

Resolution 2660 (2026)¹

Democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Iran

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The brutal suppression of nationwide protests in the Islamic Republic of Iran that began in December 2025, characterised by mass murders, grave, widespread and systematic human rights violations, has marked a new dark chapter in the pattern of repression conducted by Iranian authorities against citizens seeking to exercise their fundamental rights.
2. Against a broader regional context marked by protracted conflicts and recurrent escalation, the Parliamentary Assembly underlines the importance of upholding international rules and norms intended to protect civilians, preserve peace and ensure the peaceful resolution of disputes.
3. The escalation into armed conflict with joint Israel-United States strikes on Iran that began on 28 February 2026 has further heightened uncertainty and instability in an already fragile regional environment. The Assembly underlines that these joint military actions were executed as a direct response to Iran's persistent malign activities, including its blockades of vital maritime chokepoints and continuous sponsorship of international terrorism. However, it is the Iranian regime's asymmetric warfare and its proxies' subsequent retaliatory actions that have extended beyond the immediate theatre of operations, affecting neighbouring States, disrupting critical infrastructure and trade routes, and contributing to a broader climate of insecurity.
4. In this context, the Assembly emphasises that the worsening regional situation must not divert attention from the plight of the Iranian population. The convergence of internal repression and external conflict has compounded the suffering of civilians, who continue to bear the consequences of both systematic human rights violations and the wider impacts of instability, including airstrikes, internal displacement, economic disruption and a lack of access to essential services. Iran's brutal repression of women, the political opposition, religious and ethnic minorities, and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community puts these groups at particular risk.
5. This situation has been further intensified by the imposition by the Iranian authorities of widespread restrictions on communications, including internet shutdowns and the obstruction of independent reporting and international scrutiny. Such measures not only restrict fundamental freedoms but also serve to conceal violations and undermine efforts to establish accountability.
6. Within this broader pattern of repression, the deeply alarming use of the death penalty on an extensive and escalating scale gives rise to continued serious concern. The Assembly condemns in the strongest terms its appalling application in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including in connection with protest-related activities and broadly defined national security charges and following proceedings that fall short of international standards of due process and fair trial guarantees.
7. The Assembly deplores the large-scale arrest and detention of individuals for exercising their rights to freedom of expression, assembly and peaceful protest. The arrest and reported ill-treatment of Narges Mohammadi, Nobel Peace Prize laureate, are emblematic of the sustained repression targeting human rights defenders, journalists and political dissidents and the efforts to deny Iranian citizens any democratic space.

1. *Assembly debate* on 23 June 2026 (22nd sitting) (see [Doc. 16413](#), report of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, rapporteur: Mr Max Lucks; and [Doc. 16435](#), opinion of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, rapporteur: Mr Pablo Hispán). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 23 June 2026 (22nd sitting).

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8. The Assembly considers that these human rights violations have been committed as part of a widespread and systematic attack against the Iranian civilian population and may therefore amount to crimes against humanity under international law.

9. The repressive practices extend beyond the borders of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Intimidation, surveillance, harassment, hostage taking, assassinations and acts of violence targeting members of the Iranian diaspora, journalists and individuals perceived as critical of the Iranian authorities demonstrate a disturbing and unacceptable practice of transnational repression taking place within Council of Europe member States.

10. The Assembly further states its alarm at the continuation and acceleration of malign activities and hybrid actions attributed to Iranian actors, including attempts to intimidate and divide societies and to target, in particular, Jewish communities.

11. Recent attacks in the United Kingdom, including the terrorist incident of 29 April 2026 in Golders Green that targeted and killed two Jewish individuals, as well as a broader pattern of antisemitic violence, have underscored the seriousness of these threats, and links between these attacks and the Islamic Republic of Iran and its proxies are under continued investigation. Such developments highlight the wider security implications posed by the Iranian hybrid activities and their impact on democratic space and social cohesion within Council of Europe member States.

