

*For Release on January 26<sup>th</sup>*

**Joint Presse Release of**

**Laura Boldrini**, Member of Italian Chamber of Deputies

**Majid Jowhari**, Member of Parliament in the House of Commons of Canada

**Carmen Wegge**, Member of German Parliament

**“Acquit our sponsor Armita Abbasi of all accounts now!”**

The three international members of Parliament, Laura Boldrini (Italian Chamber of Deputies), Majid Jowhari (House of Commons of Canada) and Carmen Wegge (German Parliament) request the Iranian Regime to immediately acquit Armita Abbasi of all accounts. The 21 year old woman is imprisoned since October 10<sup>th</sup> in the Revolutionary Prison of Karaj. Each of the three politicians took over the political sponsorship for the young Iranian woman who is accused of being one of the leader of the protests in Iran.

CNN News Channel reported on October 17, 2022 that Armita Abbasi, upon her arrest and before arriving at the prison, was severely beaten, gang-raped, and sexually assaulted at the hands of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps officers (IRGC). Consequently, she was rushed to the Imam Ali hospital in Karaj, accompanied by a team of security forces. In the accounts, the medical staff saw evidence of repetitive brutal rape and physical torture but were prevented from documenting their findings by security forces. Before her family arrived at the hospital, the security forces kidnapped her from the hospital again. Armita Abbasi is now imprisoned in Fardis Prison in Karaj. She was prevented from choosing a defense lawyer and was restricted from seeing her family. Her court date, originally planned for January 26<sup>th</sup>, is now rescheduled for January 29<sup>th</sup>. She was reportedly on a hunger strike since the beginning of January. Two lawyers were allowed to take over her case but were not able to continue their work as they were denied the chance to speak to Armita.

Armita Abbasi’s case is shocking and shows the brutality of the Iranian regime. A regime that disrespects the rule of law and any international laws regarding the treatment of prisoners or women. It is therefore crucial to monitor her situation on an international level and support her.

Laura Boldrini, Majid Jowhari and Carmen Wegge stand together and urge the Iranian regime: “Acquit Armita Abbasi immediately!”

**Laura Boldrini:**

“For months now, Teheran and Iran in general have been convulsed by one of the greatest waves of protest in the country’s history: a protest in which women, first and foremost, have gone onto the streets to demonstrate against the regime. From the outset men, including very young men, have joined in the protests. Both men and women have done so in the knowledge that they face arrest, imprisonment, torture, violence, rape and the death penalty.

As Members of Parliaments, we are expressing our profound concern at the ferocious repression being visited by the Islamic Republic of Iran on demonstrators who are demonstrating for freedom and democracy. And we have both the responsibility and the duty to support those who are campaigning for freedom. We wish for the attention raised by our initiative to sponsor political prisoners to prevent Iranian courts from handing down harsh sentences against persons such as Armita Abbasi and all others who are

being detained in connection with demonstrations against the regime. These convictions are often the outcome of trials often held behind closed doors and in the absence of witnesses. Such trials are also held in the absence of a defence lawyer chosen by the defendant, which should be the basic right of any detainee.

In Italy, eighty-seven Members of Parliament have up to now joined our initiative and have written to the ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Rome. As well as calling for the immediate release of Armita Abbasi and all other political prisoners, I have asked the Ambassador to forward to the authorities in his country a request to observe the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to which Iran is also a signatory. During a meeting held on 25 January, the Ambassador stated that all cases described in our correspondence were brought to the attention of the Iranian judicial authorities but some of them were reported not existing or fake. As for Armita Abbasi's case, he would request information from the Iranian judicial authorities as soon as possible.

There is further action that we Members of Parliament can take, which is to ask that the governments of all our countries send Ambassadors to the prisons of Iran to verify the state of health of those who, like Armita Abbasi, have been jailed without having committed any crime. Ambassadors should also verify the relevant judicial processes and be present in courtrooms where those farcical hearings, in the space of just five minutes, may decide the fate of the defendants.

