

# BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

866 UNITED NATIONS PLAZA • NEW YORK, N. Y. 10017 • U.S.A.

Cable: BAHAINCOM NEWYORK - Telex: 666363 BICNY

(212) 486-0560

Representative  
to the United Nations  
Dr. Victor de Araujo  
Alternate Representative  
Mr. Gerald Knight

## UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE TO INVESTIGATE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN IRAN

United Nations, New York, 24 May 1984

Today, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), meeting in New York, decided that a Special Representative should be appointed to make a thorough study of the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The decision was adopted by 29 votes in favour, 2 against, with 14 abstentions.

In making this decision, ECOSOC was endorsing the recommendation submitted to it by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights which, in its resolution 1984/54 of 14 March 1984, had expressed its "deep concern at the continuing serious violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the Islamic Republic of Iran ... and particularly at the evidence of summary and arbitrary executions, torture, detention without trial, religious intolerance and persecution, in particular of the Bahá'ís, and the lack of an independent judiciary and other recognized safeguards for a fair trial". In view of the gravity of the situation in Iran, the Commission had requested its Chairman to appoint a Special Representative to carry out an investigation. The ECOSOC decision provided the necessary approval for the appointment.

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died for their religion. Since the start of the Islamic Revolution, 125 Bahá'ís had been summarily executed, 7 had died in prison in mysterious circumstances, 4 had been assassinated by revolutionary guards, 22 had been beaten, stoned or burned to death by fanatical mobs and 15 had disappeared without trace. Countless Bahá'ís had been deprived of their jobs, homes and possessions, and their children were denied education unless they recanted their faith.

One of the two Bahá'ís executed in Teheran on 15 May was Mr. Jahangir Hidayati, a member of the now-dissolved national governing body of the Bahá'í Faith in Iran who was kidnapped in June 1983 and disappeared without trace. The fact that he was confined, tortured and finally executed in a State prison belies the assertions of the Iranian authorities who had insisted that they were not responsible for his abduction and that they had no knowledge of his whereabouts. "His execution", said Knight, "leads us to the assumption that the other 15 disappeared Bahá'ís may well have shared his fate and that the true figure of dead probably stands at over 170.

The persecution of the Bahá'ís is motivated by fanatical religious prejudice. The Bahá'í Faith, an independent world religion founded in Iran in 1844, is not recognized in the land of its birth. Iran's fundamentalist religious leaders are unwilling to tolerate the existence of any religion that appeared after Islam and are conducting a ruthless campaign to eradicate the Bahá'í community and destroy all traces of the Bahá'í Faith in Iran.

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For further information: Gerald Knight

Bahá'í International Community

United Nations Office

866 United Nations Plaza

New York, New York 10017

Telephone: (212) 486-0560 (Office)

(914) 997-7571 (Home)



Economic and Social Council

Distr.  
GENERAL

E/1984/NGO/5  
15 May 1984

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

First regular session of 1984  
Agenda item 10

HUMAN RIGHTS

Statement submitted by the Bahá'í International Community,  
a non-governmental organization in consultative status,  
category II

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 23 and 24 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

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The Bahá'í International Community wishes to submit the following information with regard to the practice of torture in the contemporary world. This information is based on reports received by the Bahá'í International Community concerning the treatment of Bahá'í prisoners in Evin Prison, Teheran.

Typically, the prisoner is awakened at 4.00 a.m. and taken to the interrogation chamber to await the interrogators who arrive at 7.00 a.m. and work uninterrupted on their victim until 4.00 p.m. The prisoner - man or woman - is punched and kicked, then tied to a specially designed table and beaten mercilessly on all parts of the body, but particularly on the soles of the feet with a metal cable, rubber hose or similar object while other interrogators administer repeated severe blows to the head. The interrogators periodically check to see whether the prisoner's will has been broken and whether he is willing to comply with the demands of the prison authorities. The treatment continues for hours or days, depending on the victim's ability to withstand the torture. A doctor is sometimes summoned to administer superficial medical treatment in order to keep the prisoner alive. In between beatings, the prisoner is forced to mark time on his lacerated feet. The prisoner experiences extreme thirst as a result of the torture and is goaded to walk unaided on his grossly swollen legs to slake his thirst with a glass of water alluringly displayed some distance away. The severe beatings cause internal injuries and the prisoner inevitably passes blood in his urine.