12. Recalling its [Resolution 2570 \(2024\)](#) “The situation in Iran and the protection of Iranian human rights defenders in Council of Europe member States”, the Assembly considers that the Iranian regime, through its nuclear ambitions and its network of regional proxies, also by sponsoring international terrorism, is a major actor in the destabilisation of the Middle East region and beyond. As a provider of weapons to the Russian Federation to sustain its war of aggression against Ukraine, as well as its widespread hybrid threats in Council of Europe member States, the Iranian regime also poses a significant threat to European security.

13. While international diplomatic efforts to establish and maintain a ceasefire between the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel and the United States, are to be welcomed, mediation has largely prioritised security and geopolitical considerations, whereas human rights concerns have not been sufficiently integrated into diplomatic processes. Lasting peace and stability cannot be achieved in the absence of respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

14. Despite the challenges faced, Iranian civil society continues to mobilise, including human rights defenders, journalists, women’s rights activists and other democratic actors who, in defiance of sustained repression and at great personal risk, advocate for fundamental rights, dignity and democratic change. The Assembly emphasises the importance of supporting these voices and ensuring that they remain visible and engaged in international discussions on the future of Iran.

15. The Assembly calls on Council of Europe member States to prepare, in close consultation with Iranian civil society, human rights defenders, women’s rights activists, independent journalists, trade unions, lawyers and democratic actors, co-ordinated forms of support that can be mobilised rapidly if and when a political opening occurs in Iran. Such support should strengthen the rule of law, independent institutions, pluralistic media, transitional justice, and democratic participation, while fully respecting the right of the Iranian people to determine their own future.

16. The Council of Europe, as the key European organisation 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 developing co-ordinated human rights-based relations with Iran to allow the people of Iran to exercise their fundamental rights freely and to determine their own future without repression.

17. In light of the above considerations, as regards human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Iran, the Assembly:

17.1. condemns in the strongest terms the brutal, murderous and systematic repression of nationwide protests that began in December 2025, including the use of excessive and lethal force against protesters, mass arrests, torture and other serious human rights violations;

17.2. further condemns the intensification of repressive measures since the escalation of armed conflict in February 2026, including the expansion of coercive practices and the death penalty under the pretext of national security;

17.3. pays tribute and expresses its solidarity with the Iranian people, who have repeatedly taken to the streets to protest for their right to determine their own future;

- 17.4. recalling its [Resolution 2651 \(2026\)](#) “Towards the universal abolition of the death penalty in all circumstances” and its opposition to the death penalty in all places, calls for the immediate establishment of a moratorium on the use of the death penalty in the Islamic Republic of Iran, with a view to its full abolition;
- 17.5. demands the immediate and unconditional release of all individuals detained for exercising their rights to freedom of expression, assembly and peaceful protest, and in this regard, calls on Council of Europe member States to urgently mobilise diplomatic efforts to secure the immediate release of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi and ensure that she receives appropriate medical care;
- 17.6. expresses grave concern that the Iranian authorities appear to be accelerating executions and death sentences against protesters, dissidents and political prisoners, often on vaguely defined national security charges and following grossly unfair proceedings;
- 17.7. calls for an immediate halt to all planned executions and for urgent international monitoring of death penalty cases linked to protests, dissent or political activity;
- 17.8. strongly condemns the use of torture, ill-treatment and other forms of coercion, and calls on the Iranian authorities to comply fully with their obligations under international human rights law;
- 17.9. denounces the unjust detention of European and dual-national citizens by Iran, demands the immediate release of all those European and dual-national citizens currently arbitrarily detained, calls for an immediate halt to the practice of hostage diplomacy, and – recalling Resolution 2570 (2024) – calls for a joint strategy among the member and observer States of the Council of Europe to push for the release of citizens held as hostages;
- 17.10. calls for increased co-ordination and co-operation between member States to improve and align responses to arbitrary detention and hostage taking, and punitive measures in response to the continued arbitrary detention of European and dual-nationals;
- 17.11. calls on Council of Europe member States to support international mechanisms aimed at documenting human rights violations in Iran and preserving evidence, with a view to ensuring future accountability;
- 17.12. encourages the use of available legal frameworks, including universal jurisdiction where applicable, to investigate and prosecute serious human rights violations;
- 17.13. expresses its unwavering solidarity with all persecuted ethnic and religious minorities in Iran, including Kurds, Baha'is, and Baloch people. In this context, Shakila Ghasemi, Peyvand Naimi, and Borna Naimi must be released immediately and unconditionally.
18. With regard to support to Iranian civil society and democratic voices, the Assembly:
- 18.1. reaffirms that it is for the people of Iran to determine their own future and underlines the importance of ensuring that their voices are not silenced or marginalised;
- 18.2. calls on Council of Europe member States to strengthen support for Iranian civil society, including human rights defenders, journalists, women's rights activists and other democratic actors;
- 18.3. encourages the development of platforms for dialogue and engagement with representatives of Iranian civil society and democratic opposition, including through parliamentary, academic and civil society exchanges, with an objective of regular dialogue in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe;
- 18.4. calls for increased efforts to ensure that Iranian voices remain visible and meaningfully engaged in international discussions concerning the future of the country;
- 18.5. underlines the importance of maintaining access to information and communication tools, particularly in situations where restrictions on communications limit the exercise of fundamental freedoms;
- 18.6. condemns internet shutdowns and restrictions on communications used to prevent mobilisation, silence independent reporting and obstruct documentation of human rights violations;
- 18.7. calls on member States to support secure communication tools, digital safety for activists and journalists, and mechanisms for preserving evidence of serious human rights violations for future accountability processes;

