

Resolution on the serious and systematic human rights violations in Iran

Presented by the League for the Defense of Human Rights in Iran

Considering that the Tehran Prosecutor's Office announced in mid-March 2010 that the sentences of 86 people tried since the June election had been finalised;

On 15 March, the Tehran Prosecutor's Office reported that six post-election protesters had been sentenced to death on the charge of "fighting God". Those recent condemnations illustrate the current extreme degree of repression against the people of Iran.

Considering that the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran drastically deteriorated in 2009;

While gross violations of human rights had been rampant, a sharp turn occurred immediately after the 12 June 2009 presidential election, when the incumbent President Ahmadinejad was declared the winner. Starting on 13 June, millions of people took to the streets to dispute the result and to claim respect for their vote.

Considering that during the weeks and months following the June election, the authorities responded very harshly and brutally to the peaceful protesters and violently suppressed dissent;

A committee formed by two of the presidential candidates, Messrs Mir Hossein Mussavi and Mehdi Karrubi, former prime minister and parliament speaker respectively, announced in September that at least 72 peaceful protesters had been killed by armed security forces and plain-clothed Bassij militia members, either on the streets, or under torture and ill-treatment in custody in notorious detention centres. The number has risen since to well over one hundred. The committee also documented and reported cases of detainees, both men and women, who had been raped in detention. While several thousand protesters have been arrested in the post-election crackdown on in the capital Tehran as well as other cities, hundreds of political activists and leaders were arbitrarily detained, often without even arrest warrants, and held in solitary confinement for months without charge and access to due process or frequently to their lawyers and families. Some of them, including former ministers and parliamentarians, have been sentenced to long prison sentences.

Considering the disregard of due process and particularly the right to a fair trial as required by international standards of fair trials as was clearly illustrated during the mass show "trials" that started against the post-election detainees in August 2009;

In one session alone around 100 detainees were put on trial in court. Many made apparently coerced "confessions" and were shown on television incriminating themselves even before standing "trial."

Considering that over 60 journalists and writers are reported to be in prison;

One journalist, Alireza Eftekhari, was killed by blows to his skull. Tens of journalists and writers have fled Iran since the election and are scattered in Iraqi Kurdistan, Turkey, Europe and elsewhere; others have been arbitrarily detained, ill-treated and held for months without being charged or tried, e.g. Issa Saharkhiz, Badrossadate Mofidi, Sousan Mohammadkhani Ghiassvand, Khalil Darmanaki, Emad Behavar. Several have even been sentenced to heavy prison sentences, including Seyed Massoud Lavassani (8.5 years), Ahmad Zaydabadi (6 years imprisonment and 5 years in internal exile), Saeed Laylaz (5 years), Bahman Ahmadi Amou'i (6 years), Kayvan Samimi Behbahani (6 years), Massoud Bastani (6 years), Reza Rafi'ee-Foroushani (7 years), Omid Montazeri (6 years), Hengameh Shahidi (6 years), Javad Mahzadeh (4 years), Reza Nourbakhsh (3 years).

Considering that Human rights defenders have also been subjected to arbitrary arrest and detention; Persecuted human rights activists and defenders include the award-winning human rights activist Emadeddin Baghi, Kaveh Ghassemi Kermanshahi, Ali Malihi, Kouhyar Goudarzi, as well as Shiva Nazar-Ahari, who has been detained twice since the election and is still in solitary confinement. The authorities have accused her and some of her colleagues of being linked to opposition groups abroad. The

FIDH member organisation, Defenders of Human Rights Centre (DHRC), established by the 2003 Nobel Peace Laureate Shirin Ebadi and her colleagues, has faced strong repressive measures. The DHRC offices, which were closed down in late 2008 on the eve of a ceremony marking the 60th anniversary of the UDHR, are still shut. Its members have been frequently harassed and detained. Two of its founding members, Messrs Abdolfattah Soltani and Mohammad Ali Dadkhah, were detained in the aftermath of the election and each spent over two months in prison. Mr. Soltani was denied permission to travel abroad in October 2009 to receive a human rights prize in Nuremberg, Germany.

Considering that the award-winning film maker Jafar Panahi has also been arbitrarily arrested at the beginning of March 2010.

Considering that a women's rights defender, Alieh Eghdam-Doust, is spending a three-year prison sentence for her activities in the Campaign for Equality, which has been campaigning against legalised gender-based discrimination;

No less than 50 members of the Campaign have been detained at various times and some of them, including Mahboubeh Karami, as well as other women including some members of a group known as "Mourning Mothers" are currently in prison. A number of women's rights activists have currently taken shelter abroad.

Considering that besides previously existing discrimination such as refusing the women the right to divorce or to have custody of their children after divorce, since September 2009, female students have been required to study at universities in their home towns or cities, thereby restricting their free access to higher education;

On the other hand, the Family Protection Bill, which is currently at the committee stage in parliament, aims to allow men to take a second wife without the permission of their first wife.

Considering that workers have consistently been denied the right to form free trade unions and trade union activists have faced harsh treatment;

One notable example is Mansour Osalou, leader of the Syndicate of United Bus Company Workers of Tehran and Suburbs, who was detained several times and, in the past few years, held a few months each time and finally was sentenced to five years imprisonment. He has been sent to serve his sentence among the most brutal common criminals in the Rajaieshahr Prison, well outside the city of Karaj. Ebrahim Madadi, his deputy, is serving a two-year imprisonment term.

