



Iran: Ban troubled by reports of violent extinction of election protests in latest report

15 October 2009 –Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said he was “deeply troubled” by reports of excessive force, arbitrary arrests and possible torture in the suppression of protests over the disputed Iranian presidential elections, in a [report](#) to the General Assembly on the country’s human rights situation that was released today.

Mr. Ban urged the Government and the opposition to peacefully resolve their differences through dialogue and legal means, while describing the public debate during the election campaign, the high level of participation of the electorate in the 12 June polls and the peaceful post-election demonstrations as positive signs of the vitality of civil and political life.

“The handling by authorities of the protests that followed has raised concerns about respect for freedom of expression, assembly and association, the use of force in policing demonstrations and the treatment of and due process afforded to detainees,” Mr. Ban wrote in the report.

Mr. Ban said that following the announcement of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s victory, tens of thousands of supporters of the other candidates took to the streets over several days to protest the result, with national television reporting the death of seven people after violence erupted.

“There is no accurate measure of the number of casualties during the protests, but numerous media reports have cited at least 20 people killed and many more injured during the demonstrations,” stressed Mr. Ban.

He noted that the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay led a chorus of UN rights experts voicing concern over the use of excessive police force, arbitrary arrests and killings, in particular reported acts of violence by members of the Basij militia.

As the protests grew, authorities restricted the media by blocking websites, banning them from unauthorized demonstrations and implementing new restrictions requiring journalists to obtain permission before leaving the office to cover any story.

Iranian authorities also sought to block the use of social networking and other websites that had been used to broadcast information and visual images of the protests internationally.

Mr. Ban highlighted the death of Neda Agha Soltan, a young woman who was shot in the chest during a demonstration in Tehran. The incident received widespread international attention as a result of its wide circulation via the Internet.

Among the other human rights issues covered in the report, the Secretary-General spotlighted the execution of juveniles as a specific area for concern.

“The imposition of the death penalty on individuals who commit crimes while under the age of 18 is a breach of both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which the Islamic Republic of Iran is a party.”

Iranian authorities executed eight teenagers in 2008, and by the end of September three juveniles had been put to death in 2009, according to Amnesty International. The human rights group also said that from 1990 to 2009 Iran had executed 41 juveniles, accounting for more than half of the reported executions of children worldwide.

On 11 October, Behnoud Shojaie was executed for the murder of another boy in a street fight when both were 17 years old, according to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)).