that exceed the standards of the past.

The distinction also applies to Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi. Born on 31 October 1960, he was eighteen when the monarchy fell in February 1979, and was abroad for pilot training.[11] He was a young man, rather than a governing author of his father's policies. Democratic judgement should assess his own positions, decisions and conduct. Responsibility for abuses requires evidence of a person's actions; it does not pass through a surname. Equally, a surname cannot exempt anyone from scrutiny or automatically confer authority over today's citizens.

4. Reza Pahlavi as a focal point for cooperation

I support Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi because I see the possibility of a nationally recognisable focal point around which Iranians can cooperate. His name connects historical memory to the aspiration for a sovereign, modern and internationally engaged Iran. His public role can make a fragmented political field more intelligible and provide continuity during uncertainty. This is a political assessment of potential, not an assertion that every Iranian has already consented to his leadership.

Personal qualities such as dignity, composure and public conduct matter. Their deepest political value appears when they help people work together and accept constraints on power. The decisive test of leadership is the capacity to convene capable people, hear unwelcome information, protect disagreement and move authority towards accountable institutions.

His published transition statements and associated campaign materials provide evidence of an expressed programme. The Iran Prosperity Project portal includes secular democracy,

territorial integrity, individual freedoms and the right to choose the form of government among its principles.[12] His March 2026 announcement presents a prospective transitional system under his leadership.[14] These are public political commitments and proposals. Their publication is meaningful, while their future implementation would require independent scrutiny, operational capacity and public consent.

Three distinct decisions should remain visible. Iranians may cooperate around a transitional leader. They may decide whether the permanent state should take a monarchical or republican form. They must then choose governments and representatives through genuine political competition. Support at one level should never be presumed to settle all three.

The strongest national role for Reza Pahlavi is therefore compatible with a broad democratic coalition. A republican can cooperate in achieving a free constitutional choice without promising to vote for monarchy. A monarchist can campaign openly for a parliamentary crown while protecting the republican campaign's equal rights. Such cooperation gives political leadership a wider civic purpose and makes the ballot box a binding destination.

5. Pahlavi Plus: modernisation with constitutional guarantees

Pahlavi Plus is the name I give to a future-oriented synthesis. Its starting points are national cohesion, secular public institutions, modernisation, education, professional competence and constructive relations with the world. Its democratic addition must be substantial: equal citizenship, representative government, enforceable rights, transparent finance and lawful methods for correcting mistakes. The addition is what makes the historical inheritance suitable for a different society and a different century.

The word Plus also expresses an invitation. Iran's future will be enriched by constitutional liberals, social democrats, democratically minded conservatives, republicans, monarchists, independent professionals and citizens with no party affiliation. People may bring different accounts of history and different economic priorities. They can contribute where they accept common constitutional obligations. No movement possesses all of the country's experience or intelligence.

For me, modernisation is judged by human capability: whether children learn, women can participate equally, courts are reliable, scientific work is free and enterprise can develop without political patronage. Large construction projects and impressive technology can help, but the quality of the relationship between citizen and state remains fundamental. The meaning of national progress must reach a rural clinic and an ordinary household as well as a university laboratory or an industrial centre.

Table 1. The author's proposed Pahlavi Plus commitments

Commitment	Institutional expression	Public test
National sovereignty and territorial integrity	Common constitutional authority, lawful defence and local representation	Every region receives equal protection and a meaningful political voice
Secular government	Equal civic status and freedom of conscience	Belief or non-belief does not determine access to rights or office
Democratic consent	Free constitutional choice, elected representatives and protected opposition	Leaders accept adverse lawful results
Modernisation and competence	Professional public service, independent education and credible infrastructure plans	Appointments and spending can be examined against clear criteria
Human dignity	Enforceable rights, impartial courts and remedies for abuse	A citizen can obtain redress against a powerful official
Public learning	Independent evidence, audit, published review and lawful revision	Government changes a failing policy and explains why

These are my proposed standards for the movement. They are not a claim that an official document has already adopted this exact framework. Their purpose is to turn a shared political aspiration into obligations that citizens can inspect.

