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Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General

Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran

Report of the Secretary-General*

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 78/220, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit an interim report on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Human Rights Council at its fifty-sixth session.

* The present report was submitted to the conference services for processing after the deadline so as to include the most recent information.



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 78/220, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit an interim report on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Human Rights Council at its fifty-sixth session. The report provides information on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution, including options and recommendations to improve its implementation, and covers the period from 1 August 2023 to 31 March 2024. It contains information from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, non-governmental organizations and media organizations. It also draws on observations of United Nations human rights mechanisms.

2. The Government continued to engage with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations human rights mechanisms. The Secretary-General acknowledges the comments provided by the Government in response to the present report.

3. During the reporting period, the death penalty continued to be applied at an alarming rate, including in the case of child offenders, despite an overall decline in the execution of child offenders. The authorities continued to impose national security-related charges and lengthy prison sentences on human rights defenders, journalists and artists in connection with their work, with broader due process concerns also observed during this reporting period. OHCHR continued to receive reports regarding institutionalized gender-based discrimination, where the authorities had severely deprived women and girls of the achievement of substantive equality and of their fundamental rights, including equal participation in economic, social and political life, equality before the law, freedom from torture or from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, freedom from discrimination, and the rights to liberty of movement, to peaceful assembly and to freedom of association and expression. OHCHR also received reports on the impact of unilateral sanctions on the enjoyment of human rights, particularly economic and social rights, affecting key sectors of society, with a disproportionate impact on those who are most vulnerable, including individuals who require access to life-saving medication and equipment.

II. Overview of the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran

A. Death penalty and right to a fair trial

4. Article 6 (2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights stipulates that, in countries that have not abolished the death penalty, sentence of death may be imposed only for the most serious crimes. The Human Rights Committee has noted that the term “the most serious crimes” must be read restrictively and appertains only to crimes of extreme gravity involving intentional killing.¹ The Secretary-General remains concerned at the increased application of the death penalty in the Islamic Republic of Iran for a wide range of offences under the country’s Penal Code, including *hudud* crimes (such as homicide and adultery), *qisas* (retribution in kind) offences (including unintentional killing) and *ta’zir*² crimes (such as drug-related offences).

5. According to information received by OHCHR, it is estimated that at least 834 individuals were executed in 2023, compared to an estimated 582 executions in 2022, marking a 43 per cent increase in executions. Of the total number of executions in 2023, at least 471 (56 per cent) were for drug-related offences, compared to 256 executions reported in 2022, marking an 84 per cent increase. The year 2023 marked the highest rate of executions for drug-related offences since 2015.³ It is estimated that at least 282 individuals were

¹ See the Committee’s general comment No. 36 (2018), para. 35.

² Punishment for these offences is at the discretion of the presiding judge.

³ At least 642 executions were reported in 2015 for drug-related offences.

executed for murder charges. Reportedly at least 22 women were executed in 2023, which was the highest number of reported executions of women since 2013.⁴

6. According to information received by OHCHR, at least 857 individuals sentenced to death for *qisas* crimes in 2023 were forgiven by the next of kin of the alleged victim or accepted to pay the *diya*, which resulted in the death sentences not being carried out.⁵ This was a 37 per cent increase in the number of individuals forgiven for *qisas* crimes compared to 2022 (when 624 individuals were forgiven).

7. While noting an overall decline in the execution of children since 2014, the Secretary-General is deeply concerned that the execution of child offenders continues, and deplores the execution of at least one child offender in 2023, named Hamidreza Azari,⁶ who was 17 at the time of execution. On 24 October 2023, the head of the judiciary issued a directive amending article 91 of the Penal Code in relation to the assessment of a child offender's maturity in order to ensure strengthened consultations with medical experts with the aim of reducing death penalties for children.⁷ In its fifth and sixth periodic reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, of November 2023, the Government stated that a bill amending the regulations on child and juvenile criminal responsibility in the Penal Code had been prepared, with the aim of replacing capital punishment for child offenders. The Secretary-General continues to urge the Government to permanently end the sentencing of child offenders to death.

8. According to information received, it is estimated that in 2023, the Islamic Republic of Iran executed 167 members of the Baluch minority, accounting for 20 per cent of all reported executions for the year, five of whom were women.⁸ A majority of those executed for drug-related offences belonged to the Baluch minority, with Baluch accounting for nearly 30 per cent of all drug-related executions in 2023.⁹ At least 25 Afghan nationals were executed in 2023, marking a 56 per cent increase over 2022.¹⁰

