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# COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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# CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

18 January 1982

Doc. 4835

## PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

### R E P O R T

on persecution in Iran (1)  
(Rapporteur: Mr DEJARDIN)

#### I. DRAFT RESOLUTION

presented by the Political Affairs Committee (2)

The Assembly,

1. Recalling its Resolution 712 (1979), on the situation in Iran, in which it denounced and condemned very numerous cases of disregard of the law, arrests, summary verdicts, executions and discriminatory measures, tolerated if not encouraged by the authorities of this United Nations member country;
2. Recalling Europe's hopes, expressed after the fall of the police state represented by the rule of the Shah, of finding in a democratic Iran a partner to which it would be bound by the same principles of individual freedom, political freedom and the rule of law;
3. Alarmed at the wave of terror which instead continues to engulf Iran where, according to AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, more than 3,350 people - including many children - have been executed since the revolution in February 1979;

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(1) See Resolution 712 (1979), Docs. 4733 and 4749.

(2) Adopted by the committee on 15 January 1982 by 17 votes to 0 and 1 abstention.

Members of the committee: MM Urwin (Chairman), Leonard, Reddemann (Vice-Chairmen), MM Alegre, de Azevedo, Batliner, Baumel, Sir Frederic Bennett, van den Bergh (Alternate: van Eekelen), Bournias (Alternate: Frangos), Budtz, Calamandrei, De Poi, Dejardin, Lady Fleming, MM Gessner, Grima, Hesele, Kurt Jung, Sir Anthony Kershaw (Alternate: Lord Reay), MM Krieps, Kristjansson, Lied, Lidbom, Lopez Henares, Mondino (Alternate: Amadei), Richard Müller, Schleiter, Sjönell, Spénale, Steiner, van Waterschoot, Wilhelm, Yanez-Barnuevo (Alternate: Baeza).

NB. The names of those who took part in the vote are underlined.

Secretaries of the committee: MM Massie and Palmieri.

4. Shocked by the maltreatment of children, women and old people and the inhuman pressures brought to bear on them, to the point of demanding that parents denounce their own children;
5. Concerned about the growing fanaticism of young people and press reports of grave exactions against members of the Episcopalian, Jewish and other communities because of their religious convictions and practices and of their lawful links with their co-religionists in western countries;
6. Noting that the victims of executions, usually after summary trials, cannot, in most cases, be regarded as traitors, counter-revolutionaries or political opponents, but simply belong to ethnical, philosophical or religious minorities, such as the Baha'i community, or whose morals are deemed to be not entirely in accord with the fundamentalist precepts of Ayatollah Khomeiny;
7. Recalls the commitment by Members of the UNO, in ratifying the United Nations Charter, in connection with the practice of tolerance as laid down in the Preamble, and with "the universal and individual respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, language or religion" specified in Article 55 of this Charter;
8. Repeats its hope that the sufferings of the Iranian people will soon come to an end, and that they will find peace based on respect for elementary rights;
9. Notes with regret the inadequacy of the means of influence or persuasion of governments of Council of Europe member states with regard to the present Iranian rulers;
10. Resolutely supports the attitudes of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights), which has, inter alia, urged the Secretary General of the United Nations to remind the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran of its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified by that state, with a view to preventing further attacks on the life and rights of minorities, as well as the resolutions adopted by the European Parliament on 19 September 1980 and 10 April 1981;
11. Expresses its solidarity towards persons and communities, including the Baha'i community, who are unjustly treated or persecuted;
12. Calls upon the Iranian authorities to extend to the Baha'i community the constitutional guarantees with respect to religious, ethnic and philosophic minorities included in the new Iranian Constitution;
13. Calls upon the governments of the Council of Europe member states to utilise every possible opportunity, including European Community and United Nations channels, with a view to convincing the Iranian Government of the necessity to respect the law and international conventions to which it is a party, guaranteeing the security of persons and their property, as well as their individual rights and fundamental freedoms.

## II. EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

by Mr Dejardin

### 1. The origins of this report

1. The Political Affairs Committee whose general terms of reference also include respect for human rights in the world, prepared a report on the situation in Iran (Doc. 4398), presented on its behalf by Mr Lemoine. The debate before the Assembly on 11 October 1979 led to the adoption of Resolution 712, paragraph 5 of which reads as follows:

"Gravely concerned at the deterioration of the political situation in Iran, and condemning the disregard of the law, mass arrests and summary verdicts, executions, discrimination against women, violation of the freedom of the press and freedom of speech and failure to respect the people's right to express their views in free elections".

