The Leader’s remarks in meeting with officials of the 1st national congress on 4,000 martyrs of Golestan province - 15 /Dec/ 2016

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Dear brethren and sisters, who are present here; you are very welcome. I thank Mr. [Hojjatoleslam Seyyed Kazem] Nourmofidi [the Leader’s representative in Golestan province and Friday prayers leader of the city of Gorgan] as well as other brethren in charge, who have started and took this great measure and this lasting move with regard to dear martyrs of that territory. The issue of martyrs is a very important issue and although a long time has passed, we have not yet truly assessed the importance of what our youths did during this long period of time following the victory of the [Islamic] Revolution up to the present day, especially during the period of the Sacred Defense [Iraq’s eight-year imposed war against Iran]. I mean, we have not only failed to realize the true importance of this measure, which was taken to protect the revolution, the Islamic establishment, the country, our national dignity and our future and history, but have also failed to demonstrate and express [its importance]. Therefore, these measures that you take for this purpose and on this path, are very valuable.

Well, the remarks made by Mr. Nourmofidi were ample. He referred to very good and correct things about issues related to the revolution and [remarks made by other] gentlemen were also as such. Although some of the remarks made here were more suitable for [presentation to] the Cabinet and the likes of these, well, at any rate, they were remarks about an important region [of Iran], which is the Golestan region.

Let me say a few words about merits of Golestan [province]. The Golestan region is a region [in Iran] which, in terms of manpower and its people, for various reasons, is a truly exemplary region. First of all, the point on which Mr. Nourmofidi laid emphasis on, and is very important [the fact that the people in this province] are living in a desirable and effective coexistence among different ethnic and religious groups – [both] in Gorgan, [and elsewhere] in Golestan and Turkmen Sahra regions – is very important. Today, a great deal of money is being spent in order to sow discord among Islamic denominations and between Sunnis and Shias, and as put by Western people, [there are] think tanks, which deliberate and think and offer views and make plans [for this purpose]. If [their efforts] are explained for people, they would be really surprised that all these measures are being taken, so that, two Muslim persons, one of whom is Sunni or Shia, would not sit together, [or] talk to each other, would be estranged, be hostile toward each other, and take up arms against each other.

Despite all these [measures], what happened in the Islamic Iran was exactly the opposite of what they wanted and one of the best regions in this regard is the Golestan region. I had visited this region before the revolution and [during that trip, I] traveled to [the city of] Gonbad Qabus, and Gorgan and some other cities like Galikesh and the likes of them, and know how people in that region have been endeavoring and persevering to maintain this coexistence and this cooperation and mutual compassion. This is very valuable, this must be preserved, [and this situation] must be kept in place. A few years ago, I took a trip to Gorgan, which lasted one day or one and a half days – I don’t remember clearly – [and during that trip] I went to [the city of] Gonbad [Qabus]. The great majority of the people, who expressed their affection for me in Gonbad, were among Sunni brethren. This is quite the opposite of what Saudis and Takfiris, and behind them, America and [such Western] intelligence services [as] the CIA and [the British] Intelligence Service and the likes of them are working [to achieve] today; this is quite the opposite of that; I mean, the political work [done there] is in the real sense of the world purposive, well-oriented, correct, sharp and categorical. This is one of the merits of the Golestan region, which in my opinion, is very important.

Quite recently – a few months ago – I received a letter from [the family of] the Turkmen lady, who was martyred in the Mina incident [during last year’s Hajj pilgrimage]. Her family had written to me that she had gone [for Hajj pilgrimage] to [the city of] Mecca and had told somebody to bear witness that she did the pilgrimage on behalf of this humble one – now, [I am not sure if it was] this trip or a trip before that – [and] this is very important. A

Turkmen lady, whom I don't know, or whose name is unknown to me, goes on a trip to Mecca and performs Hajj [pilgrimage] on behalf of this humble one and then tells some person to bear witness – they bore witness to this, wrote it down, and signed, [and] sent it to me a few months ago. These are among those things, which are really strong points in our country and among our nation. This asymmetrical war, which is talked about now, means that one side [of the war] is in possession of certain tools and means, with the other side lacking those tools and even sometimes knowing nothing about them; this is one of its examples. These cases of affection, these connections, [and] these forms of coordination are [among] those things that our opposite side – which is the global arrogance, is the Zionism, [and] is America – know nothing about , and even do recognize and cannot analyze at all. They cannot even analyze these [soft war tools]. This is one [important] point.

