

## **The Leader of the Revolution meets with Thousands from East Azerbaijan - 17 /Feb/ 2025**

This morning, on the anniversary of the great uprising of the 29th Bahman 1356 by the people of Tabriz, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, met thousands from this city. He highlighted faith, religious zeal, leadership, and admirability as enduring characteristics of the people of Azerbaijan and Tabriz. He said, "Despite the challenges and with the expectations that they held by right, the people demonstrated during the massive February 11th (22nd Bahman) rally. The enemy's software manoeuvres and threats aimed at manipulating public opinion had been ineffective at creating division and doubt. All media outlets, thinkers, writers, artists, scholars, educators, and active youth in virtual spaces should bring all their capabilities to the forefront to ensure the nation continues its successful software defence against the enemy's complex schemes."

Ayatollah Khamenei described the faith and spirit of Tabriz's youth today as the legacy of those who created the uprising on February 18th, 1978 (29th Bahman 1356). He said, "The youth of today know their friends and enemies, and in the face of the shouts of one person from one side and the howls of another from the other side, they feel empowered, free from fear and passivity. They stand firm like a mountain against events that shake even seasoned political figures."

He emphasised the necessity for the youth of Azerbaijan to be conscious of the characteristics of the great event of the 29th Bahman and those who brought it into being. He saw that having such awareness prevents the enemy's false narratives from taking hold in the mind.

The Leader of the Revolution held Azerbaijan and Tabriz as Iran's strong fortress against foreign aggression. Quoting Sattar Khan's famous words, "I will stand under no banner except that of Abal-Fadl al-Abbas," he said, "On numerous occasions, the people of Tabriz, through patience, perseverance, and faith, have forced enemies to retreat."

He pointed out the efforts of certain misguided individuals affiliated with the apparatus of the tyrannical regime to distort Azerbaijan's identity into a non-Islamic one. He said, "Relying on ethnic characteristics and an anti-religious, so-called secular outlook, they sought to alter the true identity of the Azerbaijani people—but they failed. Even during that period, Tabriz elevated Iran's name and prestige by offering brilliant figures such as Allama Tabatabai, Allama Amini, and Ustad Shahriar."

Ayatollah Khamenei highlighted the Islamic faith and religious zeal of the people of Tabriz as the two main factors behind the 29th Bahman uprising. He said, "The significance of that uprising is not merely that it forced the tyrannical regime to deploy tanks in the streets, but rather its true greatness lies in how it became a model for the entire nation, inspiring people in various cities to join the struggle."

He also highlighted leadership in various capacities and situations as another characteristic of the people of Tabriz. He said, "The invaluable legacy of steadfastness, the sense of capability and strength, and the rejection of passivity, qualities we see in Azerbaijan today, are remnants of that era and must be relied upon for the country's progress."

Being a model for others or their admirability was another trait of the people of Tabriz that the Leader of the Revolution highlighted. In explaining this, he honoured the memory of esteemed martyrs such as Thiqatu'l-Islam, Sheikh Muhammad Khiyabani, Sattar Khan, Baqir Khan, and the distinguished martyrs of Azerbaijan in the Sacred Defence, including the Bakri brothers."

Ayatollah Khamenei recalled Tabriz's pioneering role, following Isfahan, in producing many great scholars. He stated, "These two cities are exemplary in nurturing distinguished scholars."

He described Iran's defensive capabilities against harsh threats as excellent and stated, "Both our friends and enemies acknowledge this reality, and the nation in this regard feels secure."

Ayatollah Khamenei said, "Our issue today, therefore, is not the enemy's hardware threat but rather, its software threat."

The Leader of the Revolution defined the software threat as the manipulation of public opinion, the creation of division, and the instillation of doubt in the fundamental principles of the Islamic Revolution, and that it was necessary to remain steadfast against the enemy. He said, "Those who wish us ill have concluded that the way to overcome the Iranian nation and push back the Islamic Republic from its firm positions is through the use of the software threat. However, they have not succeeded thus far, nor have they been able to deter the Iranian people and youth from their determination and movement despite their whisperings and deceptions."

