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## **Statement by Members of the European Parliament on possible release of Iranian diplomat, Assadi, convicted of terrorism**

A recent treaty between Belgium and Iran on the transfer of convicted prisoners has raised serious concerns among parliamentarians in the European Parliament, Belgium and throughout Europe.

Critics argue that this treaty will pave the way for the extradition of Mr. Assadollah Assadi, who was sentenced to 20 years in prison by the Antwerp Court of Appeal for terrorism and for planning to bomb the annual gathering of Iran's pro-democracy opposition, the NCRI, in June 2018.

There is a strong conviction that Mr. Assadi's extradition to Iran would lead to his immediate release. This is an affront to his victims by denying them justice but also constitutes a clear violation of our European values. Moreover, it undermines the credibility of European and Belgian judicial system as well as our collective efforts to counter and stop Iran's state terrorism.

Iran, under the current regime is the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism and leads the world in the number of executions per capita.

It was recently disclosed that the Iranian regime had hired agents in the United States to assassinate well-known political figures. The latest assassination attempt of the British writer Salman Rushdie in New York instigated by a fatwa by the founder of the regime in Iran, the Ayatollah Khomeini, and his successor Khamenei, is a vivid reminder of regime's continued commitment to terrorism. So is the growing number of dual nationals being arrested in Iran under bogus charges in recent years.

The current regime of Iran cannot and must not be trusted. Any agreement or concession to release its convicted terrorists only emboldens the regime to carry out more act of terrorism and subsidize its unacceptable hostage-taking diplomacy.

Today, Europe's security and the well-being of our citizens demands a firm stance against the regime in Iran. We must make it clear to the tyrannical leaders in Tehran that their acts of terrorism will have serious consequences. This begins with the EU and all of its member states holding the regime and its leaders to account for their terrorism instead of rewarding it with political expediency and concessions.

Therefore, to prevent any abuse of the rule of law, we call on the Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium to declare that the treaty excludes individuals who have been convicted by our judicial systems to terrorist crimes and that any request by Assadollah Assadi or the Iranian regime for his transfer to Iran, will be forwarded to the Belgian Parliament for consideration.

## **Signatories:**

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