

Thursday 4 September 2008

Iran

P6_TA(2008)0412

European Parliament resolution of 4 September 2008 on executions in Iran

(2009/C 295 E/22)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Iran, notably those concerning human rights and in particular its resolution of 19 June 2008 ⁽¹⁾ on the execution of juvenile offenders in Iran,
 - having regard to the Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union, of 13 June 2008, on the execution of Mohammad Hassanzadeh,
 - having regard to the Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union, of 18 July 2008, concerning application of the death penalty in Iran,
 - having regard to the Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union, of 29 July 2008, on the execution of 29 people in Evin prison in Iran,
 - having regard to the Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union, of 25 August 2008, on the execution by hanging of Reza Hejazi,
 - having regard to the Statements by the Presidency of the Council of the European Union on 19 and 28 August 2008 on the imminent execution of Behnood Shojaee and of Bahman Soleimani respectively,
 - having regard to the resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, in particular Resolution A/RES/62/168 of 18 December 2007 on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Resolution A/RES/62/149 of 18 December 2007 on a moratorium on the use of the death penalty,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which the Islamic Republic of Iran is a party,
 - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas, according to Amnesty International, the number of executions carried out in Iran so far this year totals at least 191, while in 2007 more executions were carried out in Iran — 317 — than in any other country in the world except China, although its population is 18 times smaller than China's,
- B. whereas 29 simultaneous executions took place in Evin prison in Tehran on 27 July 2008,
- C. whereas on 10 June 2008 16-year-old Mohammad Hassanzadeh, an Iranian Kurd, was executed for a crime he committed at the age of 14; whereas on 22 July 2008 juvenile offenders Hassan Mozafari and Rahman Shahidi were executed, and on 19 August 2008 19-year-old Reza Hejazi was hanged for an alleged murder which he committed when he was 15 years old; whereas on 26 August 2008 19-year-old Behnam Zare was executed for an offence he committed at the age of 15, making him the sixth juvenile offender to be put to death in Iran in 2008 alone,
- D. whereas neither Zare's nor Hejazi's family, nor their lawyer, were notified of the time and place of the scheduled executions, in violation of Iranian law,

⁽¹⁾ Texts Adopted, P6_TA(2008)0314.

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- E. whereas juvenile offenders Amir Marollahi, Behnood Shojaee, Mohammed Fadaei and Bahman Soleimani face imminent risk of execution,
 - F. whereas the execution of juvenile offenders is prohibited under international law, as stated in Article 6(5) of the ICCPR and the Convention on the Rights of the Child; whereas there are currently at least 130 children and child offenders on death row despite Iran's legal obligations,
 - G. whereas minority rights activists are increasingly exposed to the threat of the death penalty, as in the case of Yaghoub Mehrnehad, an ethnic Baluchi and executive director of the Voice of Justice Youth Association, who was executed on 4 August 2008, after having publicly confronted local officials demanding accountability for their poor performance,
 - H. whereas another minority rights activist, Kurdish teacher Farzad Kamangar, has been condemned to death on charges, without evidence, of taking up arms against the state,
 - I. whereas confessions are often obtained following torture, without access to lawyers, and court rulings lack the minimum standards to be met to ensure a fair trial,
 - J. whereas, on 5 August 2008, the Iranian Judiciary announced the suspension of the use of stoning as a means of execution, with the consequence that 10 unnamed women facing death by lapidation would not be stoned,
 - K. whereas there are grounds for concern that members and associates of the Iranian opposition who are regrouped and protected in Camp Ashraf in Northern Iraq by US-led multinational forces under Article 27 of the Fourth Geneva Convention may be under threat of being expelled or forcibly returned to Iran, where they could face heavy persecution and possibly even the death penalty,
1. Is profoundly saddened at the recent execution of several juvenile offenders in Iran, making Iran the only country in the world where this grave and inhumane punishment is still practised in 2008;
 2. Draws particular attention to the fate of Soghra Najafpour, who has spent almost the entire past 19 years of her life on death row for a murder which took place when she was 13 years old;
 3. Calls on the Head of the Judiciary, Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Sharoudi, to systematically commute all death penalties for juvenile offenders, and pleads with the Iranian authorities in particular to halt the execution of Amir Marollahi, Behnood Shojaee, Mohammed Fadaei and Bahman Soleimani;
 4. Strongly condemns the growing number of executions, and urges the Iranian authorities to establish a moratorium on the use of the death penalty with a view to its abolition in accordance with the resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 18 December 2007;
 5. Reiterates its call on the members of the Majlis to urgently amend legislation in order to ensure that no-one is executed for a crime committed when less than 18 years of age and to raise the age of legal responsibility to international standards;
 6. Supports legislative efforts in Iran to introduce a separate legislative and court system for juvenile offenders, and calls on the members of the Majlis to provide for measures aimed at education and social reintegration of child offenders; calls on the Commission to support the Iranian authorities in any request for international cooperation in this domain;
 7. Strongly condemns the persecution and imprisonment of citizens in Iran who engage in the defence of human rights and campaign against the death penalty, and are frequently charged with 'activities against national security'; calls, in particular, for the unconditional release of Emadeddin Baghi and Mohammad Sadegh Kabovand and the commutation of the death sentence on Farzad Kamangar, as well as a reinvestigation into his case;

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8. Welcomes the recent announcement of the suspension of stoning as a means of execution; expresses its concern, however, that in the penal code reform proposal currently under consideration by the Majlis, stoning for certain forms of adultery is being maintained, and calls on the members of the Majlis to commit themselves to the full abolition of stoning;
 9. Calls on the Iraqi and US authorities not to forcibly return to Iran any Iranian opposition members, refugees and asylum seekers who would be at serious risk of persecution and, in particular, to work together with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and others to find a satisfactory long-term solution to the situation of those currently in Camp Ashraf;
 10. Calls for the presentation of a resolution, at the next UN General Assembly, with a request to all countries who retain the death penalty to make available to the UN Secretary General and to public opinion all information on capital punishment and executions, so as to overcome State secrecy on the death penalty, which is also a direct cause of a greater number of executions;
 11. Calls for a new resolution to provide for the creation of a Special Envoy of the Secretary General, with the task of monitoring the situation, ensuring maximum transparency in the capital punishment system and favouring an internal process directed to the implementation of the United Nations resolution on the moratorium on executions;
 12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Government and Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Council, the Commission, the High Representative for the CFSP, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the UN Human Rights Council, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and the Governments of the United States and of Iraq.
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Albino killings in Tanzania

P6_TA(2008)0413

European Parliament resolution of 4 September 2008 on the killing of albinos in Tanzania

(2009/C 295 E/23)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on serious human rights violations,
 - having regard to the United Nations General Assembly's Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948,
 - having regard to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights which was adopted on 27 June 1981 and entered into force on 21 October 1986,
 - having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was adopted on 20 November 1989 and entered into force on 2 September 1990, and which is binding and applied without exception,
 - having regard to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities of 18 December 1992,
 - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas according to NGOs and media reports, confirmed by the Government of Tanzania, at least 25 albinos, including children, have been killed and mutilated since March 2008 in the Lake Victoria zone, especially in Mwanza, Shinyanga and Mara, where there is a high concentration of albinos,