Haley slams Human Rights Council for inviting Iran rights abuser to speak at UN

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By [Eric Cortellessa](https://www.timesofisrael.com/writers/eric-cortellessa/)

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US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley lashed out at the Human Rights Council on Sunday, saying it should be “ashamed” for inviting an Iranian minister notorious for his human rights abuses to address the body’s annual meeting in Geneva this week.

Iran Justice Minister Alireza Avaie’s slated remarks along with some 100 government ministers and other dignitaries from around the world have already [elicited outrage](https://www.timesofisrael.com/outrage-over-iran-ministers-presence-at-un-rights-meet/) from Iranian and international activists.

Haley said his appearance bolsters the Trump administration’s criticisms of the UN and threats to cut US aid to the orginization.

“The Human Rights Council should be ashamed to allow Mr. Avaei to address its membership,” the South Carolina native said in a statement.

“Yet again the Council discredits itself by allowing serial human rights abusers to hijack its work and make a mockery of its mandate to promote universal human rights. This does nothing but reinforce the United States’ call for much needed reforms at the Council for it to be viewed as a good investment of our time and money,” she said.

The European Union imposed sanctions on Avaei and other Iranian officials in October 2011 because, as Tehran’s former top prosecutor said, he was “responsible for human rights violations, arbitrary arrests, denials of prisoners’ rights, and an increase in executions.”

Exiled members of the Iranian opposition also said Avaei played a key role in a 1988 massacre of political prisoners. Amnesty International has said that during that episode, nearly 5,000 prisoners were executed in a matter of months; Iranian opposition groups, for their part, put the figure closer to 30,000.

“Allowing Avaie to address the Human Rights Council is disgraceful and would make a mockery of the United Nations and its human rights mechanisms,” Shahin Gobadi, a member of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, told AFP earlier this week. “This must not happen.”