In the same text the Assembly expressed the hope that:

"It will not be long before Europe is able to find in a democratic Iran, a partner linked to her by shared principles of individual liberty, political freedom and the rule of law".

2. This report in fact preceded the affair of the American hostages which was fortunately solved in January 1981. Nevertheless, the problem of the rule of law in Iran remains a matter of great concern for democratic Europe, since it really seems that the citizens of Iran have no guarantee that proper legal procedure will be followed in their relations with the authorities or dominant groups.

The fate of the Baha'i community, the largest religious minority in Iran, with 300,000 members, had already been considered by the Political Affairs Committee in September 1980, at the time when, for its part, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the matter on 19 September 1980, (cf Appendix I). The committee did not, at the time feel able to propose a debate before the Assembly, but a number of its members signed Written Declaration No. 88 (Doc. 4622) in which they declared themselves "scandalised at the systematic campaign of persecution" directed against the Baha'i community and "equally concerned at the gross violations of human rights inflicted upon other minorities in Iran, including Jews, Roman Catholics and Anglicans".

3. At the same time, a member of the Assembly, Mr Mercier, asked, in a written question to the Committee of Ministers, "What steps the member governments intended to take to put an end to the indescribable persecution of the Baha'i community". The reply, dated 2 April 1981 (Doc. 4700) expressed the hope that "action taken by the Secretary General of the United Nations will succeed in improving the lot of those involved". Such action was a follow-up to a resolution expressing the profound disquiet of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (Appendix III). A further written question (No. 244, Doc. 4798), was tabled by Mr Hardy and others on 7 October 1981. In it the signatories asked what action had been taken by the Committee of Ministers and by national governments in regard to the persecution of members of the Baha'i faith in Iran. The reply of the Committee of Ministers dated 25 November 1981 is appended (Appendix V).

4. Unfortunately, their lot did not improve. Indeed, the opposite was the case, and when the Political Affairs Committee resumed its examination of the matter at its meeting in Vaduz on 14 and 15 September 1981, its file included a further motion for a recommendation (Doc. 4733) presented by Mr van Waterschoot and others, recommending that "the Committee of Ministers invite the governments of the member states to bring this matter to the attention of the General Assembly of the United Nations", and a motion for a resolution (Doc. 4749), presented by Mr Hanin and others, proposed that the governments of the member states should make direct approaches in order to ensure that an end was put to persecution. Following a first reading of this report by the Political Affairs Committee on 17 November 1981, the Standing Committee, meeting the following day, adopted a press communiqué (see Appendix IV).

## 2. Deterioration of the situation on the ground

5. The unfortunate Iranian people are still not enjoying peace, tolerance or freedom, and the country continues to suffer from the effects of outside pressure (the war begun by Iraq in September 1980) and open civil war, owing to the resistance to the Chi'ite power of Ayatollah Khomeiny and the Islamic Republican Party, notably by the Mudjahiddin, and, in particular, the tenacious struggle of the Kurds for self-determination.

6. The assassination, in two spectacular bomb attacks, of a President of the Republic, Ali Radjai, and his Prime Minister, Mohamed Bahonar (30 August) and Ayatollah Beheshti, President of the Supreme Court and a number of other Ministers and prominent members of the party in power (28 June), has engendered an atmosphere of fear and hatred which has led to a ruthless hunt for traitors and scapegoats. The first anniversary of the war against Iraq was highlighted by a blood bath and the execution on 18 and 19 September alone of 180 opponents of the regime, including 51 boys and 30 girls. A new General Prosecutor of the Revolution, Hodjatolesham Tarizi, called for even more summary procedure against all those taking part in armed uprisings against the authorities (by urging the latter to execute demonstrators arrested during the day on the same evening and finish off the injured) (1).

7. In a moving account of his own experience, the Iranian journalist, Siarouch Bachiri, described the procedures of an Islamic Tribunal, presided over by Ayatollah Khalkhali (in April 1980) (2):

"As soon as dawn broke, the Pasdarans unloaded whole lorry loads of prostitutes, homosexuals, drug addicts, 'counter-revolutionaries', grand bourgeois, Baha'is, former officers etc. Mohamad Rezvani (3) prepared a joint file for each 'consignment'. The only thing missing opposite the names was the sentence. Khalkhali took care of that. The door of the chamber opened: immediately the Pasdarans pushed at least 20 prisoners in, most of them arrested for drug peddling. You were not allowed to speak or even give your name. Rezvani went up to Khalkhali, whispered a few words in his ear, and 'in the name of Almighty and Merciful God', the Ayatollah pronounced the sentences: immediate execution, life imprisonment, terms of 10, 20, 30 years' imprisonment. This mockery of a trial lasted for between 3 and 5 minutes."

