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PRESS RELEASE

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President Rouhani's UN speech and the question of human rights in Iran

NEW YORK – Having heard Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's address to the United Nations today, the world will be watching to see how he will, beyond his general call for hope and moderation around the world, address the essential question of human rights in Iran.

The Baha'i International Community is eagerly waiting to see what practical steps President Rouhani and his government will now take to redress human rights violations faced by Iran's ethnic and religious minorities, including Baha'is, the country's largest non-Muslim religious minority, as well as other sectors of Iran's population.

"In particular, we are hoping that President Rouhani will take steps to accord to the Baha'is their full rights as Iranian citizens," said Bani Dugal, the principal representative of the Baha'i International Community.

"A first step would be to revoke the provisions of the [1991 secret memorandum](#) issued by the Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council and signed by the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei. That document calls for the Baha'is to be treated in such a way that 'their progress and development are blocked' and it sets out policies aimed at eliminating the Baha'is community as a viable entity in Iran.

"For more than 30 years, the Islamic Republic of Iran has systematically persecuted Baha'is, solely because of their religious beliefs, which promote peace, obedience to law and pose no threat to the government.

"A critical first test of his real intentions, then, is whether President Rouhani will begin to release the more than 115 Baha'is who are currently in prison in Iran, all wrongfully held on false or trumped up charges," said Ms. Dugal.

For more details about the persecution of Baha'is in Iran, go to <http://www.bic.org/persecution-bahai-community>

To read the 1991 secret memorandum, go to: <http://news.bahai.org/human-rights/iran/yaran-special-report/feature-articles/the-1991-memorandum-on-the-bahai-question>