

(English version)

Question for written answer E-001402/26
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Danuše Nerudová (PPE), Daniel Attard (S&D)
(8 April 2026)

Subject: Paintball marker guns use against protesters in Iran

Recent reports and open-source investigations indicate that Iranian security forces have used so-called paintball marker guns to identify, target and seriously injure protesters. Although these devices are marketed as recreational sporting equipment, evidence suggests that they can be modified to fire harder projectiles and are being systematically used as tools of repression by units linked to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Basij forces.

Furthermore, the range of models identified appears to be limited and traceable to a small number of manufacturers, including companies operating in North America and Europe, as well as hunting cartridges produced by the French-Italian ammunition manufacturer Cheddite. Concerns have also been raised about possible indirect supply chains involving intermediaries and distributors.

In the light of the above:

1. Does the Commission consider paintball marker guns and similar equipment to fall under the category of goods that might be used for internal repression under Council Regulation (EU) No 267/2012 ⁽¹⁾?
2. Is the Commission aware of any exports, direct or indirect, from EU-based companies, including through non-EU intermediaries, of such equipment to Iran since 2022?
3. Does the Commission intend to assess whether such equipment should be explicitly listed under the EU regime on goods used for internal repression?

Submitted: 8.4.2026

Answer given by Ms Albuquerque on behalf of the European Commission
(10 June 2026)

Specific restrictions concerning the export of internal repression items to Iran are addressed within Council Regulation (EU) No 359/2011 concerning restrictive measures directed against certain persons, entities and bodies in view of the situation in Iran ⁽¹⁾.

Council Regulation (EU) 2021/821 (Dual-Use Regulation) ⁽²⁾ controls the export of dual-use goods as listed in Annex I of the regulation and restricts the export of items not listed in Annex I, but which Member States nevertheless suspect might be used for internal repression. Member States could therefore prevent the export of paintball marker guns should they suspect intended use for internal repression.

The Commission is not aware of the export by EU-based companies of such equipment to Iran since 2022. Based on the above, the Commission does not see the immediate need to amend the framework to include an explicit mention of paintball marker guns and similar equipment.

¹ Council Regulation (EU) No 267/2012 of 23 March 2012 concerning restrictive measures against Iran (OJ L 88, 24.3.2012, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2012/267/oj>).

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2011/359/oj/eng>.

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/821/oj/eng>.