After undergoing torture, the prisoner is taken to an interrogation room. Interrogation normally takes place with the prisoner blindfolded or facing a wall, so that he cannot identify his interrogators. In cases where both the husband and wife are prisoners, one will be shown the damaged body of the other during the course of the interrogation. The prisoner is given a questionnaire and ordered to complete it according to the wishes of the interrogators. Enfeebled and in a state of shock, the prisoner is subjected to blows and abuse if he fails to comply with the interrogators' demands. As the post-torture numbness of his body subsides, the prisoner is overwhelmed by pain even more excruciating than the agony he suffered in the torture chamber. The pattern of torture-interrogation-torture then resumes, lessening or increasing in intensity according to the resistance of the victim.

In order to increase the psychological pressure on prisoners, some are transferred from Evin Prison to Gawhar-Dasht Prison in Karaj, a small town on the outskirts of Teheran. They are kept there for weeks or months in solitary confinement in isolated cells measuring approximately 1.7 metres by 2 metres. Apart from the guards who bring their food, and who curse and beat them, the prisoners see no one and speak to no one. The only sounds they hear are the screams and moans of their fellow prisoners who are undergoing torture. The purpose of the torture is to extract false confessions which will implicate the prisoner and also those who share his beliefs.

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10. Human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran <sup>39/</sup>

The Economic and Social Council, noting Commission on Human Rights resolution 1984/54 of 14 March 1984, endorses the Commission's decision to request its Chairman to appoint, after consultation within the Bureau, a special representative of the Commission, whose mandate will be to establish contacts with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and to make a thorough study of the human rights situation in that country based on such information as he may deem relevant, including comments and materials provided by the Government, containing conclusions and appropriate suggestions, to be presented to the Commission at its forty-first session. The Council further endorses the Commission's request to the Secretary-General to give all necessary assistance to the special representative of the Commission.

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<sup>39/</sup> See chap. II, sect. A, resolution 1984/54, and chap. XII.

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The Commission on Human Rights,

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

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 its resolutions 1982/27 of 11 March 1982 and 1983/34 of 8 March 1983, in which, inter alia, the Commission expressed concern about the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran,

Taking into account the information on the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran contained in the report of the Secretary-General, 148/

Regretting the refusal of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to receive the mission arranged by the Secretary-General in agreement with the Government,

Encouraging the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to co-operate with the Commission on Human Rights in the future,

Mindful of resolution 1983/14 of 5 September 1983 of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities,

1. Expresses its deep concern at the continuing serious violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the Islamic Republic of Iran as reflected in the report of the Secretary-General, and particularly at the evidence of summary and arbitrary executions, torture, detention without trial, religious intolerance and persecution, in particular of the Baha'is, and the lack of an independent judiciary and other recognized safeguards for a fair trial;

2. Urges once more the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as a State party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to respect and ensure to all individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction the rights recognized in that Covenant;

3. Expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General for the efforts deployed by him in the framework of his ongoing direct contacts 149/ with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran;

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147/ Adopted at the 58th meeting, on 14 March 1984, by a roll-call vote of 21 to 6, with 15 abstentions. See chap. XII.

148/ E/CN.4/1984/28.

149/ See E/CN.4/1984/32.

4. Requests the Chairman to appoint, after consultation within the Bureau, a special representative of the Commission whose mandate will be to establish contacts with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and to make a thorough study of the human rights situation in that country based on such information as he may deem relevant, including comments and materials provided by the Government, containing conclusions and appropriate suggestions, to be presented to the Commission at its forty-first session;

5. Requests the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to extend its co-operation to the Special Representative of the Commission;

6. Requests the Secretary-General to give all necessary assistance to the Special Representative of the Commission;

7. Decides to continue its consideration of the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the Islamic Republic of Iran at its forty-first session.

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