

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000180/26
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Nikolaos Anadiotis (NI)
(16 January 2026)

Subject: The European Union's reaction to the recent human rights violations in Iran

Recently, the human rights situation in Iran has deteriorated massively. There have been widespread reports about the use of excessive force by state authorities, mass and arbitrary arrests, restrictions on freedom of expression and systematic obstruction of access to information, including through Internet shutdowns ⁽¹⁾ ⁽²⁾. These practices are primarily affecting peaceful protesters, women and human rights defenders, and raise serious questions as to Iran's compliance with its international treaty obligations.

In view of the above, can the Vice-President/High Representative answer the following:

1. How does the VP/HR view the effectiveness of existing European restrictive measures related to human rights violations in Iran and how does it intend to look into updating them?
2. What concrete measures can the VP/HR take to support independent international evidence gathering for human rights violations and efforts to hold those responsible to account?
3. How does the VP/HR ensure that the Union's overall policy towards Iran remains consistent with its fundamental values, without undermining regional stability?

Submitted: 16.1.2026

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(5 March 2026)

Since 2011, the EU has in place restrictive measures targeting individuals and entities for their involvement in serious human rights violations in Iran, as a means to pressure a change of behaviour.

These measures have been substantially expanded over the years ⁽¹⁾, including most recently at the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) meeting of 29 January 2026 ⁽²⁾ following the brutal repression of peaceful protests, and this approach will continue as long as necessary.

During this meeting, the FAC reached the political agreement to list the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) under CP931 as a terrorist organisation.

The EU's commitment to addressing the human rights situation in Iran extends as well to UN fora. The EU is a strong advocate for accountability mechanisms related to human rights violations in Iran, including those committed during the brutal repression of peaceful protests this year.

The EU urges Iran to allow free and unhindered access for UN mandate holders and to cooperate fully with the independent, international fact-finding mission and the special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran.

At the special session of the Human Rights Council on 23 January 2026 ⁽³⁾, the EU strongly supported the work of UN mechanisms and the extension of their mandate. The EU is also supporting civil society organisations, both outside and inside the country.

The EU has a comprehensive policy approach towards Iran aimed at addressing all issues of concern and considers all options at its disposal, including further sanctions.

In this context, the EU remains committed to peace, security and stability in the Middle East and contributes to diplomatic efforts towards de-escalation, urging all parties, including Iran, to abide by international law.

¹ <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/iran-protests-human-rights>

² <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/iran-crackdown-protests/>.

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions-against-iran/>.

⁽²⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2026/01/29/>.

⁽³⁾ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/un-geneva/eu-statement-special-session-human-rights-situation-iran_en.