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(1) Le Monde, 22 September 1981.

(2) "Iran": "un condamné raconte", l'Express, 25 September 1981.

(3) An "Inquisitor of Islamic justice".

8. According to an Amnesty International communiqué, dated 12 October 1981, at least 3,350 people have been executed in Iran since February 1979. Of the 1,229 known executions in the world as a whole in 1980, 709 took place in Iran.

The Iranian PARS Agency responded on 25 October 1981 by maintaining that "more than 1,000 officials and activists of the Islamic Revolution have been killed since mid-June by agents of America in Iran". As far as the Ayatollah Moussari Ardebili, President of the Supreme Court, is concerned "the number of executions is not high", thus implying that the figure is in proportion to the offences committed.

9. If the world as a whole is particularly disturbed at the lot of the Baha'is (some 60 members have been executed since February 1979), that is because as the months passed it became clear that this community was more vulnerable than the other religious minorities. The most recent resolution adopted by the European Parliament on 10 April 1981 (see Appendix II), "strongly urges the Iranian Government to grant the Baha'i community recognition and protection of rights already granted to the Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian minorities".

10. Since the Baha'i community has branches in a number of Western countries including the United States, and the Baha'i World Centre is in Israel (where it was established at the end of the 19th century, after the death of the founder Baha'u'llah in 1892; thus long before the foundation of the Hebrew state), the Baha'is are often accused, without the slightest justification, of being the "enemies of Islam" and the "agents of Zionism".

11. In fact, "the conduct of the Baha'i community in Iran was characterised under the old regime as under the present Islamic Republic of Iran by its loyalty and faithfulness towards the government in power and also by the fact that it abstained from all political activities. The principle of refusing any political post is so fundamental that, under the Pahlavi regime, a Baha'i who had accepted a post as Minister was expelled from the Baha'i community" (1).

Admittedly, the present regime in Iran might regard the fact that the Baha'i faith grants men and women the same rights, privileges and responsibilities as a provocation. The Baha'i faith is an "independent world religion which, despite its Islamic roots and although it originated in a Muslim country, differs as much from Islam as Christianity does from Judaism" (1). That is why it is regarded as a radical sect and not recognised in the same way as the Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian religions.

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(1) "The Baha'is in Iran". A report on the persecution of a religious minority, published by the Office of the Baha'i International Community at the United Nations, June 1981.

12. The very special persecution to which the members of the Baha'i faith are being subjected has assumed such proportions that it smacks of real "genocide". In fact such persecution is not confined to the exclusion of all legal protection, summary arrests, sham trials and the summary execution of the leaders; it includes the confiscation and destruction of all resources and all means of subsistence, including arbitrary dismissal from work and bans on employment. There is ample evidence to confirm the existence of a real "crusade" of violence to force the Baha'is to renounce their faith, going as far as the destruction of monuments and burial grounds.

13. The campaign for the systematic elimination of the Baha'i minority was recently taken a step further, mainly in country areas, by the confiscation of the property and belongings of executed persons, depriving widows and children of their homes; by the kidnapping of young girls whose parents are without news of them and by the dismissal of pupils from schools and students from universities, because of their religious convictions.

In August 1981 the Ministry of Education published a directive under which the authorisation to transfer money in foreign currencies to Iranian students abroad would only be granted for students who belonged to one of the religions officially recognised in Iran - a measure which deprived Baha'is studying abroad of the money needed to complete their studies.

At the same time, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran addressed a confidential note to all consular posts (reference 17/533-10/4462 of 21.5.1960, ie 12.8.1981) saying that:

"On the date of this circular, all our representatives are required to prepare carefully a list of the names of all Baha'is living within their area and the names of counter-revolutionaries, particularly so-called students. These lists must be addressed to us. Our representatives will not renew the passports of these persons. They will only be issued with a 'laisser-passer'".

