
Letter to UN Member States: Condemn Human Rights Violations in Iran

November 11, 2009

To all members of the UN General Assembly

Your Excellency,

We, the undersigned independent human rights and civil society organizations from diverse regions and societies around the world, respectfully urge your support for a United Nations General Assembly Resolution condemning the serious human rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) and advising the IRI of steps it should take to respect the rights of the Iranian people in accordance with international law.

Human rights conditions in Iran have deteriorated dramatically since the General Assembly's 2008 Resolution, as the Secretary General has indicated in his recent report. It is incumbent upon the international community and a matter of the utmost moral urgency to emphasize to the government of Iran that common human rights standards must be upheld.

Since the disputed presidential elections in June 2009, thousands of Iranian citizens have suffered grave violations of their internationally protected human rights; many have been beaten and shot during peaceful protests, and there are credible, verified reports of torture, rape, and ill-treatment in detention. Hundreds of reform-oriented citizens and political figures have been tried in "show trials" without due process, and several have already been sentenced to lengthy prison terms, while others linked to the protests have been sentenced to death.

Iran has egregiously violated its citizens' rights to freedom of association and peaceful assembly, and used grossly disproportionate force against peaceful protesters, many of whom were intentionally killed on the streets or in detention. Thousands have been arbitrarily arrested, "disappeared," and held in incommunicado detention, in what amounts to a massive ideological purge. In an effort to force "confessions" to attempting to destabilize the government, many have been beaten, threatened, and tortured, including sexually. Journalists, human rights defenders, students, and other groups have been targeted.

There are calls from powerful clerics and politicians to declare opposition political activities as violations of law that are punishable by death. In the meantime, Iran executed 115 persons convicted of crimes in 50 days following the 12 June disputed elections, and has also executed juvenile offenders in the face of strong international protests. The threat to the lives of detained individuals is acute, while the wave of executions is also a warning of what may await others seeking their human rights through peaceful protests.

Women continue to suffer from institutionalized discrimination across many spheres of Iranian society. Human rights defenders working peacefully to establish gender equality are under particular stress as many have been arbitrarily detained and prosecuted for their peaceful efforts to end legal discrimination against women. Moreover, as mentioned in the report of the Secretary General, the situation of ethnic and religious minorities, particularly the Baha'i, continues to be of great concern.

The General Assembly must take a firm stand on behalf of universal human rights principles, and on behalf of the people of Iran. While the international community focuses its attention on other issues of concern with regard to Iran, it must make clear that it will not forget

the Iranian people who continue to be denied their fundamental human rights. We take this opportunity to urge your support for a General Assembly resolution that will help show Iran a path toward respecting the human rights values and standards upon which the United Nations was founded.

Signatory civil society organizations

1. Advocacy Forum (Nepal)
2. Aliran Kesedaran Negara (Malaysia)
3. Alternative Development Studies Center (Egypt)
4. The American Islamic Congress
5. Amnesty International
6. Angikar Bangladesh Foundation (Bangladesh)
7. The Arab Penal Reform Organization (Egypt)
8. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development - FORUM-ASIA (Thailand)
9. Asian Legal Resources Centre (Hong Kong, China)
10. Association for Human Rights Legal Aid (Egypt)
11. Association for Women's Rights in Development
12. Baha'i International Community (Switzerland)
13. Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha (India)
14. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (Egypt)
15. Cambodian Center for Human Rights (Cambodia)
16. Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (Cambodia)
17. Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (Cambodia)
18. Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (Georgia)
19. Center for Civil Liberties (Ukraine)
20. Center for Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance (Egypt)
21. Center for Human Rights and Development (Mongolia)
22. Center for Trade Union and Workers' Services (Egypt)
23. Citizens' Council for Human Rights Japan (Japan)

24. CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation (South Africa)
25. Civil Initiatives Development Center (Russia)
26. Committee for the Freedom of Prisoners of Conscience in Uzbekistan (Uzbekistan)
27. Committees for the Defense of Democracy, Freedoms, and Human Rights in Syria (Syria)
28. Community Legal Aid Institute - LBT Masyarakat (Indonesia)
29. Conectas Direitos Humanos (Brazil)
30. Corporacion Humanas (Chile)
31. Dasan Human Rights Center (Republic of Korea)
32. Democracy Coalition Project (United States)
33. Democratic Workers' Solidarity (Republic of Korea)
34. Droits Humains Sans Frontieres (Democratic Republic of the Congo)
35. East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project (Uganda)
36. The Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement (Egypt)
37. Egyptian Child's Rights Center (Egypt)
38. Egyptian Social Democratic Center (Egypt)
39. Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme (France)
40. FLARE - Freedom, Legality, and Rights in Europe (Italy)
41. Freedom House (United States)
42. GayJapanNews (Japan)
43. Global International (Mongolia)
44. Greek Helsinki Monitor (Greece)
45. Guria Swayam Sevi Sansthan (India)
46. Habi Center for Environmental Rights (Egypt)
47. Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia (Serbia)
48. Hesham Mubarak Law Center (Egypt)
49. Human Rights Association for the Assistance of Prisoners (Egypt)
50. Human Rights Development Centre (Bangladesh)

51. Human Rights First (United States)
52. Human Rights Watch (United States)
53. Human Rights Working Group (Indonesia)
54. Indonesia Legal Aid Foundation (Indonesia)
55. Indonesian Human Rights Monitor (Indonesia)
56. Information and Culture Nuri for the Disabled Korean (Republic of Korea)
57. International Alliance of Women (Belgium)
58. International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran
59. International Commission of Jurists (Switzerland)
60. International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development (Indonesia)
61. International Partnership for Human Rights (Belgium)
62. Interregional Free Union of Students (Russia)
63. Interregional Human Rights Group (Russia)
64. Institute of Human Rights Education (India)
65. Italian Association for Women in Development (Italy)
66. Jagaran Media Center (Nepal)
67. Judicial System Monitoring Programme (Timor Leste)
68. Justice Foundation (Bangladesh)
69. Justice and Peace Netherlands (Netherlands)
70. Justicia y Proceso (Venezuela)
71. Korean House for International Solidarity (Republic of Korea)
72. The Kyrgyz Committee for Human Rights (Kyrgyzstan)
73. Land Center for Human Rights (Egypt)
74. Migrant Forum in Asia (The Philippines)
75. National Iranian American Council (United States)
76. National Organization for Human Rights in Syria (Syria)
77. NERVAZHI (India)

78. New Women Research Center (Egypt)
79. One World Foundation for Development and Civil Society (Egypt)
80. Open Alternative (Russia)
81. Palestine Peace Solidarity (Republic of Korea)
82. Palestinian Human Rights Organization (Lebanon)
83. Pax Romana (Switzerland)
84. Partnership for Justice (Nigeria)
85. People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (Republic of Korea)
86. Peoples' Vigilance Committee on Human Rights (India)
87. People's Watch (India)
88. Persatuan Kesedaran Komuniti Selangor -EMPOWER (Malaysia)
89. Programme Against Custodial Torture & Impunity (India)
90. Quê Me: Action for Democracy (Vietnam)
91. Right to Life Foundation (Bangladesh)
92. Sasvika Sanghatan (India)
93. Shumuu Organization for Disabled Person's Rights (Egypt)
94. South African Council of Churches (South Africa)
95. South Asia Network Against Torture & Impunity (India)
96. Suara Rakyat Malaysia - SUARAM (Malaysia)
97. Sudhanthra (India)
98. Taiwan Association for Human Rights (Taiwan)
99. Tibetan United Nations Advocacy (Switzerland)
100. Turkmen Initiative for Human Rights
101. Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (the Hague)
102. United Group (Egypt)
103. West African Human Rights Defenders Network (Togo)
104. Women's Learning Partnership (United States)

105. Working Group on Justice for Peace (Thailand)

106. Young Europe (Russia)

107. Youth Human Rights Group - Kharkiv (Ukraine)

108. Youth Human Rights Movement (Russia)

<http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2009/11/11/letter-un-member-states-condemn-human-rights-violations-iran>

© Copyright 2008, Human Rights Watch