Resolution on Iran - recent cases of human rights violations

2011/2908(RSP) - 17/11/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on Iran – recent cases of human rights violations.

The resolution had been tabled by the EFD, GUE/NGL, S&D, ECR, EPP, ALDE, and Greens/EFA groups.

Parliament expresses grave concern over the steadily deteriorating human rights situation in Iran, the growing number of political prisoners, the continuously high number of executions, including of juveniles, the widespread torture, unfair trials and exorbitant sums demanded for bail, and the heavy restrictions on freedom of information, expression, assembly, belief, education and movement. It notes that the UN Special Rapporteur's interim report expresses alarm at the growing use of the death penalty for minor crimes, and without due process, and indicates that so far in 2011 there have been at least 200 official executions and 146 secret executions in the eastern Iranian city of Mashad, and that in 2010 more than 300 people were executed in secret in Iran. Members strongly condemn the use of the death penalty and call on the Iranian authorities, in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolutions 62/149 and 63/138, to institute a moratorium on executions, pending the abolition of the death penalty. They call also for the amendment the Iranian Criminal Code so as to prohibit the imposition of corporal punishment by judicial and administrative authorities.

Parliament states that it stands ready to support additional sanctions for individuals responsible for human rights abuses. It calls on EU Member States that are permanent members of the UN Security Council to raise the issue of opening an investigation into whether the crimes committed by the Iranian authorities amount to crimes against humanity. At the same time, the EU representatives and the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy are asked to encourage the Iranian authorities to re-engage in human rights dialogue. Members call on the European External Action Service (EEAS) to focus on EU citizens in Iranian prisons and to do everything possible to ensure their well-being and release.

Parliament stresses that free access to information and means of communication and uncensored access to the internet are universal rights and expresses its concern at the use of (European) censorship, filtering and surveillance technologies to control and censor information and communication flows and to track down citizens, notably human rights defenders, as in the recent case of Creativity Software. It calls on European companies to live up to their corporate social responsibilities by not providing goods, technologies and services to Iran which could endanger the civil and political rights of Iranian citizens. It condemns Iran for illegally jamming BBC Persian Service and Deutsche Welle TV signals from the Hotbird and the Eutelsat W3A satellites, and calls on Eutelsat to stop providing services to Iranian state TV stations as long as Iran continues to use Eutelsat services to block independent TV programmes.

Parliament calls on the Iranian authorities:

- to release all political prisoners, including the political leaders Mir-Hussein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi, the human rights lawyers Nasrin Sotoudeh and Abdolfattah Soltani, the student activists Bahareh Hedayat, Abdollah Momeni, Mahdieh Golroo and Majid Tavakoli, the journalist Abdolreza Tajik, Pastor Yousef Nadarkhani, the filmmakers Jafar Panahi and Mohammad Rasoulof and all the other individuals listed in the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, Ahmed Shaheed;
- to guarantee a fair and open procedure in the judicial process;
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to allow the UN-appointed Special Rapporteur Ahmed Shaheed to enter Iran to address the country's ongoing human rights crisis, noting the government's complete lack of cooperation with the Special Rapporteur's mandate and its continued refusal to allow him access to the country are an indication that it has no intention of taking meaningful steps to improve the human rights situation;

- to release members of Iran's artistic community who are being held and to put an end to the persecution – by means of detention or other forms of harassment – of that community, such treatment being incompatible with the international human rights principles which Iran has freely signed up to;
- in view of the fact that the pressure on religious minorities, most notably the Bahai‘, converts and dissident Shia scholars continues to increase, to take steps to ensure that full respect is shown for the right to freedom of religion or belief, including by ensuring that legislation and practices fully conform to Article 18 of the ICCPR;
- to take immediate steps to ensure that members of the Baha'i community are protected against discrimination in every field, that violations of their rights are immediately investigated, that those found responsible are prosecuted and that the members of that community are provided with effective remedies;
- to repeal or amend all legislation that provides for, or could result in, discrimination against and prosecution and punishment of people on account of their sexual orientation or gender identity, and to ensure that anyone held solely on account of consensual sexual activities or sexual orientation is released immediately and unconditionally;
- to accept peaceful protest and to address the numerous problems facing the Iranian people. Parliament expresses particular concern at the pending ecological catastrophe in the Lake Urmia region and calls for decisive government action to try to stabilise the regional ecology, on which millions of Iranians depend.

Lastly, it calls on Member States to provide safe haven for Iranian citizens who have fled their country, such as through the Shelter City initiative.