

[Provisional translation from Swedish]

Answer to question 2020/21: 1506 by Amineh Kakabaveh (-) Relations with Iran and question 2020/21: 1528 by Anders Österberg (S) Confiscation and seizure of Baha'i property in Iran

Amineh Kakabaveh has asked me if I will condemn the regime in Iran and demand the immediate release of the 70 recently arrested Kurds, as well as other political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, and if I, as a representative of Sweden, will also work to this end within the EU. Moreover, Anders Österberg has asked me if I will call on Iran to ensure that the Baha'is in Ivel regain their property. I will answer the questions collectively.

As I mentioned in previous interpellations and also in answers to several parliamentary questions - among others 44, 50, 142, 273, 325 and 549, 1046 and 1060 during the current parliamentary year - the situation regarding human rights in Iran remains very dire. The Foreign Ministry's human rights report on Iran from 2019 highlights, among other things, discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities.

Many Kurds experience labour market discrimination. In recent years, Kurdish activists have been arrested, detained and executed for violating national security. A number of Kurdish organizations are banned.

The Baha'is are a particularly vulnerable religious minority. The religion is not recognized by Iran and its practitioners are harassed and detained. Other groups, not least human rights defenders, also have a vulnerable situation in Iran.

The latest news regarding mass arrests and confiscation of property affecting individuals from ethnic and religious minorities is alarming.

Sweden's Ambassador for Human Rights, Annika Ben David, has spoken out about the situation of the Baha'is on social media as recently as February 1.

The protection of and respect for human rights is central to Sweden's relationship with Iran. The Government regularly raises these issues in bilateral contacts at various levels, including in my conversations with Foreign Minister Zarif.

We also work closely within the EU, with coordinated action and joint statements. Sweden has argued that an EU delegation should be established in Tehran. It would make the dialogue between EU and Iran, regarding among other things human rights, more effective.

Stockholm, February 3, 2021

Ann Linde