

PRESS RELEASE

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UN body votes to continue monitoring human rights in Iran

GENEVA – Repudiating Iran's claim that reports about its continued human rights violations are "unreliable" or "unwarranted," the UN Human Rights Council voted today to continue its close monitoring of the human rights situation in Iran.

"Today's vote shows that the international community does not accept Iran's assertions about its human rights record generally, or in particular the statement that Baha'is enjoy "full citizen rights," said Diane Ala'i, a representative of the Baha'í International Community to the United Nations in Geneva.

Ms. Ala'i was referring to the vote, 20 to 15 with 11 abstentions, to renew the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran. The vote followed the rejection by 23 to 14 with 9 abstentions of a "no action" motion to put aside the resolution.

"As reports to the Council indicate, Iran continues to violate a wide range of human rights, including those of the Iranian Baha'í community, which sees its young people banned from university, many of its wage-earners blocked from every type of economic activity, and its leaders unjustly imprisoned," said Ms. Ala'i.

Numerous members of the Council also voiced their individual or group concerns about Iran's ongoing persecution of Baha'is during an interactive session with Dr. Shaheed on 14 March.

The European Union, the United States, New Zealand, France and Germany all expressed serious concerns about the plight of the Bahá'í community in Iran and made specific reference to the violation of rights, harassment and continued systematic discrimination in daily life—including the closure of businesses, the exclusion from public sector jobs and higher education, and prosecution for exercising their civil rights.

The decision to renew the Special Rapporteur's mandate followed two strongly worded reports from the current Special Rapporteur, Ahmed Shaheed, and the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, on human rights in Iran.

Both said unequivocally that Iran continues to violate a wide range of human rights – including the rights of Iranian Baha’is, noting that some 80 Baha’is are currently in prison in Iran.

“Fortunately, as indicated by the Council’s vote – along with numerous calls from individual Council members for an end to the persecution of Baha’is – it is clear that the international community utterly rejects Iran’s claims that Baha’is do not face discrimination, nor does it buy into the slanders Iran has raised against the Baha’i community,” said Ms. Ala’i.

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