6. Javid Shah, national emotion and the ballot box

Javid Shah literally means Long live the Shah. In my political interpretation, its wider aspiration can encompass Long live Iran and Long live liberty: a demand for national continuity, dignity and an end to theocratic domination. That interpretation explains why the slogan can carry more than a preference about an office. It does not require us to pretend that every person who uses it gives it exactly the same meaning.

National emotion is an important political resource. People who have experienced humiliation and exclusion need a language of confidence and belonging. The Lion and Sun can connect memory, grief and hope to a future that feels recognisably Iranian. The responsibility of political leadership is to give that emotion a democratic direction, so that courage and solidarity become participation, service and constitutional discipline.

A chant is an expression of political agency. It is not a substitute for an election or a reliable count of national opinion. The intensity of a demonstration, or the reach of a video, cannot tell us how every town, age group or household would vote in free conditions. A national

movement gains credibility when it welcomes the independent procedures that can establish the people's will.

As a constitutional monarchist, I want the case for monarchy to be made clearly and confidently. A parliamentary monarchy can provide a continuing civic symbol while elected ministers exercise government. International IDEA describes the constitutional monarch in a parliamentary democracy as a hereditary symbolic head of state whose central role is representative rather than executive.^[15] The details must be written so that those limits operate in practice.

Hereditary succession within a monarchy freely established by the people is a different question from a family's entitlement to establish that monarchy without public consent. A democratic campaign must accept the distinction. If Iranians choose another democratic constitutional form through a free process, constitutional monarchists must respect the result. The deepest pledge contained in our advocacy is fidelity to Iran and the freedom of its people.

7. A transitional mandate with a defined end

The Iran Prosperity Project provides material for serious transition planning. Source identification matters: the campaign portal checked for this article is labelled March 2026, while the English Emergency Phase Booklet it links bears February 2026 on its cover. The booklet addresses the first 180 days and includes a wider political roadmap. Its political chapter proposes a referendum between parliamentary monarchy and republic within four months, followed by an elected constituent assembly and a referendum on the draft constitution. It also assigns substantial initial appointment and command powers to the transitional leader.^[12,13]

I regard preparation as essential. A plan becomes more credible when its authority, constraints and mechanisms of revision are equally clear. The concentration of initial responsibilities makes independent oversight particularly important. The question is how to ensure that leadership organised for an emergency hands power onward as promised. Supporting the transition's objectives gives us a reason to improve its safeguards before a crisis makes deliberation harder.

A public transitional compact should state the legal basis and scope of temporary authority; the rights that remain protected; the composition and responsibilities of transitional institutions; the rules for appointments and dismissal; the budget and auditing process; and the milestones leading to elected government. It should identify who can review executive decisions, how disputes will be resolved and what happens when officials exceed their powers.

The timetable needs both urgency and credibility. Electoral preparation requires security, accessible registration, campaigning time, functioning media and procedures for complaints. If a deadline becomes unachievable, the obstacle, evidence and revised schedule should be published and independently reviewed. A temporary leadership must never be able to extend its own exceptional authority simply by declaring that national unity requires it.

Emergency powers should have a stated purpose, a limited duration, proportionate scope and a renewal process involving independent institutions. International IDEA's emergency-powers guidance examines the risks created by weak checks and indefinite exceptional arrangements.[18] For Iran, I would make periodic public review and a demanding renewal threshold explicit. A transitional mandate is successful when it creates the conditions for citizens to replace provisional authority with a legitimate constitutional order.

8. Constitution-making as a national act

The constitution will shape the relationship between generations. It deserves a process in which Iranians can understand the choices, contribute proposals and see how decisions are made. An elite agreement can help prevent disorder, but the country's long-term settlement requires participation beyond the negotiating room. International IDEA's work on public participation stresses context, planning, civic education and meaningful engagement across the constitution-building process.[16]

My proposal is a publicly explained sequence: an interim rights framework; independent electoral administration; an elected constituent body; open drafting and consultation; publication of the final text in accessible forms; and a free ratification process. The ordering of individual constitutional decisions must be settled transparently, including how a vote on the form of state relates to the later detailed constitution. Voters should understand which matters each ballot decides and which remain open.

The substance must secure separation of powers, equality before the law, independent courts, freedom of expression and association, competitive elections, accountable policing and protection of personal conscience. It should specify how governments are formed and removed, how spending is authorised and audited, how officials are held responsible, and how constitutional amendments can occur without destroying fundamental rights.

