

Thursday 6 October 2022

P9_TA(2022)0352

The death of Mahsa Amini and the repression of women's rights protesters in Iran**European Parliament resolution of 6 October 2022 on the death of Mahsa Jina Amini and the repression of women's rights protesters in Iran (2022/2849(RSP))**

(2023/C 132/11)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Iran,
 - having regard the declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union of 25 September 2022 and the statement of the European External Action Service spokesperson of 19 September 2022 on the death of Mahsa Amini,
 - having regard to the statement of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran of 22 September 2022, demanding accountability for the death of Mahsa Amini and calling for an end to violence against women,
 - having regard to the reports by UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran of 18 June 2022, 13 January 2022, and 11 January 2021,
 - having regard to report of the UN Secretary-General of 16 June 2022 on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran,
 - having regard to the statement of UN Secretary-General António Guterres of 27 September 2022,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966 (ICCPR), and to Iran's ratification thereof in June 1975,
 - having regard to the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders,
 - having regard to the EU guidelines of 8 December 2008 on violence against women and girls and combating all forms of discrimination against them,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas on 13 September 2022, 22-year old Iranian Kurdish woman Mahsa Jina Amini was arrested in Tehran by Iran's 'morality' police for an alleged failure to observe the mandatory veiling law; whereas according to eyewitnesses, 'morality' police pushed Mahsa Jina Amini into a police van and beat her during her transfer to Vozara detention centre in Tehran, where she shortly after fell into a coma and died on 16 September 2022, in a nearby hospital while in police custody; whereas the Iranian authorities have maintained that her death was from natural causes; whereas a proper investigation has not been conducted, and whereas the authorities have refused to provide the victim's family with her medical records and autopsy report;
- B. whereas, following the killing of Mahsa Jina Amini, nation-wide protests broke out in over 120 cities in almost all of Iran's 31 provinces, involving hundreds of thousands of Iranian citizens representing all segments of society; whereas the protests were initiated by women demanding accountability for the death of Mahsa Jina Amini and calling for an end to violence and discrimination against women in Iran, in particular in the form of compulsory veiling; whereas women's protests have inspired solidarity from men, sparking a pan-Iranian reform and protest movement; whereas students are protesting at numerous universities across the country, notably at Sharif university of Technology in Tehran, by boycotting their classes and demonstrating against repression;
- C. whereas the response of the Iranian security and police forces to the protests has been violent, indiscriminate and unrestrained, and has resulted in substantial loss of life as well as a large number of injuries; whereas the UN has confirmed that Iranian forces have been using live ammunition, birdshot, tear gas and metal pellets against the protesters; whereas, as of 2 October 2022, Iranian security forces had reportedly killed hundreds of peaceful protestors demonstrating against the killing of Mahsa Jina Amini, and injured and arrested hundreds more, among them human rights defenders, students, lawyers, civil society activists and more than 20 journalist, notably Niloufar Hamed, the journalist who first reported on Mahsa Jina Amini's arrest and hospitalisation;

