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Death penalty in Iran

Greens/EFA motion for a resolution

Tabled by ***Angelika Beer, Raül Romeva i Rueda, Monica Frassoni***

on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group

The European Parliament,

 having regard to Council declaration of 25 August 2008 on the execution by hanging of Reza Hezjazi,

- having regard to the statement of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union on the imminent execution of Behnood Shojaee,

- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which the Islamic Republic of Iran is a party

- having regard to its previous resolutions

 having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas, on 10 June 2008, 16-year-old Mohannad Hassanzadeh, an Iranian Kurd, was executed for a crime he committed at the age of 14, whereas on 22 July juvenile offenders Hassan Mozafari and Rahman Shahidi were executed and on 19 August 2008 19-year-old Reza Hezjazi was hanged for alleged murder which he committed when he was 15 years old, whereas on 26 August 2008, 19-year-old Behnam Zare was executed for an offence he committed at the age of 15, making him the sixth juvenile offender to be put to death in Iran in 2008 alone,

B. whereas neither Zare's nor Hezjazi's family and lawyer were notified of the time and place of the scheduled executions, in violation of Iranian law,

C. whereas the execution of juvenile offenders is prohibited under international law, as stated in Article 6(5) of the ICCPR and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, whereas there are currently at least 130 children and child offenders on death row despite Iran's legal obligations,

D. whereas according to estimates by Amnesty International, over 300 people have been executed last year in Iran, a number which is only exceeded by the death sentences carried out in the People's Republic of China,

E. whereas minority rights activists are increasingly exposed to the threat of the death penalty, as was the

case of Yaghoub Mehrnehad, an ethnic Baluchi and executive director of Voice of Justice Youth Association, who was executed on 4 August 2008 after having confronted local officials in public demanding accountability for their poor performance,

F. whereas another minority rights activist, Kurdish teacher Farzad Kamangar, has been condemned to death without evidence on charges of taking up arms against the state,

G. whereas confessions are often obtained following torture and without access to lawyers and whereas court rulings lack the minimum standards of a fair trial,

H. whereas on 5 August 2008, the Iranian Judiciary announced the suspension of the use of stoning as a means of execution with the consequence that 10 unnamed women facing death by lapidation would not be stoned,

1. Is profoundly saddened over the recent execution of several juvenile offenders in Iran, making Iran the only country in the world where this grave violation of international standards of law is still practiced in 2008;

2. Draws particular attention to the fate of Soghra Najafpour, who has spent almost the entire past 19 years of her life on death row for a murder which took place when she was 13 years old;

3. Strongly condemns the growing number of executions and calls for a moratorium on the death penalty;

4. Calls on the Head of the Judiciary, Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Sharoudi, to systematically commute all death penalties for juvenile offenders;

5. Calls on the Members of the Majlis to urgently amend legislation in order to ensure that no-one is executed for a crime committed when less than 18 years of age, to raise the age of legal responsibility to international standards and to introduce legislation for the prohibition of the death penalty;

6. Supports legislative efforts in Iran to introduce a separate legislative and court system for juvenile offenders and calls on the members of the Majlis to foresee measures aimed at education and social reintegration of child offenders; calls on the Commission to support the Iranian authorities in any request for international cooperation in this domain;

7. Strongly condemns the persecution and imprisonment of citizens in Iran who engage in the defence of human rights and who campaign against the death penalty, frequently being charged with so-called activities against national security; in particular, calls for the unconditional release of Emadeddin Baghi, Mohammad Sadegh Kabovand and the commution of the death sentence of Farzad Kamangar, as well as a re-investigation into his case;

8. Welcomes the recent announcement of the suspension of stoning as a means of execution, expresses, however, its concern that in the reform proposal of the Penal Code presently under consideration by Parliament, stoning for certain forms of adultery is being maintained and calls on the Members of the Majlis to commit themselves to the complete abolition of stoning;

9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Government and Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

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