

[PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION FROM PERSIAN]

[Translator's notes appear in square brackets]

[Personal information has been **redacted**.]

[Adapted from website:] [Baha'i World News Service](#)

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[UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon](#)

The UN secretary-general has released a report criticizing human rights abuses in Iran

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has strongly criticized the human rights situation in Iran, expressed concern for excessive use of force after the presidential election, harassment of women rights activists, continued execution of teenagers, and continued persecution of religious minorities, including the Baha'is.

In a 19-page report, specifically prepared in response to a request by the UN General Assembly in December 2008 to report on the human rights situation in Iran, Mr. Ban said that the civil and political rights situation in Iran “had been deteriorating” since 2008.

This year has seen “an increase in violence against women, students, teachers, workers, and social activists, especially after the recent elections.”

“Members of many ethnic groups and minorities have been harassed, abused and in some cases physically abused,” he added. “A wave of concern has arisen about the protection of minorities, including the Baha'i community, the Arab minority in Khuzestan, the Nematollahi Muslim Dervish community, the Kurdish community, Sunnis, Baluchis, and Azeri Turks.”

The report specifically mentions seven leaders of the Baha'i community who were arrested in the spring of 2008 and are still being held in Evin [Prison], noting that the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights “has repeatedly [written to] Iranian officials to express concern and request clarification of the situation of these seven.”

Mr. Ban added that during the year “reports of the arbitrary detention of members of the Baha'i community, confiscation of property, deprivation of employment and government benefits, and their lack of access to higher education has continued.”

The report, published on 23 September 2009, but released yesterday, addresses the government's wide-ranging response to the post-election protests and refers to Mr. Ban's 22 June statement, which stated that “post-election violence—in particular, the use of force against citizens, which has resulted in their deaths and injuries—has expressed [peoples'] dissatisfaction.”

The statement called on the Iranian authorities to respect the basic civil and political rights of the people—in particular, freedom of expression, freedom of association, and freedom of information. It also called for an immediate end to arrests, threats and the use of force. But the report adds that a day after the statement was issued, a spokesman for the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs rejected it.

In this report, as in last year, Mr. Ban discusses the execution of juveniles, reports of torture, and harassment of women's rights activists.

"I urge the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to address the concerns raised in this report and to continue to review national laws—in particular, the new criminal law and the rights of juveniles—in compliance with international human rights standards," he concluded, "to ensure, and to prevent discriminatory treatment of women, ethnic and religious minorities and other minorities."

Bani Dugal, the senior representative of the Baha'i International Community to the United Nations, welcomed Mr. Ban's report and read it on time.

"Although Mr. Ban praised Iran for some developments, such as the government's efforts to distribute wealth and reduce poverty, the report as a whole is quite condemning", she said. Mr. Ban has also made suggestions for a constructive response to Iran, including opening the country to UN human rights inspectors. "We sincerely hope that Iran will respond positively to this invitation."

"Mr. Ban presents a frightening picture of the situation in Iran, which explicitly points to the deteriorating human rights situation since his previous report. "Our hope is that this year, in another resolution, the UN General Assembly will call on Iran to live up to its international human rights obligations."

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