

Resolution 2642 (2026)¹

Political crisis in the broader Middle East: the need to protect human rights and the rights of all minority groups

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The rapid escalation of internal political crises in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic has raised urgent questions concerning the protection of human rights that require sustained international attention. These crises represent critical junctures for the future trajectories of both countries and carry far-reaching implications for the stability and direction of the broader Middle East.
2. The developments in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic are unfolding in a regional environment marked by heightened instability, recurring tensions and a growing risk of escalation.
3. Multiple battlefronts have been active since the terrorist attacks carried out by Hamas against Israel in October 2023, which the Parliamentary Assembly has unequivocally condemned, and the subsequent military response by Israel, which has resulted in a catastrophic humanitarian situation of exceptional severity in Gaza. The multifaceted conflicts have involved armed non-State and proxy actors, including Iran-backed groups of Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis, and have caused immense suffering to civilian populations across the region.
4. As regards the war in Gaza, the Assembly points to its previous resolutions and positions concerning the conflict, in particular [Resolution 2582 \(2025\)](#) “The absolute and urgent need to end the humanitarian crisis for women, children and the hostages in Gaza”. It welcomes the return of the remains of the final hostage and the transition to phase two of the Comprehensive Plan to End the Gaza Conflict and underlines that durable peace requires the disarmament of Hamas, alongside the mobilisation of substantial resources for the reconstruction of Gaza.
5. The eruption of open military hostilities between Israel and Iran in June 2025, followed by the direct military intervention of the United States of America targeting Iranian nuclear facilities, has further heightened the risk of a wider regional conflagration, with profound implications for human suffering and for the maintenance of international peace and security, at a time when power politics has increasingly undermined adherence to international law and multilateral governance frameworks.
6. Within this tense regional context, the Assembly condemns in the strongest terms the deteriorating human rights situation in Iran. Nationwide protests that started on 28 December 2025 have been met with a brutal and extensive State response, with State violence particularly severe in regions home to ethnic minorities. Reports indicate the widespread, large-scale use of lethal force against protesters, killing thousands alongside other forms of arbitrary deprivation of life, enforced disappearance, arbitrary arrest and detention, incommunicado detention, and torture and inhuman treatment or punishment.
7. Sustained restrictions on access to information, including prolonged internet and telecommunication shutdowns, have compounded the crisis by impeding the verification of events and limiting the ability of individuals to exercise their rights to freedom of expression, access to information and peaceful assembly.

