

BAHÁ'Í

United Nations Office

**INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY**

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

Phone: +212-803-2500, Email: uno-nyc@bic.org, Web: <https://www.bic.org>

PRESS RELEASE

Baha'i International Community

19 December 2016

For more information, contact Bani Dugal in New York at (office) 212-803-2500 or (mobile) 914-329-3020 or Diane Ala'i in Geneva at (office) +41 (-22) -798-5400 or (mobile) +41 (-78) -60-40-100

International community expresses serious concern over human rights in Iran

NEW YORK – Today the international community firmly denounced a wide range of human rights violations in Iran including the economic exclusion of Baha'is. Last month alone Iranian authorities shut down at least 124 Baha'i-owned shops and businesses in four provinces, reflecting a continuing “economic apartheid” for Iranian Baha'is.

By a vote of 85 to 35 with 63 abstentions, the United Nations General Assembly approved a resolution expressing “serious concern” about Iran’s high rate of executions without legal safeguards, ongoing use of torture, widespread arbitrary detentions, sharp limits on freedom of assembly, expression, and religious belief, and continuing discrimination against women and ethnic and religious minorities, including Baha'is.

“The vote today makes clear that the world remains deeply concerned about the way Iran treats its own citizens, while also raising questions about Iran’s genuine willingness to live up to its obligations as a member of the international community,” said Bani Dugal, the Principal Representative of the Baha'i International Community to the United Nations.

“Sadly, the list of ongoing human rights violations in Iran is long,” continued Ms. Dugal. “Despite the denials of Iranian officials, signs of progress are difficult to perceive. This is especially true for Iranian Baha'is, who face, among other forms of oppression, a policy of ‘economic apartheid’ from their government, which at every turn seeks to deprive them of jobs and education, as well as the freedom to practice their religion as their conscience dictates.

“In early November, for example, 124 Baha'i-owned shops and businesses were sealed by the government after their proprietors closed for two days to observe an important Baha'i holy day.

“In addition, Baha'is continue to be blocked from freely attending university and are subject to all manner of other restrictions. They also face arbitrary arrest, detention, and imprisonment for legitimate religious activities,” said Ms. Dugal.

She noted that about 86 Baha'is are currently in prison, and that since 2005, more than 900 Baha'is have been arrested and at least 1,100 incidents of economic exclusion have been documented.

“The situation has not improved under the administration of President Hassan Rouhani,” she added. Since he took office in August 2013, at least 185 Baha'is have been arrested and there have been at least 540 incidents of economic exclusion.

Among other things, today's resolution called on Iran to eliminate “all forms of discrimination, including economic restrictions” against religious minorities in Iran. It also called for the release of “all religious practitioners imprisoned for their membership in or activities on behalf of a recognized or unrecognized minority religious group, including the seven Baha'i leaders.”

The resolution was introduced by Canada and co-sponsored by 41 other nations. It is the 29th such resolution expressing concern about human rights violations in Iran by the General Assembly since 1985.

For more information, go to <https://www.bic.org>