



Plenary sitting

**B8-0186/2019 }
B8-0187/2019 }
B8-0190/2019 }
B8-0191/2019 }
B8-0193/2019 }
B8-0194/2019 } RC1**

13.3.2019

JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

pursuant to Rules 135(5) and 123(4) of the Rules of Procedure

replacing the following motions:

B8-0186/2019 (Verts/ALE)
B8-0187/2019 (GUE/NGL)
B8-0190/2019 (ALDE)
B8-0191/2019 (S&D)
B8-0193/2019 (ECR)
B8-0194/2019 (PPE)

on Iran, notably the case of human rights defenders
(2019/2611(RSP))

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on behalf of the PPE Group

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PE635.446v01-00 }
PE635.447v01-00 }
PE635.450v01-00 }
PE635.451v01-00 }
PE635.453v01-00 }
PE635.454v01-00 } RC1

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on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

**Cornelia Ernst, Barbara Spinelli, Luke Ming Flanagan, Marie-Christine
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on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

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on behalf of the EFDD Group

European Parliament resolution on Iran, notably the case of human rights defenders (2019/2611(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Iran, in particular those of 13 December 2018 on Iran, notably the case of Nasrin Sotoudeh¹, and 25 October 2016 on the EU strategy towards Iran after the nuclear agreement²,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions on Iran of 4 February 2019,
 - having regard to the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran of 30 January 2019, and to his statement on Iran of 29 November 2018,
 - having regard to the UN General Assembly resolution of 17 December 2018 on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, to which Iran is a party,
 - having regard to the Iranian President’s Charter on Citizens’ Rights,
 - having regard to the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders,
 - having regard to the statement of 29 November 2018 by UN human rights experts, entitled ‘Iran must protect women’s rights advocates’,
 - having regard to the EU Guidelines on the death penalty, the EU Guidelines on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and the EU Human Rights Guidelines on freedom of expression online and offline,
 - having regard to the Council decision of 12 April 2018 to extend its restrictive measures for a further 12 months in response to serious human rights violations in Iran,
 - having regard to the statement by the Spokesperson for the European External Action Service (EEAS) of 12 March 2019 on the conviction of Iranian human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh,
 - having regard to Rules 135(5) and 123(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas human rights defenders, journalists, lawyers and online activists in Iran continue to face harassment, arbitrary arrest, detention and prosecution for their work;

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0525.

² OJ C 215, 19.6.2018, p. 86.

whereas the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and other forces have unleashed a severe clampdown on civil society in the past months;

- B. whereas its resolution of 25 October 2016 on the EU strategy towards Iran after the nuclear agreement stresses the importance of upholding the EU human rights guidelines, including on human rights defenders, in the context of EU-Iran relations;
- C. whereas the renowned human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh was recently sentenced to at least seven years' imprisonment; whereas over the course of two trials it has been reported that her combined sentence could be significantly longer, although the exact length of her jail term remains unclear; whereas the real reason for her imprisonment seems to have been her peaceful defence of human rights in Iran; whereas her trials were not conducted in accordance with basic international standards of due process;
- D. whereas Reza Khandan, Nasrin Sotoudeh's husband, was detained in connection with his support of women who have peacefully campaigned against being forced to wear the hijab and for his wife's release from prison; whereas in January 2019, the Revolutionary Court in Tehran sentenced him to six years in prison;
- E. whereas environmental activists Taher Ghadirian, Niloufar Bayani, Amirhossein Khaleghi, Houman Jokar, Sam Rajabi, Sepideh Kashani, Abdolreza Kouhpayeh and Morad Tahbaz, representing the Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation, were arrested over the course of January and February 2018, detained without access to a lawyer, and have faced trial in recent weeks in proceedings which fell short of fair trial standards; whereas another member of the group, Iranian-Canadian university professor Kavous Seyed-Emami, died in custody last year in mysterious circumstances;
- F. whereas trade union activists Esmaeil Bakhshi, Sepideh Gholian and Mohammad Habibi were arrested in 2018 and 2019 after leading protests in favour of the rights of workers and teachers; whereas human rights defender Maryam Akbari Monfared was sentenced to 15 years in prison in 2010 for so-called 'enmity against God' and has been denied medical care while suffering from various illnesses;
- G. whereas activists Arash Sadeghi, Narges Mohammadi and Farhad Meysami have all received long prison sentences for their campaigns on women's rights, abolition of the death penalty and human rights;
- H. whereas Iranian courts regularly fail to provide fair trials, and use confessions obtained under torture as evidence in court; whereas 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; whereas there are no independent mechanisms for ensuring accountability within the judiciary;
- I. whereas the continuing practice of arrests of EU-Iranian dual nationals, including British-Iranian Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, is followed by prolonged solitary confinement and interrogations, lack of due process, and long prison sentences based on vague or unspecified 'national security' and 'espionage' charges, as well as state-sponsored smear campaigns against the imprisoned individuals;

