

Joint letter to the European Union Foreign Affairs Council,

Brussels August 5th 2021

Mr Joseph Borrell

High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security
Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission

Dear Council Members,

Dear Mr Borrell,

As a coalition of human rights organisations, we are writing to express our deep concern about the situation of minorities in Iran and in particular about the human rights abuses that non-Iranian peoples have suffered during the last 20 days.

Due to a drought and scarcity of water, the Ahwazi community went on a series of demonstrations. The Iranian regime is suppressing these peaceful demonstrations, which erupted following the transfer of Ahwaz water to other cities in Iran, which resulted in Ahwazi people being displaced from their land.

In order to pressure the Ahwazi people to leave their homes, the Iranian regime started drying up the rivers and the marshes, thus killing fish and animals, Ahwazi people are trying to work with the international and human rights institutions by putting pressure on the Iranian regime to respect international human rights conventions and acknowledge their right to have access to water, which is a universal human right.

These peaceful demonstrations have been met with violence, whereby the Ahwazi youth have been killed, thousands injured, and hundreds arbitrarily arrested. Despite (or because of) these abuses, the protests continue. Other minorities, such as Baluch and Kurds, have joined the movement to support the cause of the Ahwazi people in opposing the regime's policy of discrimination towards minorities.

The Bahai and Christian minorities in Iran are also subject to persecution, arbitrary arrests and hate propaganda. The Iranian authorities have banned the Bahai of Tehran in April 2021 from burying their loved ones to a space previously allocated to them in Tehran's Kharavan cemetery.

Iran's uranium enrichment programme is a real threat to the environment and biodiversity in Alahwaz areas. It results in environmental degradation, contamination of the water supply, and air pollution.

The recent election of President Ebrahim Raisi is extremely worrying, considering his direct involvement in abusing the human rights of dissidents and non-Iranian populations. He must be investigated for crimes against humanity due to his involvement in the massacre of 1988 and that of Maashour city in Alahwaz.

We strongly believe that the EU stands for human rights, individual freedoms, freedom of speech and freedom of religion. We urge the European Union to condemn Human rights violations in Iran and demand that the Iranian regime stops its persecution of the Ahwazi community and provides for water and better living conditions.

On behalf of

The European Association for The Defence of Minorities

AIDL (L'Alliance Internationale pour la Défense des droits et Libertés)

Safadi Centre for international Diplomacy, Research and Human Rights

IMPAC aisbl (International Movement for Peace and Coexistence)

Shema Institute asbl

Postversa asbl

The World Hindu Struggle Committee

Nav Bel

Golden Gate

The Ahwazi Organisation for the Defense of Human rights