9. The Government confirmed that nine men had been executed in relation to the nationwide protests of 2022, with two of those executions having taken place during the reporting period. Milad Zohrevand, aged 22, was the eighth man to be executed in the context of the nationwide protests of 2022.¹¹ He was arrested on 27 October 2022 in the city of Malayer and convicted of the murder of an Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps intelligence official. Reports received by OHCHR suggest that he was tortured in detention and was denied legal representation, and that there was pressure on his family to remain silent.¹² The Government noted that it had respected all due process and fair trial rights in the case.¹³ The Supreme Court upheld Mr. Zohrevand's death sentence on 15 November 2023, and he was executed eight days later in Hamedan Central Prison.¹⁴ The Government stated that Mr. Zohrevand's family and lawyer had been notified of the execution 48 hours before it was carried out.¹⁵

10. On 23 January 2024, Mohammad Ghobadlou, aged 23, became the ninth man executed in connection with the nationwide protests of 2022.¹⁶ He was convicted of killing a

⁴ See https://iranhr.net/media/files/Iran_Human_Rights-Annual_Report_2023.pdf, pp. 13, 56 and 85.

⁵ See <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6620/>.

⁶ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2023/11/comment-un-human-rights-office-spokesperson-liz-throssell-executions-child-and>.

⁷ Report of the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran submitted to OHCHR (November 2023).

⁸ See https://iranhr.net/media/files/Iran_Human_Rights-Annual_Report_2023.pdf, pp. 85 and 89.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 13 and 89.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

¹¹ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2023/11/comment-un-human-rights-office-spokesperson-liz-throssell-executions-child-and>.

¹² See <https://hengaw.net/en/news/archive/62905>.

¹³ Report of the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran submitted to OHCHR (January 2024).

¹⁴ See <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67512588>.

¹⁵ Report of the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran submitted to OHCHR (January 2024).

¹⁶ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/01/iran-sharp-spike-use-death-penalty>.

police officer and injuring five others during protests in the city of Parand in Tehran Province.¹⁷ Reportedly, he was sentenced to death twice, for *efsad fil-arz* (corruption on Earth) and *qisas* (retribution in kind).¹⁸ His trial was allegedly marked by torture-tainted confessions.¹⁹ Mr. Ghobadlou had reportedly been diagnosed with a bipolar disorder²⁰ in 2016, which was contested²¹ by the Government.

11. The Government asserted that due process rights had been observed, including access to legal representation and the right to appeal. The Government also asserted that Mr. Ghobadlou's appeals had been rejected twice by the Supreme Court and that his medical history and condition had been thoroughly assessed by qualified psychologists and psychiatrists who concluded that he was responsible for his behaviour at the time of the crime. However, Mr. Ghobadlou's defence counsel noted that the Supreme Court had revoked his death sentence in July 2023 due to irregularities, and that no new verdicts had been issued before the execution was carried out.²²

12. An execution notice was conveyed to Mr. Ghobadlou's family at short notice on 22 January 2024, and he was executed the next day at Gezelhesar Prison in the city of Karaj.²³ The Human Rights Committee has noted that failure to provide individuals on death row with timely notification about the date of their execution constitutes a form of ill-treatment.²⁴ The Secretary-General is also deeply alarmed by the Government's execution of individuals convicted for espionage. On 27 December 2023, three Kurdish men, Wafa Hanareh, Aram Omri and Rahman Parhazo, and one woman, Nasim Namazi, were executed for espionage for Israel.²⁵ Reports received by OHCHR suggest that their confessions were coerced through threats of torture against their families.²⁶ The Government asserted adherence to due process rights in this case.²⁷ On 29 January 2024, four Kurdish political prisoners were executed for the crime of spying for Israel.²⁸ Mohsen Mazloun, Mohammad (Hejir) Faramarzi, Wafa Azarbar and Pejman Fatehi were executed in Gezelhesar Prison after 18 months of detention. Reports received by OHCHR indicate that they were denied the right to legal counsel and contact with their families, that they were subjected to severe torture while in detention and that their confessions were broadcast on State media.²⁹

B. Rights to freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly

13. The Government continued to retain broad control over access to information, including by blocking access to social media platforms. On 20 February 2024, the National Cyberspace Centre issued a decree criminalizing the use of virtual private networks without

¹⁷ See <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iran-executes-protester-charged-with-murder-2024-01-23/>; see also <https://iranhumanrights.org/2024/01/street-protester-mohammad-ghobadlou-hanged-in-iran-amid-state-sanctioned-killing-spree/>.

¹⁸ See <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/MDE1363682023ENGLISH.pdf>.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ See <https://www.bbc.com/persian/63924870> (in Persian).

²¹ Report of the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran submitted to OHCHR (March 2024); see also <https://www.mizanonline.ir/00JxG5> (in Persian).

²² See <https://twitter.com/amirreiis/status/1749677255280697394> (in Persian).

²³ See <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/01/iran-executions-of-protester-with-mental-disability-and-kurdish-man-mark-plunge-into-new-realms-of-cruelty/>; see also Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 36 (2018), para. 40.

²⁴ Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 36 (2018), para. 40.

²⁵ Report of the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran submitted to OHCHR (January 2024).

²⁶ See <https://kurdistanhumanrights.org/fa/news-fa/executions-fa/2024/02/26/p32773/> (in Persian).

