

Priority question for written answer P-003009/2022

to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Rule 138

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Subject: Lesbian human rights defenders sentenced to death in Iran

The Urmia Revolutionary Court has sentenced two lesbian human rights defenders (HRDs) – Zahra Sediqi Hamedani ('Sareh') and Elham Chubdar – to death on charges of 'corruption on earth through the promotion of homosexuality'. A third activist – Soheila Ashrafi – is also being held in the Urmia Central Prison together with Sareh and Elham awaiting a verdict on similar charges¹.

These are harrowing developments that call for an EU response, not least because the EU has adopted guidelines on the death penalty², LGBTI persons' human rights³, EU policy towards third countries on torture⁴ and on HRDs⁵.

1. The EU does not have a delegation in Iran, yet its position is represented by the Member State holding the Council Presidency⁶. What actions is the EEAS taking, in coordination with the Czech Embassy and/or other EU embassies in Tehran, to advocate against the imposition of the death penalty in the aforementioned cases? Has there been any contact with the HRDs?
2. Will the EEAS coordinate with the UN Special Rapporteurs on Iran,⁷ on HRDs⁸, on torture⁹ and the Independent Expert on SOGI¹⁰ in order to have a joint international call on not imposing the death penalty?
3. How are the above-mentioned EU guidelines being implemented, is COHOM aware of the current cases and will a recommendation be made to the Political and Security Council?

¹ <https://www.starobserver.com.au/news/iran-sentences-two-lesbian-activists-to-death/216331>

² <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8416-2013-INIT/en/pdf>

³ https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/foraff/137584.pdf

⁴ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/40644/guidelines-st12107-en19.pdf>

⁵ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-guidelines-human-rights-defenders_en

⁶ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/iran-division_en

⁷ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/countries/iran>

⁸ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-human-rights-defenders>

⁹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-torture>

¹⁰ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/ie-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity>