

Resolution on Iran

2007/2646(RSP) - 25/10/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution expressing its deep concern about the deterioration of the human rights situation in Iran during recent years. It recalled that the number of executions in Iran, including those of minors and homosexuals, often carried out in public by hanging or stoning, has dramatically increased, bringing the number of executions recorded since the start of 2007 to at least 244, a number which exceeds the 177 executions recorded in 2006. Parliament appealed to the Iranian authorities to honour their obligations in accordance with international human rights instruments ratified by Iran, by promoting universal values and granting all persons the right to exercise their civil rights and political freedoms.

Parliament strongly condemned the execution by stoning of Mr Jafar Kiani on 5 July 2007 in the village of Aghche-kand (Qazvin Province) and called on the Iranian authorities to implement their declared moratorium on stoning. It demanded that the Islamic Penal Code of Iran be reformed in order to abolish stoning.

Members stated that they were deeply concerned about the dramatic increase in the repression of civil-society movements in Iran over the past year, and called on the Iranian authorities to put an end to harsh repression against women's rights defenders, activists of the 'one million signatures' campaign, student movements, minority rights defenders, intellectuals, teachers, journalists, web loggers and trade unionists. They were appalled at the spiralling numbers of executions recorded, many of those executed having undergone unfair trials.

Iran was asked to respect its Code of Criminal Procedure and to grant the right to a fair trial to all individuals, particularly by allowing them to have access to a lawyer from the beginning of the judicial process. Adequate medical assistance must be unconditionally provided to those prisoners who are in poor health.

Parliament strongly condemned the death sentences and executions in Iran, in particular those imposed and/or carried out on juvenile offenders and minors, and urged the Iranian authorities to respect internationally recognised legal safeguards with regard to minors, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Iranian authorities were asked to put into practice the ban on torture which was announced by the Head of the Judiciary in April 2004. Parliament appealed to the members of the Majlis to amend the Penal Code in order to transform the moratorium on stoning into a definitive ban, and to adopt legislation outlawing the execution of juvenile offenders and the imposition of the death penalty for homosexual acts or adultery. It called on the Iranian authorities to implement all required safeguards in capital cases and to limit the scope of crimes punishable by death, as a first step towards the total abolition of the death penalty. The people of Iran were asked to support the campaign entitled 'Stop the Death Penalty: the World Decides' initiated by the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty (WCADP) and other non-governmental organisations.

Recalling the increasing persecution of minorities, Parliament called on the authorities to respect internationally recognised legal safeguards with regard to persons belonging to religious minorities, officially recognised or otherwise. The authorities must eliminate all forms of discrimination on religious or ethnic grounds or against persons belonging to minorities, such as Kurds, Azeris, Arabs, Baluchis and Baha'is, and Members called in particular for the de facto ban on practising the Baha'i faith to be lifted.

With regard to the press, Parliament called on the Iranian Parliament to amend the Iranian Press Law and the Penal Code to bring them into line with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and

notably to repeal all criminal provisions dealing with the peaceful expression of opinions, including in the press. The numerous press organs which have been closed down or censored should be allowed to function under established rules of freedom of the press.

With respect to actions, by the international community, Parliament urged the United Nations General Assembly to vote on a resolution explicitly and decisively condemning the violation of fundamental human rights in Iran and to adopt urgent measures to halt the recent wave of executions in Iran. It called on the Council and the Commission to monitor developments in Iran and also to raise concrete cases of human rights abuses, and to report on the results of monitoring. In addition, the Commission must do its best to support civil society, academic, socio-economic and cultural exchanges between Europe and Iran in the interests of an open dialogue, notably through the new Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights.

Parliament stated that it proposed to restart the EU-Iran Human Rights Dialogue, which has been interrupted since June 2004.

Laslty, it called on EU Member States to refrain from expulsions of Iranian asylum-seekers, including those persecuted on the basis of their sexual orientation. It asked Greece not to return Mohammad Hassan Talebi, Mohammad Hossein Jaafari and Vahid Shokoohi Nia to Iran.