

# Resolution on Iran, notably the case of human rights defenders

2019/2611(RSP) - 14/03/2019 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on Iran, notably the case of human rights defenders.

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

Parliament called on the Iranian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release all human rights defenders, prisoners of conscience and journalists detained and sentenced merely for exercising their right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. It noted at the same time that the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and other forces have unleashed a severe clampdown on civil society in the past months. Members also reiterated their call on the Government of Iran to immediately and unconditionally release Sakharov Prize Laureate Nasrin Sotoudeh, who was recently sentenced to at least seven years' imprisonment. Parliament regarded the grossly unfair trial and sentencing of Nasrin Sotoudeh as a grave miscarriage of justice and commended her courage and commitment to human rights and women's rights in Iran. It noted that Iranian courts regularly fail to provide fair trials, and use confessions obtained under torture as evidence in court. In addition, the authorities continue to criminalise human rights activism and use Article 48 of the Iranian Criminal Procedure Law to restrict detainees' access to legal counsel.

Parliament called on the Iranian authorities to:

- amend Article 48 of the country's Criminal Procedure Law to ensure that all defendants have the right to be represented by a lawyer of their choice and to a fair trial in line with Iran's commitments to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- ensure the safety and wellbeing of all detainees, including access to adequate medical care;
- stop the surveillance, arrest, harassment and prosecution of journalists, online activists and their families, and to put an end to online censorship;
- cooperate with the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, including by allowing him to enter the country;
- protect the rights of all persons belonging to religious and ethnic minorities, and to address all forms of discrimination against them, noting that members of the Baha'i faith and the Azeri, Kurdish, Arab and Baluch communities, Sunni Muslims, Christians, and those of no faith, face discrimination in employment, education, freedom of worship and political activities in Iran.

Members also called on Iran stop criminalising the work of women's rights defenders, including those peacefully protesting against the compulsory wearing of the hijab, and called for this discriminatory and humiliating practice to be abolished.

The EEAS was asked to continue to include human rights, particularly the situation of human rights defenders, in the context of the EU-Iran High-Level Dialogue. The Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) was called upon to publicly reaffirm that respect for human rights is a core component for the development of EU-Iran

relations. Parliament wanted the VP/HR and the Council to explore the possibility of establishing a formal human rights dialogue with Iran in line with the EU guidelines on human rights dialogues with third countries.

Member States were asked to continue raising the cases of arrested human rights defenders with their Iranian counterparts, and at the next UN Human Rights Council meeting in Geneva. All Member States with a diplomatic presence in Tehran were urged to use the mechanisms provided for in the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders to support and protect these individuals, including public statements, diplomatic démarches, monitoring of trials and prison visits.