

Islamic Republic of

I R A N

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

Statement by

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United Nations**

**before the Third Committee of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly
on Agenda item 70c: Human Rights situations**

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In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Mr. Chairman,

We are witnessing, once again, Canada's attempt to abuse the UN human rights mechanism by presenting yet another non-objective, confrontational and counter-productive draft resolution against the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Third Committee. By resorting to such an approach, Canada seems to be determined, to the dismay of international community for its ulterior ends and illegitimate political interests.

It is deeply unfortunate that manipulation and abuse of the United Nations human rights mechanisms has become a prevalent tradition and exercise of certain states in advancing their political purposes. We, along side the overwhelming majority of international community who opposed or did not consciously support similar move in the past, are firmly convinced that such an ill-intended practice has nothing to do with the cause of human rights in any part of the world. Such an unhealthy and biased approach not only undermines the imperative of the new global paradigms and parameters of the third millennium, but would eventually lead to revival of the cold war legacy.

Mr. Chairman,

A close review of the draft resolution L.43 shows that it lacks credibility, reliability and objectivity in terms of both substance and procedure. The content of draft resolution L.43 reflects anything but the truth. It contains flawed, inaccurate and over-exaggerated claims, and

unfounded allegations.

Cases in point are many but I just refer to few. In PP4, regret has been expressed that no special procedure has been permitted to visit the country since July 2005. In 2002, when the EU draft resolution against Iran was defeated in the then Human Rights Commission, Iran voluntarily extended standing invitation to all thematic mandate holders of the Human Rights Commission Special Procedures. Since then, 6 mandate holders of the Special Procedures have visited the country.¹

It should also be noted that the information contained in the List of country visits by Special Procedures, which is available on the official website of the UNOHCHR, clearly reveals that the number of visits made by the Special Mandate Holders to the Islamic Republic of Iran is well above the average of the Special Rapporteurs' visits accommodated by other countries including Canada.

It is also noteworthy that the level of cooperation with the Special Procedure of United Nations by the Islamic Republic of Iran ranks amongst the highest within the international community. Furthermore, in addition to the above mentioned six visits by the mandate holders to the country, Iran has also been the host to the substantive visit of Professor Pinherio, the Independent Expert for the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children in May 2007 during which he, among others, visited Juvenile Correction and Education Centre. He admired the professional services being rendered to children, and also expressed the view that the said Centre can be a role model for the South-South Cooperation.

Furthermore, the UN High Commissioner of Human Rights, Madam Louise Arbour, was invited as the special guest to Tehran NAM Ministerial Meeting on Human rights and Cultural Diversity held in September 2007. During her visit, she met and exchanged views with the relevant high ranking Iranian officials and visited different places including Women Prison.

Another notable deficiency in the Operative section of the draft resolution L.43 is the sub-paragraph "g" of OP3 which clearly shows that in the absence of any legitimate and valid human rights claims, the authors of the draft resolution L.43 have desperately resorted to certain recommendations contained in the one decade old report of UN Special Rapporteur, and call upon the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to implement them now.

The list continues, but due to the time constraint, I decline to go further. I just raised

¹ SR on the right to freedom of opinion and expression (3-11/11/2003), Report E/CN.4/2004/62/Add.2
WG on arbitrary detention (15-27/2/2003), Report E/CN.4/2004/3/Add.2 and Corr.1
SR on the human rights of migrants (22-29/2/04), Report E/CN.4/2005/85/Add.2
SR on violence against women (29 January- 6 February 2005), Report E/CN.4/2006/61/Add.3
SR on adequate housing (19-30 July 2005), Report E/CN.4/2006/41/Add.2
SR on the human rights situation in Afghanistan (February 2002), Report A/55/346

these few examples to illustrate how the Canadian Government has resorted to illusionary and non-existing claims and allegations to gain the support of this august body for its invalid move.

Mr. Chairman,

As we all have witnessed, the Government of Canada arrogates to itself a leading global role on human rights advocacy, while certain parts of its own population especially minorities, immigrants, foreigners and indigenous people suffer from human rights violations under its watch and in the exercise of its discriminatory policies. As a result, Canada's human rights violations have been well-documented by various human rights monitoring bodies particularly the UN human rights mechanisms.

The discriminatory treatment of the Aboriginal people by the Canadian Government is known to all. The reports of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples indicates that few Canadian Aboriginal people have jobs and many of them are left behind the bars for a long period. The Commission has also described the health status of Aboriginal peoples in Canada as both a tragedy and a crisis. In addition, the Native Women Association of Canada and other institutions have also reported that hundreds of Aboriginal women have been murdered or reported missing over the past 16 years. In brief, various reports indicate that, in Canada, social exclusion policies, blatant racism and racial discrimination have led to the significant disparities which exist between minorities and the rest of the population in areas of employment and public services such as health and education.

At the international level, Canada's record in dealing with the situations of human rights violations is appalling and indefensible. Canada is one of the very few countries that stand against the overwhelming majority of UN member states to condemn the Israel's systematic and gross violation of Palestinian human rights by opposing the resolutions on the issue in the General Assembly or in the Human Rights Council.