²⁷ Report of the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran submitted to OHCHR (January 2024).

²⁸ See <https://www.mizanonline.ir/00JxXp> (in Persian).

²⁹ See <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1402/11/09/3030534/4> -- اعدام شدند -- (in Persian).
 تروریست-موساد-در-ایران-اعدام-شدند -- پروژ-ه-بمب-گذار-ی-اسرائیل-در-یک-مرکز-دفاعی-فیلم

a permit.³⁰ The decree instructs the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, in coordination with various governmental bodies, including the State broadcasting authority, Police Headquarters, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance, and the judiciary, to enforce its provisions. The head of the National Cyberspace Centre stated that the decree was aimed at simplifying public access to digital platforms and services. However, there are significant concerns that the decree would curtail privacy rights and access to information through greater governmental oversight and surveillance of online activities. The Secretary-General reiterates his concern regarding reports of increased control over online spaces, which may result in self-censorship and the stifling of independent voices.³¹

14. Journalists and writers continued to be targeted for their work. In 2023, at least 49 writers, including 34 men and 15 women, were reportedly imprisoned, including for “propaganda” and “collusion” against the State.³² The majority were reportedly released on bail or subjected to additional conditions affecting the exercise of their rights, including being banned from using social media or being prohibited from continuing their professions.³³ Journalists have faced arrest on various charges including “disseminating falsehoods”, “propaganda against the system”, “collusion against national security”, “cooperation with hostile governments” and “disrupting public order”. These charges often lead to harsh penalties, lengthy prison sentences, and restrictions on them exercising their profession.

15. Concerns remain about the continued imprisonment of at least eight journalists.³⁴ Niloofar Hamed and Elahe Mohammadi were arrested in 2022 in connection with their reporting on Jina Mahsa Amini. They were reportedly convicted for “collusion to commit crimes against the country’s security”, “propaganda against the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran” and “cooperating with the hostile Government of the United States” and were sentenced on 22 October 2023 by Branch 15 of Tehran Revolutionary Court.³⁵ While noting their release on bail³⁶ on 14 January 2024 after 17 months in detention, the Secretary-General expresses concern about reports that the judiciary has opened a new case against them for appearing in photos without a hijab following their release.³⁷

16. The Secretary-General welcomes the release of journalist Nasim Soltanbeigi on medical furlough,³⁸ while concerns remain that her conviction on national security offences, which appeared to be linked to her peaceful human rights activism, has not been lifted.³⁹

17. On 5 February 2024, State security forces reportedly raided the office of *Fardaye Eghtesad*, an online independent news outlet in Tehran, and detained four of its journalists and confiscated their belongings without informing them of the charges against them.⁴⁰ Three of the four journalists were reportedly released on bail,⁴¹ while journalist Ali Tasnimi reportedly remained in custody at the Shapur Tehran police detention centre.⁴² On 31 January 2024, a freelance economics journalist, Mehdi Afshar-Nik, was reportedly arrested by State security forces; his family and lawyer have reportedly been unable to obtain information on his whereabouts.⁴³ Journalist and editor-in-chief of the weekly newspaper *Siyahat’e Shargh*,

³⁰ See <https://www.isna.ir/news/1402120201316/> - مصوبه ممنوعیت استفاده از فیلتر شکن مخاطب عمومی - (in Persian).
ندارد خطاب مصوبه

³¹ A/78/511, para. 18.

³² Submission to OHCHR.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ See <https://ifj-farsi.org/?p=12365> (in Persian).

³⁵ See <https://irna.ir/xjNJCy> (in Persian).

³⁶ See <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1402/10/24/3023026/> - نیلوفر حامدی و الهه محمدی - با قرار - وثیقه از داد شدند (in Persian).

³⁷ See <https://www.mizanonline.ir/00JwuW> (in Persian) and <https://www.en-hrana.org/journalists-niloofer-hamed-and-elahe-mohammadi-sentenced-to-a-combined-25-years-in-prison/>.

³⁸ See <https://www.sharghdaily.com/fa/tiny/news-922450>; see also <https://humanrightsinfo.org/> - نسیم سلطان بیگی، زندانی سیاسی به مرخصی (in Persian).

³⁹ See communication IRN 18/2023, p. 2, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=28583>.

⁴⁰ See <https://www.dw.com/fa-ir/شدند-اقتصادبه-باز-داشتگاه-منتقل-شدند/a-68246859> (in Persian).

⁴¹ See <https://journalismisnotacrime.com/fa/news/5648/> (in Persian).

⁴² See <https://www.radiofarda.com/a/closure-journal-iran-arrest-journalist/32885152.html> (in Persian).

⁴³ See <https://www.hra-news.org/2024/hranews/a-47313/> (in Persian).

