

# Press release – MEPs condemn violent crackdown on the recent protests in Iran



At least 304 people have been killed, with many more wounded and thousands arrested after “tens of thousands of people from all over Iran and representing all segments of society have exercised their fundamental right to freedom of assembly... in the largest-scale unrest in 40 years”, warn MEPs in the resolution adopted on Thursday by show of hands.

Nationwide protests in Iran started on 15 November, after the government announced a 50 percent increase in the price of fuel. The authorities have reacted in an unacceptable manner, MEPs say, urging Iranian authorities to disclose the total number of deaths and detainees, and inform all families where their relatives are being detained. Allegations of excessive use of force must be promptly investigated and all perpetrators must be brought to justice.

They also demand that Iran immediately release Sakharov prize laureate [Nasrin Sotoudeh](#), who is still imprisoned serving a sentence of 33 years and 148 lashes.

## **Online service blockage**

MEPs strongly condemn Iran’s decision to shut down internet access to global networks, as this is preventing communication and the free flow of information for Iranian citizens and is a clear violation of the freedom of speech.

Calling on Iranian authorities to live up to their international obligations, MEPs urge EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell to continue raising human rights concerns with Iranian authorities at bilateral and multilateral

meetings.

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## [Press release – Nicaragua: MEPs demand an end to repression of political opponents](#)



In a resolution adopted on Thursday, MEPs urge the Nicaraguan government to end the persistent repression of dissent, torture and sexual violence against the political opposition. They also call on the Nicaraguan authorities to immediately release all those arbitrarily detained and dismantle the paramilitary forces operating in the country.

The text, adopted by 560 votes to 12, with 43 abstentions, further condemns the Nicaraguan government's lack of willingness to relaunch a meaningful internal dialogue with the opposition, and demands that talks between the authorities and the opposition Civic Alliance resume.

It also stresses the need to:

- guarantee political and civil freedoms for all Nicaraguans,
- end assaults against media,
- bring back and cooperate with international organisations currently expelled from the country,
- stop expelling students from universities for protesting against the authorities,
- establish a credible electoral process, with a reformed Supreme Electoral Council, to ensure immediate, fair and transparent elections with the presence of international observers.

## **Suspend Nicaragua from the EU-Central America Association Agreement**

In light of the current circumstances, the text finally calls for the democracy clauses in the current EU-Central America Association Agreement to be triggered, which would effectively start the process of suspending Nicaragua from the agreement. MEPs justify this move by noting that the development and consolidation of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights must form an integral part of the EU's external policies.

### **Background**

Nicaragua has seen a wave of unrest and brutal crackdowns on demonstrators and opposition voices ever since protests began in April 2018 over the social security reforms decreed by President Daniel Ortega that increased taxes and decreased benefits, with many people being killed and jailed.

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## **Press release – China must close its “re-education camps” for Uyghurs in Xinjiang, MEPs say**



MEPs strongly condemn that hundreds of thousands of Uyghurs and ethnic Kazakhs are being sent to political “re-education camps” based on a system of predictive policing, in a resolution adopted on Thursday. They urge the Chinese government to immediately end the practice of arbitrary detentions without any charge, trial or conviction for criminal offence and to immediately and unconditionally release all detained persons, including this year’s laureate of the Sakharov Prize, [Ilham Tohti](#).

## **Mass internment and intrusive digital surveillance**

There is solid information that Uyghurs and other primarily Muslim ethnic minorities in the Xinjiang province are subject to arbitrary detention, torture, egregious restrictions on religious practice and extensive digitised surveillance, MEPs argue. They call on the Chinese authorities to give independent journalists and international observers free access to Xinjiang province to examine the situation on the ground.

MEPs also express their deep concern regarding reports about Uyghurs abroad being harassed by the Chinese authorities in order to compel them to inform against other Uyghurs, return to Xinjiang or remain silent about the situation there, sometimes by detaining their family members.

## **Appropriate and effective measures against the Chinese authorities**

MEPs finally stress that tools used so far by the EU have not led to tangible progress in China's human rights record, which has only deteriorated during the last decade. They recall it is vital that the EU raises the issue of human rights violation in China at every political and human rights dialogue with the Chinese authorities. MEPs call on the Council to adopt targeted sanctions and freeze assets, if deemed appropriate and effective, against the Chinese officials responsible for severe repression of basic rights in Xinjiang.

The resolution was adopted by show of hands.

## **Background**

Pressure has been increasing on Beijing, after a recent leak of classified documents (China cables). They appear to confirm that the Chinese government has detained more than a million Muslims, mostly Uyghurs, in "re-education camps" in the north-western region of Xinjiang. The Chinese authorities said the "vocational training centres" were being used to combat violent religious extremism.

