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Agenda item 12

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/40/1007)]

40/141. Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran

The General Assembly,

Guided by the principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1/ and the International Covenants on Human Rights, 2/

Reaffirming that all Member States have an obligation to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms and to fulfil the obligations they have undertaken under the various international instruments in this field,

Recalling Commission on Human Rights resolutions 1982/27 of 11 March 1982 3/ and 1983/34 of 8 March 1983, 4/

1/ Resolution 217 A (III).

2/ Resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

3/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1982, Supplement No. 2 (E/1982/12 and Corr.1), chap. XXVI, sect. A.

4/ Ibid., 1983, Supplement No. 3 (E/1983/13 and Corr.1), chap. XXVII, sect. A.

ACTION BY THE U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN IRAN

General Assembly resolution 40/141 on the human rights situation in Iran was adopted by the General Assembly at its 116th meeting on 13 December 1985 by 53 votes in favour, 30 against and 45 abstentions.

The breakdown of the voting was as follows:

<u>In favour (53)</u>	<u>Against (30)</u>	<u>Abstained (45)</u>
Antigua and Barbuda	Albania	Bahamas
Argentina	Algeria	Bhutan
Australia	Angola	Brazil
Austria	Bahrain	Burkina Faso
Barbados	Bangladesh	Burma
Belize	Benin	Burundi
Belgium	Brunei	Cameroon
Botswana	Comoros	Cape Verde
Canada	Cuba	Central African Republic
Chile	Democratic Yemen	Chad
Colombia	Indonesia	Congo
Costa Rica	Iran	Cyprus
Denmark	Kuwait	Ecuador
Dominican Republic	Libya	Egypt
El Salvador	Malaysia	Ethiopia
Equatorial Guinea	Nicaragua	Gabon
Fiji	Niger	Ghana
Finland	Pakistan	Guinea Bissau
France	Poland	India
Germany, F.R.	Qatar	Ivory Coast
Greece	Romania	Japan
Grenada	Saudi Arabia	Lebanon
Honduras	Sierra Leone	Liberia
Iceland	Somalia	Malawi
Iraq	Sudan	Maldives
Ireland	Syria	Mali
Israel	Tanzania	Malta
Italy	Turkey	Mauritania
Jamaica	United Arab Emirates	Nepal
Jordan	Yemen	Nigeria
Kenya		Oman
Lesotho		Papua New Guinea
Luxembourg		Philippines
Mauritius		Senegal
Mexico		Singapore
Netherlands		Sri Lanka
New Zealand		Suriname
Norway		Swaziland

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of minority groups such as the Bahá'ís", on the General Assembly's agenda for 1986. The resolution thus ensures that both the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights will continue to concern themselves with these issues.

The specific references to the Bahá'ís in the text of the resolution are extremely important in terms of maintaining and increasing international concern over the plight of the Bahá'í community in Iran. They also represent a considerable achievement. Strong pressures were exerted to have these references deleted from the text, on the basis that the Bahá'í community represents only a very small proportion of the total population of Iran and is only one of a number of oppressed groups, and that the references to the Bahá'ís would lose votes for the resolution. The latter argument was certainly true. Many Arab and Muslim delegations made it clear that they would support (or at least not vote against) the resolution if, and only if, the references to the Bahá'ís were deleted, but that they would vote against the resolution if the references to the Bahá'ís were retained. Thanks to strenuous Bahá'í efforts, both in Western capitals and at the United Nations, the references were retained.

The resolution was adopted after a week of debate about the worldwide human rights situation. Resolutions were also adopted concerning the human rights situations in Afghanistan (also dealt with for the first time at this session of the Assembly), Chile, El Salvador and Guatemala. (Resolutions about the situation in South Africa had been adopted earlier in the session).

In the course of the debate, the following delegations referred to the situation in Iran in critical terms: Australia, Canada, Fiji, France, Jamaica, Luxembourg (speaking on behalf of the ten Member States of the European Community plus Spain and Portugal, who will become members on 1 January 1986), Norway, St. Lucia, Sweden and the United States. All these delegations except France, Jamaica and Sweden specifically mentioned the situation of the Bahá'ís.

Bolivia, which, in common with a number of other third world countries, has a policy of not voting on any human rights country situations, nevertheless spoke up for the Bahá'ís. In the context of expressing the hope that the situations in all the countries under review (Afghanistan, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala and Iran) would normalize, the Bolivian representative stressed the importance of freedom of religion for all, "including the Bahá'í Faith".

The attitude of the Government of Iran to the resolution and to the Bahá'í issue was significant. First of all, Iranian diplomats mounted an extensive lobbying campaign to persuade other governments not to support a resolution on the human rights situation in Iran. Iran, both publicly and privately, has tried to portray any action on the human rights situation in Iran as anti-Islamic. In addition, Iran made no less than three statements attacking the Bahá'í Faith at General Assembly meetings. The Iranian Mission to the United Nations also issued a press release reporting a statement made in Tehran on 29

BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

United Nations Office

REPORT ON THE ADOPTION BY THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE RESOLUTION ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN IRAN

The United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 40/141 concerning the human rights situation in Iran, including specific references to the situation of the Bahá'ís, on Friday 13 December 1985.

This is the first time that the General Assembly has ever adopted a resolution about the general human rights situation in Iran, or about the particular situation of the Bahá'ís. It is therefore the first time that the international community as a whole has expressed its concern over these issues. The resolution accordingly represents a major advance in our efforts to secure the widest and clearest possible expression of international concern over the persecution of the Bahá'í community in Iran. Its adoption is the result of intensive efforts by National Spiritual Assemblies in national capitals and by the Bahá'í International Community's United Nations Offices in New York and Geneva over the past few years - efforts which have been further intensified and concentrated in recent weeks with the goal of achieving such an outcome.

The General Assembly has for some years now been dealing with the human rights situations in three Latin American countries but it was only through a major and determined effort by governments, by the Bahá'í International Community and by other interested non-governmental organisations that it was possible to add the Iranian situation to the General Assembly's agenda.

This action at the General Assembly follows the adoption of resolutions about the human rights situation in Iran, including the particular situation of the Bahá'ís, by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in 1982, 1983, 1984 and 1985. The resolution adopted by the Commission in 1985 put these issues on the General Assembly's agenda for the first time at its current session, and (also for the first time) commissioned a report on them for submission to the General Assembly as a basis for its discussions.

Mr. Andrés Aguilar of Venezuela was appointed Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights, charged with responsibility for

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