

**BAHÁ'Í
INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY**

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

PRESS RELEASE

Baha'i International Community

20 November 2009

For Immediate Release

For more information, contact Bani Dugal in New York at (office) 212-803-2500 or (mobile) 646-404-4210 or Diane Ala'i in Geneva at (office) +41 (-22) -798-5400 or (mobile) +41 (-78) -60-40-100

UN resolution on Iran sends a powerful message on human rights

UNITED NATIONS – The approval today of a strongly worded resolution on human rights in Iran sends a powerful signal to the Iranian government that the world is gravely concerned about how Iran treats its citizens, said the Baha'i International Community.

The resolution, approved by a vote of 74 to 48 by the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly, expressed “deep concern at serious ongoing and recurring human rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Iran.” The list of violations included oppressive measures taken after the June presidential election and “increasing discrimination” against minority groups, including Baha'is.

“This year’s resolution – which is among the most forcefully worded in more than 25 years of resolutions on Iran – sends a potent message to the government there, stating vigorously that the international community will not turn a blind eye to human rights violations,” said Bani Dugal, the principal representative of the Baha'i International Community to the United Nations.

“The General Assembly identifies numerous violations, including the use of torture, the repeated abuse of legal rights, the violent repression of women, and the ongoing discrimination against minorities, including Baha'is, who are Iran’s largest religious minority and are persecuted solely because of their religious belief,” she said.

The resolution also expresses concern over the treatment of “Arabs, Azeris, Baluchis, Kurds, Christians, Jews, Sufis and Sunni Muslims and their defenders.”

“The resolution also sharply condemns Iran’s severe curbs on freedom of expression and its use of violence to silence dissent after the presidential election in June,” said Ms. Dugal. “We can only hope that, given the severity of the resolution’s expression, Iran will at long last heed the international community’s recommendations and change its ways.”

The resolution, which was put forward by Canada and co-sponsored by 42 other countries, calls on Iran to better cooperate with UN human rights monitors, such as by allowing them to make visits to Iran, and asks the UN secretary general to report back next year on Iran's progress at fulfilling its human rights obligations.

Noting the turmoil that followed the presidential elections, the resolution devoted eight paragraphs to express "particular concern" about oppressive measures used by the government to suppress dissent. It noted specifically the persecution of journalists, human rights defenders, students and "others exercising their rights to peaceful assembly and association."

It also noted the "use of violence" against "Iranian citizens engaged in the peaceful exercise of freedom of association, also resulting in numerous deaths and injuries." And it criticized the holding of "mass trials and denying defendants access to adequate legal representation."

It makes extensive mention of the persecution of Baha'is, expressing concern over "attacks on Baha'is and their faith in State-sponsored media, increasing evidence of efforts by the State to identify, monitor and arbitrarily detain Baha'is, preventing members of the Baha'i Faith from attending university and from sustaining themselves economically."

The resolution also notes the continued detention of seven Baha'i leaders who were arrested in March and May 2008, stating they have faced "serious charges without adequate or timely access to legal representation."

For more information, go to <http://news.bahai.org>