Thursday 6 October 2022

- D. whereas Amnesty International has documented the authorities' plot to crush current protests by deploying the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), the Basij paramilitary force, the Law Enforcement Command of the Islamic Republic of Iran, riot police, and plain-clothes security agents; whereas evidence shows how the General Headquarters of Armed Forces issued an order to commanders in all provinces instructing them to confront peaceful protesters with widespread use of lethal force and firearms by security forces;
- E. whereas according to reports, numerous foreigners including EU nationals have been arrested in recent days for their alleged involvement in the protests;
- F. whereas Iranian authorities are deliberately disrupting internet and mobile connections and severely restricting social media platforms to undermine the ability of Iranian citizens to access communication technologies in a secure and private manner and to organise peaceful assemblies; whereas there have been reports of SMS messages containing the words 'Mahsa Amini' in Farsi being blocked; whereas by disrupting and disconnecting the internet in large parts of Iran, the regime is trying to prevent the transmission and dissemination of news about and images of the protests as well as to prevent international and local organisations from documenting human rights violations;
- G. whereas the Iranian Government introduced mandatory veiling in 1983; whereas the mandatory hijab has become a tool for the repression of women, depriving them of their freedom and rights in Iran; whereas women who are seen in public without a headscarf are frequently harassed, imprisoned, tortured, flogged and even killed for defying these repressive rules;
- H. whereas the harassment of and violence against women and girls by the 'morality' police forces has increased since the beginning of President Ebrahim Raisi's term in 2021; whereas the Government of Iran has pushed for legislation and draft legislation that encourages the repression of women; whereas the killing of Mahsa Jina Amini is part of a larger pattern of curtailing and rolling back the already heavily restricted rights of women in Iran, including through a new law passed in 2021 severely restricting women's access to sexual and reproductive health rights, in direct violation of women's human rights under international law; whereas the introduction of the 'Hijab and Chastity Project' would imply the use of surveillance cameras to monitor and fine unveiled women;
- I. whereas the human rights situation in Iran is increasingly deteriorating; whereas the killing of Mahsa Jina Amini is illustrative of the ongoing human rights crisis in Iran, perpetuated by the systemic impunity of the Iranian Government and its security apparatus, which has permitted widespread torture, as well as extrajudicial executions and other unlawful killings; whereas more than 40 human rights defenders have been arrested since 18 September 2022, and women human rights defenders have been particularly and violently targeted as part of these arrests, assaults and raids by the Iranian forces; whereas Iranian LGBTQI rights defenders Zahra Sedighi Hamedani, age 31, and Elham Chubdar, age 24, were sentenced to death by the Revolutionary Court of Urmia on charges of 'corruption on earth through the promotion of homosexuality';
- J. whereas the EU has adopted restrictive measures related to violations of human rights, including asset freezes and visa bans for individuals and entities responsible for grave human rights violations, and a ban on exports to Iran of equipment which might be used for internal repression and of equipment for monitoring telecommunications; whereas these measures we first put in place on 12 April 2011, are regularly updated and remain in place;
- K. whereas Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) Josep Borrell, in his declaration of 25 September 2022, condemned the killing of Mahsa Jina Amini and the excessive use of force by Iranian security forces and announced that the EU would consider all the options at its disposal ahead of the next Foreign Affairs Council to address the killing of Mahsa Jina Amini and the way Iranian security forces have responded to the ensuing demonstrations;
1. Condemns in the strongest terms the death of Mahsa Jina Amini following her violent arrest, abuse and ill-treatment by Iran's 'morality' police; extends its condolences to her family and friends and to the families of all those killed during the recent protests in Iran;
 2. Calls on the Iranian Government to allow for an impartial and effective investigation of Mahsa Jina Amini's tragic death and allegations of torture and ill-treatment by an independent competent authority;

Thursday 6 October 2022

3. Expresses its solidarity with the young Iranian women leading and participating in the protests despite the difficulties and personal repercussions they are facing; supports the peaceful protest movement across the country, protesting against Mahsa Jina Amini's killing, the systemic and increasing oppression of women, and severe and mass violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms;
4. Strongly supports the aspirations of the Iranian people who want to live in a free, stable, inclusive and democratic country that respects its national and international commitments on human rights and fundamental freedoms; is deeply concerned about reports of the besiegement, arrests and shooting of large numbers of students locked inside Sharif University of Technology in Tehran on 2 October 2022, by the IRGC, Basij forces and police;
5. Acknowledges that the Iranian women's movement goes beyond the defence of women's rights and advocates for a secular state in Iran instead of a violent and reactionary theocracy;
6. Strongly condemns the widespread, intentional and disproportionate use of force by Iranian security forces against peaceful protesters and calls on the Iranian authorities to stop their continued, systematic and unacceptable violence against their own citizens; demands that the Iranian authorities allow for an evidence-based, swift, impartial and effective investigation into the killings of all protesters, including bringing those responsible to justice;
7. Demands that the Iranian authorities immediately and unconditionally release and drop all charges against anyone who is imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly in connection with the protests; stresses that fundamental rights such as freedom of expression and assembly must always be respected and calls on the Iranian authorities to live up to their international obligations, including under the ICCPR; urges the Iranian authorities to immediately release all EU nationals arrested and drop all charges against them; is highly concerned about the arrest of more than 20 journalists, notably Niloofar Hamed, the journalist who first broke the news about Mahsa Jina Amini's arrest and hospitalisation, and calls on the Iranian authorities to free them without delay; calls on Iran to respect the freedom of expression and belief of all people living in Iran, especially women and girls, who are notably repressed;
8. Condemns the Islamic Republic of Iran's systemic discrimination against women and other vulnerable groups through laws and regulations that severely restrict their freedoms and rights, including the degrading compulsory veiling law and its abusive enforcement, severe restrictions on women's sexual and reproductive health rights, and violations of women's political, social, economic, cultural and personal rights; demands that the Iranian authorities swiftly repeal laws that impose compulsory veiling on women and girls, abolish the 'morality' police and end systemic discrimination against women in all fields of life;
9. Strongly condemns Iran's practice of shutting down internet and mobile networks in the context of protests in the country, which prevents communication and the free flow of information for Iranian citizens; underscores that such actions are a clear violation of international law; welcomes the decision of the US to allow private companies to make their digital services available to the Iranian people amid the current protests;
10. Categorically rejects the accusations by Iranian officials and the state-controlled Iranian media pointing to the diplomatic representations of Germany and other European countries as the supposed instigators of the protests;
11. Reiterates its strong condemnation of the steadily deteriorating human rights situation in Iran, including and especially for persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities, including Kurds, Baluchis, Arabs and non-Shi'a and non-Muslim religious minorities, including Baha'i and Christians; urges the Iranian authorities to respect ethnic and religious minorities' fundamental rights and freedoms; calls on the Iranian authorities to eliminate all forms of discrimination;
12. Urges the Iranian Government to immediately and unconditionally release all human rights defenders who have been imprisoned for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression and belief; calls on the Iranian Supreme Court to overturn the sentences handed down against LGBTI human rights defenders Zahra Sedighi-Hamadani and Elham Choubdar, on the grounds of violations of the right to fair trials; asks the Iranian Government to cease its targeting of all human rights defenders in Iran and to guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free from all restrictions, including judicial harassment;

