



Plenary sitting

B9-0443/2020

15.12.2020

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 144 of the Rules of Procedure

on **Iran, in particular the case of 2012 Sakharov Prize laureate Nasrin Sotoudeh (2020/2914(RSP))**

Hilde Vautmans, Petras Auštrevičius, Malik Azmani, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Dita Charanzová, Olivier Chastel, Klemen Grošelj, Bernard Guetta, Svenja Hahn, Karin Karlsbro, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Javier Nart, Frédérique Ries, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Nicolae Ștefănuță, Ramona Strugariu, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne
on behalf of the Renew Group

B9-0443/2020

European Parliament resolution on Iran, in particular the case of 2012 Sakharov Prize laureate Nasrin Sotoudeh (2020/2914(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 13 December 2018 on Iran, notably the case of Nasrin Sotoudeh; as well as its previous resolutions including its most recent of December 18 2019 on the violent crackdown on the recent protests in Iran; of 19 September 2019 on Iran, notably the situation of women's rights defenders and imprisoned EU dual nationals and of 14 March 2019 on Iran, notably the case of human rights defenders,
 - having regard to the EU Council decision of 8 April 2019 to extend its restrictive measures for a further 12 months in response to serious human rights violations in Iran, and EU Council Conclusions of 4 February 2019 on Iran,
 - Having regard to Council Regulation (EU) 2020/1998 of 7 December 2020 concerning restrictive measures against serious human rights violations and abuses
 - Having regard to the statement of the EU High Representative's spokesperson on the execution of Ruhollah Zam of 12 December 2020;
 - Having regard to the statement of the European Parliament's Sub-Committee on Human Rights (DROI) of 28 October 2020 "Nasrin Sotoudeh: MEPs call on Iran to immediately release the Sakharov Prize laureate from prison"
 - having regard to the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders, on the death penalty, on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and on freedom of expression online and offline,
 - having regard to the latest report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran of 18 July 2019,
 - Having regard to the latest statements of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the 33-year prison sentence of lawyer Ms. Nasrin Sotoudeh, the imminent execution of Swedish-Iranian academic Mr. Ahmadreza Djalali; the detention of British-Iranian photographer Ms. Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and journalist Ms. Narges Mohammadi ;
 - having regard to the Iranian President's Charter on Citizens' Rights,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. Whereas Nasrin Sotoudeh, a human rights lawyer, was awarded the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought by the European Parliament in 2012;
- B. Whereas Ms. Sotoudeh has actively defended prisoners of conscience, unlawfully detained protesters following the 2009 mass protests against election fraud, bloggers, journalists and lawyers, women rights, children rights and religious minorities' rights;

- C. Whereas Ms. Sotoudeh was detained arbitrarily from 2010 to 2013 in dreadful conditions, facing a 6-year sentence for “endangering Iran’s national security”, according to Iranian authorities; whereas after her sudden release in 2013, a delegation of the European Parliament was able to meet her in Tehran in December 2013; whereas she was repeatedly detained again, on dubious charges, on a number of occasions since;
- D. Whereas Ms. Sotoudeh has been arbitrarily detained since 13 June 2018 for her support for peaceful protests against torture and the compulsory wearing of the headscarf for women; whereas she was sentenced to 33 years in prison and 148 lashes for “endangering national security, spreading propaganda, membership of illegal groups, encouraging people to engage in corruption and prostitution, and appearing without the sharia-sanctioned headscarf”;
- E. Whereas her health worsened following her hunger strike from 11 August to 25 September 2020, as she called for all political prisoners to be released; Whereas she was allowed to undergo advanced medical checks and treatment for her heart and pulmonary diseases on 7 November 2020 outside of prison; Whereas three weeks later she was arrested and sent back to Qarchak’s prison, a woman detention center in Teheran known for cruel and inhuman detention conditions, on 2 December 2020;
- F. Whereas EU nationals such as Swedish-Iranian academic Ahmadreza Djalali are being arbitrarily detained; whereas Mr. Djalali is a professor at Brussels’ VUB University and Italy’s Università degli Studi del Piemonte Orientale; whereas he was arrested in April 2016 upon visiting his family in Iran, remained in detention without an arrest warrant or a lawyer for 10 months until he was sentenced to death on October 2017 for “corruption on earth” in a grossly unfair trial with so-called confessions following torture and prolonged solitary confinement; whereas he has received threats from Iranian officials to kill him and his family in Sweden and Iran; whereas in a letter written from Evin political prison, he wrote that the reason behind his detention was that he objected to spying for Iran against European institutions; whereas Mr. Djalali was informed on 24 November 2020 that his execution was imminent;
- G. Whereas EU national and prominent French-Iranian academic Fariba Adelkhah, research director at Sciences Po Paris, has been arbitrarily detained since June 2019 at Evin prison; whereas she was originally charged with espionage which was dropped in January 2020; whereas she was then sentenced to six years in prison in May 2020 under equally dubious charges of “propaganda against the political system and collusion to endanger national security”; whereas she has been under travel ban and house arrest since her conditional release for health reasons in October 2020;
- H. Whereas EU national German-Iranian national Nahid Taghavi and British-Iranian conservationist Morad Tahbaz remain unjustly detained, as well as British-Iranian charity worker Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe who remains under travel ban;
- I. Whereas journalist Ruhollah Zam, who lived in France under asylum status, was charged with dubious charges of “corruption on earth” and executed on 12 December 2020, after his abduction by Iranian operatives in Iraq in September 2019, following his coverage of the 2017 economic protests in Iran and his management of a popular anti-government news channel; whereas Iran is running hostile operations on EU territory, harassing and threatening Iranian journalists and activists living in the EU and their relatives in Iran;
- J. Whereas the violent crackdown on protesters from November 2019 and civil society in general has continued as another chapter in the Iranian regime’s longstanding repression; whereas human rights defenders, journalists, lawyers, members of minority groups and online activists face increased harassment, arbitrary arrest, detention and torture for their peaceful activities; Whereas of prisoners of conscience have been excluded from clemency and temporary releases in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic to reduce overcrowding in prisons;

