

# *Exclusive: A tribute to martyred Iranian statesmen*

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By former Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi \*

Speaking about statesmen whose lives were filled with sincere and pure endeavors in God-pleasing service to their nation is a difficult task, as one cannot do justice to it.

At the forefront is Martyr Ayatollah Ebrahim Raisi, the devoted president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who had a personality with distinguished characteristics, such as nobility, humility, being people-oriented, simple living, adherence to ethics, and indomitable faith.

Along with him was someone with whom I enjoyed a great affinity, Martyr Dr. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian. When I was honored to serve as Iran's Foreign Minister (2010-2013), he was serving as the director of the Arab-Africa department at the ministry.

Therefore, we happened to be together on my first official trip to Iraq. During that trip, I got to know the depth of his wisdom, insight, and deep understanding of regional issues. Thus, I decided to utilize his presence in higher positions in the ministry upon our return from Iraq.

At that time, the situation in West Asia and North Africa region, especially Syria, was chaotic. Thus, I found it opportune to appoint Dr. Mohammadreza Shibani, who was then the Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab-African affairs, as ambassador to Syria due to his valuable experiences.

At the same time, I appointed Dr. Amir-Abdollahian as his successor. From that time and for a while during the tenure of Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif as Iran's Foreign Minister, Dr. Amir-Abdollahian continued to hold that important diplomatic responsibility.

One of the prominent features of the martyr, due to his background, was combining field experiences with diplomacy. Dr. Amir-Abdollahian operated with sincerity, honesty, wisdom, and trust in God in every period and in every responsibility he was entrusted with.

His ever-smiling face and pure heart attracted people to him. He was the perfect embodiment of Imam Ali's (AS) famous saying that describes the faithful: "His smile on his face and his sorrow in his heart."

Every time I had the opportunity to meet Dr. Amir-Abdollahian, he interacted with utmost humility and pure human emotions.

Another dear one we lost in this tragedy is the esteemed Ayatollah Al-Hashem, a prominent cleric and the respected representative of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution in northwestern East Azerbaijan province.

In addition to possessing scholarly virtues, he was an embodiment of ethics and humility. A few days before his martyrdom, I had the privilege of meeting him at the International Congress of Imam Reza (AS) in the city of Mashhad.

His behavior, full of love and humility, bestowed him a radiant appearance.

The other companions of our martyred president were servants of the great Iranian nation who were destined to reach the grace of martyrdom. They lived happily and were martyred happily.

However, this painful incident represents a great loss for the Iranian nation and the Muslim Ummah. The nation lost compassionate and hardworking statesmen.

Martyr Raisi had firm and principled political positions and was a staunch supporter of the Palestinian cause. In this path, his skilled and trusted aide was Martyr Dr. Amir-Abdollahian.

Although the loss is very hard to bear, we are certain that the great nation of Iran, with the blessings of the martyrs' blood and its high resolve, and guided by the wise Leader of the Islamic Revolution, will confidently overcome these difficult times and emerge stronger.

Because these people worked for the pleasure of God and in His name, therefore the hand of destiny will surely support this honorable and noble nation.

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