

**BAHÁ'Í  
INTERNATIONAL  
COMMUNITY**

Web: <http://bic.org>

*United Nations Office*

866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 120, New York, NY 10017 USA

Telephone: 1-212-803-2500, Fax: 1-212-803-2566, Email: [uno-nyc@bic.org](mailto:uno-nyc@bic.org),

**PRESS RELEASE**

Baha'i International Community

23 October 2013

For Immediate Release

For more information, contact Bani Dugal in New York at (office) 212-803-2500 or (mobile) 914-329-3020 or Diane Ala'i in Geneva at (office) +41 (-22) -798-5400 or (mobile) +41 (-78) -60-40-100

**Despite promises, Iran continues to violate human rights, says UN report**

UNITED NATIONS – Despite recent signals by Iran that it intends to improve on its human rights record, there has been little evidence of change, according to a [report](#) issued yesterday by the UN's expert on human rights in that country.

“The human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran continues to warrant serious concern, with no sign of improvement,” said Ahmed Shaheed, the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Iran.

Among other things, Dr. Shaheed expressed concern over Iran's high level of executions, continuing discrimination against women and ethnic minorities, poor prison conditions, and limits on freedom of expression and association.

He also said that religious minorities in Iran, including Baha'is, Christians, Sunni Muslims, and others, “are increasingly subjected to various forms of legal discrimination, including in employment and education, and often face arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment.”

His report, which will formally be presented today to the UN General Assembly, devoted several paragraphs to the persecution faced by Iran's Baha'i community.

“The Special Rapporteur continues to observe what appears to be an escalating pattern of systematic human rights violations targeting members of the Baha'i community, who face arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment, national security charges for active involvement in religious affairs, restrictions on religious practice, denial of higher education, obstacles to State employment and abuses within schools,” he wrote.

Bani Dugal, the principal representative of the Baha'i International Community to the UN, welcomed the report, saying that it provided a clear picture of what has been happening in Iran—and continues to happen even since the election of President Hassan Rouhani, who has made public promises for improvement.

“Recent reports from Iran give disturbing details indicating there has been no improvement whatsoever,” said Ms. Dugal. “Indeed reports to our office actually indicate a worsening of the situation facing Baha’is in Iran. And we note that although much has been made in the news media of recent releases of a few prisoners of conscience, no member of the Baha’i Faith has yet been included among them.”

Ms. Dugal stated: “What we see is the continuation of the usual tactics, attempting to delude the international community and to appease the family of nations, even as repression continues at home with full force. The Baha’i community in Iran, like many other minorities in that country, remains deprived of its most basic rights, including ultimately the right to exist as a viable community. Iran’s government must be held accountable for this hypocrisy and double standards.”

She continued: “In Iran’s official reply to Dr. Shaheed’s report, the government claims that ‘the citizenship rights of followers of other faiths including Baha’is are entirely observed.’

- If this is so, how is it that the barrage of [hate-filled incitement](#) against the Baha’is continues unabated in the state-controlled media, and has indeed intensified in recent weeks?
- If this is so, how is that ordinary Baha’is face constant cruel harassment in earning a basic livelihood and [official government documents](#) explicitly prohibit Baha’is from engaging in dozens of professions while in practice they are debarred from many more.
- If this is so, how is it that all the properties of the Baha’i community remain confiscated and even Baha’i cemeteries are not immune from destruction?
- If this is so, what is the explanation for an [official edict to 81 universities](#) not to accept Baha’i students and why is the government decree expelling any student who is discovered to be a Baha’i still in full force?
- If this is so, how is it that even the courageous lawyers who defend the Baha’is against injustice are themselves thrown into prison?
- And if this is so, why would the country’s [Supreme Leader issue a fatwa](#) declaring Baha’is as “unclean” and call for them to be systematically identified and socially ostracized?

These and countless other actions, all of which are evidence of obvious religious discrimination, establish beyond the shadow of doubt the presence of a chilling, state-organized, insidious campaign aimed at the eradication of a religious community in the land of its birth.”

“How long” asked Ms. Dugal “will the Iranian government persist in its duplicity?”

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