In a recent decree, the terms of which were published on 30 September 1981 by the daily paper Kayhan, the Ministry of Education listed the crimes for which teachers and students would be banned from employment or enrolment in Iranian universities. One of the "crimes" listed is membership of what is called "the deviant and heretical sect" - that is to say, the Baha'i religion.

14. The position of the Baha'i minority in Iran today can only be compared, *mutatis mutandis*, with the Jews in Nazi Germany just before the "final solution".

15. As for the situation of members of other religious minorities, according to Amnesty International, the British and Iranian members of the Episcopal Church who were interned, have apparently all been released, whilst the Co-ordinating Committee of Jewish Organisations in Brussels states that it has no knowledge of the persecution of Jews simply because they are Jews in Iran. It has been established that members of the Jewish community have been convicted and even executed, but that was allegedly for offences under common law which had nothing to do with their religious convictions. Authorised Jewish sources refuse to furnish more detailed information, perhaps because there may be negotiations with the Iranian leaders with a view to permitting the Jews to emigrate from Iran.

16. It is a fact that religious fanaticism is such in Iran today that no member of a faith other than the Islamic Chi'ite denomination is completely safe. That also applies to atheists and agnostics. It is hardly necessary to add that Freemasonry is banned at present, as is always the case under dictatorial or totalitarian regimes; the "children of light" are never tolerated by obscurantism!

17. For the sake of historical accuracy, it must also be stated that, as Professor Ann K S Lambton wrote in "The Times" on 12 September 1980, under the regime of the Pahlevis, the status of Christians and other minorities was that of second class citizens whose existence was tolerated but not encouraged. The writer also points out that the methods of persecution differ little from those practised for many centuries, whilst the accusation of espionage was always made against anyone who had contacts abroad. Moreover, it was Reza Khan - the first of the Pahlevis - who, in order to consolidate his coup d'état of 12 December 1925, and win the sympathy of the Ulemas, had the constitution amended by giving the head of the ayatollahs the right of veto in the case of laws which might conflict with Islam.

18. The persecution of the Kurdish people must be seen in the same context of the "Pahlevi dynasty's" thirst for power. Actually, the origin of this problem is to be found in the context of the collapse of the Ottoman empire, as a result of which, under the Treaty of Sevres, 10 August 1920, the Kurds were granted recognition of their rights and offered prospects of a Kurdish autonomous state. That treaty was never implemented owing to the armed opposition of Mustapha Kemal Atatürk in Turkey. Actually, the Kurdish problem exists in four states: Turkey, Iraq, USSR and Iran. The treaty of Lausanne, of 24 July 1923 dashed the hopes of an autonomous Kurdish state by fixing the present frontiers of Turkey. Since that time, the Kurds' determination, and frequently their armed uprisings, has enabled them to obtain, notably in the USSR and Iraq, a special autonomous status and respect for their cultural values. That was never the case in Turkey, whilst in Iran, the support given by the Kurds to the overthrow of the Shah led them to hope that their lot would be other than the massacres and razzias organised against them by the integrist Islamic militia.

19. It is tragically clear that there is no longer in Iran today any coherent authority which effectively governs the country and the people, but only various dominant groups all claiming to be followers of Ayatollah Khomeiny and all propagating the most fundamentalist interpretation of Chiite Islam. Their common denominator is the blindest dogmatism and sectarianism.

It is increasingly difficult today to see who decides what; which complicates the situation even further and is plunging the entire country into an abyss of disorganisation and economic stagnation.

20. Furthermore, the disenchantment of the people, who see no practical realisation of the hopes raised by the overthrow of the Shah, but instead a wave of repression as cruel as existed before, is certainly encouraging the most influential religious leaders to offer them "scapegoats", such as the Baha'is or the Kurds.

21. It is clear that this situation is unlikely to bring peace or security to this part of the world, already greatly disturbed by the external conflict between Iran and Iraq and the occupation of Afghanistan by Soviet forces.

It is becoming increasingly essential to seek the best ways and means of encouraging the establishment of political stability, based on a democratic system which will be in full conformity with the principles set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

### 3. The role of the international community

22. On 9 September 1981, the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights adopted, by 19 votes to 5 abstentions, a further resolution (see Appendix III), urging the Secretary General to continue his efforts to persuade the Iranian Government to prevent further attacks on the Baha'i community and grant it religious freedom.

