

PRESS RELEASE

Baha'i International Community

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For more information, contact Bani Dugal in New York at (office) 212-803-2500 or (mobile) 646-404-4210 or Diane Ala'i in Geneva at (office) +41 (-22) -798-5400 or (mobile) +41 (-78) -60-40-100

UN vote registers “deep concern” over Iran human rights violations

UNITED NATIONS – Citing a long list of abuses, a UN committee today expressed “deep concern” over “ongoing and recurring” human rights violations in Iran.

By a vote of 83 to 31 with 68 abstentions, the General Assembly’s Third Committee called upon Iran to stop such violations, to release prisoners of conscience, and to open its doors to international human rights monitors.

Among other things, the resolution noted Iran’s alarming use of the death penalty, the systematic targeting of human rights defenders, journalists and bloggers, and the “pervasive gender inequality and violence against women.” It also expressed concern over continuing discrimination against minorities, including the persecution of Iranian Baha’is.

The resolution was the 25th on human rights violations in Iran by the Third Committee since 1985 – and its length and specificity reflected the international community’s continuing alarm over increasing violence against Iranian citizens by their government, said Bani Dugal, the principal representative of the Baha’i International Community to the United Nations.

“The atmosphere in Iran continues to worsen for all Iranian citizens,” said Ms. Dugal. “If your viewpoint is different from that of Iran’s authoritarian regime, you are fundamentally in grave danger.”

“For the Baha’is – who are Iran’s largest non-Muslim religious minority – there has been persistent and worsening persecution at the hands of the government and its agents,” she said.

“This has been accompanied by increasing violence and a deliberate intensification of pressure aimed at disrupting Baha’i community life as a whole and destroying their viability.”

Ms. Dugal noted that more than 115 Baha'is are currently behind bars for their religious beliefs, and that hundreds more are in the legal system waiting to know their fate.

The text of the resolution, which was put forward by Canada and co-sponsored by 44 other countries, also calls on Iran to better cooperate with UN human rights monitors, particularly 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.

For more information, go to <http://news.bahai.org> or <http://bic.org>