

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 29, 2012

The Honorable Ban Ki-moon
United Nations Secretary-General
760 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Secretary-General:

We write to convey our disappointment with your decision to attend this week's Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit in Tehran. We believe your attendance at the summit will only serve to legitimize a regime that is the world's greatest state sponsor of terrorism and that is pursuing an illicit nuclear weapons program in contravention of numerous UN Security Council resolutions, and whose leader just this month has called for the annihilation of the State of Israel, the latest in a series of similar statements.

As you know, the Iranian regime also continually denies the Iranian people their basic rights and freedoms. The human rights situation in Iran has deteriorated significantly since the fraudulent 2009 elections. In February 2012, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 66/175, which highlighted the regime's continuing and systematic targeting of human rights defenders, gender inequality and violence against women, as well as "[i]ncreased persecution and human rights violations against persons belonging to unrecognized religious minorities, particularly members of the Baha'i faith."

During your visit, we urge you to raise Iran's atrocious human rights record directly with its leadership and publicly pressure Tehran's leaders to uphold their international obligations and release all political prisoners, as called for in Resolution 66/175. We also urge you to meet with prominent members of the Green Movement and the families of imprisoned human rights defenders, including those of the seven Baha'i leaders ("the Yaran").

We ask that you communicate to Iran's leaders that the international community will not allow the people of Iran to be harassed, detained, and tortured by their government.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Mark Kirk
United States Senator



Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senator