

BAHÁ'Í INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

United Nations Office

Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran

UN Human Rights Council – 19th session
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Geneva

Dr. Shaheed,

The Baha'i International Community fully concurs with your analysis of – quoting from your report – “the systemic and systematic persecution of members of unrecognized religious communities, particularly the Baha'i community, in violation of international conventions” [unquote].

We also agree with your presentation of the underlying obstacles, including elements of the legal framework and lack of adherence to the rule of law – none of which are being addressed by the government. As you clearly state, impunity continues to prevail in Iran, and certain individuals are exempted from laws and regulations meant to restrain the abuse of power.

In Iran, impunity protects those who target anyone that government officials falsely accuse of acting against Islam and the Islamic Republic. Your report also mentions an intensive defamation campaign intended to incite hatred and discrimination against the Baha'is of Iran. It was orchestrated by government-controlled and -sanctioned media while, at the same time, hundreds of officials went to enormous lengths to identify every single Baha'i in the country. Combined with impunity, these concerted efforts generated a dramatic increase in human rights abuses: multiple violations, across the entire spectrum of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, specifically directed against members of this community, literally from kindergarten to the grave.

So, our question to you is:

- Given Iran's refusal to engage in any substantive manner with UN human rights mechanisms, how should the international community respond?
- What can it do when a government like Iran refuses to recognize a community's right to exist?
- How can the international community protect people who belong to the most vulnerable minorities?

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