



*Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran
to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations
28, chemin du Petit-Saconnex / 1209 Geneva*

Statement

by

H.E. Mr. Ali Akbar SALEHI

**Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Islamic Republic of Iran**

before

**the High Level Segment of
the 16th Session of the Human Rights Council**

Geneva, 28 February 2011

Please check against delivery

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Mr. President,

Madam High Commissioner,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to have the opportunity to address this important session of the Human Rights Council. The Islamic Republic of Iran highly respects this august body, which indicates my government's dedication to the promotion of human rights and human dignity worldwide.

Mr. President,

Human rights are common heritage of humanity which have been developed by valuable contributions of all civilizations and cultures. Basic principles and components of human rights such as non-discrimination, justice, equality and due process of law are necessary prerequisites for every society seeking prosperity and welfare of its citizens. Promotion of these rights, along with individual state's efforts, requires collective commitments and willingness of all states to cooperate and to listen and learn from each other, and to respect diverse cultural heritages and traditions.

Mr. President,

I am speaking on behalf of a country with a long history of human civilization which has offered the world numerous contributions. Iranian identity inspired by the teachings of Islam expresses itself with justice, righteousness, benevolence and respect for human dignity. The Islamic Republic of Iran is founded as a democratic polity i.e: a social and civil order based on Islamic rationality.

The Constitution of Iran is a vivid proof of the sublime aspirations, ideals and the roadmap of the future of our nation. A salient feature of our constitution is its explicit and extensive reference to all intrinsic and main

pillars of human rights. Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran maps with utmost care and delicacy our historical aspirations and ideals i.e. building a democratic modern country based on Islamic doctrine and values.

Iran as a founding member of the United Nations and a party to the major international human rights instruments while upholding the promotion of principles enshrined in its constitution and while ensuring its full compliance with the relevant international commitments has taken a genuine and long term approach to safeguard human rights. There are ample evidences, facts and figures which indicate achievements in civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights in my country.

Mr. President,

While making the utmost efforts to promote the nations prosperity and wellbeing, Iran is facing some adverse challenges too. With the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the situation of human rights has consistently been used as a political tool to apply pressure against us and to advance certain ulterior political motives by some specific western countries. Moreover, Iran has consistently faced serious problem of terrorism supported by certain foreign countries too. Iran has been one of the main victims of terrorism in the world. The terrorist groups have killed, threatened, and abducted thousands of Iranian ordinary citizens including women and children and proceeded to plunder public and private properties. During last year two noble physicists, professor Alimohammdi and professor Shahriari were assassinated by a suspicious terrorist group ,who enjoys the generous hospitality of a western capital and the full collaboration of the Zionist terrorists. This situation has placed a heavy responsibility on the shoulder of the government to put an end to this dreadful challenge.

Mr. President,

People in the Middle East are experiencing highly vital and critical moments. Tired of corruption and foreign domination, they are desperately appealing for their rights to freedom and independence from foreign domination, tyranny and despotism. Such legitimate demands of people should be respected and honored. Governments in the region burden the responsibility to listen and pay due attention to these requests and observe the fundamental rights of their people. It is deplorable, however, that some

governments have used excessive force against innocent civilians which resulted in the death and injury of a large number of people.

Certain foreign powers must refrain from making obstacles in the way of the people of the region thus allowing them to freely choose their own destiny and future. It is historically attested that the domineering policy of certain Western countries was the main cause which led to the miseries and bloodsheds currently we witness in the region as it happened at the time of the revolution in Iran when thousands of innocent people were killed by the Shah's regime. These states in particular the United States should not repeat the mistakes they have made in the past presumably to serve their own narrow political interests.

Mr. President,

Let me draw attention of the Council to the plight of the Palestinian people who have been suffering, for over six decades from occupation and the consequent deprivation of their most basic national and human rights. The depth and expanse of the gross and systematic violation of human rights of the Palestinian people by the Zionist regime in total blatant defiance of international law, numerous UN resolutions and human rights principles is more than known to the international community. What is perplexing is that this regime, enjoying the unflagging support of the Western bloc, continues to perpetrate its crimes and violations with a sense of impunity, the most recent evidence of which is Vetoing by the United States of the draft resolution supported by all other members of the UN Security Council.

Mr. President,

Despite the extensive efforts of the international community in combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the measures taken to root out these evil and inhuman phenomena, racist and xenophobic attitudes, and still worse, institutionalized practices, continue to prevail in various parts of the world. Discrimination on the basis of religion, race and ethnicity in the United States and within the European community has been on the rise in recent years. Moslem communities continue to experience an increasingly intolerant and even hostile environment. Over and above the systematic Islamophobic campaign in many Western societies and deliberate projection of a highly distorted image of Islam and Muslims in the media, certain unfair, discriminatory governmental policies specifically targeting Muslim minorities have further aggravated their

situation and exposed them to different kinds of threat and intimidation by racist and extremist groups, and, sadly even in certain cases by security forces and law enforcement officers.

As part of the collective endeavors in combating these phenomena, we call upon all member states to take concrete steps and adopt effective and practical measures towards combating Islamophobia and other forms of racism and racial discrimination in line with their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and other human rights instruments. In this context, we welcome the General Assembly decision to convene a high level meeting in September 2011 to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

Mr. President,

Establishment of the Human Rights Council was one of the significant UN initiatives in recent years, not only for its contribution towards improving the functioning and performance of the UN human rights machinery, but more importantly for creating the potential capacity and institutional arrangements to move beyond the previous prevalent environment of confrontation, between and among governments – a feature of the Commission days.

The review of the Council's functions, as has been extensively carried out during the past months, has afforded the Council a good opportunity to assess its performance objectively and thus move in the direction of rectifying its shortcomings.

At this juncture, I take the opportunity to thank all distinguished delegates and different regional groups for their active and constructive participation during the negotiations in Geneva process which led to the adoption of the consensual outcome. It is also expected that through the collective wisdom of the member states a consensual, negotiated final outcome would emerge from New York process for the adoption at the next session of the General Assembly.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, let me just underline that the Human Rights Council, entrusted with an historical and critical mandate for the actual promotion and protection of human rights on a global scale, can indeed rise to the challenge

through relying on the cherished principles of objectivity, impartiality, transparency and consensus. Its proactive approach in addressing global human rights challenges, including rectification of past shortcomings of the UN human rights machinery, is encouraging. In this regard, we look forward to continuing our close cooperation with the Council and its members in order to realize our shared objectives of attaining greater global justice, equity and development for all.

Islamic Republic of Iran in its own part has extended and is ready to continue its cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. In December 2010 my country with the cooperation of the Office of the High Commissioner hold a joint colloquium on the administration of justice which provided a very good opportunity for the participating judges as well as experts to exchange view on different judicial issues. We are also happy that the High Commissioner is planning a visit to Iran which takes place this year aiming at exploring and enhancing the meaningful and beneficial cooperation of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Office of the High Commissioner. A preparatory team would visit Iran in near future to ensure that such a visit would be a successful one. I have the honor to announce that we have already planned for a full-fledged programme of cooperation with the special procedures which includes the visit by some mandate holders to Iran.

Thank you, Mr. President.