



Iran: Oral intervention by Amnesty International and Südwind at the 22nd session of the UN Human Rights Council (25 February – 22 March 2013)

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Item 4: Human Rights situations that require the Council's attention

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran

Mr. President,

As independent international NGOs we welcome this opportunity for dialogue with you. We are, however, dismayed by the increasing presence of governmentally-organized NGOs in this Council, irrespective of their origin, like the organizations that will speak immediately after us.

We believe that discriminatory selection procedures for candidates, as well as restrictions of the freedoms of expression, assembly and associations, and the house arrest of Mousavi and Karoubi, two of the candidates in 2009 election mean that the 2013 presidential election will not be fair or free. It will however, have a significant impact on the future of the Iranian people. The mass arrests of journalists in recent weeks along with others that are still in prison are, we believe, directly related to the upcoming election.

As you mentioned, the most prominent human rights defenders like Nasrin Sotoudeh, the recent Sakharov Prize winner, Abdol Fattah Soltani and Mohammad Ali Dadkhah are still serving prison terms. In addition, we would emphasise the difficult situation of human rights lawyers Mohammad Seyf Zadeh and Javid Hootan Kian, both imprisoned for their work as lawyers.

We concur that widespread and systematic torture exists in the Islamic Republic of Iran, often leaving severe post traumatic psychological effects. There is a continuing high rate of public executions and amputations - most recently on 24 January 2013.

The executions of juvenile offenders continue, and a bill has been introduced that continues to provide for the possibility of execution by stoning. Discrimination against women in education, marriage, work, travel and many other areas continues. Religious and ethnic minorities are persecuted. We commend your recommendations for a re-examination of laws discriminating against lesbians, gays, bisexual and transgender persons.

Your selection as the special Rapporteur of the situation of human rights in Iran has led to the uncovering of ever more violations of human rights. We strongly urge the renewal of your mandate.

Thank you Mr. President.