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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Joint written statement* submitted by the Marangopoulos Foundation for Human Rights, (MFHR), the Women's Human Rights International Association (WHRIA), non-governmental organizations in special consultative status, the International Educational Development, Inc. (IED), a non-governmental organization on the roster

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

[13 February 2011]

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

International warning on the increase of executions in Iran**

The number of announced executions in Iran in the month of January has reached 90 people which is four times higher in comparison with the same period last year. These executions are employed to create an atmosphere of terror and fear in the society. The death penalty in Iran has become an instrument in the hands of the government to deal with political instability and social crisis.

Mr. Ali Saremi, who was executed on 27 December 2010, and Mr. Jafar Kazemi and Mr. Mohammad Ali Haj Aghaii, who were executed on 24 January 2011, were all hanged in Tehran's Evin Prison. They were supporters of the PMOI, the main opposition movement, which is labeled as a 'banned organization' by the ruling government. All three were charged with 'making propaganda against the regime', 'moharebeh' (enmity against God) and travelling to Camp Ashraf, home to members of the PMOI, where the sons of Mr. Saremi and Mr. Kazemi are residing. Prior to this, Mr. Kazemi and Mr. Haj Aghaii had spent 11 and 7 years, respectively, in prison for supporting this same organization. All in all, Mr. Saremi had spent 24 years in the prisons of the Shah and the religious dictatorship. All three men were subjected to torture for several consecutive months to participate in TV interviews 'to make confessions' against the PMOI but they resisted these pressures.

A Kurdish political prisoner, Hossein Khezri, was also executed on January 15, 2011 in Orumieh Prison under charges of 'moharebe'. Furthermore, Mrs. Zahra Bahrami, a mother of two children, who had Dutch citizenship, was arrested on December 27, 2009 in the 'Ashura' uprisings and executed on January 29, 2011.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Ms. Navi Pillay has stated, "We have urged Iran, time and again, to halt executions. I am very dismayed that instead of heeding our calls, the Iranian authorities appear to have stepped up the use of the death penalty."

A number of other Ashraf residents' family members are also on the Iranian regime's death row. The 3400 members of the opposition People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran that live in Camp Ashraf in Iraq are considered as a source of hope for Iranian people in their protests inside the country.

Amnesty International announced on January 24th, "For months, the residents of Camp Ashraf have been subject to constant harassment, pressure and siege like conditions by the Iraqi authorities, who wish them to leave Iraq."

For over one year now the Iranian regime's operatives in Iraq have been imposing psychological torture on the residents, especially women, through constantly broadcasting threats and propaganda against the residents using 180 powerful loudspeakers.

The European Parliament announced in a Written Declaration approved on November 25, 2011, "Several relatives of Ashraf residents have been sentenced to death by the Iranian regime after returning from visits to their families in Ashraf."

Emphasizing the UN General Assembly resolution, our organizations stress the following points:

- The release of all political prisoners and abolishment of all death sentences of political prisoners.

** The Association of Humanitarian Lawyers (AHL), an NGO without consultative status also shares the views expressed in this statement:

- To end the psychological torture of Ashraf residents by removing all the loudspeakers.
 - To stop arbitrary arrests, torture and execution of family members of Ashraf residents.
 - To carry out an independent investigation by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on recent executions and other dire violations of human rights in Iran.
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