



Plenary sitting

B9-0445/2020

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))

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on behalf of the PPE Group

B9-0445/2020

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 previous resolutions on Iran, in particular that of 13 December 2018 on Iran, notably the case of Nasrin Sotoudeh of and that of 17 September 2019 on the situation of women’s rights defenders and imprisoned EU dual nationals,

– having regard the statement on Iran of 9 December 2020 by the United Nations Human Rights office of the High Commissioner requesting the release of Nasrin Sotoudeh,

– having regard the statement by the United Nations Human Rights office on the 25 of November 2020 calling on Iran to halt the execution of Ahmadreza Djalali,

– having regard the statement of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran of the 26 of October 2020 urging accountability for violent protest crackdowns and his report of 21 July 2020 on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran,

– having regard to the awarding of the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought and Expression to Nasrin Sotoudeh in 2012,

– having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,

– having regard to Rules 135(5) and 123(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

- A. whereas Nasrin Sotoudeh, 2012 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, is an Iranian lawyer, human rights activist, and political prisoner that over the past 15 years has fought for the rights of women, children, religious minorities, journalists and artists, as well as those facing the death penalty and as a result, has been continuously targeted and harassed by the Iranian authorities, and has been arrested and imprisoned several times;
- B. whereas Nasrin Sotoudeh was most recently arrested in 2018 for representing women who protested Iran’s mandatory hijab law and sentenced in March 2019 to 38 years in prison and 148 lashes, whereas UN experts have on numerous occasions raised serious concerns that her current detention is arbitrary and called for her release; whereas her prosecution and the charges brought against her demonstrate the grave extent to which the Iranian judiciary is criminalising human rights activism;
- C. whereas on 2 December, the Prosecutor’s Office ordered Nasrin Sotoudeh to return to Qarchak prison the same day contrary to the opinion of medical professionals who requested for a longer resting period due to her COVID-19 infection;

- D. Whereas by ordering her return to prison, the authorities have taken an action that may have life-threatening consequences for her and further extended her arbitrary imprisonment, in violation of their obligations under international human rights law;
- E. Whereas on 12 December 2020, Ruhollah Zam, a journalist who was convicted by the Iranian authorities over his online work that helped inspire nationwide economic protests in 2017 with the charges of “corruption on Earth,” often used in cases involving espionage or attempts to overthrow Iran’s government, was executed in Iran;
- F. Whereas the Iranian-Swedish medical doctor and academic Ahmadreza Djalali who was sentenced to death on spurious espionage charges in October 2017, has reportedly been transferred to solitary confinement, in preparation for his execution despite widely held findings which confirm that his trial was grossly unfair and that his conviction was based on a forced confession extracted under torture;
- G. Whereas the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran in his annual report delivered to the General Assembly on the 21 July 2020 is dismayed by the continued use of the death penalty and its high execution figures and affirmed that reports received demonstrate a continued trend of restricting freedom of expression and ongoing discrimination against minorities and women;
- H. Whereas in this same report, the UN Special Rapporteur affirms that despite clear evidence that Iranian security forces used excessive and lethal force, which caused the deaths of over 300 people, including women and children in November 2019 protests and that nearly one year on, the Iranian authorities have failed to conduct an investigation compliant with international standards;
- I. whereas the European Parliament adopted a resolution calling for the establishment of an EEAS StratCom unit dedicated to Iran and the Middle East;
1. Strongly condemns the arbitrary detention, sentence and recently return to prison of woman human rights defender and lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh, and calls the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran to immediately and unconditionally release her as a matter of urgency and to allow her to receive the health care she requires;
 2. Strongly condemns the execution on the 12 December 2020 of journalist Ruhollah Zam, editor of the Amad News Telegram channel and calls the Iranian authorities to uphold the due process rights of accused individuals and to cease the practice of using televised confessions to establish and promote their guilt;
 3. Urges the Iranian authorities to take immediate action to reverse the decision that Ahmadreza Djalali is soon to be executed by the Islamic Republic of Iran before it is too late and strongly condemns is torture, arbitrary detention and death sentence;
 4. Calls on the Government of Iran to immediately and unconditionally release the hundreds of people arbitrarily detained for peacefully exercising their human rights;
 5. Strongly condemns the threats against and arrests and imprisonments of individuals for

peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of opinion and expression, including online, such as journalists and those participating in political and public affairs;

6. Condemns the restrictions on civic space, the use of the death penalty as a weapon of political repression, the amputations, floggings and other cruel and inhuman punishments included in Iran's penal code, the cruel and inhuman detention conditions and confessions obtained through torture or ill-treatment;
7. Calls on the Iranian authorities to address all forms of discrimination against women, persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities and immediately and unconditionally release all those imprisoned for exercising their right to freedom of religion or belief and to eliminate in legislation and in practice all forms of discrimination and other violations against women and girls;
8. Calls for the establishment of a UN led inquiry into the crimes under international law and other serious human rights violations committed during November 2019 and January 2020 protests;
9. Request the EEAS to strengthen its capabilities to counter Iranian interference and disinformation, hybrid warfare, propaganda, and espionage on European soil, aimed at European targets, through the establishment of a StratCom Task Force within its Strategic Communications division;
10. Expresses its concern about the law recently ratified by Iran's Guardian Council, which will require the government to resume enriching uranium to 20% - well above the 3.67% agreed under a 2015 nuclear deal - if sanctions are not eased in two months;
11. 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.