

PRESS RELEASE
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USADI lauds Canada's tabling of UN censure resolution on Iran rights abuses

The US Alliance for Democratic Iran lauds Canada's tabling of a resolution in the General Assembly's human right committee concerning human rights violations in Iran.

Since the last UN censure resolution in the fall of 2001, the human rights situation in Iran has rapidly deteriorated. Despite the announcement of a moratorium on stoning, four people were sentenced to stoning in northeastern city of Mashad earlier this month.

Public execution is common practice. During the visit to Tehran by Mr. Ambeyi Ligabo, the Special Rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Commission on freedom of opinion, the judiciary sentenced 25 prisoners to death in the northeastern province of Khorassan on October 30; nine were executed so far.

Public protests have met harsh crackdown. During a week of student protests in Tehran last June, dozens were wounded and more than 4,000 arrested. Despite international pressure, the vast majority of the detainees remain incarcerated.

The repression affects Iranian and foreign journalists as well. Canadian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi was murdered during interrogation and the so-called official investigation into her death was a sham. The editor of the Tehran-based *Asia* daily was jailed in July for publishing a front page photo of Iran's leading opposition figure. The *Reporters without Borders* has listed Iran as having the largest number of imprisoned journalists in the Middle East.

Public lashing and humiliation of young people has been on the rise. Last week, seven Iranian girls were sentenced to 50 lashes each for undermining "Islamic codes," *Agence France Presse* reported.

The USADI urges UN General Assembly member states to support the censure resolution introduced by Canada and co-sponsored the United States, Ireland, the Czech Republic, Iceland, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden. Failure to do so would be interpreted by Tehran as a sign of international community's ambivalence and encourage it to continue domestic clampdown with impunity.

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