# Statement to the FAZ: One-Sided Portrayal and Unsubstantiated Claims

31 October 2026

To the Rhein-Main editorial team of the
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

**Re: Your article of 30 October 2026 – one-sided portrayal and unsubstantiated claims**

Dear Sir or Madam,

In your article “Award to the Shah’s son divides Iranian diaspora”, you rightly describe Prince Reza Pahlavi as an opposition leader. All the more surprising to us was the weighting of the article. You give a great deal of space to critical voices, while the broad and documented support hardly appears. A report can be worded objectively and still convey a distorted overall picture through its selection.

The political divisions in the diaspora did not begin with this award; they have existed for a long time. The headline, however, gives the impression that it was the invitation of Prince Reza Pahlavi that caused the division. It would have been more important to show how much social reach the different positions actually have.

According to the police, around 250,000 people came to the rally with Prince Reza Pahlavi in Munich on 14 February 2026 – your newspaper reported on it itself. According to Prince Reza Pahlavi, some 1.5 million Iranians worldwide followed his call. For the republican rally in Brussels, by contrast, Iran Global reported the next day, citing the police, only 700 participants. Of course, such figures are no substitute for an election. But anyone who wants to assess political support cannot simply ignore them.

The sweeping statement by an anonymous speaker that people in Iran want neither

Shah nor mullah should also have been put into journalistic context. Your article provides no verifiable evidence from the protests for it. Yet chants of “Javid Shah” and open support for Prince Reza Pahlavi are part of the documented reality of this protest movement.

In addition, the slogan “Neither Shah nor mullah” is also spread by the People’s Mojahedin (Mujahedin-e Khalq or People’s Mojahedin Organization of Iran, MEK/PMOI). This organisation is burdened by past terrorist attacks and was on the US terrorist list until 2012. Its political messages should not be generalised, unchecked, as the voice of the Iranian population.

The Foundation has received a declaration of support with 1,746 signatures. More than 32,000 people have now signed the Change.org petition “Freedom Prize 2026 for the Iranian people – represented by Prince Reza Pahlavi”. In addition, there are declarations of support from 43 organisations and networks, from 202 Iranian athletes, from survivors and former political prisoners, and from four other political and civil-society alliances. Eleven republican and non-partisan organisations have also explicitly backed the decision. Support for Prince Reza Pahlavi therefore extends beyond monarchist circles.

The Freedom Prize is dedicated to the Iranian people; Prince Reza Pahlavi accepts it in trust. This is neither a coronation nor a prior decision about the future form of government. Anyone who demands that an oppressed opposition hold a mandate from free national elections even before liberation turns the dictatorship itself into an obstacle to any recognised transitional leadership.

We currently see Prince Reza Pahlavi as the only realistic leader for an orderly transition to democracy. He should be measured by his own convictions, his statements and his political actions, not by whether he publicly distances himself from his father. The reign of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi is today viewed differently and reassessed by many Iranians. Against the background of the Cold War and the threat posed by the Soviet Union as well as by communist and Islamist forces, many are convinced that his actions at the time were right. Engaging with this history, however, must not turn into prejudging his son.

We therefore call on you to avoid one-sided portrayals, to examine unsubstantiated claims critically and to give appropriate consideration to the documented voices of supporters. Independent journalism should not steer readers towards a particular

point of view. Its task is to present the different positions and the facts behind them fairly and in a balanced way – only then can readers form their own opinions freely and on a sound basis. We expect this standard also when you report on Prince Reza Pahlavi and the Iranian freedom movement.

The future of Iran lies in the hands of Iranians. Please give this voice space as well.

Yours sincerely,

**Patriotic Doctors of Iran**