

Time to get tough on Iranian president about dreadful human rights situation

1/21/2016 3:06:52 PM



The human rights situation in Iran

The Hill, January 20, 2016 - In December 2015, the [United Nations](#) General Assembly slammed the flagrant violations of human rights by the Iranian regime. The resolution criticized the Iranian regime's use of inhuman punishments, including flogging and amputations. The UN's 61st resolution on human rights abuses in Iran also censured the mullahs' dictatorship for the rise in executions, public hangings and the execution of juveniles.

“When the Iranian government refuses to even acknowledge the full extent of executions which have occurred, it shows a callous disregard for both human dignity and international human rights law,” says Ahmed Shaheed, the U.N.'s special “rapporteur” on human rights in Iran. Ahmed Shaheed's report says the regime in Tehran is executing individuals from religious and ethnic minority groups “for exercising their protected rights, including freedom of expression and association.”

Ahmad Shaheed has noted that under the so-called “moderate” President [Hassan Rouhani](#) “the overall situation has worsened.”

The human rights situation in Iran has been dreadful.

There have been over 2,000 executions in Iran in the two years that Rouhani has been in office, more than in any similar period in the past 25 years. The victims include political dissidents like Gholamreza Khosravi, an activist of Iran's principal opposition, the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI or MEK) who was hanged solely for providing financial assistance

to a satellite television station supporting the opposition.

On April 20, 2014 Rouhani described these executions as “God’s commandments” and “laws of the parliament that belongs to the people.”

In another shocking medieval act, on August 1, the regime sentenced a 27-year-old man, Hamed, to be blinded. Hamed had told the regime’s court that in [March 20](#) 11, when he was 23 years old, he unintentionally caused an eye injury to another young man in a street fight, according to the official state-run Iran newspaper.

On June 28, the regime amputated the fingers of two prisoners in Mashhad.

Iran under Hassan Rouhani has become the largest prison for journalists in the Middle East; dozens of journalists are being detained today.

Iran is one of the 10 countries in which the greatest crackdown is applied to Christians. There are several cases of Christian priests who are imprisoned solely for their practices. Saeed Abedini, an Iranian American Christian pastor, has been detained in Iran since the summer of 2012 for practicing his faith.

The Iranian regime arrested a group of practicing Iranian Christians on Christmas Day at an in-house church in the city of Shiraz, southern Iran. The group of Iranian Christians had gathered together on December 25, to celebrate Christmas when plain-clothes agents of the regime’s notorious Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) raided the in-house church.

And one can go on and on about horrific human rights violations in Iran.

The theocratic leaders in Tehran hope that Rouhani’s charm offensive and prospect of billions of Euros in trade in Paris and Rome will make the European leaders to close their eyes on this alarming reality in Iran.

As Rouhani arrives in Europe, it would be naïve to think that an agreement on Tehran’s nuclear program and trade will encourage reforms from within the theocratic regime. This is especially true when the Revolutionary Guard Corps, the regime’s elite fanatic force that is responsible for the domestic crackdown and export of terrorism abroad, is controlling Iran’s economy and is to receive billions of dollars from sanction relief.

Such policy and lack of firmness towards Tehran would only exacerbate the past mistake of deliberately decoupling Tehran’s abysmal human rights record and its sponsor of terrorism from the nuclear negotiations.

Hassan Rouhani represents an oppressive regime and therefore he must not be let off the hook simply by putting the blame on the rival faction. He must answer for the regime’s appalling crimes and no one must not be fooled by his hollow words and promises.

Rouhani’s government must understand that it will be judged by its actions and not slogan of moderation. As such, the least it should do is to halt its support for Assad regime in Syria, restrain IRGC’s power and stop the domestic crackdown by security forces allowing the Iranian people to engage in genuine freedom of expression, political opposition and peaceful protests. Anything short of that will just signal a continuation of the past oppressive and malign policies and will further embolden the regime to carry on horrendous human rights violations inside Iran and become more aggressive in its ominous meddling in the region.



By Hossein Abedini

Abedini is a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the [NCRI](#), the Parliament in exile of the Iranian resistance.