Another point is the issue of the loyalty of this people to the revolution and issues related to it. I traveled to Gorgan in [the Iranian calendar year, 1343 (1964-65), [and] was a preacher there. It was about one year after the incidents that took place on the 15th [day of the Iranian month] of Khordad [in the Iranian year, 1342 (June 5, 1963)]; [and] it was the second or third ten-day period of [the lunar month of] Safar. That gathering and move that people created and that welcome, which people accorded [me], and that excitement that people showed was surprising for me. It was a sign of vigilance and interest of people in this [revolutionary] movement, [taking into account that] at that time, nothing important was taking place [with regard to the revolution], [and anti-Shah] struggles were not prevalent and widespread.

Then it was the developments related to the revolution period. This very issue of [what happened on] the 5th day of [the Iranian month of] Azar [in the Iranian year, 1357 (November 22, 1978)] – to which you gentlemen referred – is an important day in [the course of] the developments of Gorgan. People in Gorgan heard about the attack on the shrine of Imam Reza (PBUH) in [the city of] Mashhad and started a spontaneous move; neither anybody had invited them [to do this], nor anybody welcomed them, [but] they entered the arena and were, well, attacked [by former regime forces]. This development was repeated a couple of weeks later in [the city of] Gonbad Qabus, this happened in [the city of] Galikesh as well; I mean people entered the arena. Or during early [months after the victory of the Islamic] Revolution, during the move that Marxists made in there – that massacre [of people] and that secessionism and the likes of these – the most important thing, which managed to save Gorgan or to save that region or to save [the entire] Turkmen Sahra was people's resistance. [This was] because those [Marxist forces], who had gone there and found a foothold there and had recruited some people there, they lacked poplar support. When a group does not have popular support, it is easily defeated. People were supporting this [pro-revolution] side, people were supporting the revolution, [and] people were supporting [the late] Imam [Khomeini]. At any rate, praise be to God, the merits of people [of Golestan] are numerous.

Likewise, during the period of the Sacred Defense both the Army – the same Division 30 to which you referred – and Division 25 of the IRGC [Islamic Revolution Guards Corps], both belonging to Golestan and Gorgan region, were greatly successful and did great things, some of which he [the secretary of the congress] mentioned. Once, Mr. Nourmofidi was there when I went to the [war command] center and a group of our friends from Gorgan were there as well, [and] I think late Mr. [Seyyed Habibollah] Taheri [Gorgani, former representative of Gorgan in the Assembly of Experts] was there as well. May God bless his soul and increase his ranks [in the Afterworld, because] he played a great role. At any rate, their presence in the arena of war and their activities were extraordinary activities. Now, when it comes to the people of Gorgan, regardless of how much we would talk about them, it would not be sufficient. Hereby, I hail each and every one of our dear people [in Gorgan] both Shias and Sunnis, and especially the clerics of the region, both Shias and Sunnis. [I expect] Mr. Nourmofidi to take this trouble on my behalf and convey the greetings of this humble one to all clerics there and to all officials, who are active there, and [also] to all people. I really have a feeling of compassion and trust and devotion toward the people of Gorgan.

As I said before, the issue of martyrs must be taken very seriously. We must believe in the same values for martyrs, which the Almighty God has considered for them, [when he said in the Quran that]: "They fight in the cause of Allah, so they kill and are killed. [It is] a true promise [binding] upon Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Quran." These people, who fight on the path of God and lay down their lives, are valuable both when they kill the enemy and when they are killed [by the enemy], [and] the Almighty God has given His divine promise to have mercy on them. Now, [about] that person, who loses his life in this way, we have in [Islamic] traditions that before leaving this world, they see the signs of God's mercy. I mean, [Islamic] traditions have it that as soon as a martyr

falls from his horse – at that time they fought on horseback – [and] before hitting the ground, they receive the divine promise. That is, even in this world, his eyes are opened and see the truth and God's mercy, [and] understand and receive God's favor in a tangible way; this is how valuable martyrs are. If it were not for these martyrdoms, [and] if it were not for these sacrifices, this establishment would not have survived; [because] this sapling was attacked by strong storms. The reason why this establishment has survived and this sapling was not destroyed and, thank God, turned into a robust tree, was sacrifices and selflessness and enthusiasm for martyrdom and entering the arena [by martyrs]; this [quality] must be preserved. [At the same time,] the enemy must be known, [and] the enemy's plot must be known.

