

## **The Belgian government must not be allowed to make deals over Iran's convicted terrorists**

The Belgian government is planning to pass through a bill to allow the Iranian regime's convicted terrorists to be returned to Iran in exchange for Belgian citizens who have been taken hostage by the Islamic regime in Iran.

The bill, which is yet to go through a full parliamentary vote on July 14<sup>th</sup> at the earliest, would allow the return to Iran of convicted terrorists such as Assadollah Assadi who is currently serving a 20-year sentence in Belgium for a plot to bomb an Iranian opposition group's rally near Paris in 2018.

All foreign citizens and dual nationals currently in prison in Iran as hostages, such as the Belgian aid worker Olivier Vandecasteele and French trade unionists Cécile Kohler and Jacques Paris, and dual Swedish-Iranian academic Ahmadreza Djalali, and many others, must be freed immediately. However, this can only be achieved by applying international pressure on the Islamic regime of Iran and by isolating it, not by appeasing it and returning its convicted terrorists to it.

The proposed treaty normalises and legitimises the hostage taking by the Iranian regime, and acquiesces to that regime's policy of blackmail. It is a slap in the face of the families of countless victims of this regime who are seeking justice for their executed loved ones.

Just like the conviction of Assadollah Assadi in Belgium and the trial of Hamid Nouri in Sweden, the officials of the regime of Iran should be tried for crimes against humanity and made accountable for their criminal actions and not returned to the safety of the regime in Iran.

We condemn the Belgian government's planned deal with the Iranian regime and call on the Belgian parliament to reject it. We call on all civil rights and human rights organisations in Belgium and internationally to put pressure on the Belgian government to abandon its proposed plans.

We reiterate our call for a comprehensive political, arms, cultural and sporting boycott of this regime. Not appeasement and accommodation, but global pressure and boycott is the only viable way to put an end to that regime's hostage taking and secure the release of the hostages.

**Worker-communist Party of Iran – International Office**

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<https://wpiran.org/english/>

[international.office@wpiran.org](mailto:international.office@wpiran.org)