

Glaring Western Hypocrisy on Human Rights in Iran

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Now that Iran is reconstructing its international relations through a dynamic nuclear diplomacy and gaining reputation as an emerging regional superpower, the United States and its allies, infuriated and frantic, consider it as worthwhile to test Iran's patience by using the notion of human rights as a leverage for pressuring the Islamic Republic.

On Wednesday, December 18, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution proposed by the Canadian government to condemn the alleged violations of human rights in Iran. 83 countries voted in favor, 36 against and 62 others abstained.

The adoption of the anti-Iran resolution, despite failing to get the vote of the majority of the 193 UN member states, comes on the heels of the sensitive and highly significant negotiations between Iran and the six world powers over Iran's nuclear program, especially after Iran and the Sextet ratified the Joint Plan of Action on November 24, 2013 which stipulated limitations on certain portions of Iran's nuclear program in return for relief from some of the sanctions imposed against Iran in the recent years.

Such a resolution which seems completely irrelevant and unbecoming amidst the important expert-level talks between the representatives of Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany to find a practical basis for implementing the Geneva accord, is undeniably counterproductive and unconstructive and will simply serve to increase the Iranians' feeling of mistrust in the United States and the other Western states who voted in favor of the resolution.

All the European members of the UN General Assembly voted in favor of the resolution while some of them are themselves accused of violating the essential rights of their citizens. Aside from being detrimental to the spirit of Iran-West rapprochement which the new Iranian administration under President Hassan Rouhani sees itself committed to, the resolution clearly underlines the hypocritical and duplicitous approach of some of these countries to the notion of human rights.

It seems as some Western powers are utilizing the idea of human rights as a pretext for furthering their agenda of isolating such independent countries as Iran. It's interesting that they don't present any confirmable evidence to substantiate their claims, and instead resort to general statements, condemning in their own way what they say is the violation of the rights of Iranian people.

They blatantly close their eyes on the grave violations of the rights of religious and ethnic minorities as well as women in the countries with whom they are allied, such as Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Yemen and Egypt, portraying everything in an upside-down manner,

making the credulous people believe that it's really Iran that violates the rights of its people.

But why is it so? The answer sounds simple. Confirming a country's commitment to such values as human rights is a matter of alliance with the bullying powers who call themselves the sole defenders and pioneers of human rights. If you are an ally and a friend, they will commend you, and if you're an adversary, they pull out all the stops to crush you.

The Canadian government that circulated the draft resolution against Iran is said to be one of the major violators and abusers of human rights in the Western world. In a December 2012 report, the Amnesty International noted that committees on racial discrimination, prevention of torture and children's rights found "a range" of "ongoing and serious human rights challenges," especially for indigenous peoples in Canada.

"By every measure, be it respect for treaty and land rights, levels of poverty, average life spans, violence against women and girls, dramatically disproportionate levels of arrest and incarceration or access to government services such as housing, health care, education, water and child protection, indigenous peoples across Canada continue to face a grave human rights crisis," it said.

It's been long objected by the people across the world who intend to travel to Canada for various purposes that the Canadian embassies in different countries treat the visa applicants in a derogatory, insulting and humiliating manner. Even in Iran, where Canada maintained an embassy which was unilaterally closed by the Ottawa government on September 7, 2012, the Iranian applicants of Canadian visa continuously complained of the rude behavior of the embassy staff and that the embassy prolonged the issuance of visas due to political reasons, leading to serious problems for those who wanted to travel to Canada on specific dates.

Canada also violates the rights of the aboriginal communities and the women in a very appalling and dreadful way.

According to a report published by the Native Women's Association of Canada in 202, "aboriginal women continue to face violence in their lives every day... According to various statistics, Aboriginal women in Canada experience consistently higher rates of reported intimate violence than the overall female population. At least one in three is abused by a partner compared to one in ten women overall and there are some estimates of as high as nine in ten. Four out of five Aboriginal women have witnessed or experienced intimate violence in childhood."

"A survey by Correctional Services of Canada pointed out that abuse played a more widespread part in the lives of Aboriginal women compared to non-native women. It indicated that 90% of Aboriginal and 61% of non-Aboriginal women had been physically abused, whereas 61% of Aboriginal and 50% of non-Aboriginal women had been sexually abused" in a given time, the report added.

The aboriginal Canadians have also face other types of discrimination and injustice in the recent decades, but there has been no UN General Assembly resolution to defend their rights and condemn the atrocities being committed against them.

The same goes with the U.S. allies in the Middle East which are surely the biggest human rights abusers in the world, but get away with their crimes and felonies thanks to their "passionate attachment" to Uncle Sam.

In Saudi Arabia, where the women are not allowed to drive cars, and constitute only 5% of the workforce, human rights are being trampled underfoot in the daylight, but no voice is raised in protest from the side of the world powers and international organizations. In Saudi Arabia, women and men are not allowed to work with each other in public offices. Even prior to 2008, the women were not allowed to enter hotels or furnished apartments without the permission of a male chaperon. Currently, every woman who wants to reside in a hotel for a few days should inform the nearest police station of her room reservation and the length of her stay.

Saudi Arabia is a Muslim country and a founding member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, but even the Shiite Saudis who comprise around 10% to 15% of the population are deprived of their basic rights, including practicing their religious and denominational tenets in public, reciting the prayers exclusive to the Shiites and visiting the shrines of their demised relatives.

In December 2012, the Saudi forces raided a house in the province of al-Jouf and detained 41 people for “plotting to celebrate Christmas.”

The state of civil liberties, political freedoms and the freedom of press is immensely deplorable and declining in Saudi Arabia. The minutest criticism of the House of Saud and the government can lead to the detention and even execution of a journalist or blogger, as it has been the case with the Saudi novelist and political author Turki al-Hamad and blogger Fouad al-Farhan.

These kinds of injustice and discrimination are being committed in a country which is the closest U.S. ally in the Middle East and one of its major trade partners in the whole Asian continent.

The situation in Bahrain or Yemen is not any much better. Bahraini activists and human rights advocates have reported hundreds of cases of extrajudicial killing, illegal detention and abuse of the critics of the Al-Khalifa regime, especially following the February 2011 uprising in the tiny Persian Gulf kingdom.

The violation of human rights in these Arab countries with which the United States and other Western governments have strategic alliances can be effortlessly neglected and ignored. It clearly indicates a flagrant duplicity on the notion of human rights.

Iran is making progress on its human rights record, but there’s nobody to confirm and attest to it. Of course what has propelled Canada, the United States and their European partners to adopt a resolution in condemnation of the so-called human rights violations in Iran, as they did in 2011 and 2012, is not that they really care for the rights of the Iranian people. It’s simply a matter of demonization and propaganda to vilify Iran and undermine its international stature and the fact that the public around the world are coming to a new understanding of Iran as a pacifist and beneficial member of the international community that is ready to allay the concerns of the world countries over its nuclear activities.

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