

## Open Letter to BBC

Mr. Tony Hall  
Director General  
Broadcasting House  
London, W1A 1AA

Director General,

We constitute a group of former parliamentarians, cabinet members and military officers from different nations but united in our support of the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK) efforts to end the religious dictatorship in Iran. Each of us has traveled to the MEK's camp in Albania, Ashraf-3, established under the auspices of the United States Government and have extensive contacts with the membership of the MEK.

The BBC report by Linda Pressly of November 7 (posted on November 11, 2019) represents both a significant departure from the facts and completely contradicts our experiences.

On July 13, 2019, we were among 350 foreign dignitaries visiting Ashraf-3 in Albania. During several days, we exchanged views and listened to MEK members. The allegations that members' activities are restricted, information withheld, or that a free and open dialogue is denied are completely false. While we recognize that legitimate mistakes can be made by reporters with limited time or background, this experience cannot be so easily dismissed. The primary sources for these allegations, Hassan Hayrani and Gholam-Ali Mirzai, are both former residents now indisputably operating as agents of the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence (MOIS). The fact that your sources were compromised could easily be ascertained since both are being monitored by Albanian authorities.

There is a stark contrast between the written report of November 11 and the original broadcast of November 7. Deleted from the posted edition were favorable comments from Albanian officials and citizens on their interactions with MEK Members. Meanwhile, the demonstrably false claims by MOIS agents remained undisputed.

The BBC would not be the first news organization to have been manipulated by the Iranian regime. Der Spiegel, on February 16, 2019, was similarly fed false information on Ashraf and MEK members which it similarly failed to research. The editions of Der Spiegel, at the instruction of a court in Berlin, dated March 21, 2019, issued a retraction. Recommend you research both those legal proceedings and their editors' responses.

The continued efforts of the Iranian regime to undermine the legitimate political opposition through false information isn't without consequence. The MEK has paid the price of thousands of members being executed for the crime of free expression. This terror, fully disclosed to public sources, has included attempts to explode devices in Paris and Albania. The extraordinary work of French, German, Albanian and American Governments prevented these attacks. Investigations conducted by law enforcement agencies of these governments have determined

the planned attacks were organized by the MOIS. Both physical and character assassinations are standard operating procedures for the MOIS. No one, to include the media, should allow themselves to aid and abet such actions.

It is critical to understanding how such a story, at such variance with the collective experience of so many potential sources, could be influenced by known agents of the Iranian regime without editorial control. Truth in reporting is an obligation owed to the public, yourself, and in this case to the members of the MEK. Facts, and not misinformation provided by the MOIS, should have been the foundation of this story. As in the case of Der Spiegel, a retraction from BBC is merited.

Hon. **Ingrid Betancourt** – Former  
Colombia Presidential Candidate

Hon. **Louis J. Freeh** – Former Director,  
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Hon. **Paulo Casaca** – Former Member  
of the Regional Azorean Assembly,  
of the Portuguese and of the European  
Parliament

Hon. **Alejo Vidal Quadras** – Former  
Vice-President of the European Parliament

Gen. (Ret.) **James Conway** – Former  
Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps

Hon. **Rama Yade** – Former French Minister  
of Human Rights

Hon. **Robert Joseph** – Former  
Under-Secretary of State for Arms Control  
and International Security

Hon. **Tom Ridge** – Former Pennsylvania  
Governor, First Secretary of U.S. Homeland  
Security

Colonel (Ret.), U.S. Army **Wesley M. Martin** –  
Former US Military Commander for Camp  
Ashraf, former Senior Antiterrorism Officer  
of all Coalition Forces, Iraq

Prof. **Ivan Sascha Sheehan** – Executive  
Director of the School of Public  
International Affairs, University of  
Baltimore

Hon. **Robert Torricelli** – Former New Jersey  
Senator