

Question for written answer E-009104/2014
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)
Rule 130
Barbara Matera (PPE)

Subject: VP/HR - Unjust sentencing of Ghonchen Ghavami

On 20 June 2014, Ghonchen Ghavami was detained in Iran after having tried to watch a men's volleyball match between Iran and Italy. Ghavami was arrested and beaten at the match along with a group of other women, but was later freed. She was once again arrested while trying to collect her belongings from the police. It was at this point that the police discovered that she holds dual British-Iranian citizenship.

Ghavami was recently sentenced to one year in prison, with the court claiming that she is guilty of spreading anti-regime propaganda. Ghavami was not permitted access to her lawyer until two days before her hearing. She was held in solitary confinement for 41 days, allegedly was subjected to death threats by her interrogators and was held in Evin prison for over 100 days, and there is a possibility that she was singled out due to her dual citizenship.

Ghavami's trial highlights the restrictions on free expression in Iran. Authorities have been making efforts to enforce a strict interpretation of Islamic norms despite the policy of greater openness currently being pursued by President Hassan Rouhani.

1. How can the EU encourage the swift release of Ghonchen Ghavami from prison?
2. What steps can the EU take to combat actions against women and fight for free rights for Iranian women?