

HRC35 - Item4

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Mr. President,

Just weeks ago, two brothers, who had stabbed to death Mr. Farhang Amiri in the city of Yazd in Iran and in front of his house, were brought to court where they admitted to having killed Mr. Amiri because he was a Baha'i and therefore an apostate. They also claimed that his murder was in fact a pious deed, justified by verses from the Holy Qu'ran. They showed no remorse and, on the contrary, appeared to be prepared to kill other Baha'is as well. Having heard all of this, the judge decided to release them on bail. It is inconceivable to imagine such an act by a judge if the victim were not a Baha'i.

This impunity that prevails in Iran stems from the clear government policy that Baha'is must be treated differently than other Iranians, that their blood can be shed, that they can be imprisoned for long sentences without any proof to substantiate their charges, that their properties can be confiscated, that their shops can be sealed under the excuse that they were closed on Baha'i Holy Days, and that their youth can be denied access to higher education. Many of these injustices are outlined in an official 1991 government memorandum that deals with "The Baha'i Question".

Another point of this memorandum, which was revealed two years later by the then-UN Special Representative on Iran, states that their cultural roots outside the country must also be confronted and destroyed.

Today, Iran has exported its persecution of the Baha'is to Yemen, where a similar systematic campaign is being waged against them by the Houthi de facto authorities. Yemeni Baha'is are imprisoned with no legal basis and detained indefinitely by being denied a proper court hearing, and tens of others, including women, have been issued arrest warrants, forcing them into hiding for weeks.

Mr. President,

The Iranian government has time and again repeated its commitment to human rights principles and is a signatory of the two Covenants. It is time that the international community call on the Islamic Republic of Iran to stop treating Iranian Baha'is without regard for these commitments and to stop inciting hatred against Baha'is, both within and outside of its borders.

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