You may recall that, in the course of aggression into Lebanon in August 2006 and the brutal killing of many innocent Lebanese people especially children by Israel, Canada openly supported Israeli brutalities and atrocities, and voted against the Human Rights Council resolution S-2/1 of 11 August 2006, on the situation of human rights in Lebanon caused by Israeli military operation. Just last Friday, 16 November 2007, this Committee witnessed the negative vote of Canada against the resolution on the Human Rights Council institution building and code of conduct. We are all aware of Canada's intransigent position and negative vote against the UN Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples, adopted by the General Assembly on 13 September 2007.

I suffice to these few examples, and leave the judgement to the wisdom of the house on the Canada's claim of sincerity and seriousness about the cause of human rights. It is evident that with such a bleak human rights record, Canada cannot claim perfection and innocence in dealing with human rights issues.

Other co-sponsors of draft resolution cannot also be proud of their own record of human rights. The appalling situations in Guantanamo Bay, the disclosure of torture in the Iraqi prisons by the occupying forces especially in the Abu Gharib prison, the existence of secret detention centres in different parts of Europe, the situation of minorities, indigenous peoples and migrants in many developed countries are but few examples of gross violations of human rights committed by the so-called claimants and self proclaimed champions of human rights.

Mr. Chairman,

The Islamic Republic of Iran, along with the other developing countries of the South, actively participated and positively contributed to the reform processes of the UN human rights machinery with the view to put an end to its long time politicization and manipulation by few countries of the North. By establishing the Human Rights Council, we all intended to have a mechanism devoid of selectivity, double standard, and political bullying when it comes to human rights and fundamental freedoms and their promotion and protection.

To this end, we are of the opinion that the international scrutiny on protection of human rights in any given country should be carried out objectively, fairly, and free from discrimination and abuse of relevant UN mechanisms. In fact, the Human Rights Council's mechanism of Universal Peer Review (UPR) is envisaged to address this issue of high importance.

The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes UPR, which is due to be conducted as early as 2008. We are of the opinion that UPR is the most appropriate and efficient mechanism for examining and safeguarding the human rights situation in all countries, including in Canada and Iran. Therefore, resorting to any duplicative and overlapping means for singling out and scrutinizing human rights situations in any given country, such as presenting a specific country resolution, is totally irrational and unacceptable.

Mr. Chairman,

The Islamic Republic of Iran is committed to its human rights obligations prescribed by the Islamic principles, its Constitution, and the international instruments that it has adhered to.

In Iran's view, human rights cannot be claimed to be the monopoly of any single culture and society. They can be protected and promoted in a meaningful and effective manner only through genuine respect for cultural diversity, national and regional particularities as well as historical and religious backgrounds, traditions and value systems. Furthermore, we are of the opinion that various cultures and civilizations can and should engage in a constructive dialogue, mutual understanding and fruitful cooperation on human rights, despite their differences and varieties. In this vein, we stand ready to engage in a

meaningful dialogue and cooperation on human rights with all interested countries and parties, with a view to contribute to making real progress in fulfilling the obligations that we are all committed to.

At the domestic level, the Government and people of Iran are determined to realize a society based on social justice, compassion, due process of law and good governance. In this regard, a wide range of measures has been taken to secure the well-being of the citizens and improve their economic and social conditions especially the less-advantaged and more vulnerable ones. As an example, I wish to refer to the Iran's ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography on July 31, 2007.

At the international level, Iran has continued to play its active and constructive role in advancing human rights worldwide. In this context, and upon the decision of the Non-Aligned Movement Summit in Havana in September 2006, the Islamic Republic of Iran hosted the first Non-Aligned Movement Ministerial Meeting on Human Rights and Cultural Diversity in Tehran on September 3-4th 2007. Amongst the valuable outcomes and achievements of the said Meeting was the establishment of the NAM Centre for Human Rights and Cultural Diversity in Tehran.

In line with our principled position and approach on human rights, which is cooperation-oriented and dialogue-based, Iran has thus far held four rounds of human rights dialogue with the European Union. At the bilateral level, similar dialogues have been held with Australia, Russian Federation, Switzerland and Japan. Iran regards such dialogues as a useful mechanism to exchange views, enhance understanding and appraisal of mutual achievements in all aspects of human rights. At the same time, Iran has maintained that cooperation and dialogue cannot be coupled and continued with political pressure and offensive allegations surfaced in the form of presenting and insisting on the country resolution. One has to choose between cooperation and confrontation.

Sadly, Canada and its partners have chosen the path of confrontation by presenting the draft resolution L.43 against the Islamic Republic of Iran. It is a wrong path, and therefore, should be countered by other members of this august body. Indeed, presenting specific country resolutions to the Third Committee undermines the goals and mandate of the Human Rights Council, as the most competent UN human rights institution, and should therefore be avoided.

In light of what I have tried to elaborate, and in order to preserve the dignity and credibility of the UN human rights system, I humbly invite the members of the Third Committee to oppose this mischievous attempt of the Canadian Government by voting against the draft resolution L.43.

Thank you Mr. Chairman