Nasrin Hassani, was convicted of “disseminating false information” and “non-compliance with public hijab regulations” in November 2023.⁴⁴ On 4 February 2024, she commenced a seven-month prison term in Bojnurd Prison, North Khorasan Province.⁴⁵ Additionally, she faces a one-year sentence for spreading propaganda against the system.⁴⁶ Hassani had previously been arrested for her coverage of the 2022 nationwide protests and for allegedly violating hijab laws.⁴⁷

18. The Secretary-General expressed concern over the detention of artist Toomaj Salehi, who is now facing new charges related to an ongoing case from October 2022 in connection with his music, perceived to be critical of the authorities.⁴⁸ In November 2023, Mr. Salehi was released on bail,⁴⁹ but reports indicate that he was violently rearrested shortly thereafter in relation to a video he had released describing his experiences of torture and other violations while in detention.⁵⁰ Charges of “disseminating false information” and “inciting people to violence” related to the video were dismissed by the Criminal Court of Isfahan in March 2024.⁵¹ In January 2024, two new charges were included as part of his ongoing case dating back to October 2022 of abetting rebellion and conspiracy with intent to compromise national security.⁵² In late March 2024, his request for early release was rejected and he remains in detention.⁵³

19. The Secretary-General also expresses concern over the detention of other artists for exercising their right to hold opinions and to freedom of expression, including Vafa Ahmadpour, known as Vafadar, on charges of propaganda against the system, dissemination of falsehoods and disturbing public opinion, in relation to the production of a song in support of the 2022 nationwide protests.⁵⁴ Artist Saman Yasin also remains in prison after the Supreme Court’s decision of December 2022 to overturn his death sentence for “assembly and collusion with the intention of committing a crime against the security of the country” and “disturbing the public order and peace”⁵⁵ in connection with songs that he produced which were perceived to be critical of the Government.⁵⁶ The Supreme Court’s decision to overturn his death sentence was reportedly due to “investigative irregularities”.⁵⁷ There were also disturbing reports of his torture, of forced confessions and of mock executions while he was in detention.⁵⁸ Mr. Yasin published an open letter in February 2024 to the head of the judiciary condemning his indefinite imprisonment and unjustified transfers to a psychiatric hospital.⁵⁹

⁴⁴ See <https://www.en-hrana.org/journalist-nasrin-hassani-receives-one-year-prison-sentence-for-alleged-propaganda-against-regime/?hilite=Shargh>.

⁴⁵ See <https://www.etemadonline.com/بخش-سیاسی-650842/9-اجرای-حکم-حبس-تعزیری-نسرین-حسنی> (in Persian).

⁴⁶ See <https://www.en-hrana.org/journalist-nasrin-hassanis-one-year-sentence-upheld-on-appeal/>.

⁴⁷ See <https://cpj.org/2024/02/iranian-journalist-nasrin-hassani-begins-7-month-prison-sentence/>.

⁴⁸ A/HRC/53/23, para. 29.

⁴⁹ See <https://www.dw.com/en/jailed-iranian-rapper-toomaj-salehi-released-on-bail/a-67484551>.

⁵⁰ See <https://www.cbc.ca/lite/story/1.7047425> and <https://www.en-hrana.org/protest-singer-toomaj-salehi-faces-re-arrest/>.

⁵¹ See <https://www.khabaronline.ir/news/1885696/%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%DB%8C-%D8%AA%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%A6%D9%87-%D8%B4%D8%AF> (in Persian).

⁵² See <https://www.en-hrana.org/protest-singer-toomaj-salehi-faces-charges-of-armed-rebellion-baghi/?hilite=toomaj+salehi>.

⁵³ See <https://www.rferl.org/a/iran-rapper-salehi-release-denied-amini-protests/32879660.html>.

⁵⁴ See <https://twitter.com/dadban4/status/1773015597548261442> (in Persian) and <https://www.en-hrana.org/protest-rapper-vafa-azarpour-faces-political-charges-in-evan-court/?hilite=vafa+ahmadpour>.

⁵⁵ See <https://kurdistanhumanrights.org/en/news/2024/03/01/imprisoned-kurdish-rapper-saman-yasin-protests-extended-detention>.

⁵⁶ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/12/iran-un-experts-condemn-execution-protestor-raise-alarm-about-detained>.

⁵⁷ See <https://tn.ai/2825873> (in Persian).

⁵⁸ See <https://www.radiofarda.com/a/mock-execution-of-saman-yasin/32692650.html> (in Persian).

⁵⁹ See <https://kurdistanhumanrights.org/en/news/2024/03/06/saman-yasin-taken-to-psychiatric-hospital-for-second-time-in-a-year/>; see also <https://iranhr.net/fa/articles/6597/> (in Persian).