1. *Assembly debate* on 29 January 2026 (7th sitting) (see [Doc. 16336](#), report of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, rapporteur: Mr Piero Fassino). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 29 January 2026 (7th sitting).
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8. The Assembly equally abhors the intensification of repressive measures by the Iranian authorities in the period preceding the protests and notes with profound concern the significant rise in the use of the death penalty in 2025, contributing to a climate of fear and repression incompatible with respect for human dignity and fundamental rights.
9. The Assembly expresses its profound solidarity with the people of Iran who have voiced their legitimate aspirations for a better life, freedom and dignity. It acknowledges the significant risks faced by individuals who peacefully express dissent, in particular women and persons belonging to religious and ethnic minorities, who continue to experience heightened levels of repression and discrimination.
10. At the same time, the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic continues to be characterised by prolonged fragmentation of authority, unresolved political arrangements and recurring violence, which have perpetuated serious human rights concerns and left civilian populations, including persons belonging to ethnic and religious minority groups, particularly exposed to insecurity, displacement and abuse.
11. Since the fall of the Al-Assad regime, patterns of violence in parts of Syria have underscored the continuing vulnerability of minority communities in areas affected by shifting control, weak institutional safeguards and limited accountability. The Assembly is appalled by reports of unlawful and extrajudicial killings targeting civilians belonging to religious and ethnic minorities such as Christians, Alawites and Druze communities, as well as forced displacement, intimidation and the destruction of cultural and religious heritage. The Assembly stresses the urgent need to ensure that all parts of Syrian society are effectively protected and fully included in the country's political transition.
12. Recent developments across north-east Syria have further illustrated the fragility of existing security and governance arrangements, particularly in areas with significant Kurdish populations. The escalation of violence between the Syrian Government and the Syrian Democratic Forces has had severe humanitarian and protection consequences for Kurdish communities and has increased risks for other ethnic and religious minorities throughout the region.
13. The Assembly stresses its concern at reports from Kurdish authorities that more than 150 000 people have been displaced by the recent military escalation. Intensified fears of renewed extremism, persecution and large-scale displacement have been heightened by reports of the release of Daesh detainees who have carried out indiscriminate attacks against Kurdish communities.
14. The Assembly expresses deep concern that Kobani, where the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) was first defeated in 2015, is once again under siege after 11 years, this time by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham/ ISIS elements; condemns the long-range artillery shelling of civilian areas and the imposition of embargoes on water and electricity for heating, which may amount to war crimes; and calls for the immediate opening of the Mürşitpınar border crossing under the control of Türkiye to facilitate urgent humanitarian aid and prevent a catastrophe.
15. Against this background, the Assembly states the need for urgent action to respond to the humanitarian needs in the country, intensify diplomatic efforts to prevent further military escalations, protect civilian populations and avoid normalising violence against minorities.
16. The persistence of impunity for serious human rights violations in both the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic continues to undermine prospects for justice, reconciliation and long-term stability, reinforcing cycles of violence and repression that disproportionately affect minority communities and other vulnerable groups.
17. As regards instability in the broader Middle East, the Assembly:
 - 17.1. stresses that lasting peace and stability in the region can only be achieved through full respect for international law, including human rights law and international humanitarian law, and through political solutions that prioritise the protection of civilians;
 - 17.2. calls for all actors involved in regional hostilities to refrain from actions that risk further military escalation, to respect existing ceasefire arrangements and to take immediate steps to reduce tensions across all active fronts;
 - 17.3. underlines that the protection of civil populations, including persons belonging to ethnic and religious minority groups, must remain a central consideration in all political, security and military decisions, and that violations against civilians must not be normalised;
 - 17.4. stresses its commitment to a peaceful, just and sustainable future for Israelis and Palestinians based on the two-State solution and in full respect for international law.

18. As regards the situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Assembly:
 - 18.1. is appalled by the violent suppression of peaceful protest and condemns in the strongest terms the horrendous and brutal killing of Iranian protesters;
 - 18.2. demands the immediate and unconditional cessation of the use of violence against peaceful protesters and an end to the killing, persecution and repression of civilians exercising their fundamental rights;
 - 18.3. demands that the Iranian authorities be held fully accountable under international law for the widespread and systematic violence inflicted on their own population;
 - 18.4. calls for the review of all death sentences imposed in Iran and the immediate suspension of all executions;
 - 18.5. calls for the release of all protesters and political prisoners arbitrarily deprived of their liberty;
 - 18.6. calls on the Iranian authorities to respect at all times the fundamental rights and freedoms of its citizens, including the rights to life, freedom, peaceful assembly, freedom of expression and access to information;
 - 18.7. condemns the use of enforced internet and telecommunications shutdowns and other forms of digital repression, and calls for the full and unconditional restoration of access to information and communication services;
 - 18.8. underlines its [Resolution 2570 \(2024\)](#) “The situation in Iran and the protection of Iranian human rights defenders in Council of Europe member States”, and calls for member States of the Council of Europe to consider the option of designating the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organisation;
 - 18.9. calls on Council of Europe member States and international partners to continue to counter disinformation and misinformation disseminated by the Iranian authorities, to speak out consistently against human rights violations and repression, and to pursue diplomatic efforts aimed at reducing regional tensions and supporting peace and security in the broader Middle East.
19. As regards the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, the Assembly:
 - 19.1. stresses its grave concern for the safety of Kurdish communities and Christian, Alawite and Druze minorities in the country;
 - 19.2. calls for urgent international accountability, including the consideration by member States of the Council of Europe of targeted sanctions against individuals and entities responsible for abuses;
 - 19.3. calls for adherence to the ceasefire agreement, continued dialogue and an end to violence;
 - 19.4. stresses the need for enhanced diplomatic efforts with allies to prevent further military escalation and to protect civilian populations;
 - 19.5. calls for unimpeded humanitarian access to be safeguarded and adequately resourced both within Syria and across borders;
 - 19.6. supports efforts towards an inclusive political transition that guarantees rights and protection for all communities and delivers for all Syrians, and welcomes the commitments of the Syrian Government towards inclusive, representative governance in the pursuit of a safe and secure future for Syria.