For a parliamentary monarchy, the text should define the crown's functions and succession rules precisely, place government in ministers accountable to parliament and prevent a parallel political or security authority emerging around the head of state. Any reserve powers require narrow definition and a lawful means of review. For a republic, equivalent attention must be given to executive concentration and the relationship between president, government and legislature. The name of the system settles fewer questions than the actual distribution and restraint of power.

A credible referendum requires more than two boxes on a paper. Citizens need a clear question, reliable information, impartial administration, fair campaign opportunities, secret voting, observation and a lawful complaints process. These principles are reflected in the Venice Commission's Revised Code of Good Practice on Referendums.[17] The practical aim is a result that citizens who lose can nevertheless recognise as legitimate.

9. Territorial integrity through equal belonging

Iran's territorial integrity is a foundational commitment. Its democratic protection is strengthened when people in every region feel that national institutions protect their dignity and respond to their needs. A citizen should not have to choose between an Iranian identity and affection for a local language, culture or place.

Persian can continue to serve as a shared national language alongside secure opportunities to learn, publish and participate in other languages. Decisions about educational provision need consultation, trained teachers, workable materials and clear funding. The aim should be both a common public sphere and cultural confidence. Local participation and fair access to national institutions give people reasons to invest in a shared future.

Ethnic categories must also be handled with care. They can overlap, change with self-identification and conceal diversity within communities. The UN racial-discrimination committee has drawn attention to gaps in Iran's demographic and socioeconomic data.[2] We should avoid invented precision about population shares or treating self-appointed spokespeople as the only voices of a community. Transparent evidence and direct participation are more useful than competitive demographic claims.

I propose elected and accountable local government, published formulas for intergovernmental funding, accessible national courts and guarantees against discriminatory policing. Constitutional debates about administrative decentralisation deserve open discussion. Citizens must be able to examine how responsibilities and finance would operate within a sovereign Iran, without having every proposal treated as disloyalty.

Public resources should be allocated according to need, service standards and verifiable conditions. Regional hospital access, school quality, water security, employment opportunities and environmental protection are concrete expressions of national solidarity. Equal citizenship becomes convincing when a family can see that distance from Tehran or membership of a minority does not lower the state's obligations towards them.

10. The first responsibility of government: protect life and daily function

My experience as a trauma surgeon informs the questions I bring to political preparation. In a crisis, the visibility of an intervention should never displace attention from the person and the system needed to support recovery. The political analogy has limits, but its practical lesson is valuable: judgement, teamwork, sequencing and continuity matter. Institutions must be able to function while the country decides its long-term constitutional future.

A transitional authority should know how hospitals receive medicines, how water treatment continues, how power stations are staffed, how food reaches markets and how public salaries and pensions are paid. It should protect land records, civil registries, banking information and administrative knowledge. People encounter the state through these services before they encounter a constitutional seminar.

Preparation therefore requires inventories, named responsibilities, lawful chains of command, alternate suppliers, transparent emergency procurement and reliable communication. Public announcements should distinguish verified facts, estimates and unresolved problems. A government that admits a shortage and explains its response can build more trust than one that promises universal recovery without knowing its own capacity.

Table 2. The author's proposed priorities for an initial 180-day horizon

Period	Priority	Evidence the public should receive
Days 1-30	Protect civilians, essential services, records and basic payments; publish interim rights and authority rules	Service interruptions, emergency expenditure, detention information and responsible offices
Days 31-90	Stabilise delivery, open civic space, establish review bodies and prepare electoral administration	Procurement records, complaint outcomes, appointment criteria and electoral readiness reports
Days 91-180	Improve independent oversight, advance constitutional participation and transfer tasks into regular institutions	Audit findings, consultation responses, regional service gaps and progress against the agreed public timetable

This table is my planning proposal, not an official replacement for the IPP timetable. The stages may overlap and must be adapted to conditions. Democratic safeguards begin immediately; public-service recovery cannot serve as a reason to postpone rights. No date guarantees that institutional transformation will be complete.