20. In its concluding observations of 26 October 2023, the Human Rights Committee expressed concerns regarding multiple reports of hate speech by public officials, which had instigated prejudice against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons.⁶⁰ It also expressed concern about the criminalization of consensual same-sex relations between adults, which could lead to flogging or sentencing to death.⁶¹ The Committee further expressed concern about acts that restricted freedom of association, such as preventing meetings by civil society actors from taking place and arbitrarily arresting members of civic associations and trade unions, including members of the Iranian Teachers Trade Association and the Free Union of Iranian Workers.⁶²

21. The Secretary-General is deeply concerned by reports of the use of lethal force against peaceful protesters.⁶³ On 29 September, 1 October and 20 October 2023, security forces reportedly fired “birdshot” shotgun pellets at worshippers from the Grand Makki Mosque in Zahedan after Friday prayers, resulting in injuries.⁶⁴ Special Forces, Revolutionary Guards and plain-clothes agents, some reportedly disguised in traditional attire and masks, were allegedly implicated in those operations.⁶⁵ The Secretary-General welcomes the opening of the trial of members of security forces for their alleged involvement in the killing of protesters in Zahedan during the September 2022 protests,⁶⁶ on 7 February 2024.⁶⁷ In its comments for the present report, the Islamic Republic of Iran affirmed its commitment to investigating allegations of misconduct by law enforcement officials in relation to that incident.

C. Economic and social rights

Adequate standard of living

22. The Secretary-General reiterates⁶⁸ his concerns at the impact of the economic crisis on living conditions, exacerbated by unilateral sanctions, which affected a range of economic and social rights.

23. According to the International Monetary Fund, in 2023, the inflation rate in the Islamic Republic of Iran was 40.7 per cent.⁶⁹ A devaluation of the national currency has caused high inflation, which has negatively affected the purchasing power of households.⁷⁰ Consumption patterns have changed, with reports indicating that many consumers are purchasing cheaper, lower-quality food items to meet calorific and nutritional needs.⁷¹

24. Increasing rent levels have affected the right to adequate housing and have impacted on socioeconomic welfare,⁷² as State reports estimated that 25 per cent of the population were renters,⁷³ while in Tehran, the capital, an estimated 51 per cent were renters.⁷⁴ With increased urbanization and demand for housing, the official news agency, the Islamic Republic News Agency, reported in November 2023 that as many as 543 cities were experiencing growing

⁶⁰ CCPR/C/IRN/CO/4, para. 13.

⁶¹ Ibid., para. 15.

⁶² Ibid., para. 53.

⁶³ See <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/22/iran-security-forces-violently-repress-anniversary-protest>.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ See <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/10/iran-new-wave-of-brutal-attacks-against-baluchi-protesters-and-worshippers/>.

⁶⁶ A/HRC/53/23, para. 10.

⁶⁷ See <https://haalvsh.org/2024/02/07/برگزاری-اولین-جلسه-دادگاه-رسیدگی-به-پرو> (in Persian).

⁶⁸ A/78/511, paras. 25 and 26.

⁶⁹ See <https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/IRN#countrydata>; see also <https://amwaj.media/article/deep-data-the-iranian-economy-in-2024>.

⁷⁰ See <https://www.entekhab.ir/fa/news/766076/%۶۰-درصدی-قدرت-DB%۰۰-بانک-مرکزی-اعلام-کرد-سقوط-۶۰-درصد> (in Persian).

⁷¹ See <https://www.etemadnewspaper.ir/fa/main/detail/214850/-خبر-کاهش-قدرت-خرید-۱۴۰۲-درصد> (in Persian); see also <https://hammihanonline.ir/ها-۱۲۳۸۵/۲۳-مشتري-ها-۱۲۳۸۵/۲۳-مشتري-ها-۱۲۳۸۵> (in Persian).

⁷² See <https://www.radiozamaneh.com/795285/> (in Persian).

⁷³ See <https://snn.ir/fa/news/1112353/۲۵-مستأجر-هستند-۲۵-درصد-جمعیت-ایران> (in Persian).

⁷⁴ See <https://www.isna.ir/news/1402102416942/%۱۴-هزار-میلیاردی-برای-۱۴۰۲-شهر-دارای-نهران-حمل> (in Persian).

informal settlements and slums, with an estimated population of 19 million.⁷⁵ In its comments for the present report, the Government asserted that it had constructed 1 million homes, with 335,000 residential units already completed.

Right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment

25. Unilateral sanctions have imposed a heavy burden on the national energy infrastructure, which requires access to foreign investment and technology to improve the quality and quantity of domestic production.⁷⁶ Coupled with population growth and urbanization, the energy infrastructure has been strained further. Air pollution, exacerbated by widespread burning of fuel oil to compensate for a weak national energy infrastructure, has negatively affected the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. According to information shared by the Air Pollution Research Centre of Tehran University of Medical Sciences in December 2023, an estimated 45,000 to 50,000 people die annually due to health issues related to air pollution, including 700 to 1,000 children under the age of 5.⁷⁷

