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8. Strongly condemns the post-electoral political violence and human rights violations targeting supporters of opposition parties;
9. Deplores the arrest of almost a dozen foreign journalists in recent weeks and calls for the immediate lifting of all restrictions on freedom of the press and assembly, and for unfettered access to Zimbabwe for foreign news agencies; calls in addition for the immediate release of the 36 citizens arrested in the course of a peaceful protest against the delayed publication of the results;
10. Commends the South African dockworkers for refusing to unload arms from the Chinese cargo ship *An Yue Jiang* which were bound for Zimbabwe's security forces; calls on all SADC countries to refuse unloading of the *An Yue Jiang's* cargo at any of their ports;
11. Calls on the Chinese Government to cease arms exports to Zimbabwe and to order the immediate return of the *An Yue Jiang* to Chinese waters;
12. Calls on the Council to ensure that all Member States rigorously apply existing restrictive measures;
13. Calls on the Council and the Commission to accelerate preparation of the package of measures, including urgent economic assistance, that will be put in place as soon as the democratic transformation in Zimbabwe has taken place, and to coordinate such measures with the wider international community;
14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the governments of the G8 countries, the governments and parliaments of Zimbabwe and South Africa, the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Chairmen of the Commission and Executive Council of the African Union, the Pan-African Parliament, and the Secretary-General and governments of the Southern African Development Community.

Women's rights in Iran

P6_TA(2008)0185

European Parliament resolution of 24 April 2008 on women's rights in Iran

(2009/C 259 E/19)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Council Declaration of 25 February 2008 on the legislative proposal on criminal law in Iran,
- having regard to its previous resolutions on Iran, notably those concerning human rights and, in particular, those of 25 October 2007 ⁽¹⁾ and 31 January 2008 ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to the report ⁽³⁾ by its Committee on Foreign Affairs on the EU's Annual Report on Human Rights in the World and the EU's policy on the matter,

⁽¹⁾ Texts Adopted, P6_TA(2007)0488.

⁽²⁾ Texts Adopted, P6_TA(2008)0031.

⁽³⁾ A6-0153/2008.

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- having regard to the resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN), and, in particular, Resolution 62/168 of 18 December 2007 on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Resolution 62/149 of 18 December 2007 on a moratorium on the use of the death penalty,
 - having regard to the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to all of which Iran is a party,
 - having regard to the 2nd inter-parliamentary meeting between the European Parliament and the Majlis (the Islamic consultative assembly) of the Islamic Republic of Iran, held in Tehran on 7 to 9 December 2007, and the report thereon,
 - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas since the launch of the One Million Signature Campaign for legal equality between men and women in Iran on 27 August 2006, over 70 activists have been arrested or are otherwise facing persecution because of their peaceful efforts to lobby for legislative change; whereas the Campaign's website has been blocked on numerous occasions by the Iranian authorities,
- B. whereas women's rights activists in Iran face growing repression, more than a hundred of them having been arrested, interrogated or sentenced in the last two years, while the Iranian government has raised over EUR 1 million in bail; whereas newspapers, magazines and broadcasters promoting women's rights have been closed down, including the most prominent magazine advocating women's rights, Zanan, which existed for over 17 years before being closed down on 28 January 2008,
- C. whereas a prominent member of the Campaign, women's rights and environmental activist Khadijeh Moghaddam, was arrested on 8 April 2008 and was released only recently after a high bail payment of IRR 1 billion (approximately EUR 50 000),
- D. whereas the general human rights situation in Iran has continued to deteriorate since 2005, and whereas executions alone almost doubled in 2007, making Iran the country with the highest per capita rate of execution after Saudi Arabia, with Iran and Saudi Arabia, together with Yemen, being the only three countries where executions are carried out for crimes committed by people below the age of 18,
- E. whereas at least ten women — Iran, Khayrieh, Kobra N., Fatemeh, Ashraf Kalhori, Shamameh Ghorbani, Leyla Ghomi, Hajar and the sisters Zohreh and Azar Kabiriniat — are still at risk of being stoned to death, as are two men — Abdollah Farivar and an unnamed Afghan national,
- F. whereas Mokarrameh Ebrahimi was sentenced to death by stoning, together with her partner, the father of her children, for the simple reason of having maintained an extra-matrimonial relationship — conduct which does not constitute a crime by international legal standards; whereas Mokarrameh Ebrahimi was pardoned by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei after 11 years of imprisonment and released on 17 March 2008, together with her 5-year-old younger son, but, tragically, only after her partner Ja'Far Kiani had been stoned to death in July 2007,
- G. whereas in an important move, the head of the judiciary, Ayatollah Seyyed Mahmoud Hashemi Shahr-oudi, recently overturned the murder conviction of Shahla Jahed, a 'temporary wife', after finding 'procedural flaws' in the original investigation, which had found her guilty of murdering her temporary husband's permanent wife,
- H. whereas there have been some improvements as regards women's rights in recent years, notably: the minimum age of marriage for girls has increased from 9 to 13, divorced mothers may retain custody of their sons up to age seven (previously they were permitted to do so only until their sons were two years old), and women can now be judicial advisers, seek divorce and refuse to let their husband take a second wife,

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- I. whereas, however, a draft bill on 'family protection' has recently been submitted in the Iranian Majlis which attempts further to legitimise polygamy, temporary marriage and the unilateral and arbitrary right of men to divorce and obtain child custody,
- J. whereas Iran is still not a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,
1. Welcomes the release of Khadijeh Moghaddam and Mokarrameh Ebrahimi, and notes the roles of the Iranian Supreme Leader and head of the judiciary in those cases; calls for the release of Shahla Jahed;
 2. Strongly condemns the repression of civil society movements in Iran, including women's rights defenders such as those involved in the Campaign; urges the Iranian authorities to end the harassment, intimidation and persecution of people peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression, association and assembly, and to release immediately and unconditionally all prisoners of conscience; recalls its resolutions of 25 October 2007 and 31 January 2008;
 3. Acknowledges the active and important role that women play in Iranian society, despite great and persisting legal inequalities, which can be a source of inspiration and hope for women in other countries of the region;
 4. Calls on the Iranian Parliament and Government to change the discriminatory Iranian legislation which, inter alia, excludes women from the most senior state offices and appointment as judges, denies them equal rights with men in marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance, and determines that any evidence they give before a court carries only half the weight of that given by a man; considers that under certain circumstances that inequality may contribute to violent crimes committed by women;
 5. Reiterates its strong condemnation of the death penalty in general; calls for an immediate moratorium on executions in Iran and is appalled that Iran continues to have the highest number of executions of child offenders in the world and that the moratorium on stoning is still not fully implemented;
 6. Notes the directives recently issued by head of judiciary Sharoudi on banning public executions without prior consent and detentions for long periods without charge;
 7. Calls on the members of the newly elected Majlis speedily to pass the pending reform of the Iranian penal code, with the aim, notably, of abolishing stoning and executions of child offenders, to move towards a moratorium on the death penalty, to bring Iranian legislation into line with international human rights obligations and to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
 8. Calls on the Council and the Commission to monitor closely the human rights situation in Iran, to raise concrete cases of human rights abuses in Iran with the authorities and to submit to Parliament, in the second half of 2008, a comprehensive report on the matter, including proposals for projects that could be financed in the framework of the Financing Instrument for the Promotion of Democracy and Human Rights worldwide ⁽¹⁾ of the EU;
 9. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the High Representative of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN Secretary-General, the UN Security Council, the UN Human Rights Council, the Head of the Judiciary of Iran and the Government and Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 386, 29.12.2006, p. 1.