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**PRESS RELEASE**

Baha'i International Community

19 November 2013

For Immediate Release

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**UN calls on Iran to live up to its human rights promises**

UNITED NATIONS – Today's vote expressing concern over Iran's continued human rights violations demonstrates that the international community will not be swayed by mere promises of improvement, said the Baha'i International Community.

“By its resolution today, the UN General Assembly says clearly that it expects deeds instead of just words from Iran on human rights,” said Bani Dugal, the principal representative of the Baha'i International Community to the United Nations.

“During his election campaign, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani promised a ‘civil rights charter’ that would provide equality for all citizens without discrimination based on race, gender or religion,” observed Ms. Dugal. “It is now time for President Rouhani to take action on this promise.

“The strength and depth of the resolution, moreover, indicate just how little has changed in Iran in recent months,” said Ms. Dugal. “Mr. Rouhani also promised the widespread release of prisoners of conscience, but so far only a few prisoners have been released. And none of them have been Baha'is.”

By a margin of 83 to 36 with 62 abstentions, the Assembly's Third Committee approved a powerfully worded resolution that said Iran “continues to catalog a wide range of systematic human rights violations.”

Among other things, the resolution expresses “deep concern” over Iran's continued use of torture, high rate of executions, lack of legal due process, and ongoing discrimination against women and minorities, including religious minorities, such as members of the Baha'i Faith, among other groups.

While the resolution welcomed recent promises by President Rouhani to improve human rights, “particularly on eliminating discrimination against women and members of ethnic minorities and promoting freedom of expression and opinion,” the six-page document

nevertheless listed many ongoing violations of international human rights law. It also included recommendations for corrective action.

The resolution, for example, devoted several paragraphs to the ongoing persecution of Iranian Baha'is, expressing concern over "targeted attacks and murders," "arbitrary arrests and detention," and "restriction of access to higher education on the basis of religion."

And it called on Iran to "emancipate the Baha'i community, to release the seven Baha'i leaders held since 2008 and to accord all Baha'is, including those imprisoned because of their beliefs, the due process of law and the rights that they are constitutionally guaranteed."

"Today's resolution is actually a blueprint for what Iran must do to live up to its obligations under the international human rights agreements to which it is a party," said Ms. Dugal.

She noted that more than 100 Baha'is are currently in prison, held solely for their religious beliefs.

"The resolution calls for Iran to 'immediately and unconditionally release all those who have been arbitrarily arrested and detained for exercising their rights to freedom of religion or belief,' among other things. Baha'is certainly fall into this category," observed Ms. Dugal.

Ms. Dugal also said that educational and economic oppression continues against Iranian Baha'is. "Earlier this month, for example, the Reuters news service produced a long investigative report that, among other things, showed how the government has over the years confiscated many Baha'i-owned properties – and then used profits from them to finance policies that, basically, contribute to the persecution of Baha'is."

The resolution was put forward by Canada and co-sponsored by 46 other countries. It also 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.

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