

OPEN LETTER

H.E. Volker Türk
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

URGENT – BY EMAIL

Copies:

Amb. Václav Bálek, President of the UN Human Rights Council
Permanent Representatives of the Member States of the Human Rights Council

2 November 2023

Dear High Commissioner,

RE: Statement to the United Nations

In an undemocratic process, the religious dictatorship ruling Iran, one of the biggest violators of human rights in the world today, will take over the chairmanship of the Social Forum of the United Nations Human Rights Council on 2 November 2023 in Geneva.

This platform is being given to the Iranian regime at a time when in addition to its flagrant violations of human rights inside Iran, the regime plays the biggest role in wreaking havoc in the Middle East, having caused the death and displacement of hundreds of thousands of people on both sides in recent days.

Top Iranian officials, including President Ebrahim Raisi, should be held accountable for the 1988 massacre of some 30,000 political prisoners, the vast majority members of the PMOI (MEK).

Allowing a regime notorious for committing the 1988 massacre and daily executions and warmongering to take over a prestigious UN platform is a dagger to the heart of human rights, fuels terrorism and endangers regional and global peace. It egregiously violates the very principles upon which the United Nations has been founded and for which millions of people have sacrificed their lives. This represents a dark stain in the history of the United Nations.

The UN has condemned Iran's regime in 69 resolutions for gross and systematic violations of human rights. The clerical regime has executed more than 600 people in the first 10 months of 2023 and murdered 750 protesters during the 2022 uprising and 1,500 more during the 2019 uprising. On 24 November 2022, the Human Rights Council established an international Fact-Finding Mission to investigate the Iranian authorities' human rights violations during the 2022 uprising. On 14 December 2022, Iran's regime was removed from the UN Women's Rights Commission due to its atrocious human rights record. On 15 December 2022, the UN General Assembly condemned the brutal and systematic violations of human rights in Iran. On 4 April 2023, the Human Rights Council condemned the human rights abuses in Iran and renewed the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Appointing the representative of such a regime as the Chair of the Human Rights Council's Social Forum will be seen by the clerical regime as a green light for more torture and killing and assure its suppressive forces that they will not be held accountable for their crimes.

We ask the representatives of all democratic countries and all human rights advocates to protest the Iranian regime's chairmanship of the UN human rights body and to refrain from attending its session on 2-3 November 2023.

SIGNED:

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1997 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

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Chair Uyghur Tribunal; Chair China Tribunal; Lead prosecutor at the trial of Slobodan Milošević in The Hague; prosecuted the case of Bosnian Croat Dario Kordić at the UN International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), successfully prosecuted Goran Jelisić at the ICTY

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Center for Civil Liberties (CCL) - 2022 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate - (Ukraine)

CIVICUS - (South Africa)

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Center for the Study of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Crimes Against Humanity, The Graduate Center—City University of New York (CUNY) - (United States)

Guernica 37 Chambers - (United Kingdom)

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World Without Genocide - (United States)

International Council for Diplomacy and Dialogue (ICDD) - (United States)

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