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Iran

Greens/EFA motion for a resolution

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Iran of 10.3.2011, 20.1.2011, 8.9.2010 and 10.2.2010,
- having regard to the Statements by the spokesperson of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the sentences on Iranian Filmmaker Jafar Panahi and Iranian Actress Marzieh Vafamehr of 18.10.2011, on the sentencing of Ms. Narges Mohammadi, an Iranian Human Rights Defender of 8.10.2011, on the arrest of 6 independent film-makers in Iran of 26.9.2011, on the execution of a juvenile offender in Iran of 22.9.2011 and on the human rights situation in Iran of 15.9.2011;
- having regard to the reinforcement of EU restrictive measures due to serious human rights violations in Iran on 10 October 2011
- having regard to the 123 recommendations of the outcome of the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council of February 2010
- having regard to the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ahmed Shaheed of 23 September 2011
- having regard to the joint press statement on 22 September 2011 of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers and the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment condemning the public hanging of 17 year old Alireza Molla Soltani
- having regard to the international Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which the Islamic Republic of Iran is a party
- having regard to the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran and notably articles 23 to 27 and 32 to 35 which provide for freedom of expression, assembly, association and practice of one's religion as well as basic rights for accused and detained,
- having regard to Rule 122 of its Rules of Procedure,

A. Whereas human rights defenders (notably women's, children's and minority rights activists), journalists, bloggers, artists, student leaders, lawyers, trade unionists and environmentalists continue to live under high pressure and constant threat of arrest,

B. Whereas in February and March 2011 hundreds were arrested and at least three people died when thousands of demonstrators went to the streets in support of the pro-democracy movements in neighboring Arab countries and to protest against the detention of opposition leaders Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi,

C. Whereas in April security forces killed several dozen protesters, mostly ethnic Arabs, and arrested dozens more in the southwestern province of Khuzestan,

D. Whereas dozens of people were arrested and many injured when environmental protests started in Western Azerbaijan Province against the drying up of the Urmia Lake and the Iranian Parliament failed to adopt remedial measures at the end of August

E. Whereas since 2009 dozens of lawyers have been arrested in exercise of their profession, including Nasrin Soutoudeh, Mohammad Seifzadeh, Houtan Kian and Abdolfattah Soltani; Whereas Nobel Peace Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi has effectively been forced into exile after authorities shut down her Center for Defenders of Human Rights and whereas taking on the defense of political detainees and prisoners of conscience implies taking increasingly high personal risks,

F. Whereas since 2009 the authorities have been cracking down on journalists and bloggers, arresting dozens, over 40 publications have been shut down and while more than 60 journalists have been forced into exile in 2011 alone; whereas 7 documentary film makers were arrested under allegations that they have been cooperating with the BBC

G. Whereas pressure on religious minorities, converts and liberal Shia scholars continues to raise, most notably against the Bahai's who despite being the biggest non-Muslim religious minority suffer heavy discrimination including denial of education and whereas the legal procedure against the seven imprisoned leaders of the are ongoing while over 100 community members remain under arrest; whereas the protestant pastor Yousef Nadarkhani is still under the threat to be executed for apostasy; whereas the ban by the authorities of Sunni Muslims from building houses of worship or praying in groups on Eid al-Adha day continues; whereas a state supported defamation campaign against (Shia) Nematollahi Sufis is ongoing, depicting all forms of mysticism as satanic and persecuting Sufi worshippers most prominently in the armed attack in Kavar in September, which killed one person and seriously injured others,

H. Whereas according to media reports, on 11 and 12 November, Iran hanged five people convicted of charges varying from rape to drug trafficking; whereas with far over two hundred executions this year already, Iran continues to lead the worldwide statistics on capital punishment with the highest per capita rate in the world, including at least one juvenile offender,

I. Whereas this year, for the first time since 2006, Iranian citizens have ranked in the top five countries producing asylum seekers globally, according to a recent report by the office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees,

J. Whereas certain European companies are on record to have provided technology to Iran that may have been used to block information, or worse, to persecute activists; whereas for example the French Company Eutelsat, owned to 30% by the French Government, has ended its contracts with BBC Persian and Deutsche Welle under pressure from Iran, while at the same time maintaining several Iranian state owned TV stations as customers;

K. Whereas the British company Creativity Software secured a contract two years ago to "provide lawful intercept solutions" to Iran, despite concerns that it has been used to round up activists communicating with their mobile phones,

L. Whereas the Obama administration is planning to build a regional coalition to counter Iran by providing GCC member states such as UAE, Saudi Arabia and Oman with advanced attack weapons, such as thousands of "bunker-buster" bombs and other munitions and F-15 aircraft, Stinger missiles and medium-range, air-to-air missiles,

1. Expresses its grave concern over the continuously deteriorating human rights situation in Iran, the growing number of political prisoners, the continuously high amount of executions, widespread torture, unfair trials, exorbitant sums demanded for bail, as well as the heavy restrictions on the freedom of information, expression, assembly, belief, education and movement
2. Supports the EU decision on 10 October 2011 to add further names to the list of Iranian officials for which restrictive measures are applied due to serious human rights violations
3. Pays tribute to the many protagonists of the pro-democracy movement since June 2009, which have expressed similar demands for democratic and social change as have inspired the Arab Spring uprising in many neighboring countries
4. Re-iterates its call for a moratorium on capital punishment and the abolition of the execution of juvenile offenders
5. Notes positively the release of 1200 political prisoners, including some who have participated in the 2009 protests and Dr. Arash Alaei an AIDS specialist, solely incarcerated on the charge of having maintained international contacts, but insists that all those who are being held solely on the grounds of peacefully calling for reforms in the country should be released,
6. Insists notably on the immediate release from house arrest of former presidential candidates and opposition leaders Mehdi Karroubi and Mir-Hossein Mousavi, as well as his wife Zahra Rahnavard
7. Calls on the Iranian authorities to accept peaceful protest and to respond to the numerous plights of the population, expresses its particular concern over the pending ecological catastrophe in the Urmia Lake region and calls for decisive government action to try to stabilize the regional ecology on which millions of Iranians depend,
8. Calls on the EEAS and the European Commission to offer the Iranian authorities financial and technical support in their struggle to save the Urmia Lake
9. Takes note of the Islamic Republic of Iran's offer to cooperate with the UN Human rights system, including the standing invitation issued to thematic special procedures and the proposed visit of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and calls on Iran to honor its commitments by allowing the special Rapporteur to visit the country before the end of the year as a first gesture, considering that no visit of any mandate holder of the UN Human Rights Body has taken place since 2005;
10. Expresses its regret that the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran chose not to grant visas for the EU Iran parliamentary delegation who planned to visit Iran at the beginning of November; believes that despite considerable political divergences dialogue remains the only way to advance mutual understanding and peaceful change on all sides; regrets that an opportunity was missed, but remains open to future exchanges

11. Calls on European companies to live up to their cooperate social responsibilities by not providing goods and services to Iran which could endanger the civil and political rights of Iranian citizens and calls on Eutelsat to stop providing services to Iranian state companies as long as Eutelsat services are being used by Iran in order to jam independent TV programs; condemns the collaboration of European companies in the repression of the Iranian population and asks Creativity Software to stop all dealings with the Iranian Government

12. Regrets the extensive arms deliveries to non democratic countries in the Golf region by the US administration and warns of the dangers of this ongoing arms race for the future stability of the conflict prone region

13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the EEAS, the Commission, the Parliaments of the Member States, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Government and Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

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Letter

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