26. There have been protests against the Government's inadequate response to severe air pollution from the industrial use of fossil fuels, such as in the city of Ardakan in December 2023⁷⁸ and in the city of Arak against the Shazand power plant in late February 2024.⁷⁹ The Government highlighted the lack of funding as well as challenges in accessing modern pollution reduction technologies due to the ongoing unilateral sanctions.⁸⁰

27. The Islamic Republic of Iran entered its fourth consecutive year of drought, with the National Centre for Climate and Drought Crisis Management reporting a 44.8 per cent decrease in the country's average rainfall. State-affiliated media has highlighted that 70 per cent of the country's land is currently in critical condition. This situation, exacerbated by reports of water mismanagement, is affecting a variety of rights, including the right to adequate food and the right to water and sanitation. This is exemplified by worsening water crises in areas such as the Gavkhni Marshes and the declining water levels of Lake Urmia. State-affiliated media reported in January 2024 that government officials had pointed to a lack of adequate conservation measures in water usage across households, industries and agriculture, exacerbating the strain on natural groundwater resources.

Right to health

28. The overall economic crisis has significantly impacted the health sector, exacerbating already challenging working conditions for medical staff and negatively affecting people's enjoyment of the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.⁸¹ Medical staff face a variety of pressures, including low wages⁸² and delayed salary payments.⁸³ Citing troubling statistics, the President of the Supreme Council of the Medical System has drawn attention to an increase in suicide rates within the medical community due to challenging socioeconomic conditions.⁸⁴

⁷⁵ See <https://www.irna.ir/news/85268853/> (in Persian).

⁷⁶ See <https://www.bbc.com/persian/articles/czr8z70ynm8o> (in Persian).

⁷⁷ See <https://www.hamshahrionline.ir/news/813346/> (in Persian).

⁷⁸ See <https://farsnews.ir/Provinces/1703910366000379227/> (in Persian); see also <https://www.radiofarda.com/a/32747847.html> (in Persian).

⁷⁹ See <https://www.bbc.com/persian/articles/czr8z70ynm8o> (in Persian); see also <https://twitter.com/ICHRI/status/1760327376473342318>.

⁸⁰ See <https://www.sharghdaily.com/fa/tiny/news-909267> (in Persian).

⁸¹ See <https://www.irna.ir/news/85322412/> (in Persian).

⁸² See <https://www.irna.ir/news/85196595/> (in Persian); see also <https://www.mehrnews.com/news/5926515/> (in Persian).

⁸³ See <https://www.irna.ir/news/85301042/> (in Persian); see also <https://www.sharghdaily.com/921180/100/> (in Persian).

⁸⁴ See <https://www.etemadonline.com/652114/23/> (in Persian).

29. On 14 January 2024, the Supreme Insurance Council announced a 46 per cent increase in prices for medical services for 2024/25.⁸⁵ This could further jeopardize the already strained ability of many individuals and families to access affordable and quality healthcare.⁸⁶

30. The compounded effects of unilateral sanctions, together with overcompliance by different actors, such as States, businesses, financial institutions and humanitarian actors, and the overall complex economic situation in the country, have jeopardized the availability of medical products and equipment, with a serious impact on the right to health, including on access to essential healthcare and medications for chronic illnesses, for example thalassemia. Reports received by OHCHR indicate that, since 2017, at least 750 people have died due to medication shortages.⁸⁷

Rights to work and to social security

31. According to official figures, unemployment decreased from 9 per cent in 2022 to 8.2 per cent in 2023,⁸⁸ while the International Monetary Fund put the latest unemployment rate at 9 per cent, for 2022 and 2023.⁸⁹ Labour activists and representatives reportedly demanded a 42 per cent increase in the minimum wage.⁹⁰ On 19 March 2024, the Government announced a 35.5 per cent increase in the minimum wage of labourers, a move that was labelled as insufficient by labour representatives, who noted that inflation rates had outpaced such an increase.

32. According to information received by OHCHR, between October and December 2023, retirees held weekly strikes in various regions, especially retirees from various industries such as the steel, oil, telecommunications, military and healthcare sectors.⁹¹

33. Reportedly, municipal public service workers frequently obtain employment through contractors that offer low pay, and they routinely face significant delays in receiving their wages. Government officials have reportedly noted reduced municipal incomes as a reason for such delays.⁹² Employees in urban and rural water and sewage companies, in telecommunications and in the transportation sector face similar challenges that affect their right to work.

34. The Secretary-General notes the ratification by the Islamic Republic of Iran on 7 February 2023 of the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155) and the Protocol of 2002 to the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981, of the International Labour Organization, which could strengthen the protection framework for workers and improve working conditions, especially for vulnerable groups.

D. Human rights situation of women

35. During the review in October 2023 of the Islamic Republic of Iran by the Human Rights Committee, the Government stated that various programmes had been rolled out to support women and that there had been an increase in women's representation in tertiary education, medicine, business and science.⁹³ In its comments on the present report, the Government stated that the number of women in managerial positions had more than doubled since 2020 to 40,683 in 2023 and that significant appointments of women included

⁸⁵ See <https://www.irna.ir/news/85364552/> - موافقت شورای عالی بیمه با رشد ۴۶ درصدی تعرفه های پزشکی - در سال (in Persian).

