

PRESS RELEASE

Baha'i International Community

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President Rouhani's UN speech falls short on human rights and the Baha'i question

UNITED NATIONS – Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's speech to the United Nations today failed to address a number of fundamental human rights issues in Iran, including the reason for Iran's continued unjust persecution of Baha'is.

“A year ago, President Rouhani came to office making numerous promises to improve the human rights situation in Iran, including a pledge to end religious discrimination,” said Bani Dugal, the principal representative of the Baha'i International Community to the United Nations.

“Sadly, he has failed to fulfill these promises, and his lack of any mention of human rights in his speech today at the United Nations only serves to underscore this.”

Earlier this month, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon issued his [annual report on human rights in Iran](#), saying likewise that the human rights promises of President Rouhani have gone largely unfulfilled.

“Despite President Rouhani's signals of greater openness to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, the Government has failed to put in place an enabling and safe environment that is conducive to free expression,” said Mr. Ban.

“Religious minorities such as Baha'is and Christians face violations entrenched in law and in practice. Harassment, home raids and incitement to hatred are reportedly commonly applied by the authorities to suppress the Baha'i community,” he also said.

Ms. Dugal added that “the litmus test for Iran's sincerity in addressing human rights is how it treats the minority Baha'i religious community, which is well-known all over the world for its commitment to peace and poses no threat to the government.

“Yet more than 100 Baha'is remain in prison, and thousands are deprived of access to higher education or discriminated against in the economic sphere, all as a matter of government policy. New tactics are used are employed to increase the deniability of such discrimination.

Ms. Dugal noted that President Rouhani spoke about the various “delusions” that are inflaming extremism and hatred against Iran.

“However, Iran has spread its own delusional ideas about the Baha’i Faith. During President Rouhani’s tenure, government-sponsored, anti-Baha’i propaganda has actually increased,” she said, noting that during the first six months of 2014, incidents of anti-Baha’i propaganda in government-run media increased by a factor of 10, from 55 in January to 565 in June.

Ms. Dugal said President Rouhani’s lack of specifics on how he would improve human rights requires the world to ask of him a series of hard questions.

“First, when will Iran live up to the human rights it has agreed to protect under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which includes freedom of assembly, protections for due process, and freedom of religion?”

“Second, when will the government stop its systematic persecution of Iranian Baha’is, who wish to work for the betterment of their country? How, in this era, can such a peaceful segment of society be denied this opportunity?”

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