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The Most Reverend Desmond M. Tutu  
President Mohamed Nasheed

FREEDOM NOW

**34th Session of the Human Rights Council**  
**22 March 2017**  
**Item 2 – General Debate on HC/SG Country Reports**  
**Speaker: Ms. Shazia Akhtar**

Video available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lHPBFzRDsCo>

We urge the Council to take special note of Behnam Ebrahimzadeh, a labor rights and child rights’ activist currently serving a 7 year sentence for communicating with the previous UN Special Rapporteur on Iran.

As a result of his human rights work, Behnam was arrested on multiple occasions, most recently in June 2010 when he was accused of participating in a demonstration. After a trial without his lawyer present, Behnam was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment, which was reduced to 5 years on appeal.

In December 2014, towards the end of his sentence and while still in jail, Behnam was charged with new offenses, including communicating with the UN Special Rapporteur on Iran. A new trial was held, which his lawyer was prevented from attending. Behnam was found guilty of “gathering and colluding to commit crimes against internal and external security of the country” and sentenced to 9 years, reduced to 7 on appeal.

Behnam was subsequently transferred to a non-political ward. He has been subject to indiscriminate beatings by both prisoners and guards, denied medical treatment, and physically threatened by security agents. He remains there to date, suffering from the abuse of torture as well as significant untreated health problems.

We urge the Council to inquire about this case and ensure that Iran cease its harassment and persecution of human rights defenders such as Behnam.