
Human rights breaches in Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia and Iran

- Chinese and Hong Kong authorities must stop arresting, harassing and intimidating journalists
- Saudi Arabia must stop executing child offenders
- Iran must halt the imminent execution of Swedish-Iranian academic Ahmadreza Djalali

On Thursday, the European Parliament adopted three resolutions on the human rights situation in Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Hong Kong, notably the case of Apple Daily

Parliament condemns in the strongest terms the recent forced closure of the Apple Daily newspaper in Hong Kong, the continued freezing of its assets and the arrests of its journalists. This is yet another step by Chinese authorities to dismantle free society in Hong Kong and abolish media freedom and freedom of expression there, MEPs say.

The resolution also calls on the Hong Kong authorities to stop harassing and intimidating journalists, release arbitrarily detained prisoners, and denounces any attempts to muzzle pro-democracy activists and their activities.

While urging the Chinese authorities to repeal the draconian national security law introduced last year, MEPs encourage EU countries to impose sanctions against individuals and entities responsible for serious violations of human rights and international law in Hong Kong under the EU human rights sanctions regime.

They also call on the Commission, the Council and EU countries to decline invitations to government representatives and diplomats to attend the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics unless the Chinese Government demonstrates a verifiable improvement in the human rights situation in Hong Kong, the Xinjiang Uyghur Region, Tibet, Inner Mongolia and elsewhere in China.

The text was adopted by 578 votes in favour, 29 against and 73 abstentions. For further details, the full version will be available [here](#). (08.07.2021)

The death penalty in Saudi Arabia, notably the cases of Mustafa Hashem al-Darwish and Abdullah al-Howaiti

MEPs strongly condemn Saudi Arabia's ongoing executions of child offenders despite its claims that it has abolished such practices. This includes the recent execution of Mustafa Hashem al-Darwish for crimes that may have occurred while he was a minor following his conviction in an unfair trial and involving a confession obtained from him under torture.

Members also call on Saudi Arabia to confirm that all other child offenders in the Kingdom, such as death-row inmate Abdullah al-Howaiti, will not be executed and that 'confessions' extracted under torture will be excluded from their cases.

While urging the country's authorities to genuinely abolish the death penalty for these offenders, the resolution strongly supports EU sanctions against Saudi officials responsible for grave human rights violations. All EU exports of mass surveillance technology and other dual-use items to Saudi Arabia should be suspended, say MEPs.

The resolution also recalls that the Saudi Sakharov Prize laureate Raif Badawi has now been in prison for nine years and urges the EU and the international community to work towards his immediate release.

The text was adopted by 661 votes in favour, 3 against and 23 abstentions. It will be available in full [here](#) (08.07.2021).

The case of Dr Ahmadreza Djalali in Iran

Parliament calls on Iran, under its newly elected President Ebrahim Raisi, to halt the imminent execution of Swedish-Iranian academic Dr Ahmadreza Djalali. He must be pardoned, released immediately and unconditionally, and be allowed to return to his family in Sweden, says the text.

The resolution also calls on Iran to stop threatening Dr Djalali's family in both Sweden and Iran. The charges of other arbitrarily detained EU nationals in the country must also be immediately dropped, MEPs demand. This includes German nationals Nahid Taghavi and Jamshid Sharmahd, French nationals Benjamin Brière and Fariba Adelkhah, Austrian nationals Kamran Ghaderi and Massud Mossaheb, in addition to UK nationals Morad Tahbaz, Anoosheh Ashoori, Mehran Raof and Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe.

The Council should consider more targeted EU sanctions against Iranian regime officials and entities involved in the arbitrary detention and sentencing to death of EU nationals, MEPs urge. The text calls on Iran to release its political prisoners, including human rights defenders, as they have been arbitrarily detained solely for exercising their fundamental rights to the freedoms of expression, belief, association, publication, peaceful assembly and media freedom.

For more details, the resolution will be available in full [here](#) (08.07.2021). It was adopted by 666 votes in favour, 5 against with 16 abstentions.

Further information

The European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights
Watch a video recording of the plenary debates (08.07.2021)

EP Multimedia Centre: free photos, video and audio material

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