

Testimony of  
Amir Hossein Etemadi  
Former Iranian Political Prisoner  
Spokesman of Iranian Liberal Students and Graduates (ILSG)  
Before the Subcommittee on the Middle East and  
North Africa, House Foreign Affairs Committee  
One Year Under Rouhani: Iran's Abysmal Human Rights Record  
June 19, 2014

Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Ranking Member Deutch, and members of the Subcommittee,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify before you today. I am AmirHossein Etemadi, a former Iranian political prisoner, and the current spokesman of Iranian Liberal Students and Graduates.

What motivated me to testify at this hearing is the continuation of the systematic and widespread violation of human rights and suppression of basic freedom of Iranian people along with the efforts of international community to prevent the Iranian regime from achieving nuclear weapons.

Today, the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI), under pressure of the sanctions, has been forced to inevitably submit to parts of International community's requests in its nuclear case. It would not be off the mark to claim that the election of Hassan Rouhani in June 2013 was due to this pressure. On the contrary, the noteworthy silence of the international community at the face of human rights violations in Iran has encouraged the IRI to further expand and aggravate violation of Iranian people's right.

According to the reports by human rights watchers, since Hassan Rouhani's election, at least 750 people including 38 political prisoners have been executed; almost all of them were deprived of the right to due process and fair trial. In the past year, arrests, issuance and enforcement of prison sentences for religious minorities, including Baha'is, Christian converts, Sufis and Sunni Muslims have been continued. Rouhani's government, like its predecessors, does not recognize followers of Baha'i faith as a religious minority, and they are still banned from attending universities. On the other hand, despite of his promises during the presidential campaign, to release the political prisoners, specially, Mehdi Karroubi, MirHossein Moussavi and Zahra Rahnavard, the green movement leaders have been under house arrest since February 2011, not only Mr. Rouhani did nothing for them, even more journalists and bloggers, human rights defenders, labor and civil activists, students, cyber activists, and dissidents have been arrested in past year.

Moreover, while Facebook and Twitter continue to be blocked, Ali Khamenei and Hassan Rouhani along with other members of the government such as Foreign Minister JavadZarif, are active on these social networks. Iran State TV which has a monopoly on visual and audio media in Iran still has an important role in censorship and false propaganda of Iranian regime against its opponents. Terrestrial jamming of satellite signals by transmitting rogue and strong electromagnetic frequencies have been intensified since the new government has taken office to an extent that their possible health hazard and link to cancer have been discussed in Iranian local media.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At such time, I, as individual who have experienced detention, torture, and harassment by Iranian regime for my peaceful political activities, ask you to place Islamic Republic's human rights dossier on the nuclear negotiation table, and tie the final resolution of the latter to settling of Iran's human rights' file.

I believe that the U.S. and its allies, at least, could ask Iranian authorities to be committed to their international obligations on these specific cases:

1. Agreeing to a trip to Iran by Mr. Ahmed Shaheed, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, and granting him the permission to freely meet with the victims of human rights violations
2. Ending transmission of rogue frequency aimed at jamming satellite signals in accordance of Iran's obligations as a member of "International Communication Associations"
3. Commitment to "Free Elections" in accordance with "Declaration on Free and Fair Elections" passed by Inter-Parliamentary Union in 1994 to which Iran is a signatory

I would also like to ask you to firstly, ensure full adherence of the US Government to the existing sanctions against violators of human rights and those individuals involved in crackdown and suppression of the dissidents. Secondly, place Ayatollah Khamenei, IR supreme leader and all the financial and military organizations under his control, as the main responsible party and orchestrator of human rights violation in Iran, on the list of the sanctions. Keeping "The Execution of Imam Khomeini's Order" (EIKO), and the "Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps" (IRGC) and their subsidiaries on the list would have two results:

It ensures that the release of frozen Iranian funds, which belong to Iranian people, would not be controlled by oppressive organizations, and also it would intensify the pressure on the violators of human rights.