He said that the massive 22nd Bahman march was clear evidence of the ineffectiveness of the software threat, adding, "The magnificent and impressive participation of people, even after 46 years since the victory of the Revolution, is an unparalleled phenomenon in the world. The people demonstrated that despite the challenges and their rightful expectations, these (threats) do not prevent them from standing in defence of the Revolution."

Emphasising the need to continue countering the enemy's deceit, Ayatollah Khamenei stated, "Officials in charge of propaganda, education, media institutions, writers, thinkers, scholars, artists, as well as those youth who are active in virtual space, must identify the points targeted by the enemy where they seek to infiltrate public opinion and block them by producing content, ideas, and thought."

He described software defence as more critical than hardware defence in the current circumstances. He explained the reason for this importance, saying, "Shortcomings in hardware defence can be compensated through software defence, as has been done many times so far. However, software issues cannot be resolved using hardware tools."

The Leader of the Revolution advised the youth to strengthen software defence by familiarising themselves with the concepts and characteristics of the Revolution and the statements of the great Imam (Khomeini). He added, "Our Revolution, in its true sense, is a struggle of 'light against darkness' and 'truth against falsehood,' aiming to elevate the Iranian nation, bring greatness to its future, and showcase its national identity."

Referring to the progress made in achieving the goals of the Revolution, he said, "Of course, we have not yet fully achieved the goals of the Revolution, particularly in areas such as justice, addressing social disparities, and some other issues. We face difficulties and must work harder to overcome our shortcomings. Still, the Revolution has managed to preserve its independent identity as a massive and hopeful base for the nations of the region and even beyond. The reason for the anger of the global arrogant powers, colonialists, and vile criminal elements is the ability of the Islamic Republic to endure, stand firm, and show them a powerful fist."

Ayatollah Khamenei rejected certain analyses suggesting that the Iranian nation had created enemies for itself as being incorrect. He said, "The hostility of the oppressive U.S. policymaking apparatus is not because of the chant 'Death to America,' rather, it stems from the fact that, through the determination and sacrifices of its people, Iran has managed to break free from the yoke of colonial subjugation and refuses to submit to their impositions."

He described the arrogant and domineering rhetoric of the Americans, as well as their demands to seize or lay claim to parts of countries, as a reflection of the ugly, brutal, plundering, and domineering nature of the arrogant powers and the intricate Zionist network. He added, "They cannot tolerate the fact that, by standing on its own feet and



protesting against their oppression and aggression, the Iranian nation has established a government that, after 46 years, grows stronger by the day."

The Leader of the Revolution identified the primary audience of his remarks as the youth of Iran and addressed them, saying, "Today, your responsibility is to preserve the revolutionary spirit, strengthen progress, and advance toward achieving the goals of the Revolution."

Ayatollah Khamenei also honoured the memory of the late and martyred Friday Prayer Imam of Tabriz, Ayatollah Al-Hashem, as well as the young and revolutionary governor of East Azerbaijan, and all the martyrs of the tragic helicopter crash that claimed the life of Martyr Raisi and his companions. He said that the presence of Mr Pezeshkian at this meeting was a sign of the President's deep connection with the people.

At the beginning of this meeting, Hujjatul Islam wal-Muslimeen Motahari Asl, the Representative of the Supreme Leader in East Azerbaijan Province and the Friday Prayer Imam of Tabriz honoured the memory of the Martyrs of Service and spoke about the territorial integrity of Iran and its neighbours. He described the border of East Azerbaijan as a border of empathy, friendship, tranquillity, and based on lasting security.

Hojatoleslam wal-Muslimeen Motahari also presented a report on the Friday Prayer institution's cultural, scientific, political, and social activities in this province.