

November 21, 2012

Your Excellency:

We, the undersigned human rights organizations and press freedom groups, write to respectfully urge your government to vote in favor of the resolution on the promotion and protection of human rights of the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Affairs Committee of the 67<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), scheduled to take place on November 27, 2012. This 67<sup>th</sup> UNGA provides an important opportunity to advance the concerns of the international community with respect to ongoing human rights abuses in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In recent years, the Islamic Republic of Iran has increasingly and systematically repressed its population and committed widespread abuses with impunity. Earlier this month, Iranian officials were suspected of torturing to death a blogger, Sattar Beheshti, simply for his criticisms of the government on Facebook—a disturbing, but not isolated, case which highlights the plight of hundreds of political prisoners in Iran, as well as the broader status of human rights and freedom in the country.

Last month, Dr. Ahmed Shaheed, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, reported a “deeply troubling picture” of overall conditions inside the country and detailed the ill-treatment of activists, journalists, human rights defenders, political opposition, students, women, and ethnic and religious minorities—many of whom face threats, arbitrary detention, torture, sexual abuse, and even death for exercising their fundamental rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international laws and standards, which Iran has agreed to uphold. Despite repeated requests, Iranian authorities have refused access to the country for any UN human rights mechanism for the past seven years, and have systematically worked to decimate the work of independent civil society and human rights defenders in the country.

Until the Islamic Republic of Iran stops its repressive practices against its people and begins cooperation and compliance with its international human rights obligations, the international community has an obligation to stand up for the Iranian people and hold their government to account for its widespread transgressions. To that end, this proposed resolution is an important mechanism for the international community to stand with one voice in support of the Iranian people’s basic human rights. The resolution crucially details the vast violations by the Iranian authorities, including those that are widespread and/or systematic in nature, as well as strongly urges the government to undertake the necessary reforms to carry out free and fair presidential elections in June 2013.

We urge your support for this resolution, and we further request that your government reject any motion for no-action on this measure that would prevent consideration of the resolution on its merits. On November 27, and with your government’s support, the UN General Assembly will send a strong signal to Iranian Government authorities to put an end to their abusive practices.

Sincerely,

Kamran Ashtary, Director  
Arseh Sevom

Roya Boroumand, Executive Director  
The Boroumand Foundation

Ziad Abdel Tawab, Deputy Director  
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies

Kianoosh Sanjari  
Committee of Human Rights Reporters

Joel Simon, Executive Director  
Committee to Protect Journalists

Sarah Leah Whitson, Director, Middle East and North Africa  
Human Rights Watch

Gissou Nia, Executive Director  
Iran Human Rights Documentation Center

Hadi Ghaemi, Executive Director  
International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran

Jessica Stern, Executive Director  
International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission

Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam  
Iran Human Rights

Shadi Sadr, Executive Director  
Justice for Iran

Olawale Fapohunda, Managing Partner  
Legal Resources Consortium

Dokhi Fassihian, Director of Programs and Advocacy  
United for Iran