A blue and yellow flag

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**European Union**

**UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**35th Special Session**

**(24 November 2022)**

**Statement by**

**H.E. Mr Václav Bálek**

**Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic**

**on behalf of the European Union**

**Geneva, 24 November 2022**

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**EU Statement**

Mister President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The EU welcomes the convening of this session to address the deteriorating human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The death in custody of Mahsa Amini must be duly investigated and those responsible must be held accountable. We have seen brave Iranian women and men, girls and boys, take to the streets to exercise their right to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and protest; and to speak up against systemic discrimination. Women and girls, in particular, have emerged as a major driver of a nationwide movement calling on the authorities to uphold the human rights of all Iranians, irrespective of sex, race, ethnic or social origin, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, disability, age, sexual orientation and gender identity

The widespread and disproportionate use of force by the security forces against nonviolent protesters, incarceration of children at “psychological centers” and “preventative” detentions of civil society activists is unjustifiable and unacceptable. People in Iran, as anywhere else, have the right to peaceful protest. The decision to severely restrict internet access is a clear violation of freedom of expression and freedom of association. We are receiving alarming reports concerning the number of people, killed or seriously injured during the protests, including women and children. Perpetrators of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, must be held accountable.

We are appalled by the imposition of the death penalty against protesters. The European Union strongly opposes the death penalty at all times and in all circumstances, as an unacceptable denial of human dignity and integrity.

The EU also recalls that the prohibition of torture is absolute. The EU urges Iran to strictly abide by the principles enshrined in the ICCPR, to which Iran is a party.

Iran must stop the violent crackdown on protests and ensure access to information, including unrestricted internet access. Human rights must be respected in all circumstances. Iran must also clarify the number of deaths and arrests, release all non-violent protestors, provide due process to all detainees in line with Article 14 of the ICCPR, and cease all executions, including those of juvenile offenders, and start pursuing a consistent policy towards the abolition of capital punishment.

In addition, we also call on Iran to engage with the Iranian people in a meaningful and inclusive dialogue on improving human rights, including gender equality, and to engage relevant UN mechanisms in that process.

We call on Iran to uphold its international obligations to respect, protect and fulfil human rights. The EU will continue to react firmly against violations of human rights in Iran and stands ready to engage with Iranian Authorities to promote and protect human rights in the country.

Thank you.