Thursday 6 October 2022

13. Deplores the systematic use of torture in Iranian prisons and calls for the immediate cessation of all forms of torture and ill-treatment of all detainees; condemns the practice of denying detainees access to phone calls and family visits; expresses grave concerns about detainees' inability to access legal representation during interrogations; calls on the Iranian Government to treat prisoners with the respect due to their inherent dignity and value as human beings;

14. Deeply regrets the lack of progress made in the cases regarding EU-Iranian dual nationals detained in Iran, including Ahmadreza Djalali, who has been sentenced to death on spurious espionage charges;

15. Strongly condemns the Iranian authorities' increasing use of the death penalty in recent years and deplores the alarming escalation in the use of the death penalty against protesters, dissidents and members of minority groups; reiterates its call on the Government of Iran to introduce an immediate moratorium on the use of the death penalty as a step towards abolishing it, and to commute all death sentences;

16. Asks the Iranian authorities to allow visits of all Special Procedures of the UN Human Rights Council, and particularly to ensure that the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran is allowed to enter the country;

17. Calls on the UN, particularly its Human Rights Council, to launch without delay a comprehensive investigation into the events that have taken place in recent weeks, led by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran; asks the UN Human Rights Council to establish an international investigative and accountability mechanism for human rights violations perpetrated by the Iranian Government;

18. Asks the EU and its Member States to use all engagements with the Iranian authorities to demand an immediate end to the violent crackdown against protests and the unconditional release of all those arrested for exercising their right to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, call for an independent investigation into the deaths of Mahsa Jina Amini and dozens of protesters, urge the restoration of access to the internet and communication channels and encourage the abolition of compulsory veiling for women; calls on Member States to store, preserve and share available evidence, in line with the new rules of Eurojust, that may contribute to investigations, including cooperating with and supporting the work of the International Criminal Court;

19. Calls on the Foreign Affairs Council to add Iranian officials, including all those associated with the 'morality' police, who are found complicit in or responsible for the death of Mahsa Jina Amini and violence against protesters, to the EU's list of individuals against whom restrictive measures in relation to serious human rights violations in Iran have been imposed; reiterates that sanctions against the IRGC leadership must not be lifted; welcomes the Council's adoption of the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime as an important instrument for the EU to sanction violators of human rights;

20. Calls for the EU, including the VP/HR, to continue raising human rights concerns with the Iranian authorities in bilateral and multilateral forums and to use all planned engagements with the Iranian authorities for that purpose, in particular in the context of the EU-Iran High Level Political Dialogue; reaffirms that respect for human rights is a core component in the development of EU-Iran relations;

21. Encourages strong coordination among EU embassies accredited in Tehran; urges all Member States with a diplomatic presence in Tehran to use the mechanisms envisaged in the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders to support and protect these individuals, in particular women's rights defenders and EU-Iranian dual nationals, including through emergency grants under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument — Global Europe, and the European Endowment for Democracy, as well as emergency visas, public statements, the monitoring of trials and prison visits;

22. Calls on the Commission to consider, under strict compliance with the principles of necessity and proportionality, allowing EU-based communications providers to offer tools, including videoconferencing, e-learning platforms, web maps and cloud services, to people in Iran, in order to ensure that they have access to the online tools and platforms they need to exercise their human rights;

Thursday 6 October 2022

23. Expresses concern at the continuous lobbying of European institutions by reactionary Islamist associations, which may amount to foreign interference in our democracies;
 24. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Islamic Consultative Assembly, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Office of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the family of Mahsa Jina Amini.
-