- K. Whereas the use of death sentences against protesters has been increasing, with a pattern of so-called confessions extracted under torture after which protesters are executed without informing their lawyer or family members, as in the case of two people executed on charges of murder in connection with the protests in August and September 2020 in Esfahan and Shiraz; whereas Iran is the world's second most prolific executioner after China;
- L. Whereas mass surveillance technologies are being used to quell online and street protests, including through online censorship; whereas state media have run disinformation campaigns against protesters and human rights defenders, involving leading national figures to distort the November 2019 protests;
- M. 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;
- N. Whereas Iranian courts regularly fall short in providing due process and fair trials, with the denial of access to legal counsel and denial of visits by representatives of consulates, the UN and humanitarian organisations; whereas sentences by the Iranian judiciary are often based on vague national security and espionage charges;
1. Firmly condemns the detention of 2012 Sakharov Laureate Nasrin Sotoudeh; urges her immediate and unconditional release as well as the release of all prisoners of conscience in Iran, including protesters, journalists, media workers, political dissidents, artists, writers and human rights defenders, including lawyers, women's rights defenders, labour rights activists, minority rights activists, anti-death penalty campaigners and those demanding truth, justice and reparation for the mass extrajudicial executions of the 1980s;
 2. Urges Iranian authorities to guarantee Ms. Sotoudeh's physical and mental safety and provide her with urgent, specialised medical care, as for all other prisoners in need; Deplores Iran's record of withholding medical treatment to human rights defenders;
 3. Urges Iran to immediately halt the imminent execution of Swedish-Iranian academic Ahmadreza Djalali, release and compensate him, and to stop threatening his family in Iran and Sweden; Calls on all EU Member States to jointly undertake public statements and diplomatic initiatives to monitor unfair trials and visit prisons where human rights defenders and other prisoners of conscience are being detained, including EU nationals in Iran, in line with the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders;
 4. Urges Iran to immediately drop all charges and lift all travel restrictions on EU nationals subject to arbitrary detention and other restrictive measure, such as in the case of French-Iranian academic Fariba Adelkhah and German-Iranian architect Nahid Taghavi;
 5. Calls on Iran to stop its planned smear campaigns against unjustly detained EU nationals and Iranians with ties to EU Member States, solely for the purpose of national propaganda, brandishing them as so-called spies on Press TV and other regime-controlled media outlets;
 6. Condemns in the strongest terms the execution of Iranian journalist Ruhollah Zam on 12 December 2020; expresses its deepest condolences to the family, friends and colleagues; Calls on EU and Member States' institutions to provide a more effective protection to Iranian nationals residing in the EU who are subjected to harassment and threats from Iranian intelligence services;
 7. Calls on Iran to immediately halt and abolish death sentences as well as amputations, floggings and other cruel and inhuman punishments;
 8. Calls for a UN-led international and independent inquiry into the killing of hundreds of protesters during the 2019 protests;

9. Calls on the EU Council to raise human rights violations in its bilateral cooperation as a core component with Iran, in line with the Joint Statement agreed by the EU HR/VP and the Iranian Foreign Minister in April 2016;
10. Calls on the EEAS and EU Member States to fully support the laureates of the Sakharov Prize through EU and Member States diplomatic and consular representations; Is of the view that the support to laureates at risk should be enhanced on the part of EU delegations;
11. Urges Iranian authorities to lift its censorship of online services and content; Reiterates its call for an EU-wide ban on the export, sale, update and maintenance of any form of mass surveillance technology that can be used to facilitate internal repression; Urges the Council to apply the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Mechanism, otherwise called the “European Magnitsky Act”, in order to target Iranian officials involved in gross human rights abuses, including judges sentencing to death journalists, human rights defenders, political dissidents and activists, inter alia;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European External Action Service, the EU HR/VP, 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.