⁸⁶ See <https://www.mehrnews.com/news/5859168/> - برخی بیماران به دلیل شرایط اقتصادی درمان را رها می کنند (in Persian).

⁸⁷ Submission to OHCHR.

⁸⁸ See <https://amwaj.media/article/deep-data-the-iranian-economy-in-2024>.

⁸⁹ See <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/LUR@WEO/IRN?zoom=IRN&highlight=IRN>.

⁹⁰ See <https://iranwire.com/en/news/126568-35-percent-increase-in-irans-minimum-wage-sparks-discontent-as-inflation-soars/>.

⁹¹ Submission to OHCHR.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ CCPR/C/SR.4038, para. 40.

455 women in political roles, 6,471 women working in legal and judicial affairs and 1,006 women serving as judges.

36. The Secretary-General continues to be concerned at the slow progress⁹⁴ in reviewing and adopting the Bill on the Protection of Women Against Violence, presented to the parliament in 2021.

37. The Secretary-General also remains concerned about the Bill to Support the Family by Promoting the Culture of Chastity and Hijab (Chastity and Hijab Bill),⁹⁵ which seeks to reinforce mandatory public hijab requirements for women and girls and introduce severe penalties for non-compliance, which could amplify gender discrimination. On 20 September 2023, the bill was adopted in Parliament by a majority vote and was subsequently submitted for the approval of the Guardian Council.⁹⁶ Since then, the bill has undergone several parliamentary adjustments following rejections by the Guardian Council. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, special procedures of the Human Rights Council and treaty bodies have called for the bill to be withdrawn.

38. The Secretary-General is deeply disturbed by reports of discrimination, harassment and punishment that women and girls in the Islamic Republic of Iran face daily. According to reports received by OHCHR, in May 2023 Iranian security forces detained Roya Heshmati on charges of “propaganda against the Islamic Republic”, “hurting public chastity”, “producing inappropriate (vulgar) content”, “promoting corruption” and “appearing in public without a veil”. Subsequent to an appeal against her initial sentence of 13 years, Ms. Heshmati was sentenced to 74 lashes for “offending public morality and chastity” in connection with publishing a photo of herself online without a hijab.⁹⁷ The ruling further contended that the flogging was for her “alleged connection to an organized movement outside the country receiving funds to promote non-compliance with laws at busy hours in Tehran”.⁹⁸

39. On 16 and 17 August 2023, 11 women’s rights activists were arrested across Gilan Province, including in the cities of Bandar Anzali, Fuman, Lahijan and Rasht.⁹⁹ Reports indicate that they were arrested in the run-up to the one-year anniversary of the 2022 nationwide protests and for their involvement in women’s rights campaigns.¹⁰⁰ On 27 March 2024, they were convicted by Branch Three of the Revolutionary Court in Rasht for “consensus and collusion with the intention of disturbing national security”, “membership of an illegal group” and “propaganda against the Government”. Notably, Zohreh Dadras received the most severe sentence – nine years, six months and two days of imprisonment – for “establishing an illegal group with the intention of disrupting national security” and “consensus and collusion with the intention of disrupting national security”.¹⁰¹ They were reportedly held in solitary confinement, and their whereabouts remained unknown because they were denied access to legal representation and their phone calls were restricted.¹⁰² They were released on bail from Lakan Prison from 16 September to 1 October 2023.

40. Sedigeh Vasmaghi, a prominent religious scholar, writer, poet and sociopolitical analyst,¹⁰³ was arrested on 16 March 2024, and was subsequently convicted for “propaganda against the system” and “appearing publicly without the hijab”. According to reports,

⁹⁴ A/74/273, para. 44.

⁹⁵ A/78/511, paras. 29–37.

⁹⁶ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-briefing-notes/2023/09/iran-concerns-over-chastity-and-hijab-bill>.

⁹⁷ See <https://www.rferl.org/a/iran-women-defiant-flogging-hijab-violation/32767635.html>.

⁹⁸ See <https://www.mizanonline.ir/00JwXv> (in Persian).

⁹⁹ See <https://www.mehrnews.com/news/5863925/-/در-خصوص-دستگیری-کل-اطلاعات-گیلان> (in Persian).

¹⁰⁰ See <https://www.rferl.org/a/iran-women-activists-sentenced-long-prison-terms/32881067.html>.

¹⁰¹ See <https://www.bbc.com/persian/articles/cpr0xgdj022o> (in Persian); see also <https://www.sharghdaily.com/بخش-سیاست-924434/6-صدور-حکم-فعالان-حقوق-زنان-گیلان-برای-نفر-مجموعه-ا-بیش-از-سال-حکم-حبس-صادر-شد> (in Persian).

