

# The Blue Girl

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009 the 26-year-old Neda Agha-Soltan, while participating in a demonstration was shot to death on the streets of Tehran. The video of her tragic death swept across the world like a tsunami. Many, including world leaders responded to the graphic video with a great deal of sympathy and condemnation of the regime's heinous act. Days and weeks passed, and the momentum of the fervor gradually gave way to the familiar apathy that has followed many similar incidents whether greater or smaller in magnitude. This was an interesting phenomenon. It perhaps could be viewed as an ongoing Pavlovian Conditioning event. People rise momentarily, but routinely, the unchecked brutality of the regime along with the silent condoning of other nations for maintaining the status quo points to the futility of their resistance, so they go home dejected, time and time again. The Iranian people's lack of diligence is often criticized without paying attention to the contributing factors. Every emotionally climactic event, instead of becoming a launching pad for a paradigm shift, has been neutralized by the absence of a proactively empathetic and clearly supportive and empowering global voice. Of course, one may argue that the Iranian internal affairs are an Iranian concern, however, that would be true if the rest of the world had maintained a neutral stance and had not been meddling in these affairs to ensure the respective (short sighted and short

term) national interest of their own countries for the past four decades. The Iranians up to now, have subscribed to the notion that the rest of the world has consistently acted against their national interest in a grand collusion with the IRI. So far, this collaboration represented a Goliath that intimidated the individual Iranian or the fragmented Whole of the nation. Luckily, due to the recent reach-outs to the people of Iran by some governments, the myth of this unwholly alliance's power is crumbling. Due to this unprecedented but fuzzy claim of support for the people of Iran, which incidentally has been no more than an empty gesture so far, the nation is waking up to a new revelation. The realization that perhaps, the David of the times has been sleeping within the body of the nation all along, and that when empowered, and once a hive mentality for the good of all is adopted, nothing can stand in its way.

On Monday September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019, Sahar Khodayari, better known postmortem as the Blue Girl of Iran lost her life due to an act of self-immolation. She was a soccer fan who had changed her appearance to resemble a male fan just to gain entry to a stadium where her favorite team was to play. She was arrested, humiliated and sentenced to a prison term which she didn't believe she could survive. Her innocence and becoming the latest victim of absurd laws, points once again to the true nature of a regime that has brutally subjugated the Iranian nation for four decades. Ten years later, while we have a sequel to Neda's story on hand, the capricious prohibitions and unjust punishments are still the same, but the sociopolitical

environment has changed drastically. Whether the other countries would stop deluding themselves by replacing their decaf with some real coffee is to be seen.

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