

As talks around the nuclear deal conclude in Vienna, “human rights are non-negotiable”

While we applaud the European Parliament for recently adopting a strong [resolution on the death penalty in Iran](#), we are concerned that the European Union (EU) and other negotiators in Vienna are being invited to compromise on restrictive measures adopted in reaction to serious violations of human rights in the country.

The resolution adopted last week "*strongly condemns the steadily deteriorating human rights situation*" in the country. It also "*reaffirms that respect for human rights is a core component in the development of EU-Iran relations*" and "*calls for targeted measures to be taken...against Iranian officials who have committed serious human rights violations.*"

The European Union, the United States, and negotiating partners in Vienna, have put in place regimes of targeted sanctions against individuals and entities responsible for grave human rights violations in Iran, including top Iranian officials, in particular members of the office of the Supreme Leader, President Ebrahim Raisi, and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). These officials and entities' mandates ultimately fall under the purview of the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei who himself is the subject of peace and security related sanctions. These measures mainly consist of travel bans, asset freezing, bans on funding, and a ban on the export of goods that can be used for internal repression.

However, Iran's parliament recently [insisted](#) that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action should be conditional on states' lifting these sanctions. As talks around the nuclear deal conclude in Vienna, we are gravely concerned that states may compromise on important accountability measures for the sake of political expediency.

The EU Parliament's resolution echoes civil society's and UN monitors' repeated alarms at Iran's systematic and widespread impunity for past and ongoing crimes under international law. The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran recently published a [report](#) highlighting the "*institutional impunity and the absence of a system for accountability for violations of human rights*" in Iran's political and legal system.

Against this backdrop, international accountability measures are one of the only avenues currently available for Iranians to ensure that grave human rights violations are not left without consequences for their perpetrators and that citizens seeking truth, justice, and reparation are not abandoned. Lifting any human rights related sanctions to secure the nuclear deal, in the absence of improvements in human rights, transparency, and accountability would seriously undermine the strength of states' pledges to uphold human rights and put an end to impunity in Iran.

Therefore, we urge the international community to be consistent with its human rights values and policies while negotiating political deals with Iran. States' commitments should translate into concrete steps to hold perpetrators of human rights violations accountable. Upholding such commitments require at the very least a persistent and robust stance on the promotion and protection of human rights in Iran under all circumstances.

Human rights are non-negotiable.