

Human Rights Council – 25th session (3-28 March 2014)

**Statement by Ireland during interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur
on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran**

17 March 2014

Mr. President,

Ireland welcomes the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mr. Shaheed, and thanks him for his dedication to his mandate, his report to the Council and his presentation today. We would like to make some remarks in addition to those made on our behalf in the statement of the European Union.

While we agree with the Special Rapporteur that a number of positive steps have been taken by the Iranian authorities in recent months, we also share his assessment that these do not address fully the human rights concerns raised by this Council, the General Assembly and others.

We are concerned, for example, that the draft charter on citizen's rights, published in late 2013, in fact contains no new rights, and subjects the exercise of rights to the existing legal framework, which has for a long time been a source of concern to the United Nations human rights machinery. In particular, the charter, as currently drafted, fails to address laws and policies that discriminate against religious minorities, including the Baha'i, and insufficiently addresses discrimination against women. It does not address the use of cruel, inhumane or degrading punishment, including flogging, hanging, stoning and amputation. It does not prohibit the execution of juveniles, nor does it address other concerns about the use of capital punishment. We continue to have serious concerns about the high number of executions in Iran, including the high proportion of executions of members of national minorities and the use of the death penalty for certain vaguely-defined crimes of a national security nature.

The situation of members of religious minorities continues to be of concern. We note in particular the information contained in the Special Rapporteur's report on the situation of the Baha'is, including that they are regularly prosecuted for participation in their community affairs, including by facilitating educational services and publicly engaging in religious practices, such as attending devotional gatherings, but that they are typically charged with political or security crimes, such as espionage or "propaganda against the ruling system". The lack of legal recognition of the Baha'i faith appears to result in its adherents being treated as less than equal citizens by the legal system.

In conclusion, I would like to ask the Special Rapporteur the following question:

How, in your opinion, could the international community assist the Islamic Republic of Iran to bring its legislation into accordance with its international human rights obligations?

I thank you, Mr. President.