

**BAHÁ'Í**

*United Nations Office*

**INTERNATIONAL**

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

**COMMUNITY**

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

Web: <http://bic.org>

**PRESS RELEASE**

Baha'i International Community

18 December 2013

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

**UN General Assembly again expresses “deep concern” over continuing human rights violations in Iran**

UNITED NATIONS –The UN General Assembly today expressed “deep concern at serious ongoing and recurring human rights violations” in Iran, showing that the international community will not be swayed by mere promises of improvement.

By a vote of 86 to 36 with 61 abstentions, the Assembly approved a powerfully worded resolution that, while welcoming recent promises by Iran’s new president to improve human rights, nevertheless cited alarm over unjustified executions, the use of torture, limits on freedom of assembly and expression, and ongoing discrimination against women, ethnic minorities, and religious minorities, including members of the Baha'i Faith.

“We welcome the fact that the international community clearly prefers action instead of words, and the world has thus made it clear by this vote today that it expects Iran to live up to the new promises it has made, as well as its commitments under international law,” said Bani Dugal, the principal representative of the Baha'i International Community to the United Nations.

“Iran has not changed its ways yet. This is certainly true for Iranian Baha'is, who see no let-up in the ongoing, systematic persecution that has been directed by the government since 1979.

“As the catalog of violations in this resolution makes clear, neither has Iran relented in its oppression of millions of other Iranian citizens who only desire to share in the fundamental freedoms that enjoyed by the citizens of most other countries,” she said.

Among other things, the resolution expresses “deep concern” over Iran’s continued use of torture and its high rate of executions, noting the “high frequency of the carrying out of the death penalty in the absence of internationally recognized safeguards.”

The resolution also noted “widespread and serious restrictions on the right to peaceful assembly, freedom of association and of opinion and expression,” the “systematic

targeting and harassment of human rights defenders,” and “pervasive gender inequality and violence against women.”

On the question of discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities, the Assembly expressed concern about discrimination against “Arabs, Azeris, Balochis and Kurds and their defenders,” along with ongoing “severe limitations and restrictions on the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief” affecting “Christians, Jews, Sufi Muslims, Sunni Muslims and Zoroastrians and their defenders.”

The resolution devoted more than one paragraph to the situation facing Iranian Baha'is, noting their “continued persecution” including “targeted attacks and murders, without proper investigation to hold those responsible accountable, arbitrary arrests and detention, the restriction of access to higher education on the basis of religion, the continued imprisonment of the leadership of the Iranian Baha’i community, the closure of Baha’i-owned businesses and the de facto criminalization of membership in the Baha’i faith.”

Ms. Dugal noted that more than 100 Baha’is are currently in prison, held solely for their religious beliefs.

The resolution was put forward by 47 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.

Today’s resolution was the 26<sup>th</sup> such resolution by the General Assembly since 1985.

**For more information, go to <http://www.bic.org>**