- 18.8. calls on Council of Europe member States to provide protection mechanisms and safe pathways for individuals at risk, including human rights defenders, journalists and other civil society actors forced to leave the country.
19. As regards Iranian hybrid actions and malign activity in Europe, the Assembly:
- 19.1. expresses grave concern at the pattern of transnational repression attributed to Iranian authorities and associated actors, including acts of intimidation, surveillance, harassment and violence targeting individuals within Council of Europe member States;
- 19.2. calls on member States to carry out the measures set out in paragraph 17 of Resolution 2509 (2023) "Transnational repression as a growing threat to the rule of law and human rights", and to take due account of the Assembly's subsequent work in this area, in order to prevent and effectively combat transnational repression by Iran;
- 19.3. calls for strengthened co-operation between law enforcement, intelligence and judicial authorities in order to identify, prevent and counter such activities effectively;
- 19.4. bearing in mind the severe security implications for Council of Europe member States highlighted in Resolution 2570 (2024) "The situation in Iran and the protection of Iranian human rights defenders in Council of Europe member States", calls for enhanced co-ordination between Council of Europe member States and international partners to counter the proliferation of Iranian unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and missile technologies, noting with grave concern that Iranian drones and ballistic missiles have already entered the airspace of several Council of Europe member States;
- 19.5. urges member States to ensure the effective protection of individuals at risk, including members of the Iranian diaspora, journalists, human rights defenders and other persons engaged in public or political activity;
- 19.6. calls for the enhanced protection of communities and institutions targeted by threats and violence, including Jewish communities and organisations, as well as media outlets and civil society spaces;
- 19.7. calls for the development of appropriate and proportionate measures against individuals and entities involved in acts of transnational repression, including, where applicable, through targeted sanctions and judicial proceedings.
20. As regards international engagement with the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Assembly:
- 20.1. welcomes ceasefire initiatives and mediation efforts, including those facilitated by Pakistan between the United States of America and Iran;
- 20.2. calls for human rights, democracy and the rule of law to be fully integrated into all diplomatic engagement with Iran;
- 20.3. underlines that separating security considerations from human rights risks undermining both, and reiterates that lasting peace and stability cannot be achieved in the absence of respect for fundamental rights;
- 20.4. encourages a consistent and co-ordinated approach among member States that reflects the principles of democratic security and avoids treating human rights as secondary to short-term geopolitical considerations.