

Revised

Statement by
Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran on
Clustered Interactive Dialogue with:
Working Group on enforced or involuntary disappearances
The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief
19th session of HRC,
6 March 2012

Madam, President,

I would like to thank the Special Rapporteur for his report on the freedom of religion or belief in which he provided us with an account of his activities during the reporting year.

The right to freedom of religion or the freedom to practice one's religion as a fundamental human right has been reflected in many international human right instruments.

In this respect, articles 18 of both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights guarantee everyone's right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, as well as the freedom to manifest his or her religion or belief in practice and observance. The United Nations Human Rights Committee in its General Comment 22 has emphasized that this freedom encompasses the right to wear religiously distinctive clothing or headscarf.

In fact, the right to religious freedom and right to practice and profess religion give support to religious minorities who wish to perform their religious duties.

Madam, President,

Hijab, a head covering worn in public by Muslim women, is one of the Islamic teachings that many Muslim women practice it as a religious duty. Thus, based on the international human rights standards, banning on Hijab is a violation of human rights and religious freedom and has no legal logic.

Regrettably, in recent years, some European Countries have imposed restrictions on Islamic dress for Muslim women, and despite numerous discussions, some of these Countries passed special laws on banning the use of Islamic dress (Hijab). As a result, human rights and freedoms of the Muslim women and girls are infringed.

Madam, President;

Having said that, my delegation wishes to put forward the following questions:

Has the Special Rapporteur ever examined the right to freedom of religion of Muslim minorities in the western countries in the context of the right to manifest and practice their religion?

I would also appreciate if the Special Rapporteur could elaborate on his activities on official and social obstacles to the enjoyment of the right to practice religion by Muslim women in the western

societies. What are his recommendations to the states that officially banned Hejab in their countries?

I would also appreciate if the Special Rapporteur could briefly explain how anti-Hejab laws negatively affect or violate other Muslim human rights.

Madam, President

Let me turn to the Working Group on enforced or involuntary disappearances, as it was reflected in its report, the primary task of the Working Group is to assist families in determining the fate or whereabouts of their members who are reportedly disappeared.

By now, for over twenty-eight years, from the 5th of September 1982, contrary to International law on Diplomatic immunities, four Iranian diplomats have been abducted by armed mercenaries, supported by a certain regime in the region.

Different evidences show that these diplomats are alive and are kept somewhere in the Occupied Palestine by the forces of occupying regime. Hence we ask the working group to do all its efforts to clarify the situation and their whereabouts.

Thank you Madam President,