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**[Spain: EIB grants EUR 57.5m to Vitalia Home to build 19 retirement homes](#)**



- The centres will provide some 3 200 residential places and more than 500 daycare places
- Employment impact: the agreement will help create almost 1 400 jobs
- The project will help to develop the “Homes to live in with gardens ” residential model for integrated people-centred care
- Climate action: the buildings for the new centres will be energy efficient with near-zero energy consumption
- The investment is being supported by the Juncker Plan

The European Investment Bank (EIB) is helping to improve elderly care in Spain by means of an agreement to finance the construction of 19 new retirement homes. To do so, the EU bank will be providing Vitalia Home with a loan of EUR 57.5m to help set up these new centres using the *Homes to live in with gardens* model developed by the Spanish company, which is intended to improve living spaces and care for the elderly. The agreement, which was signed today at the company’s headquarters in Zaragoza by EIB Vice-President Emma Navarro and the CEO of Vitalia Home Chema Cosculluela, is being backed by the Investment Plan for Europe, also known as the “Juncker Plan”.

The new residences will be located in Madrid, Catalonia, Castilla y León,

Valencia and Murcia. In total, this new infrastructure will provide 3 200 new places for residents and more than 500 places for people who only require daycare. The investments will help to implement the innovative *Homes to live in with gardens* residential model, which is focused on integrated people-centred care. With this in mind, the new retirement homes will include co-living units (houses): homely spaces for groups of 15 to 20 elderly people. Direct access from these houses to terraces or gardens will allow residents to enjoy regular open-air co-living.

The buildings housing these new residences will be Nearly Zero Energy Buildings (NZEB), i.e. buildings with very low energy consumption owing to their design and the materials used in their construction. These energy efficiency measures mean that the annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of these centres is 1 330 tonnes less than an ordinary building, which contributes to climate action, another of the EU bank's priorities.

The new retirement homes will become operational in the next three years. Some 1 000 people will be employed to build them, and they will employ around 1 400 workers – mostly women – once operational. Indeed, women make up nearly 90% of the workforce at Vitalia Home, which employs 3 350 people.

At the signing ceremony today in Zaragoza, **EIB Vice-President Emma Navarro** said: *“Supporting the healthcare sector is fundamental, not just because of its economic importance and potential, but also because of its social relevance. This is why we are delighted to support investments such as the one we are financing today, which are needed to ensure the availability of infrastructure that will allow us to meet the growing care requirements of our elderly people with services of the highest quality. Thanks to this project, more than 3 000 people will receive care at centres designed to focus on improving users' quality of life, with energy efficiency measures that help to protect the environment.”*

**Paolo Gentiloni, European Commissioner for Economy**, remarked: *“I am very pleased that the European Union is providing this financing, worth EUR 57.5 million, to Vitalia Home. The care and welfare of elderly people are fundamental. The project will create 3,200 places in 19 new retirement homes over the next three years, with an emphasis on open-air co-living. Moreover, the centres will meet EU energy efficiency targets and will create some 1,400 new jobs for caregivers.”*

**Chema Cosculluela, CEO of Vitalia Home** stated: *“The Vitalia Home expansion plan is more than just growing the number of centres and places. It constitutes a radical transformation. We are going to build 30 new centres that are very different from existing elderly care centres. Friendly spaces and a homely feel will help to prevent the harmful effects of overcrowding and institutionalisation. We are not satisfied with simply guaranteeing quality of care, but want to make people happy and to ensure their emotional well-being as well as their physical well-being, offering the chance of positive co-living and a satisfying life. We want elderly people to see our centres as a place to live that is as close as possible to a house and a home.”*



## Background information

### Vitalia Home

Vitalia Home runs 57 centres offering 8 200 residential places and employing 3 350 people. In addition to this first expansion phase financed by the EIB, Vitalia Home aims to reach 15 000 residential places, which would enable 3 500 new jobs to be created.

Vitalia's Homes To Live in With Gardens model is intended to provide large, bright, accessible spaces to encourage resident mobility and safety, combined with innovative technology to eliminate physical and pharmacological limitations. Personal tutors for each resident, choice of menu, interaction of family members with centre life through services such as dining halls and apartments for families, proximity and access to surroundings and a focus on technological innovation and research are other essential elements of this model.

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## [ESMA announces MiFID scheduled publication dates for 2020](#)

ESMA publishes its calendar of scheduled dates during 2020 for non-daily publications i.e. excluding daily reference data publication and transparency calculations for recently listed instruments. The monthly publication dates for the operation of the double volume cap mechanism (MiFIR Article 5) are detailed in the dedicated [webpage](#) and take place on the fifth working day of each month.

During 2020, ESMA will publish for the first-time transparency and systemic internalisers calculations for derivatives. During 2019, publications on derivatives were not executed given the observed data quality problems and the operational impact on ESMA of contingency preparations for the announced no-deal Brexit dates. In 2020, ESMA and National Competent Authorities (NCAs) are working to publish this information from April, however due to pending quality issues, the scope of derivatives classes to be published will not be entirely complete.

The scheduled publication dates may be updated during the year as appropriate. Further information will be released upon the execution of the publications or in case of relevant delays or corrections.

### Background:

ESMA, under MiFID II/MiFIR, regularly publishes relevant information for investors, market participants and supervisors regarding instruments reference data, transparency calculations and double volume cap calculations.

ESMA receives data on the activities of more than 400 trading venues and approved publication arrangements regarding 29 million instruments since January 2018. This data is provided to ESMA by the National Competent Authorities (NCAs) or directly by the reporting entities (via delegation of the NCAs). The data is made available through ESMA's dedicated [webpage](#).