23. The European governments seem reluctant to intervene directly. In the European Parliament, questions were put to the Chairman in Office of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs on 14 October 1981. In reply to his compatriot, Mr Prag, who asked what action had been taken in response to the two resolutions adopted in September 1980 and April 1981, the British Minister, Mr Douglas Hurd, said: "We do not wish to take any action which would further endanger the Baha'is position. We therefore feel that action through the United Nations would be the more effective way of alleviating the situation and certain member governments of the Ten are pursuing this approach."

Furthermore, when replying to a question in Parliament by Mr Valkeniers, on 2 September 1981, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium stated that: "The Belgian Government has always devoted close attention to this problem. It wishes to point out that already on 16 March 1979 it approved the resolution in which the European Parliament expressed its deep concern at the summary verdicts and executions which continued to occur in Iran, and since that time it has repeatedly approached the Iranian authorities on behalf of members of ethnic and other minorities whose basic rights were apparently not being respected. The Belgian Government shares the concern of its partners in the European Community. In the context of European political co-operation, the 'Ten' regularly hold consultations concerning the persecuted minorities in Iran and they encourage any action or intervention which might improve their lot."

24. In any case, it appears that the Secretariat General of the United Nations is scarcely displaying greater determination than the Europe of the "Ten", whilst traditional diplomatic methods are proving regrettably ineffectual. That is why a number of members of our Assembly have suggested the adoption of special embargo measures in respect of Iran if such persecution were to continue (cf Document 4749).

25. Apparently, the international democratic community is looking on powerlessly whilst democracy is waning in the world and situations involving the flagrant violation of human rights are constantly increasing in number, whether this be in Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe, Afghanistan, Turkey, Iran or elsewhere.



26. It is for the governments of the member countries and the organs of the Council of Europe, including our Assembly, to seek effective ways of exerting pressure and influence in order to check this development and see to it that every human being enjoys the right to freedom of belief or non-belief, to think, work, read and write, to have enough to eat, in short to safeguard his dignity as a human being.

A P P E N D I X I

## RESOLUTION

on the persecution of members of the Baha'i community in Iran

(adopted 19 September 1961)

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The European Parliament,

- recalling its unfailing attachment to international protection of human rights,
  - recognising in particular the need to protect the rights of religious minorities in all countries,
  - concerned at the systematic campaign of persecution directed in Iran against the 300,000 members of the Baha'i community (the biggest religious minority in Iran) and the accompanying violations of elementary human rights, in particular:
    - a. the refusal of any legal protection to the Baha'i minority,
    - b. the summary arrest, detention and execution of leaders of the Baha'i community,
    - c. the confiscation or destruction of the resources and means of subsistence of the Baha'i and the arbitrary dismissals or refusals to employ Baha'is,
    - d. the threats and acts of violence against the Baha'is in an attempt to force them to repudiate their faith,
1. Condemns the violation of the human rights of all religious minorities in Iran, more particularly the members of the Baha'i faith whose rights as a religious minority are not recognised by the Iranian constitution;
  2. Calls upon the Government of Iran to grant the Baha'i community the legal recognition and protection to which all minorities are entitled under the provisions of the various UN pacts and conventions on human rights;
  3. Also condemns the illegal measures taken against Catholic and Anglican leaders and the execution of leading members of the Jewish community;
  4. Calls upon the Foreign Ministers of the European Communities meeting in political co-operation to make urgent representations to the Iranian authorities to put an end to the persecution of the members of the Baha'i community and to allow them to practise their religion freely and enjoy all civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights;

5. Requests the Commission and Council to impose an embargo on all sales of surplus agricultural products to Iran where subsidies by European taxpayers are involved until full human rights are restored to Iranian citizens;
6. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Foreign Ministers meeting in political co-operation, to the Government of Iran, to the governments and parliaments of the member states and to the Secretary General of the United Nations.

A P P E N D I X II

RESOLUTION

on the persecution of the Baha'i community in Iran

(adopted on 10 April 1981)

The European Parliament,

- recalling its resolutions of 19 September 1980 on the persecution of members of the Baha'i community in Iran,
  - alarmed at the escalation of violence and the campaign of persecution directed at the Baha'i community, which is the largest religious minority in Iran,
  - pointing out that this section of the population has no legal protection,
  - aware of the fact that two members of this community were executed on 15 March 1981 merely on account of their activities within that community,
  - condemning the purely arbitrary arrest and detention of individuals,
  - concerned at the disappearance of nine members of the Baha'i national administrative council in Iran,
1. Condemns the violation of the human rights of all religious minorities in Iran, in particular the rights of the Baha'i minority, which is not recognised as such by the Iranian constitution;
  2. Strongly urges the Iranian Government to grant the Baha'i community the recognition and protection of rights already granted to the Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian minorities;
  3. Calls on the Foreign Ministers meeting in political co-operation to make the necessary representations to the Iranian Government as soon as possible to secure the release of members of the Baha'i community currently in detention merely on account of their religious beliefs and to prevent any persecution of and discrimination against the Baha'i minority in Iran;
  4. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Foreign Ministers meeting in political co-operation and to the Iranian Government.

