

## “Human Rights” as an Instrument of Coercion

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*Only a few weeks after the UN Human Rights Council endorsed a resolution in condemning the alleged violations of human rights in Iran on March 28, the European Parliament also took action to do its share of attacking the Islamic Republic for its “human rights violations” in what was introduced as the “European Parliament resolution on the EU strategy towards Iran.”*

The two U.S.-allied bodies, in line with their customary and conventional policies of interfering in the internal affairs of other countries and sowing the seeds of discord and strife across the globe, expressed serious concern over the “alarming level” of rights violation in Iran and called on the Iranian government to respect the rights of its citizens!

It’s a very praiseworthy and significant idea to protect the essential and fundamental rights of all people around the world, regardless of their nationality, age, gender, religion, race, color or place of residence, and raise voices to protest any infringement upon these rights. However, what is disturbing is that those who usually raise their voice in protest and accuse others of violating the human rights are those who violate these rights the most and blatantly disrespect the internationally-recognized conventions and agreements that ensure the protection of the rights, life and dignity of the humankind.



At the first glance, for those who are not familiar with the West-engineered hostility toward Iran, it sounds like the accusations of rights violation and condemnatory resolutions are purely aimed at improving the status of human rights in Iran and intended by those who really care about the welfare and interests of the Iranian people. But a deeper look at the course of developments in the Iran-West relations prove that it's not the case and that the idea of human rights is being used as a leverage and an instrument of coercion to overdue an independent nation that has resisted unrelenting international economic and political pressures for more than 3 decades.

So, what are these human rights that have turned to be so controversial and problematic? Different entities give different definitions for human rights. But there are some elements and concepts which can be unanimously found in all of these definitions. For example, according to Amnesty International, "Human rights include civil and political rights, such as the right to life, liberty and freedom of expression; and social, cultural and economic rights including the right to participate in culture, the right to food, and the right to work and receive an education. Human rights are protected and upheld by international and national laws and treaties."

Just consider the first example the AI gives, that is the "civil and political rights, such as the right to life," and rest assured that the United States, which habitually and more often than not accuses Iran and other nations of violating the human rights, is the biggest machinery of stripping the people in different countries of this basic, rudimentary and essential right to life. People in Asia, Africa and Latin America have experienced the taste of the American-style human rights. The U.S. government decides to invade a distant country overnight, and as a result of its invasion, thousands of lives perish away and millions of hopes evaporate. The United States gives its own justifications for its endless military expeditions and increases its enormous military budget every year, but for the innocent children in Iraq and Afghanistan who should inhale the Sarin gas and other nerve agents when the U.S. Army

bombards their cities, or successive generations of fathers and mothers in Hiroshima and Nagasaki who should give birth to defected babies as a result of exposure to the nuclear materials dropped on the heads of their parents some 50 years ago, these justifications are irrelevant and senseless.

It's good to be attentive to the status of human rights in the world, but not when you are simply unable to meet the demands of your own people, the racial and religious minorities living under your rule and those vulnerable people needing your support.

A clear example is discrimination against the Muslims and the colored people in the United States and Europe. Islamophobia is a growing phenomenon in the West as the Muslims face greater restrictions in practicing their religious rituals, observing their special dressing code and having equal job and education opportunities with the other citizens. When a lunatic pastor decides to burn a holy book which some 1.5 billion people hold to be sacred, the U.S. government shows no reaction in protest, unless asking the pastor to abandon his plan simply because it may endanger the lives of the Americans in uniform, not because the burning of holy books is a devilish and loathsome act. Of course you remember what I'm referring to; the 2011 plan by the pastor of Dove World Outreach Center Terry Jones who set several copies of the Holy Quran ablaze on the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.

The blacks are also under different kinds of pressure because of the color of their skin, and although the Jim Crow laws that stipulated segregation in public places in the United States based on race and color were abolished around 5 decades ago in 1965, there are still traces of racial discrimination, racial profiling and anti-black prejudice in the American and other Western societies. The black athletes are usually booed and scoffed at in the sport stadiums, and this kind of bigotry is really a disgrace for the societies that boast of being highly civilized and developed. The African-Americans are still facing difficulties finding jobs in the United States, are deprived of certain voting rights in such states as Iowa, and should pay more expenses for healthcare services. These are realities which the U.S. mainstream media don't talk about too much, but they exist.

The same goes for the freedom of speech and expression. The United States and its European allies frequently accuse Iran and other non-aligned nations of restricting the freedom of speech, while knowing that following the 9/11 attacks, a bunch of laws, acts and legislations which restrict the freedom of speech, press and the civil liberties of the ordinary citizens were introduced by the Congress and signed into law by the U.S. Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama after him.

Simple examples are the Patriot Act of 2001 and other regulations foreseen in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2012, 2013 and 2014 including the extrajudicial and indefinite detention of any American or foreign citizen traveling in the States who is seen to pose a threat to the U.S. national security. By virtue of the Patriot Act, the U.S. government is allowed to monitor and overhear the phone calls and email correspondences of any citizen whom it considers dangerous and threatening.

We may not also forget the barbaric and horrendous mental, sexual and corporal abuse and torture of the prisoners held in the Guantanamo bay detention facility and the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq; prisoners who are kept there for more than 10 years without any trial or specific charge.

The conscious minds haven't also forgotten the unjustified imprisonment of the critics of the Israeli regime in the West who were jailed because of criticizing Israel and questioning the veracity of the official accounts of Holocaust: David Irving, Fredrick Toben, Ernst Zundel, Gremar Rudolf, Robert Faurisson and many others.

If detaining people without a court warrant is a human rights violation, then the United States and its Western partners are human rights violators and should be held accountable.

If persecuting the religious minorities and depriving them of their basic rights is a human rights violation, then the West has perpetrated serious violations and should justify its crimes.

If killing innocent civilians en masse is a human rights violation, then the United States military-industrial complex is the biggest culprit and should be tried.

If restricting the freedom of speech of the citizens and mass media is a crime, then the U.S. government should be equally responsible for restricting the alternative, progressive media and silencing the critics.

These are only simple instances of rights violation by those who claim to be the harbingers of freedom and human rights. It's only a fair and balanced investigation of their crimes which will ensure the comprehensive and inclusive protection of human rights around the world, not directing baseless accusations against the political rivals and those whom they want to use the pretext of human rights as an instrument of coercion to put pressure on.

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