

A Coalition of Humanity

Vs

Tyranny

Unpunished by the International Community

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Neda for a free Iran is a non-political human rights NGO, which seeks to promote awareness about the gross violations of human rights in Iran. It aims to further the word of information to the four-corners of the world, in hope that the masses will take up the struggle for freedom and human rights not just in Iran, but all over the world. 'Neda' is Farsi for 'a calling', hence 'a calling for a free Iran'. There is no power more influential and constructive than the power of information via education; such is the principle in which Neda for a Free Iran endorses.

Why, then, does Iran need to be free? Iran has been oppressed by the rule of tyranny since its birth in 1979, in which a hard-line theocratic government was established. Since then, there have been countless United Nations (UN) documents and sessions condemning Iran for its gross violations of human rights and its persistent failure to amend its laws and actions so that it may be in compliance with the international human rights laws it is party to, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966 (ICCPR); Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 (CRC); and the customary binding declaration, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 (UDHR). Given that Iran is party to such instruments, it is consequently bound to abide by their provisions, in honouring the obligation to protect and promote human rights. Evidently, the authorities have not only failed to do so, they have served to demonstrate a blatant disregard for such duties and obligations.

The latest human rights breach took the form of the execution by strangulation of two dissidents, one of which was under 18 years of age at the time the charges were brought against him; thus, constituting a violation of Article 37(a) of CRC in that no one may be executed for any crime committed whilst below the adult age of 18. Furthermore, death by strangulation is facilitated by the lifting of the condemned at the neck, by a crane, in which the condemned will die not as a result of the sudden snap of the neck brought about by the drop of the platform that holds them, but rather by the noose tightening around their neck as they are lifted kicking their legs desperately into the air until they die as a result of both not being able to pass oxygen into the lungs as well as the closing of arteries, preventing the flow of blood to the brain. A very slow and excruciating death. Such a method of slow execution was ruled as a direct breach of Article 7 ICCPR prohibition of torture, cruel or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment by the Human Rights Committee in the case of *Ng v Canada*, thus, constituting a violation of another provision of human rights law.

The reprehensible authorities reigning in Iran have violated anti-gender discrimination laws, in which UN Special Rapporteur Yakin Erturk reported that in 2001, 375 of the 575 'honour killings' in

Khuzestan were forced suicides by way of women setting themselves on fire. Special Rapporteur Coomaraswamy found that national laws dictate that a husband may execute his wife if he finds that she has been unfaithful, whereas if the situation was reversed, the wife would be executed by the state on the charge of murder. Furthermore, the laws that protect ethnic minorities, such as Kurds and Baluchi have been mocked by the government of Iran, in which many of such members have been extra-judicially, and summarily executed without the right to due process of law and a competent court, as stipulated by Article 6(2) ICCPR; and have persistently persecuted members of minority faiths, such as members of the Bahai faith, Sunni Muslims, Jews, Zoroastrians, and the recent law that was passed that prescribes the execution of one who converts away from Islam (apostasy law under Iranian Penology).

What lengths has the United Nations gone to enforce such systematically violated international human rights laws? One observes with an overwhelming sense of scepticism as more and more condemning reports are drafted and General Assembly Resolutions are adopted to continue to 'monitor' the human rights situation in Iran - see, for example, the UN General Assembly's 64th Session, Third Committee, Agenda Item 69, 29 October, 2009. Whilst such takes place at the United Nations, more and more people are persecuted, arbitrarily arrested, tortured, executed and exiled. On Monday 15 February, 2010 between 0900-1200hrs, the Human Rights Council (HRC) will convene in Geneva at their 7th Session on the Universal Periodical Review of Iran, which is part of a systematic procedure the HRC adopts. Unfortunately, it is not as a result of the authorities in Iran having demonstrated a blatant disregard for the United Nations' international instruments that seek to protect and promote human rights world-wide.

However, whilst the United Nations engage in routine sessions, a Coalition will commence its work. This is no run of the mill coalition that seeks to dive into the deep waters of disappointed humanity for a quick soak so that it may show off its swimming ability; no, this Coalition is in it for the marathon. It comprises of the many human rights NGOs from all over the world, whose sole purpose is to speak up for human rights, to rally and campaign for its effective enforcement; for it to be truly protected and promoted. It calls for human rights to be honoured and recognized as basic rights inherited by all human beings from all walks of life. The Coalition consists of, but is not limited to, NGOs and organizations, such as Cyberdissidents, Neda for a Free Iran, Stop Child Executions, Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization and many more. This Coalition will be present in Geneva on 15th February, 2010, in Place des Nations, striving to disseminate the concept of human rights so that it will resonate across the lands, touching the hearts and stimulating the intellect of all who are caught within its wave. They will voice the testaments of those in Iran who speak with courageous hearts and muzzled mouths. The Coalition calls for UN Special Rapporteurs to be granted unfettered access into Iran to further report on the human rights situation. The Coalitions calls for Iran to fully honour the human rights instruments that bind it to ethical governance, whilst respecting all tenets of human rights. The Coalition calls for the international community to refrain from encouraging the abusive authorities in Iran with their assistance and contractual compliance, and to refrain from engaging in business arrangements with the Iranian government, such as China ceasing to provide anti-riot tanks, and Russia ceasing to provide interrogation techniques to the Iranian officials.

The international community ought to express that human rights violations will not be tolerated, that they take paramount importance over any other issue. For as long as the

international community turns a blind eye to the gross human rights violations but rather focuses on the nuclear issue, this will send out a message to other states that human rights are simply not that important. Human rights must take priority over all issues, including nuclear issues, if human rights and its protection and promotion are to advance and be secure.