Considering that independent student groups and activists have been facing severe persecution and crackdown, especially since the June election;

Some university dormitories were brutally attacked and ransacked in Tehran, Isfahan and Shiraz, immediately after the election. Reports indicated the killing of, respectively, five, two and two students in those cities. Many students have since been deprived of continuing their education and several students have been handed down heavy sentences. A female student leader, Bahareh Hedayat, has been in detention since the end of December 2009 without charge. Majid Tavakkoli, a student leader, who had been detained several times in the past few years, was sentenced to 8.5 years imprisonment in January 2010. Another young student, Mohammad Amin Valian, was reportedly sentenced to death in early March 2010 for taking part in street protests.

Considering that over the past two years, about 20 newspapers and magazines have been banned;

Book publishing is subject to a stringent censorship process. Some books at times were kept waiting for several years for permission to be published and ultimately were refused. Some books are refused a publication licence for subsequent editions, even though they have already been published in the past. Some others, in particular novels, receive a license on the condition that whole sections or numerous paragraphs and sentences are cut, often making the stories incomprehensible.

Considering that writers and journalists are refused the right to form unions;

The Iranian Writers Association, which the authorities have denied registration, has been unable to hold its general assembly for the past seven years. The Journalists Association, that was a legally registered

body, was banned last year.

Considering that the number of executions has risen drastically over the past several years, from 94 executions unofficially recorded in 2005 to 388 in 2009;

The real numbers were likely higher. As a result, Iran has ranked second throughout the world, next to China, regarding the absolute number of executions and first as far as the per capita number of executions is concerned. However, the IRI can easily claim the top rank in regard to execution of juveniles, having executed no less than 12 in 2007, eight in 2008 and at least five in 2009.

Considering that the number of death-row prisoners is believed to run to thousands, mostly on drug smuggling, and murder;

An Afghan parliamentary delegation that visited the IRI in early February 2010 reported that, according to the information given to them by the Iranian judicial authorities, out of more than 5,600 Afghan citizens in Iranian prisons, about 3,000 were on death-row, mostly on drug-smuggling charges.

Considering that in less than two months after the election, no less than 115 executions were reported; Later in January 2010, two men were the first political prisoners to be executed on charges reportedly related to post-election unrest. They had faced the vaguely worded charge of “fighting God”, which is frequently leveled against political prisoners.

Considering that members of ethnic and religious minorities as well as political prisoners are frequently victims of the death penalty;

Members of the Baluch, Kurdish and south-Iranian Arab ethnic groups have frequently been victims of summary trials and executions, occasionally being hanged in public within two or three days after being arrested, thus clearly illustrating total neglect of due process and the right to a fair trial by the Iranian judicial authorities.

Considering that members of religious minorities not recognised by the Constitution are recurrently persecuted and face prosecution on accusations of heresy and apostasy, which could carry the death penalty;

In particular, followers of the Baha’i faith as well as followers of Ahl-e Haq, a Sufi sect, and members of the Ale-ya-Sin group have been subjected to arrests and trials in recent years.

Recognising the momentum of the movement of millions of Iranians;

The FIDH Congress:

Expresses strong support for all the people seeking the right to vote, democratic reforms and their basic rights of freedom of expression, press, assembly and association;

Urges the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to:

- Respect its obligations under international human rights standards, including all treaties to which it is party, e.g. the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Respect its ostensible agreement to guarantee equality for women before the law, during the review of Iran’s record by the UN Human Rights Council within the framework of the Universal Periodic Review;
- Release all prisoners of conscience imprisoned for peaceful exercise of their rights of expression, assembly and association;
- Guarantee for prisoners, the application of due process, access to proper medical care, their families and lawyers and their right to a fair trial;

- Stop immediately the execution of juveniles;
- Stop issuing the death sentence for political charges as well as the stoning sentence for adultery and restrict the use of death penalty to the “most serious crimes” as a first step to abolishing the death penalty.

Urges the United Nations, the European Union and the national governments to:

- Support Iranian human rights defenders in particular those still in Iran, as a matter of high priority;
- Call on the Iranian government to release all prisoners of conscience held for the peaceful exercise of their basic rights, as well as all prisoners and detainees imprisoned on such vague charges as “propaganda against the system”, “acting against national security”, “insulting the leader” and other similar charges that relate to their exercise of freedom of expression;
- Call on the Iranian government to ensure prompt access by UN special procedures such as the UN special rapporteur on torture and the UN special rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, who have been requesting to carry out country-visits in Iran;
- Reconsider the existing political relations with the IRI government that has persistently refused to respect the human rights and the lives of its citizens.
- Take effective steps to remedy and prevent corporate behaviour that may constitute complicity for human rights violations perpetrated in the IRI and, in particular, ban the export of eavesdropping and other equipment used to control people’s access to internet and other media as well as items used for brutal repression of protesters.

Urges NGOs from all countries to:

- Form a wide and united front and speak in one cohesive voice to say “no” to the Iranian government’s gross violations of human rights;
- Closely monitor their governments, including their political and economic relations with the Iranian government, in order to prevent them from ignoring the latter’s violation of human rights in exchange for growing trade and economic relations;
- Support the growing Iranian civil society and rights defenders, by establishing contact with and extending support to the existing groups and lobbying governments to provide shelter for Iranian dissidents.