Today, you see that with regard to global issues, where the arrogance has a fundamental plot with regard to this region, that central point [of the plot] is Iran; why? [It is] because of the Islamic Revolution, because of this faithful nation, [and] because of the Islamic faith that exists here. We are target of frequent attacks; fortunately, the Almighty God has given us the power, [and] given us the ability [to repel those attacks]. We have both manpower, and a blessed country. We have a big country, have a big population, [and] have a talented and vigilant and active young generation. These are our potentialities, [and] these potentialities should not be taken lightly, [because] they are grand potentialities [and] we must take advantage of them. And state officials are addressees of these remarks in the first place followed by each and every one of [Iranian] people. Everybody must feel that they shoulder a duty with regard to this huge development that has taken place – in which the flag of Islam has been hoisted – [because] this is no small thing. At a time that all hands and policies and powers were endeavoring to isolate the absolute concept of religion, especially Islam, at that time, the most lively of religions, that is, the dear Islam, and the most eloquent of divine texts, that is, the Holy Quran, were able to rise to the highest level in a country and take control of the [whole] expanse of the country and, in addition to this, could throw geographical boundaries in disarray and enter various regions of the world; this is a very amazing and important development.

The enemy witnessed these developments and felt threatened and started its activities and efforts against the Islamic establishment since day one and [has continued those efforts] up to the present time; [however], praise be to God, they have not been able [to do anything] and, with God's Grace, will certainly not be able to do anything from now on. The [main] condition [for their failure], however, is that all of us feel responsible. I mean, everybody must feel responsibility and every one of us, at any place that we are, must really make defending the Islamic establishment our first and foremost duty and must regulate our moves accordingly. This step that you take to revive [the name] of martyrs and promulgate their name and hold commemoration ceremonies for them, is certainly for this purpose and is effective in this regard and, God willing, is a good deed whose effects linger in time and is a lasting step and the Almighty God, God willing, will reward you for it.

Make sure that these publications and these products of your work will hit [people's] mind and reach the audience. I mean, we must not be satisfied that we have produced a book; of course, there is no doubt that production of a book is important or production of a film or an artistic production is important, but besides these measures, it is also important to find audience, or in other words, to create audience. Try to get this book reach the mind of the audience. At present, our youths need intellectual nourishment. Many of these young people of today, even our active and good youths, have neither seen the revolution, nor the Imam, nor the period of war, nor are informed of these various issues. Now, [for example] you referred to [what happened in Gorgan on] the 5th of Azar; well, do young people of Gorgan know what happened on the 5th of Azar? This is very important. They must know what happened on the 5th of Azar, which has been recorded in history; I mean, this is important. It is very important that young people would know their history, know their past, and in fact, know their revolutionary identity. You must try to do this as much as you can. Of course, doing this needs [hard] work; I mean, it is not an easy job. More difficult than writing a book is to offer that book to the views and mind of the audience; this is very important. This needs tact, needs accuracy, [and] has subtleties, which you must be able to infuse into the mind of these [young people].

This very issue of Sunnism and Shiism, which was brought up here – both he (the Leader's representative in Golestan province) mentioned this, and I also brought it up – is a very important issue. Both Shia and Sunni youth must know how important this issue is. Today, enemies are taking advantage of these differences, [and] of these grievances, which occur – either on this side, or on the other side – from time to time. The likes of Daesh and Takfiris and the likes of these [groups] are taking advantage of these things, [and] we must prevent them from taking advantage [of these differences]. This would not be possible unless a Shia youth, [and] a Sunni youth know

that what they are doing right now, the coordination and coexistence and common language and empathy that exist between them, are very great things; [because] this is the biggest weapon against the enemy of Iran, the enemy of Islam and the enemy of the Quran. They must know this and preserve this [state of affairs]. These [facts] must be transferred and conveyed to the mind of our young audience in a tangible way.
God willing, God will make you successful. God willing, God will elevate to the highest level the ranks of your deceased ones and great clerics of Gorgan some of whom I knew up-close and had met. God willing, God will increase achievements of these friends, who are present right now – [including] Mr. Nourmofidi, all of you and other brethren who are active – on a daily basis and, God willing, you would be able to take strong and unwavering steps on this path.

Peace be unto you and so may the mercy of Allah and His blessings