

**BAHÁ'Í
INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY**

United Nations Office

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

Telephone: 1-212-803-2500, Fax: 1-212-803-2566, Email: uno-nyc@bic.org

PRESS RELEASE

Baha'i International Community

21 December 2010

For Immediate Release

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

Iran's human rights record condemned by United Nations

UNITED NATIONS – In a vote today, the United Nations once again strongly condemned Iran for failing to live up to international human rights standards.

By a vote of 78 to 45, with 59 abstentions, the UN General Assembly confirmed a resolution that expressed “deep concern at serious ongoing and recurring human rights violations.” In more than two decades of such resolutions about Iran, the vote passed with one of the highest percentages ever.

The resolution specifically expressed concern over Iran's “intensified crackdown on human rights defenders and reports of excessive use of force, arbitrary detentions, unfair trials and allegations of torture,” as well as its “pervasive gender inequality and violence against women,” and its discrimination against minorities, including members of the Baha'i Faith.

“The world community has clearly spoken. It is outraged at Iran's continued and intensifying violations of human rights,” said Bani Dugal, the principal representative of the Baha'i International Community to the United Nations.

Welcoming the result Ms. Dugal noted that the “resolution documents a wide range of violations, from torture to the oppression of women to the persecution of minorities. “All of this has been going on for too long, and it is high time that Iran pays heed to the call of the international community and complies with the standards of international law,” she said.

The resolution devoted an entire paragraph to Iran's treatment of members of the Baha'i Faith, cataloging an extensive list of recent anti-Baha'i activities. These included: “increasing evidence of efforts by the State to identify, monitor and arbitrarily detain Baha'is, preventing members of the Baha'i faith from attending university and from sustaining themselves economically, the confiscation and destruction of their property, and the vandalizing of their cemeteries...”

It also expressed concern over the recent trial and sentencing of seven Baha'i leaders, saying they were “repeatedly denied the due process of law.”

Worldwide condemnation

The UN vote has coincided with a renewed protest – from numerous governments, organizations and prominent individuals – at the persecution of Iran’s Baha’is.

In a statement dated 17 December, **Canada**’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honorable Lawrence Cannon, reiterated his country’s deep concern of the “ongoing failure of the Iranian authorities to meet their domestic and international legal obligations.”

“The Government of Canada stands firmly with the people of Iran against human rights abuses and discrimination, as well as ill treatment of women and minorities,” said Mr. Cannon.

A number of **India**’s prominent citizens have also recently called upon Iran to respect its minorities. Among them, former Deputy Prime Minister, L. K. Advani, appealed for justice for the seven imprisoned Baha’i leaders. “The attitude of a country and a nation towards minority religion is the touchstone of how civilized a country it is,” the Indian Baha’i news reported on 17 December.

In **Germany**, human rights campaigners took to the streets in Frankfurt on 11 December and in the city of Mainz one week later. “We have gathered here to protest the alarming situation of Baha’is, of human rights in general and the climate of fear that exists for Baha’is, for women, for youth, for bloggers, for journalists,” said Omid Nouripour, a member of the German Parliament who attended the Frankfurt event. “We raise our voices to show the world that the people of Iran need our help.”

Christian Solidarity Worldwide has also called for the release of the Baha’i prisoners. “Clearly the seven Bahai leaders are being held solely on account of their faith,” said CSW’s Advocacy Director Andrew Johnston on 10 December, “and this contravenes Iran’s international legal obligations.”

For more information, visit <http://news.bahai.org>