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Human Rights Council

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Agenda item 4

Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by United Nations Watch (UN Watch), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[16 February 2010]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

50 Iranian rights activists urge U.N. rights chief to issue call for special session and inquiry

Iran's most famous torture victim appeared before the U.N. Human Rights Council in September 2009 to present an appeal, signed by 50 leading Iranian activists, urging U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay to issue a call for a U.N. Human Rights Council special session and a commission of inquiry into allegations of Iran's mass arrest, rape, torture and killing of post-election demonstrators.

Ahmed Batebi was imprisoned in 1999 for appearing at a Tehran student demonstration, and tortured for 9 years. *The Economist* magazine published the iconic photo of Batebi, holding the bloodied t-shirt of his injured friend, on its front cover, making him one of the world's most famous political prisoners, and provoking retaliatory abuse from the Iranian prison authorities.

Batebi appeared before the Council together with Nazanin Afshin-Jam, founding president of Stop Child Executions, a group advocating for children on death row in Iran.

The joint appeal, which has yet to be answered, follows below.

Appeal of Iranian Human Rights Defenders for U.N. Human Rights Council Special Session and Independent Investigation on Human Rights Violations in Iran

16 September 2009

Dear Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon,

Dear High Commissioner for Human Rights Navanethem Pillay,

Shocked and anguished by the tyranny, oppression, and gross human rights violations perpetrated by the Islamic Republic of Iran since the fraudulent June elections;

Recalling that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees the right to life, liberty and security of person, freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of peaceful assembly, and the democratic right to participate in genuine elections;

Recalling further that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights prohibits torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, arbitrary arrest and detention,

Reiterating the July 2, 2009 call by Iranian and international human rights activists for the U.N. Secretary General to name a Personal Envoy for Iran to investigate the post-election violence in Iran, to complete his report on the human rights situation in Iran, due at the 64th session of the General Assembly;

We hereby call upon you to lead the United Nations and the international community in convening an urgent and immediate Special Session of the U.N. Human Rights Council on the grave violations of international human rights law in Iran since the fraudulent June elections, and, in that context, for the Council to establish an independent, international and impartial commission of inquiry to investigate:

- The complicity of Iran's senior leadership, including Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, in perpetuating massive election fraud, followed by the brutal arrests, beating and killing of peaceful demonstrators by the Basij and other government forces, including the deadly June 20, 2009 shooting of 27-year-old Neda Agha-Soltan;

- Torture and abuse of defendants following their arrest, with credible reports of rape of women and male detainees by security officials, including the rape and killing of Taraneh Mousavi and the rape of Ebrahim Sharifi;
- Specific allegations of gross abuse raised by Mehdi Karroubi and others concerning the Kahrizak detention center, which have been partially acknowledged by Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei;
- The show trials of more than 100 Iranians designed to delegitimize the mass and peaceful protests following the June elections;
- Secret burials of dead protesters in Tehran's Behesht Zahra cemetery and other locations;

Mindful of the precedent shown by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 2006, when he successfully led the international community in calling for a special session of the Human Rights Council on Darfur, we now look to your moral leadership to give hope to the millions seeking human rights, freedom and justice in Iran.

Sincerely,

- Ahmad Batebi, Human Rights Activists in Iran
- Nazanin Afshin-Jam, Stop Child Executions
- Dr. Fatemeh Haghighatjoo, Former Iranian MP
- Professor Payam Akhavan, McGill University Faculty of Law
- Hassan Zarezadeh Ardeshir, Committee for Defense of Political Prisoners
- Mina Ahadi, International Committee Against Stoning and Execution
- Dr. Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam, Iran Human Rights (www.iranhr.net)
- Dr. Saeed Ganji, National Union For Democracy in Iran
- Kawa Ahangari, Kurdistan Democratic Party
- Lida Sherafatmand, World Citizen Association
- Darab Ganji, Organization for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms for Iran
- Sharif Behruz, Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan
- J Jonroy Avani, Filmmaker and Activist
- Hamed Sepehri, Human Right Committee of Iranian Constitutionalist Party
- Sameem Monzaviyan, Stop Discrimination Against Baha'i Students in Iran
- Roya Teimouri, Stop Executions Committee
- Kazem Alamdari, Society for Human Rights in Iran
- Azad Moradian, Society for Human Rights in Iran
- Maryam Fakhar, Women's Freedom Forum
- David Etebari, Stop Child Executions
- Vanecha Roudbaraki, Artist
- Pastor Kouroesh Barani
- Davoud Rastgou, Actor

- Arezou Shokoufandeh
 - Atoosa Shokoueian
 - Mehrtash Rastegar
 - Khosro Chavoshi
 - Sepideh Rouhani
 - Hossein Khorram
 - Adrian Hjelmslund
 - Mandana Mehrtash
 - Benjamin Ramm
 - Omid Afkhani
 - Cyrus Marvasti
 - Minoo Homily
 - Behrooz Nikoo
 - Reza Pardisan
 - Roxanne Ganji
 - Soheil Parhizi
 - Maryam Reissi
 - Azarin Sadegh
 - Farnaz Farrokhi
 - Aram Khatibi
 - Fara Askari
 - Taraneh Irani
 - Azarin Sadegh
 - Sofia Beiki
 - Shiva Irani
 - Rofi Bei
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