11. National reconciliation and individual accountability

National reconciliation is a practical condition of reconstruction. Many people working in hospitals, schools, utilities and public administration have kept society functioning under difficult circumstances. Their skills belong to Iran's future. Treating an entire profession, locality, family or religious community as an enemy would waste competence and deepen fear.

At the same time, victims need truth, protection, remedy and justice. Reconciliation should include evidence preservation, independent investigation, support for survivors and families, and fair proceedings where individual responsibility is established. Public recognition and reparative measures should be designed with affected people. A victim should not be asked to disappear from public memory for the convenience of a political agreement.

The distinction between service and abuse is essential for security and judicial reform. OHCHR's operational guidance on vetting emphasises individual conduct and integrity, and warns that broad purges based solely on group affiliation can violate due process and remove

necessary expertise.[19] For Iran, personnel review should use published criteria, reliable evidence, an opportunity to respond and an appeal. Criminal prosecution and suitability for a particular public office are related but distinct questions.

The same principle should govern the movement's language. Denying the ballot box is incompatible with the democratic coalition I advocate. That is a standard for participation in a voluntary political project. It cannot become a licence to deny another citizen's civil rights or peaceful political expression. The state will belong to those who opposed us as well as those who marched beside us.

I would urge Reza Pahlavi and his office to give their closest confidence to people who demonstrate constitutional discipline, competence and respect for human dignity. They should also create regular channels for constructive criticism, including from democratic republicans and people outside established circles. A national office gains authority when it can hear the country beyond its most enthusiastic supporters.

12. Economic reconstruction as part of the civic contract

Political freedom must become compatible with an ordinary secure life. Inflation, uncertainty, unemployment, corruption and unequal access to opportunity can damage trust even when constitutional language is impressive. A reconstruction programme should explain how it will protect essential consumption, stabilise public finance, support production and make economic power answerable to public rules.

I propose an initial separation between urgent stabilisation and decisions that permanently redistribute national wealth. Emergency food, medicine and basic services require fast action with auditable procurement. Large asset transfers, major concessions and the design of long-term tax or welfare systems require fuller evidence, public explanation and legitimate authorisation. A short transitional mandate should not become an opportunity for insiders to acquire irreversible economic privileges.

The World Bank's World Development Report 2017 shows why policy design alone is insufficient: exclusion, capture and unequal power can obstruct implementation, while credible commitment, coordination and cooperation matter for effective governance.[20] This is an important warning for any Iranian reform programme. A beautifully written proposal may fail if its institutions cannot resist interference or if the costs are imposed on people who have no voice.

Practical safeguards should include published budgets, independent financial audit, open competition for major contracts, disclosure of relevant interests and a professional public service. Independent monetary institutions and clear rules for public borrowing merit constitutional and legislative attention. Decisions about subsidies, pensions and social support should be costed, explained and reviewed for their effect on vulnerable households.

Economic sovereignty also means the capacity to cooperate internationally on terms that serve Iranian citizens. Trade, investment, scientific exchange and diaspora expertise can

contribute to recovery. Their benefits depend on enforceable contracts, credible regulation, capable institutions and protection of the country's assets and environment. Patriotism should be visible in the quality of agreements and public services, rather than measured by permanent hostility towards the outside world.

13. A constitutional order capable of learning

The comparison with a sophisticated AI programme is useful as a design metaphor: a complex system should detect errors, receive feedback, revise decisions and improve. Its political meaning requires care. Society contains persons with rights, competing interests and purposes that cannot be reduced to a single performance score. No central algorithm should be granted authority to define the national good or override democratic judgement.

The institutional equivalent of learning begins with independent sources of information. Statistical offices must be able to publish inconvenient findings. Universities should investigate without a duty to confirm official belief. Journalists need access to information and protection for lawful reporting. Inspectors and auditors require the resources and security to challenge failures. Citizens need usable complaint and appeal routes.

I propose a public cycle for significant policies: define the problem and the legal duty; publish the assumptions, intended benefits and likely costs; implement with responsible officials; measure outcomes and unequal effects; invite independent evaluation; then continue, amend or withdraw the policy with reasons. Legislative scrutiny and judicial review operate alongside this cycle. Rights set limits on experimentation, and elected institutions remain responsible for political choices.

