

Thursday 22 October 2009

Iran

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European Parliament resolution of 22 October 2009 on Iran

(2010/C 265 E/06)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Iran, in particular those concerning human rights,
 - having regard to the declarations by the EU Presidency, the High Representative for the CFSP, the EU Foreign Ministers, the Heads of State and Government of the G8, the European Council and the President of the European Parliament on the repression of demonstrations during the post-electoral unrest in Iran in June 2009,
 - having regard to the report of the UN Secretary-General of 23 September 2009 on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran,
 - having regard to the statement by the President of the European Parliament of 9 October 2009 reiterating the commitment of Parliament to the worldwide abolition of the death penalty and specifically denouncing capital punishment for juvenile crimes and the imminent executions in Iran,
 - having regard to the EU Presidency statement of 13 October 2009 on the execution of Behnoud Shojaee in Iran,
 - having regard to the EU Presidency statement of 20 September 2009 condemning the repeated denials by the Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of the Holocaust and of the right of the state of Israel to exist,
 - having regard to the EU Presidency statement of 18 October 2009 condemning the suicide attack in Sistan-Baluchestan province in Iran, which killed at least 42 people,
 - having regard to United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 62/149 of 18 December 2007 and 63/168 of 18 December 2008 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 122 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the general human rights situation in Iran has continued to deteriorate, even more so since the presidential elections of June 2009,
- B. whereas Iran is the country with the highest number of executions after China, the numbers having increased fourfold since President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad came to power in 2005, and whereas it holds the sad distinction of being the only country in the world still to execute juvenile offenders; whereas at least 140 child offenders are on death row in Iran, according to reports by human rights lawyers,

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- C. whereas on 11 October 2009 Behnoud Shojaee was hanged despite strong national and international pleas to spare his life, being the third juvenile offender to be executed in the Islamic Republic of Iran since the beginning of 2009 after Delara Darabi and Molla Gol Hassan, and whereas the juvenile offenders Safar Angooti and Abbas Hosseini face imminent risk of execution,
- D. whereas the torture and ill-treatment of prisoners, sleep deprivation, solitary confinement, clandestine detention, the application of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and impunity for state agents all continue to be widespread,
- E. whereas the violent repression of political opponents, human rights activists, journalists, bloggers, teachers, intellectuals, academics, gay people, women, students, trade unionists and members of religious, ethnic and language minorities has increased,
- F. whereas seven leaders of the Baha'i faith continue to be imprisoned, being held solely on the basis of their religious beliefs,
- G. whereas on 4 August 2009 President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad received formal endorsement for a second term of office, having been declared the winner of the 12 June 2009 elections, while his election rivals Mir-Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karrubi, as well as numerous observers, accused the authorities of large-scale falsification of the election results,
- H. whereas in the following weeks and months tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets; whereas some 150 people died and more than a thousand demonstrators were arrested,
- I. whereas mass trials continue for reportedly 140 opposition supporters, including prominent reformers, and activists accused of offences ranging from rioting to spying and seeking to topple Iran's rulers,
- J. whereas four individuals have been sentenced to death in connection with the protests despite being imprisoned since April, long before the post-election demonstration,
- K. whereas according to reports by human rights organisations, dozens of reporters, photographers and bloggers have left Iran or are trying to flee the country, thousands have lost their jobs, numerous newspapers have been closed down by the authorities in recent weeks, and 19 journalists and five bloggers are reportedly still being held by the Iranian authorities,
1. Expresses serious doubts concerning the accuracy of the election results which have led to the confirmation of President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad for a second term of office, despite strong indications of large-scale electoral fraud, and considers that the credibility of the Iranian President has been seriously undermined;
 2. Pays tribute to the courage of all those Iranian men and women who are defending their basic freedoms and democratic principles and expressing their wish to live in a society free from repression and intimidation; pays a special tribute to the Iranian women who played a crucial role in the post-election demonstrations in June, and in particular to Neda Agha Soltan, who has become the symbol of the violent repression, and also to Shadi Sadr, the human rights activist, arrested on 15 July 2009 for speaking publicly about human rights violations carried out in prisons on detainees following Iran's disputed presidential elections;
 3. Condemns the large-scale and excessive use of force, arbitrary arrest and alleged torture in the repression of protests over the disputed Iranian presidential elections; calls on the Iranian government to respect fundamental civil and political rights and in particular the right to free expression, and demands that all peaceful demonstrators and all those arrested in the wider context of the recent unrest - be they students, academics, campaigners, journalists or human rights activists - be released unconditionally;

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4. Calls on the Iranian authorities to grant access for the International Committee of the Red Cross to all prisoners without exception, and to allow international human rights organisations to monitor the situation in the country;
 5. Urges the Iranian authorities to eliminate, in law and in practice, all forms of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and to uphold due process of law and end impunity for human rights violations;
 6. Condemns the suicide bomb attack which took place in Sistan-Baluchestan province on 17 October 2009, in which dozens of people were killed or wounded; is concerned that this suicide attack may be linked to the repression of ethnic and religious minorities in this province; rejects the use of terrorism as a means of resolving political disputes;
 7. Reiterates its appeal to the Iranian authorities to live up to the government's obligation to respect religious minorities and promptly release the Baha'i leaders Fariba Kamalabadi, Jamaloddin Khanjani, Afif Naeimi, Saeid Rasaie, Mahvash Sabet, Behrouz Tavakkoli and Vahid Tizfahm;
 8. Reiterates its call on the Iranian authorities to abolish the death penalty completely and, in the meantime, to establish a moratorium on executions, as called for by UN General Assembly Resolutions 62/149 and 63/168;
 9. Strongly condemns the death sentences and executions in Iran, in particular those imposed or carried out on juvenile offenders and minors, and protests vehemently against the execution in Iran on 11 October 2009 of Behnoud Shojaee; urges the Iranian authorities to respect the internationally recognised legal safeguards with regard to minors, such as the ICCPR and the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, and, in particular, not to execute Safar Angooti and Abbas Hosseini;
 10. Recommends that a Special Envoy be dispatched by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to monitor the situation of political detainees and ensure that the Iranian authorities adhere to international procedural standards and to their legal human rights obligations;
 11. Deplores the systematic restriction of freedom of information by means of blocking websites, banning them from covering unauthorized demonstrations, and implementing new restrictions requiring journalists to obtain permission before covering any story;
 12. Calls on the Iranian authorities to stop the prosecution of journalists working for international media, and calls, in particular, for the immediate release of Fariba Pajooh, a young Iranian-Canadian journalist and well-known blogger, arrested at her home in Tehran on 24 August 2009;
 13. Condemns the fact that the human rights activist Abdolfattah Soltani was, on 2 October 2009, prevented from travelling from Tehran to Nuremberg, Germany in order to receive that city's Human Rights Prize;
 14. Calls on the Commission to establish an EU delegation in Tehran in order to promote and strengthen dialogue with the authorities and with civil society in Iran, and to intensify cooperation, notably on aid for refugees and the fight against drug trafficking;
 15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Secretary-General, the UN Human Rights Council, and the Government and Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
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