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(Final version)

The situation in Iran and the protection of Iranian human rights defenders in Council of Europe member States

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A. Draft Resolution

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to its Resolution 1678 (2009) "Situation in Iran", and reiterates its deep concern with regard to the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran and its foreign policy.
2. For more than two years, the Islamic Republic of Iran has been the scene of mass anti-government protests that have spread across the country following the death of Jina Mahsa Amini, a young woman who died in custody of Iran's "morality police" on 16 September 2022. Her death led to an unprecedented protest movement under the motto "Woman, Life, Freedom", against the Islamic regime as a whole. Faced with an existential threat, the regime reacted with extreme brutality, using violence and torture, kidnappings and death sentences to silence the protesters' legitimate demands.
3. The Assembly pays tribute to the victims of the Iranian regime and expresses political support to, and solidarity with civil society groups and courageous Iranians who stand up against repression and mobilise to promote democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Iran.
4. Ever since the establishment of the "Islamic Republic" in 1979 the people of Iran have been denied basic human rights. Many opponents of the regime had to flee the country and were granted asylum and citizenship in Council of Europe member States. As a result, there are large Iranian communities in many European countries, which maintain relations with relatives and friends in Iran.
5. Many Iranians living in exile in Europe, and European citizens of Iranian origin or descent, are opposed to the regime in Iran and support the protest movement against it. They are often faced with threats, intimidation, violence, abductions by the Iranian State structures of repression operating abroad, and even fall victims of assassination attributable to them.
6. The persecution of dissenting civil society voices and human rights defenders both in Iran and abroad by the Iranian regime is a serious human rights issue and a threat to the security of European societies.

Amendment 2 Tabled by the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

In the draft resolution, paragraph 3, before the words "victims of the Iranian regime" insert the following words:

"women and men"

Amendment 3 Tabled by the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

In the draft resolution, paragraph 6, after the words "both in Iran and abroad", insert the following words:

", in particular in the Council of Europe member States,"

Amendment 4
Tabled by the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

In the draft resolution, paragraph 6, replace the words "a serious human rights issue" with the following words:

"a serious human rights concern"

Amendment 5
Tabled by the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

In the draft resolution, at the end of paragraph 6, insert the following sentences:

"The Assembly reaffirms its support for all human rights defenders under the jurisdiction of member States and refers to its Resolution 2225 (2018) "Protecting human rights defenders in Council of Europe member States" and its Resolution 2554 (2024) "Protecting women human rights defenders in Europe". It further refers to its Resolution 2509 (2023) "Transnational repression as a growing threat to the rule of law and human rights", as Iranian human rights defenders in Europe are also targeted. The Assembly invites its General Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders and whistleblowers to address the protection needs of Iranian human rights defenders in exile in Europe".

7. Iran is a direct neighbour of three Council of Europe member States: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Türkiye, and has a significant impact on regional stability and security in the South Caucasus.
8. With its support to Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen, and the Assad regime in Syria, and its fierce stance against Israel and the denial of its right to exist, Iran is one of the most influential stakeholders, and a major actor contributing to the destabilisation of the Middle East.
9. As a provider of weapons to the Russian Federation, and given its political rapprochement with that country both on bilateral and multilateral levels, as well as its strategic ambitions in the Mediterranean, Iran is a threat to European security.
10. The Assembly therefore believes that the situation in Iran and its domestic and foreign policy have a direct impact on, and pose a serious threat to, regional, European and global security.

Amendment 1
Tabled by Mr Emanuelis ZINGERIS, Mr Eerik-Niiles KROSS, Ms Larysa BILOZIR, Mr Oleksii GONCHARENKO, Ms Olena KHOMENKO

In the draft resolution, paragraph 9, after the words "Russian Federation", insert the following words:

"which are used to reinforce its war of aggression against Ukraine,"

11. European countries, however, have so far not designed a co-ordinated strategy to counter the Iranian policy to destabilise international order, and its subversive activities that threaten European democracies, including as regards the protection of Iranian communities in Europe.
12. The Assembly believes that the Council of Europe, as the key European institution protecting and promoting democracy, human rights and the rule of law, should play a significant role in guiding and supporting its member States when it comes to building up co-ordinated human rights-based relations with Iran.
13. The Assembly therefore calls upon governments and parliaments of member and observer States of the Council of Europe, as well as parliaments enjoying observer or partner for democracy status with the Assembly to raise awareness of the human rights situation in Iran and to consider, possibly in consultation with Iranian communities in Europe, ways to strengthen solidarity with, and support to, Iranian civil society organisations and individuals who stand up to promote democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Iran and, inter alia, to:
 - 13.1. send, at all levels, a stronger message of political support to and solidarity with Iranians standing up for democracy and human rights;
 - 13.2. introduce and enforce targeted sanctions against Iran's power elite, namely individuals and companies linked to the regime;
 - 13.3. ensure accountability under international law, by introducing targeted sanctions against, and initiating international legal prosecution of Iranian human rights violators;
 - 13.4. ensure access to international protection for all those Iranians who manage to escape and cannot return to the country because of fear of persecution;
 - 13.5. dispatch independent observers, including the staff of their embassies, to attend trials of protesters who are detained;
 - 13.6. provide Iranian citizens with free internet access during the regime's blackout thereof during protests, and to facilitate access to internet via virtual private networks (VPNs);

Amendment 6
Tabled by the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

In the draft resolution, paragraph 13, after the words "Iranian civil society organisations", insert the following words:

", human rights defenders,"

Amendment 7
Tabled by the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

In the draft resolution, at the end of paragraph 13.3, insert the following words:

", including those responsible for the pervasive institutional discrimination leading to the elimination of the rights of women and girls in Iran, and for the persecution of and discrimination against religious and ethnic minorities, as well as LGBTI persons".

