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***Oral statement to the 14th session of the
UN Human Rights Council***

UPR – Islamic Republic of Iran – item 6 (June 2010)

The Bahá'í International Community is deeply disturbed by the Iranian government's refusal to accept basic recommendations concerned with ending injustice, persecution and discrimination in that country. We wish to see the current tragic chapter of Iran's history closed, and believe meaningful engagement in the UPR process to be imperative in that regard.

With particular reference to the situation of the Bahá'ís, rejected recommendations 15, 39, 40 and 41 asked Iran to stop discrimination, incitement to hatred and acts of repression against the community. Accepting these would have required specific measures to end intimidation and discrimination against Bahá'í children in schools by teachers and officials, for example, and to rescind policies that deny Bahá'ís access to university and to 25 trades from which they are officially banned.

Rejected recommendation 14 simply asked Iran to act in conformity with recommendations of the Human Rights Committee and two of the UN Special Procedures. The report presented to this year's ILO Conference by its Committee of Experts noted that:

“...Bahai continued to be subjected to discrimination as regards access to education and employment without any significant measures being taken by the Government to bring discriminatory practices, including on the part of the authorities, to an end.”

How regrettable, then, to see the head of Iran's delegation and a member of its judiciary attempting to mislead the UPR about the treatment of the Bahá'í community. How low the regard in which the Iranian government must hold the UPR process if it believes such behavior to be sufficient response to the statements of 26 States—each calling it to account for the human rights violations perpetrated against the Bahá'ís.

While welcoming the recommendations accepted by Iran, we are greatly concerned by the government's insistence on a partial reading of the right to freedom of religion enshrined in Article 18, and its continuing refusal to commit to measures that would actually put a stop to discrimination and persecution. We call upon the Council to request that Iran cooperate on this issue.