- J. whereas numerous cases of inhumane and degrading conditions in prisons and lack of adequate access to medical care during detention in Iran have been reported, in contravention of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners;
- K. whereas Iran is estimated to have executed 273 people in 2018, the second highest number in the world for that year, according to a report by the NGO Iran Human Rights;
- L. whereas in 2018 thousands of people staged peaceful demonstrations and strikes in protest against unpaid wages, poor working conditions, corruption, political repression and other grievances; whereas the authorities arrested hundreds of them, sentencing many to prison terms and flogging;
- M. whereas the Iranian judiciary continues to clamp down on peaceful acts of resistance by women's rights defenders protesting against the compulsory wearing of the hijab; whereas in 2018 at least 39 women were arrested in connection with the protests and another 55 were held for their work on women's rights;
- N. whereas freedom of the press, both online and offline, freedom of association and freedom of thought are repressed in Iran;
- O. whereas the Iranian authorities have systematically targeted journalists, including those working for the BBC Persian service, and their families, through the use of criminal investigations, asset freezes, arbitrary arrest, detention, surveillance, harassment, and by spreading false, malicious and defamatory publicity; whereas at least eight journalists are currently in detention in Iran;
- P. whereas Iranian President Hassan Rouhani launched a Charter on Citizens' Rights in December 2016; whereas this charter is not legally binding;
- Q. whereas members of religious and ethnic minorities, including 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;
1. Calls 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; stresses that the Iranian authorities must in all circumstances ensure that human rights defenders, lawyers and journalists are able to carry out their work free from threats, intimidation and impediment;
 2. Reiterates its call on the Government of Iran to immediately and unconditionally release Sakharov Prize Laureate Nasrin Sotoudeh, and commends her courage and commitment to human rights and women's rights in Iran; regards the grossly unfair trial and sentencing of Nasrin Sotoudeh as a grave miscarriage of justice and welcomes the statement by the EEAS Spokesperson of 12 March 2019 on this issue;
 3. Calls 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;

4. Urges the Iranian authorities to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all detainees, including access to adequate medical care; calls also for an independent investigation into the death in custody of Kavous Seyed-Emami, and into allegations of torture of other activists in detention, and condemns the practice of deliberately denying medical care to political prisoners;
5. Calls on the Iranian authorities as a matter of urgency to stop the surveillance, arrest, harassment and prosecution of journalists, online activists and their families, and to put an end to online censorship, and calls for the creation of conditions which tolerate freedom of expression and freedom of the media, both online and offline;
6. Calls on the Government of Iran to cooperate with the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, including by allowing him to enter the country;
7. Calls for the EU Member States and the EU institutions 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;
8. Calls on the EEAS to continue to include human rights, particularly the situation of human rights defenders, in the context of the EU-Iran High-Level Dialogue; calls also on the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR) to publicly reaffirm that respect for human rights is a core component for the development of EU-Iran relations;
9. Urges 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;
10. Urges EU officials to call on the Iranian authorities to guarantee the safety and wellbeing of human rights activists in custody and to pursue full investigations into reports of torture;
11. Urges all Member States with a diplomatic presence in Tehran 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;
12. Urges Iran to stop criminalising the work of women's rights defenders, including those peacefully protesting against the compulsory wearing of the hijab, and calls for this discriminatory and humiliating practice to be abolished;
13. Calls on the Government of Iran to protect the rights of all persons belonging to religious and ethnic minorities, and to address all forms of discrimination against them;

14. Welcomes the amendments to the drug trafficking law, which have reduced the imposition of capital punishment, and calls for a review of all death sentences to ensure that the relevant trials were conducted in accordance with international standards; calls on the Iranian authorities to introduce an immediate moratorium on the use of the death penalty as a step towards abolition;
15. Recommends that an ad-hoc delegation from the Subcommittee on Human Rights be sent to Iran before the end of the current mandate in order to visit imprisoned human rights defenders and hold the necessary meetings with the Iranian authorities;
16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European External Action Service, 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 Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the Members of the Iranian Majlis.