A P P E N D I X III

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
Sub-Commission on Prevention of  
Discrimination and Protection  
of Minorities  
(Thirty-fourth session)

RESOLUTION

(adopted in Geneva on 9 September 1981)

The Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities,

Welcoming the adoption by the Commission on Human Rights at its thirty-seventh session and by the Economic and Social Council at its first regular session of 1981 of a Draft Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief,

Recalling its resolution 10 (XXXIII) in which it expressed its profound concern for the safety of the members of the Baha'i community in Iran and requested the Secretary General to invite the Government of Iran to grant full protection of fundamental rights and freedoms to this religious minority,

Having now heard statements clearly demonstrating the systematic persecution of the Baha'is in Iran, including summary arrests, torture, beatings, executions, murders, kidnappings, disappearances, abductions, and many other forms of harassment,

Convinced that the treatment of the Baha'is is motivated by religious intolerance and a desire to eliminate the Baha'i faith from the land of its birth,

Concerned that the Government of Iran appears to have ignored all previous approaches made on behalf of this community,

1. Expresses its profound concern for the perilous situation facing this religious community;
2. Appreciates the efforts already made by the Secretary General on behalf of this community;
3. Urges the Secretary General to continue his efforts to persuade the Government of Iran to prevent further attacks on the Baha'i community and to grant them religious freedom;
4. Draws the attention of the Commission on Human Rights to the perilous situation faced by the Baha'i community of Iran and requests the Secretary General to submit all relevant information about the treatment of the Baha'is in Iran to the Commission on Human Rights at its thirty-eighth session.

A P P E N D I X I VTHE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
CONDEMNS THE PERSECUTIONS IN IRAN

(24 November 1981)

The 21 nation Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly's Standing Committee expressed its horror at the scale of human rights violations in Iran. According to Amnesty International figures issued last month, since the February 1979 revolution at least 3,350 persons have been executed, often after the most summary of trials or no trials at all. The victims are frequently members of ethnic, religious or philosophic minorities, including the 300,000-strong Baha'i Community, whose situation is made more precarious by the fact that it does not benefit even from the nominal constitutional protection afforded to other minority religions. In violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified by Iran, several young people below the age of 18 and even children have been executed.

The Standing Committee, which speaks in the name of the Assembly, which will be debating persecution in Iran at its next public session, expressed its solidarity with the Iranian people and called upon member governments, both individually and through international organisations, to do everything in their power to convince the Iranian authorities to accord due process of law to its citizen, to respect international conventions and to stop the executions.

A P P E N D I X V

REPLY BY THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
TO WRITTEN QUESTION NO. 244 BY MR HARDY AND OTHERS, MEMBERS OF  
THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE ASSEMBLY, ON THE PERSECUTION OF THE MEMBERS  
OF THE BAHAI FAITH IN IRAN

(25 November 1981)

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The Committee of Ministers and the governments of member states are deeply concerned by reports about persecution of members of the Baha'i community in Iran for their religious beliefs. They deplore the fact that the fundamental rights of that community and of its members are not safeguarded in Iran.

The committee supports the endeavours of the United Nations to improve the lot of the Baha'i community and calls for an intensification of those endeavours as an expression of the international community's concern at the violation of the physical integrity and freedom of persons by reason of their membership of a religious community.

With this in mind, the Committee of Ministers and the governments of the member states support the Secretary General of the United Nations in the execution of the mission entrusted to him on 10 September 1981 by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities of the Commission on Human Rights to "continue his efforts to persuade the Government of Iran to prevent further attacks on the Baha'i community and to grant them religious freedom".

The Committee of Ministers will follow the development of events closely and attentively. It would be a matter of deep concern if, at the next session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, in February 1982, it was not possible to report a considerable improvement in the position of the Baha'i community in Iran.

The committee requested the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to communicate the foregoing to the Secretary General of the United Nations.