Table 3. What a learning state should make visible

Question	Institutional mechanism	Safeguard
What is happening?	Independent statistics, service reporting and open research	Transparent methods and protection against political editing
Who is being harmed or excluded?	Complaints, regional analysis and rights monitoring	Confidentiality, accessible participation and lawful remedies
Who is responsible?	Parliamentary scrutiny, audit and published decisions	Clear mandates, conflicts disclosure and fair investigation
What should change?	Public evaluation, legislative amendment and judicial review	Reasons, time limits and protection of fundamental rights

Professional administration supports this approach. International IDEA's 2026 public-service primer examines constitutional choices for protecting merit, professionalism and public-service institutions from patronage.[21] Expertise should inform democratic choice, while appointments and official decisions remain open to scrutiny.

A learning state also needs restraint in its use of data. Collect what is necessary, protect private information and provide routes to challenge decisions. A digital service can be efficient and still unfair. The possibility of an automated mistake strengthens the case for human responsibility and an effective appeal.

No constitutional design can promise to eliminate every crisis or prevent every future revolution. Our achievable ambition is to give dissatisfaction peaceful, credible and effective routes into politics. People should be able to change policy, remove a government and seek justice before despair makes rupture appear to be their only voice. A political order becomes more resilient when it can acknowledge its mistakes without fearing that every admission will destroy it.

14. Building the democratic habits before holding power

The conduct of the movement today is part of the institutional future it offers. Organisations seeking public trust should disclose their decision rules, relevant funding and conflicts of interest. They should distinguish advice from official commitments, correct factual errors and protect members' ability to raise concerns. A movement practises constitutional culture when its leaders accept that support does not end the need for accountability.

The organising centre of gravity must remain connected to society inside Iran. Workers, teachers, students, entrepreneurs, women, professional associations and local civic networks possess knowledge that cannot be supplied entirely from abroad. The diaspora can contribute skills, advocacy, financing and international connections, with care for the safety and consent of people in Iran. Its role becomes more valuable when it supports rather than substitutes for domestic agency.

This article develops a line of argument present in my earlier essays on building civic institutions during the struggle and on the future-oriented redefinition of Pahlavism.^[22,23] The point is to join national feeling to organised capability. Patriotic doctors can think about continuity of care and ethical service; engineers can examine infrastructure and safety; lawyers can prepare due-process institutions; economists can analyse credible recovery choices. These contributions need coordination, independent challenge and realistic resource assumptions.

I would make a small set of questions routine in every organisation: Who has authority to decide? What evidence would change our view? Who has not been heard? What does this cost? How can an affected person complain? When will we review it? These habits help prevent a movement from confusing public enthusiasm with organisational competence.

The coalition must also reject intimidation by those claiming to act in its name. Peaceful disagreement, political criticism and refusal to use a particular slogan are compatible with full Iranian belonging. Protecting that space makes a shared constitutional project possible. The object is to expand the number of citizens who can see themselves in the future, and to demonstrate that political cooperation can survive principled disagreement.

15. A national pledge for the future

We are due to build the government and institutions through which a free Iran can govern itself. We should therefore prepare with ambition and discipline. The opportunity, whenever it comes, must be met by people who have thought about laws, services, finance, security, representation and the daily dignity of their fellow citizens.

I support Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi as a potential leader of a democratic national transition. My argument for that role rests on its capacity to unite people around a clear purpose and carry public authority towards constitutional consent. His office should be a place where patriotism welcomes competence, where loyalty permits candour and where the best protection of leadership is a trustworthy institutional framework.

Pahlavi Plus, as I understand and advocate it, commits us to a sovereign Iran with territorial integrity, secular government, equality before the law, human rights, representative institutions and a free ballot box. It asks the historical aspiration for modernisation to meet the full democratic responsibilities of the present.

The pledge must be credible to someone who does not share my preferred constitutional form. That person should be able to say: I can vote against you, speak against your policies, practise my religion or none, use my language, seek justice and still belong fully to this country. When that assurance becomes an institutional reality, national unity acquires a depth that no enforced unanimity can offer.

For those of us who say Javid Shah with the hope of an Iran restored to freedom and dignity, the task is to give the hope practical content. We honour Iran by building a state that serves its people, a political culture that hears them and a constitution that protects them. The measure of nation building is the security, dignity and freedom of every citizen.

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