

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/iran-support-for-european-resolution-10-04-2014,46126.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Iran

Strategic resolution

Support for European resolution, call for release of 52 journalists

10 April 2014

Reporters Without Borders hails last week's European [Parliament resolution](#) on European Union strategy towards Iran. For the first time, the European Parliament has displayed a clear desire to take human rights into account in the EU's relations with Iran.

Adopted on 3 April, the resolution "calls on Iran to cooperate with international human rights bodies and its own NGOs," supports "the urgent call of 772 Iranian journalists on the Iranian President to live up to his promise and allow the reopening of the Association of Iranian Journalists," and urges the European Union "to mainstream human rights in all aspects of its relations with Iran."

"We welcome this initiative stressing human rights in relations with Iran," said Reporters Without Borders secretary-general Christophe Deloire. "The measures envisaged in this resolution are a starting point. A counter-weight to the issue of Iran's nuclear programme and the defence of European economic interests, they form a basis for taking account of fundamental freedoms in bilateral talks."

Various Iranian officials, including allies of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, have stepped up their attacks on the international community and the Europeans in particular since 31 March, the date that the text of the proposed resolution was circulated.

The mullah-led regime has reacted with virulence towards article 17 of the resolution, which says that "any future Parliament delegations to Iran should be committed to meeting members of the political opposition and civil society activists, and to having access to political prisoners."

"The threats and attacks on the European Union by Iranian political and religious officials have no legitimacy coming from a regime that does not respect international human rights law," said Réza Moini the head of the Reporters Without Borders Iran-Afghanistan desk.

"By calling for implementation of the Helsinki accords by an authoritarian regime, the EU is encouraging and legitimizing civil society's human rights demands. The EU finally seems to be adopting an appropriate stance towards one of the world's most repressive countries as regards freedom of information, a country that continues to be one of the world's biggest prisons for journalists and netizens."

Moini added: "We call on the authorities to release the 52 journalists currently detained in Iran."

Disastrous record on freedom of information

[The British media](#) revealed on 2 April that **Roya Saberi Negad Nobakht**, 47, a UK resident with British and Iranian dual citizenship, was arrested while on a visit to Iran five months ago because of a comment on Facebook, and has been held in Tehran's Evin prison ever since.

Her husband, Daryoush Taghipoor, said she is being held on charges of "plotting to commit crimes against security and insulting Islam" for saying on Facebook that everything in Iran was "too Islamic." She is "not a political activist in any way (...) just a normal citizen" and may have made a confession "under duress," he said.

Neither the Iranian nor British government said anything about Nobakht's arrest for five months. Alerted by family friends, Andrew Stunell, a member of parliament for a district in the Stockport region where the couple lives, said he was "concerned about this arbitrary arrest"

and had asked the Foreign Office to make urgent inquiries on her behalf.

Nobakht is one of a total of 20 netizens currently detained in Iran. Subjected to long spells of solitary confinement and tortured into making confessions that are eventually used against them in sham trials, these men and women pay a high price for using their freedom of expression.

Reporters Without Borders reiterates its deep concern about the conditions in which a number of Iranian journalists are being detained. The regime continues to show no consideration for the netizens and journalists who fall ill while in detention.

They include **Hossein Ronaghi Malki, Mohammad Reza Pourshajari, Mostafa Daneshjo, Hamidreza Moradi, Afshin Karampour, Mohammad Davari, Mohammad Sadegh Kabovand and Said Matinpour.**

All of them are ill and need urgent medical attention, but the prison and judicial authorities refuse to allow their transfer to hospitals although this is recommended by prison doctors and the regulations established by the judicial body that oversees the prison system.

The eight members of the staff of the website [Narenji](#) (Orange in Persian) who were arrested on 3 December – **Ali Asghar Hormand, Abass Vahedi, Alireza Vaziri, Nassim Nikmehr, Malieh Nakehi, Mohammad Hossien Mossazadeh and Sara Sajad Pour** – are meanwhile still being held.

Arrested by Revolutionary Guards, they were taken to an unknown location after their homes were searched and personal effects were removed. The date of their trial and the grounds for their arrest have still not been officially announced.

The UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution on 24 March condemning Iran's grave and repeated human rights violations and granting a one-year extension to the mandate of Ahmad Shaheed, the special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran.

One of the world's most repressive regimes as regards freedom of expression, Iran is ranked 173rd out of 180 countries in [the 2014 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).

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