Patriotic Doctors of Iran

Open Letter to the SPD Group in Frankfurt City Council on the Award of the Freedom Prize

4 November 2026

To the SPD group in the Römer (Frankfurt City Council)
Mr Kolja Müller, Ms Sarya Ataç and Mr Mustapha Lamjahdi

Re: Your press release of 30 October 2026 on the award of the Freedom Prize

Dear Mr Müller,
Dear Ms Ataç,
Dear Mr Lamjahdi,

It was with dismay that we read your press release on the award of the Freedom Prize. In it, you express your solidarity with the people of Iran. At the same time, you cancel your participation in an event dedicated precisely to these people. Your statement leaves open how your absence is supposed to help the persecuted and their families.

When the protests were crushed in January 2026, tens of thousands of people were killed according to various reports and estimates. Many of them had chanted the name of Prince Reza Pahlavi in the streets. Citing senior officials of the Iranian Ministry of Health, TIME magazine reported that possibly more than 30,000 people died on 8 and 9 January alone. Behind these figures are shattered families, political prisoners and people who have paid an almost unimaginable price for their desire for freedom.

The violence did not end with the massacres in January. Since then, the regime has been executing people almost daily. At least 29 people arrested in connection with the protests have already been hanged, some in public, some of them just 18 or 19 years old. Dozens more have been sentenced to death after summary trials without independent legal counsel and on the basis of “confessions” extracted

under torture – more than 70 in a single prison in Isfahan province alone. These young people are sitting in their cells today, not knowing whether they will live to see the next morning. Where is your voice for them? We are not aware of any initiative by your group calling for their release, for fair trials or for an end to the executions – neither a public statement nor a political sponsorship for any of the prisoners.

All the less do we understand why the consequence you are now drawing publicly is directed, of all things, against an honour for the Iranian struggle for freedom.

The Freedom Prize is awarded to the Iranian people. The Friedrich Naumann Foundation has explicitly stated that Prince Reza Pahlavi accepts it only in trust until it can be handed over to freely elected representatives of Iran. This confers no mandate to govern, nor does it predetermine the future form of government. Anyone assessing the award should not overlook this distinction.

Your criticism rests essentially on his origins and on his father's rule. That the human rights violations of that era must be addressed is beyond question for us. But whether someone is politically suitable is decided by what he himself says and does and by the democratic commitments he makes, not by his ancestry. Which specific statements or actions of Prince Reza Pahlavi do you consider incompatible with freedom, democracy and equal rights for all citizens? Your statement gives no answer to this.

Nor does the remark that "many" doubt his representativeness replace a look at his actual support. According to the police, up to 250,000 people came to the Iran rally in Munich on 14 February 2026, at which Prince Reza Pahlavi spoke. Worldwide, around 1.5 million Iranians followed his call that day. These figures do not replace an election, but they should not be overlooked either. We currently consider him the only realistic leader who can guide an orderly transition to a secular democracy. You do not have to share this assessment. But the many people who hold it are just as much legitimate Iranian voices as all others.

To avoid any misunderstanding: we reject the Islamic Republic just as we reject any other authoritarian claim to power. Nor do the People's Mojahedin (Mujahedin-e Khalq, MEK/PMOI) speak in our name. The future of Iran should be decided by Iranians themselves, in freedom. We expect this standard from you too – towards all political groups.

You invoke the democratic tradition of the Paulskirche. That is precisely where there should be room for open debate. A conversation with different Iranian voices would do more justice to your democratic responsibility than a demonstrative absence.

We therefore call on you to reconsider your decision, to give comprehensible reasons for your objections and to engage in dialogue with supporters of Prince Reza Pahlavi as well. We would be glad to take part in such an exchange.

Whether solidarity with the Iranian people is credible is shown by what it achieves for their freedom. The victims of repression and the right of Iranians to determine the future of their country themselves should be at the centre of your political action.

Yours sincerely,

The Board of Patriotic Doctors e. V.,
on behalf of its members

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