

Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles

High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/
Vice-President of the European Commission
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels, Belgium

Brussels, 9 August 2021

Dear High Representative/Vice-President,

We, Members of the European Parliament, note with concern and regret the decision of the European Union to be represented by Enrique Mora, Deputy Secretary General and Political Director of the European External Action Service, at the inauguration of the incoming Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi. Sending such senior representation to the inauguration of a president with such a dark record, at this sensitive time, contradicts European commitments to uphold and stand up for human rights.

President Raisi was shepherded into office through a sham election, boycotted by millions of Iranian citizens, which was intended to reinforce conservatives within the Iranian regime and deny any real choice to the people of Iran. He has an appalling record of personal responsibility for the most heinous of human rights abuses. Raisi earned his reputation as the 'Hangman of Tehran' for his role in the execution of thousands of political prisoners and opponents in the late 1980s. He is personally sanctioned by the US government for his actions. More political opponents have been executed during his tenure as head of the judiciary which began in 2019, including wrestler Navid Afkari and journalist Ruhollah Zam.

It is hardly fitting to honour President Raisi's inauguration with the presence of one of the EU's most senior diplomats. It seems even more incongruous given Mr. Mora's senior role in coordinating the nuclear talks in Vienna. His presence risks giving the impression that the EU's overwhelming concern is the nuclear agreement, to the point of ignoring severe Iranian human rights abuses. While mass protests against the regime are taking place across Iran, the EU comes across as ignoring the voice of the Iranian people.

Moreover, it comes across as ignoring Iran's violent and destabilizing regional policies. The inauguration occurs just days after British, US and Romanian governments unequivocally blamed Iran for a murderous drone attack on the Mercer Street, a civilian ship navigating international waters off the coast of Oman, which killed two European citizens a British and a Romanian.

It is time for the EU to send a clear message to Iran that Europe will not turn a blind eye either to human rights abuses or acts of terror and piracy, and that Iran will face consequences for its actions. Honouring the inauguration of the 'Hangman of Tehran' only serves to encourage such behaviour.

Yours sincerely,

MEP David Lega

MEP Carmen Avram

MEP Anna Fotyga

MEP Antonio Lopez-Isturiz White

MEP Bert-Jan Ruissen

MEP Petras Auštrevičius

MEP Andrey Kovatchev

MEP Lucas Mandl

MEP Tomáš Zdechovský