

## English

### **Statement No. 81 – SHAMA To the Aware and Courageous Students of Iran**

On the occasion of the commemoration of Khajeh Nasir al-Din Tusi and the twenty-third anniversary of the arrest of Dr. Ghasem Sholeh-Saadi, spokesperson of the National Council for the Iranian Revolution, we reflect on important developments within the universities of Iran.

Twenty-three years ago, Dr. Sholeh-Saadi, then a professor at the Faculty of Law and Political Science at the University of Tehran, published an open letter grounded in legal reasoning in which he declared the leadership of Ali Khamenei unlawful and called for his resignation from power. Following the publication of that letter, he was arrested, prosecuted, and eventually dismissed from the university after nearly three decades of academic service.

We wish to share the following reflections:

1. We express appreciation for the many students who, despite a restrictive climate, stood in defense of academic freedom and the right to critical thought. Their actions reflected a longstanding tradition of intellectual responsibility in Iranian universities.
2. The open letter in question emphasized a fundamental political argument: that governance without public consent and contrary to majority opinion lacks moral and legal legitimacy. The core issue raised was accountability and representation.
3. Although Dr. Sholeh-Saadi faced imprisonment, pressure, and professional exclusion, he did not abandon his political convictions. His experience illustrates the cost often borne by independent intellectual voices in Iran.
4. At a time when segments of the opposition pursue divergent and sometimes externally dependent paths, the question of credible, nationally rooted leadership remains central. Sustainable political change requires independence, intellectual integrity, and commitment to national sovereignty.

In the present sensitive circumstances, students once again occupy a historic position. Universities have long served as spaces for national reflection, ethical debate, and civic responsibility.

The future of Iran depends on clarity of vision, independence from foreign manipulation, and leadership grounded in national dignity and democratic principles.