

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/iran-un-human-rights-council-votes-to-24-03-2011,39871.html>

Middle East & North Africa - Iran

Resolution finally approved

UN Human Rights Council votes to send special rapporteur to Iran

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Reporters Without Borders hails today's adoption by the United Nations Human Rights Council of a resolution appointing a special rapporteur on the human rights situation in Iran. Approved by a large margin – 22 votes in favour, 7 against (including China, Pakistan, Russia and Cuba) and 14 abstentions – the resolution requires Iran to cooperate fully with the rapporteur.

This resolution, which was strongly supported by Reporters Without Borders, offers hope to the hundreds of Iranians enduring inhumane conditions in Iranian prisons, dozens of whom have been sentenced to death.

"We hope the appointment of a special rapporteur will finally enable the international community to see what the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran tries and too often manages to hide – its violence, its policy of harassing and persecuting political opponents, its nightmarish justice system and its blind repression of everything representing rights and freedoms, to the despair of part of the population," Reporters Without Borders said.

The resolution was voted despite the Iranian government's threats and attempts to bribe several delegations to the Human Rights Council. Iran must now cooperate so that the special rapporteur can be sent as soon as possible.

The authorities have been persecuting the political opposition, human rights activists and journalists ceaselessly ever since Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's reelection as president in June 2009. According to a Reporters Without Borders tally, more than 200 journalists and bloggers have been arrested and 40 of them are still being held on charges of spying, acting against state security or spreading false information.

Around 20 news media have been banned by the regime, about 100 journalists and bloggers have been forced to flee the country, and more than 3,000 are out of work as a result of the crackdown or the closure of newspapers or because the media they used to work for have been banned from rehiring them.
