

IRAN PITCH

“You know, I don’t get what democracy is because I am from Iran. Here you cannot fight against politicians or make complaints”

Anonymous student from Iran in Hamburg

The roaring twenties started out with the terrifying murder of Maj. Gen. Quassim Soleimani, Iranian leader of the so called Quds force - a group labelled terrorism by the US, Canada and other countries.

It was terrifying in the sense that the minds of many were crossed by the thought that this was the start of a new proxy war, which could mean the intervention of countries possessing nuclear weapons.

Our focus on this new conflict may have been distracted by the COVID-19 pandemic. But it requires us to remember, that although the coronavirus will subside some day the danger of a nuclear disaster remains as long as states possess nuclear weapons.

I have interviewed students (of both sexes, from ages 18-28) in an institution where I am studying and working now, to see what personal stories they might provide in order to understand what some Iranian youth think about nuclear weapons overall, and war.

Needless to say all of the students agree how complex it is, because of the current Iranian political situation, to find clear answers to such questions - questions disarmament politicians have been trying to answer for decades. When asked about the social climate, the young adults (students) remembered extreme poverty in Iran, which makes people a little inclined to overlook of the political situation.

However, opinions on conflict were at quite a personal level, as one of the students lost his brother to armed conflict.

Views on nuclear weapons were diametrically opposed. Some students saw them as the cause of Iranian people’s suffering from sanctions, imposed because of perceptions about Iran’s nuclear intentions, and there should be steps taken to make Iran appear less of a threat and improve the lives of Iranians.

Others, in spite of this, told me that nuclear weapons are a message not only of power, but also a promise that if a war should ever take place, it would be over fast; no one wants a long war, because people are simply tired of the tensions surrounding the previous and possible future political conflicts.

The students agreed that the government should be friendlier in the international arena and the regime puts in danger diplomatic attempts to build strong relations.