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Iran

Greens/EFA motion for a resolution

Tabled by ***Angelika Beer, Monica Frassoni, Hélène Flautre, Jean Lambert***

on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the 3rd inter-parliamentary meeting between the European Parliament and the Majlis (Parliament) of the Islamic Republic of Iran , held in Brussels on 4and 5 November 2008, and the report thereon,

- having regard to the Declaration of 22 December, 2008 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the closure by Iranian police of the Human Rights Defenders Centre (HRDC) led by the lawyer and 2003 Nobel Prize Laureate Shirin Ebadi,

- having regard to the statement of 2 January 2009 by the UN Secretary General on harassment and persecution against Mrs. Shirin Ebadi and her safety and security,

- having regard to Resolution of the UN General Assembly on the Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran of 18 December 2008,

- having regard to the Report of the UN Secretary-General on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran of 1 October 2008,

- having regard to the United Nations of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders adopted on 9 December 1998,

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

A. whereas the Tehran-based Centre for Human Rights defenders (CHRD) has been forcibly closed and its offices searched by the authorities on 21 December 2008,

B. whereas the Centre, co-founded and headed by the lawyer and Nobel-Peace Price laureate Shirin Ebadi has as its role reporting violations of human rights in Iran, providing pro-bono legal representation to political prisoners and support to families of political prisoners,

C. whereas the raid by the authorities significantly took place shortly before the CHRD was to hold an event commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

D. whereas the members of the CHRD, besides Ms. Ebadi notably Mr. Soltani, have been repeatedly harassed, defamed, or imprisoned for their courageous struggle in favour of respect for human rights and the rule of law in Iran,

E. whereas Shirin Ebadi received death threats earlier this year after she had decided to take on the defence of the 7 member leadership of the Baha'i faith who had been collectively arrested earlier last year; whereas the CHRD had also protested against the authorities barring students from universities, such as student activists and student members of the Baha'i,

F. whereas IRNA, Iran's official news agency, divulgated in August the false information that Shirin Ebadi's daughter Narges Tavasolian had converted to the Baha'i faith, an allegation which can carry serious consequences since Baha'i believers are strongly persecuted in Iran,

G. whereas the members of another renowned human rights centre in Iran, the Human Rights Organization of Kurdistan (HROK) are equally harassed by the authorities and under constant threat of arrest; whereas notably its founder Mohammad Sadiq Kaboudvand has been sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment on the charge of "acting against national security through establishing the HROK",

1. Expresses its grave concerns over the persecution of human rights defenders in the Islamic Republic of Iran and calls on the authorities to fulfil their obligations under the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders to protect and support the work of all those engaged to improve the standard of human rights and rule of law in Iran;

2. Calls on the authorities to allow the CHRD, the HROK and other human rights associations to function unhampered;

3. Insists that all harassment of the members of the CHRD, above all Peace Nobel Price laureate Shirin Ebadi and her daughter, as well as AbdolfattahSoltani should stop and complements the CHRD for its important work;

4. Is seriously concerned about the deteriorating health situation of Mohammad Sadiq Kaboudvand who has reportedly suffered from two heart attacks and other illnesses since his imprisonment; considers him a prisoner of conscience and calls for his immediate and unconditional release as well as medical care;

5. Deeply regrets the continued method of suspension used against students in order to penalise them for organising open public debates and calls on the authorities to release those who have been arrested on the occasion of the last annual National Student Day, 6 December, at the University of Shiraz;

6. Appeals to the Iranian authorities to live up to the respect for religious minorities as stipulated by the government and to promptly release the Bahai' leaders Fariba Kamalabadi, Jamaloddin Khanjani, Afif Naeimi, Saeid Rasaie, Mahvash Sabet , Behrouz Tavakkoli and Vahid Tizfahm, as they are solely imprisoned on the basis of their belief;

7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Commission on Human Rights, the Head of the State Supreme Court of Iran and the government and parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

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