We must support, in every possible way, the brave Iranian people who are fighting for their rights, for their lives and for their freedom.

Acquit Armita Abbasi and all political prisoners in Iran!"

### **Majid Jowhari:**

"As Members of Parliament, we are joining forces in support of Iranian citizens, and in defence of political prisoners and brave young protestors on their quest for accountability, justice and freedom they rightfully deserve. The brutality of the Iranian Regime against its own people, in particular its women and girls, is unrelenting, and the situation has deteriorated during the recent Woman-Life-freedom movement in Iran.

We are appalled by the Iranian Regime's wrongful imprisonment, execution of brave political prisoners and continued oppression of the brave Iranian women fighting for their rights. One such brave woman is Armita Abbasi, who despite the ongoing suppression she and others faced at the hands of the Iranian Regime, continues to send a powerful message to the world, from behind bars: **"that they will no longer be silenced, and that freedom will always prevail."**

As a collective, we hope that drawing attention through our joint efforts to endorse political prisoners would prevent the Iranian Regime and its Judicial courts from continuing to impose punitive and inhumane punishments on brave prisoners like Armita Abbasi and all others who have been unlawfully jailed previously and ever since the "Woman-Life-Freedom" movement commenced in Iran.

As part of our continuous advocacy for Armita Abbasi, calling for her immediate and unconditional release alongside all other political prisoners, we call upon the Iranian Regime to:

A) Fully respect and follow the Internationally recognized procedures and relevant judicial processes, including respecting the basic right of all detainees such as Armita Abbasi's, namely the right to access a defence lawyer or representation chosen by the defendant; and

B) Fully observe the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to which Iran is also a signatory.

Our advocacy for political prisoners such as Armita Abbasi is unwavering, and we will continue to remain relentless, as long as it takes to achieve justice and accountability for Armita and others. While we continue to amplify the voice of Armita Abbasi alongside all brave political prisoners in Iran, Canada has not stood idly by while the regime's human rights violations increase in scope and intensity against the Iranian people.

Canada has imposed some of the toughest sanctions against the Iranian Regime. Additionally, more than ten thousand of senior members of the Iranian regime, including many members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, are now inadmissible to Canada, forever. The Iranian Regime must be held accountable for its egregious actions in accordance with international law. Canada strongly condemns the application of the death penalty and urges the Iranian regime to immediately cease plans for further executions.

We call on the Iranian regime to immediately establish a moratorium and to halt all executions, to end the brutal and inhumane punishment of Iranian citizens. On December 14, 2022, Canada voted to remove Iran from the UN Commission on the Status of Women and on December 16, 2022, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution that Canada drafted and introduced to reaffirm our commitment to human rights for the people of Iran.

Our message to Armita: "You are not alone, we hear your powerful voice and we will continue to stand with you, for as long as it takes to achieve your freedom. We will not legitimize the Iranian Regime's unfair trials, manufactured charges, and deep lack of legal representation for brave freedom fighters like you."

As three parliamentarians joining efforts from Canada, Germany and Italy, it is our collective duty to stand in unity as we demand Armita Abbasi's unconditional and immediate release from prison. The courage and bravery of the Iranian women fighting for their rights deeply inspire us and we will continue to echo their powerful voices in their quest for freedom and justice.

We will not rest until Armita Abbasi is acquitted and all political prisoners in Iran are free."

### **Carmen Wegge:**

"As Socialdemocrats in the German Parliament we are fighting for the release of all political prisoners, support for the Iranian civilian population, tougher personal sanctions against the regime, listing the IR Revolutionary Guard Army as a terrorist organization and protection of people with Iranian roots in Germany.

Armita Abbasi's is a horrible example of how the people and especially the women of Iran are suppressed by the Islamic Regime of Iran. I deeply moved by the strength, courage and braveness of the Iranian women who are fighting for their rights.

I feel strong admiration for their struggle. As democrats and politicians it is our duty to support them in their fight for justice and we will do so until Armita Abbasi is acquitted."