



Iran

Iran accuses Swedish EU diplomat of crime that carries the death penalty

Johan Floderus faces trial for 'spying for Israel' and 'corruption on Earth', one of Iran's most serious offences

Agence France-Presse in Tehran

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Iran has accused a Swedish EU diplomat held in a Tehran prison for more than 600 days of spying for Israel and “corruption on Earth”, a crime that carries the death penalty.

“Johan Floderus is accused of extensive measures against the security of the country, extensive intelligence cooperation with the Zionist regime and corruption on Earth,” the judiciary’s Mizan Online news agency said on Sunday.

Floderus, 33, was arrested on 17 April 2022 at Tehran airport as he was returning to Iran from a trip with friends.

The Swede, who [works for the EU’s diplomatic service](#), is being held in Tehran’s Evin prison. His arrest came while an Iranian national, Hamid Noury, was being tried in Sweden over the mass execution of dissidents in Tehran in 1988. He ultimately received a life sentence in July 2022.

Noury has contested his sentence, and Sweden’s court of appeal is expected to announce its verdict on 19 December.

In a recent [interview with the Guardian](#), Floderus’s father, Matts, said the family were on tenterhooks as they waited to learn of the charges.

“We have reason to believe the trial will come soon, that it will be in December,” he said. “He told us he didn’t care what the verdict would be because it would mean the same thing whatever they decided to charge him with. It is just theatre, just make-believe.

“We are deeply worried and say this over and over again. He has been arbitrarily detained. He has done nothing wrong and should be freed and allowed to leave the country.”

Mizan published photos of a handcuffed Floderus appearing before judges in a pale blue prison uniform as the charges were read. Corruption on Earth is one of Iran’s most serious offences and carries a maximum penalty of death.

The prosecution claimed Floderus had gathered information on Iran’s nuclear and enrichment programmes, carried out “subversive projects” for the benefit of Israel and established a network of “agents of the Swedish intelligence service”.

It further claimed he was involved in “intelligence cooperation and communication with the European Union” and the exiled People’s Mujahedin (MEK) opposition group, according to Mizan.

The date of the trial was not yet known.

The EU’s foreign affairs chief, Josep Borrell, called for his immediate release, saying: “There are absolutely no grounds for keeping Johan Floderus in detention.”

Sweden’s foreign minister, Tobias Billström said: “There is no basis whatsoever for keeping Johan Floderus in detention, let alone bringing him to trial.”

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Hello to you, dear reader from Italy!

When the former Albanian dictator Enver Hoxha delivered his New Year message back in 1967, he pulled the cord marked “truth bomb”. “This year will be harder than last year,” he declared. “It will, however, be easier than next year.” I mean ... on the one hand: thanks for not sugar-coating it, Enver. On the other: way to kill the party buzz, you monster!

I don’t want to murder the atmosphere (or indeed any dissidents) by reminding you of the news year you’ve just lived through - or by warning you of the news year you’re about to live through. It’s not big, it’s not clever, and it’s sure as heck not seasonal.

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With that, it simply remains is for me to wish you a very happy holidays, and a splendid new year. Goodness knows you’ve earned it.

Marina Hyde

**not formally*



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