

Statement in Response to Allegations

I feel deeply for the ongoing suffering of family members of the victims of violence against political prisoners. Summary executions are horrible acts and are indeed crimes against humanity wherever they happen.

During my years at Oberlin, and because of my long anti-war activism, I have come under attack by a spectrum of war-lobby protagonists both in the US and in the Middle East.

On October 8, 2020, an email was sent to the President of Oberlin College from Kaveh Shahrooz and Lawdan Bazargan that asserted their belief that when I was serving as Iran's ambassador to the UN in 1988, I "obfuscated" and "lied" to the international community about mass executions of prisoners by the Iranian regime in the summer of 1988.

The accusers fail to provide a single solid document as evidence of my actual knowledge of these incidents. With no concrete evidence, they infer that I must have been informed and intentionally denied these atrocities.

I categorically deny any knowledge and therefore responsibility regarding mass executions in Iran when I was serving at the United Nations. I was in New York the entire summer of 1988, focusing on peacemaking between Iran and Iraq and did not receive any briefing regarding executions. There was not a single communication from Tehran to Iran's UN embassy informing Iranian diplomats of those incidents.

During my short-lived ambassadorial position (1987-1989), I was focused on peacemaking efforts to end the Iran-Iraq war, the most prolonged and devastating war in modern history. The UN and public media records unequivocally demonstrate that in encouraging peace between my country and Iraq, I went beyond my mandate and was the very first Iranian official who publicly announced Iran's acceptance of UNSC Resolution 598 for peace. (The New York Times reported on my work with the Security Council in the spring of 1988.) My accusers overlook these well-documented peacemaking efforts, and the fact that I risked my ambassadorial position for that purpose.

For more than three decades since, I have dedicated my life to research, teaching and writing about peace and friendship. All my scholarly and artistic works in English, Persian and Arabic focus on international and interpersonal peace and friendship.

These pursuits are where I will continue to focus my energies, in the hope of contributing to a better world.

M. Jafar Mahallati

Oct. 9, 2020