Amendment 8
Tabled by the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

In the draft resolution, at the end of paragraph 13.4, insert the following words:

", including human rights defenders".

- 13.7. promote international exchanges with Iranian civil society and its constituent women's, student and labour movements.

Amendment 9
Tabled by the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

In the draft resolution, paragraph 13.7, after the word "women's", insert the following word:

"rights"

Amendment 10
Tabled by the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

In the draft resolution, paragraph 13.7, before the word "student", insert the following word:

"youth,"

Amendment 11
Tabled by the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

In the draft resolution, at the end of paragraph 13.7, insert the following words:

"and consider establishing a "Vienna process-type dialogue" with all relevant human rights interlocutors in Iran and abroad".

Amendment 12
Tabled by the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

In the draft resolution, after paragraph 13.7, insert the following two paragraphs:

"set up targeted assistance, such as support programmes, to ensure the safety of Iranian human rights defenders at risk, including early warning mechanisms; protect Iranian human rights defenders in the Council of Europe member States from acts of intimidation, harassment and violence, and provide support to them as needed".

14. The Assembly urges the governments and other public authorities and relevant agencies of member States to introduce a coherent and co-ordinated policy to ensure the protection of and the respect for fundamental rights of Iranians who are citizens of, refugees in, or otherwise under the jurisdiction of Council of Europe member States, including double-nationals being held as hostages and used as instruments for pressure, against activities of Iranian special services. Security measures for the Iranian diaspora in Europe, in particular the key opposition figures, must be improved, including in terms of digital and physical security; intelligence gathering on Iran's proxy groups must be strengthened.

Amendment 13
Tabled by the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

In the draft resolution, paragraph 14, second sentence after the words "Security measures for the Iranian diaspora in Europe", insert the following words:

"and Iranian human rights defenders in the Council of Europe member States",

Amendment 14
Tabled by the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

In the draft resolution, after paragraph 14, insert the following paragraph:

"The Assembly calls on the Council of Europe member States that are Parties to the Rome

15. The Assembly further calls upon governments and other relevant authorities of the Council of Europe member States to elaborate a coherent and co-ordinated policy vis-à-vis Iran that should be based on the following principles:
 - 15.1. an active and comprehensive diplomatic engagement vis-à-vis Iran should not be limited to the nuclear deal and address all issues in a broad and comprehensive manner, the human rights situation must be made a central topic of discussion;
 - 15.2. an option of downgrading diplomatic and trade relations should be on the table;
 - 15.3. Europe should develop its own deterrence capacity and be ready to impose costs;
 - 15.4. sanctions should be imposed and enforced to specifically target Iran's power elite;
 - 15.5. in case of renewal of the nuclear deal, advantages and the collateral damage should be considered;
 - 15.6. an active transatlantic co-ordination is needed;
 - 15.7. there should be no diplomatic deals which are harmful to civil society;
 - 15.8. engagement with Iranian citizens should be strengthened;
 - 15.9. dialogue with civil society groups should be developed as well as efforts to overcome the fragmentation of

Statute of the International Criminal Court to consider proposing an amendment to the Statute aimed at including the crime of "gender apartheid", which is the institutionalisation of gender-based discrimination and exclusion of women and girls from all spheres of society".

Sub-amendment 1 to amendment 14
Tabled by Mr Claude KERN, Mr Titus CORLĂȚEAN, Ms Sandra ZAMPA, Mr Gergely ARATÓ, Mr Berdan ÖZTÜRK

At the end of amendment 14, insert the following sentence:

"as well as "religious apartheid", which is the institutionalised discrimination and exclusion of individuals from all spheres of society based on their religious beliefs or ethno-religious identity".

Amendment 15
Tabled by the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

In the draft resolution, after paragraph 15.2, insert the following paragraph:

"an active feminist foreign policy in relation to Iran, to make the situation of women and girls in Iran a foreign policy priority, which can provide an enabling framework to support Iranian women's rights defenders".

opposition, possibly by facilitating the setting-up of a co-ordination platform for Iranian opposition abroad;

- 15.10. a joint strategy should be established among the member and observer States of the Council of Europe to push for the release of citizens held as hostages;
- 15.11. opposition and democratic forces from Iran should be brought together and their voices made heard;
- 15.12. a mechanism to investigate and register alleged human rights violations in Iran should be established as a complementary tool to the fact-finding mission of the United Nations Human Rights Council;
- 15.13. the option to qualify Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and possibly other entities, as terrorist organisations should be considered.