¹⁰² See <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/six-human-rights-defenders-began-serving-sentences-lakan-prison-1>.

¹⁰³ See <https://www.tabnak.ir/fa/news/1198547/-/شور-ای-شهر-تهران-تا-کشف-حجاب> (in Persian).

Ms. Vasmaghi had questioned the legal and religious justification for compulsory wearing of the hijab following the 2022 nationwide protests, expressing objections to the treatment of women and mandatory wearing of the hijab.¹⁰⁴

41. The Human Rights Committee expressed concern about the lack of representation and participation of women in senior and decision-making positions in political and public life and the private sector.¹⁰⁵ On 1 March 2024, the Islamic Republic of Iran held its twelfth parliamentary election. Although more than 1,700 women were approved to stand for Parliament, of the 245 members elected during the first round, only 11 were women. This marked a further decrease compared to the outgoing parliament, which had 16 women, and indicated that major impediments to the political participation of women persist.

42. The Secretary-General acknowledges the findings of the independent international fact-finding mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran, published on 8 March 2024.¹⁰⁶ The fact-finding mission concluded that there was pervasive and deep-rooted structural and institutionalized discrimination against women and girls, permeating all areas of their public and private lives.¹⁰⁷ It also found that this was a trigger for and enabler of widespread serious human rights violations and crimes under international law against women and girls.¹⁰⁸ The Secretary-General notes the Government's comments on the report of the fact-finding mission.¹⁰⁹

E. Human rights situation of children

43. The Secretary-General acknowledges the Government's long-standing commitment to facilitating education, which is also reflected in its Constitution and the Charter of Citizens' Rights.¹¹⁰ However, government reports indicate that as at January 2024, at least 30,000 children with disabilities were unable to attend primary school, depriving them of their basic right to education.¹¹¹ The Secretary-General recalls article 27 of the country's Law on the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, of 2017, which underlines the State's obligation to provide a living allowance to individuals with severe disabilities based on the minimum wage approved by the Supreme Labour Council.¹¹² The Secretary-General notes the allocation of resources equivalent to \$60 million for school renovations, announced by the Minister of Education in March 2024 to improve learning.¹¹³

44. The Secretary-General remains concerned that child marriage is yet to be prevented and eliminated. The legal age of marriage for girls and boys under the Civil Code remains at 13 and 15 years respectively. In practice, girls are more at risk of early and forced marriage. In October 2023, the Government reported¹¹⁴ to the Human Rights Committee that 43,000 child marriages had been registered. This was a considerable rise from the last available data from the national statistical centre, for the period between March 2022 and March 2023, when the marriages of 25,900 girls and 15 boys were registered.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁴ See <https://www.bbc.com/persian/articles/cv2yvnegn7zo> (in Persian).

¹⁰⁵ CCPR/C/IRN/CO/4, para. 17.

¹⁰⁶ The fact-finding mission was mandated through Human Rights Council resolution S-35/1 to thoroughly and independently investigate alleged human rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Iran related to the protests that began on 16 September 2022, especially with respect to women and children.

¹⁰⁷ A/HRC/55/67, para. 122.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ See <https://geneva.mfa.ir/portal/newsview/741577>.

¹¹⁰ See <https://www.irna.ir/news/85364609/تحصيل-از-بازماندگی-جزئیات-تشریح> (in Persian).

¹¹¹ Ibid., and see <https://www.ekhtebareh.ir/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/معاونان-از-حقوق-حمایت-از-قانون-حمایت-از-حقوق-معاونان.pdf> (in Persian).

¹¹² See <https://www.ilna.ir/بخش-کارگری-1441931/9-ماده-قانون-حمایت-از-معاونان-را-اجرا-کنید> (in Persian).

¹¹³ See <https://www.isna.ir/news/1402121309157/۶-از-بازماندگی-جزئیات-تشریح> (in Persian).

¹¹⁴ CCPR/C/SR.4039, para. 43.

¹¹⁵ See <https://women.ncr-iran.org/2023/10/20/marriages-of-children/>.

45. The Secretary-General is concerned that over 40,000 children lack official identification documentation, as highlighted in the announcement on 8 October 2023 by the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare.¹¹⁶ This impedes their access to State services and jeopardizes the enjoyment of their rights to health and education. According to semi-official State media outlets, the children are predominantly from minority groups; others have non-Iranian fathers.¹¹⁷ The Secretary-General notes the Government's efforts in addressing this issue, including the public commitment by the head of the National Civil Registration Organization on 23 January 2024 to prioritize this matter.¹¹⁸ The Secretary-General also notes the implementation of the *Faghedin* electronic registration system designed to expedite the registration of undocumented individuals, including children.¹¹⁹

F. Human rights situation of human rights defenders, lawyers and families

46. Since the nationwide protests of 2022, an ongoing atmosphere of intimidation, coercion and repression against lawyers, human rights defenders and the families of protest victims has persisted, including during the current reporting period. These individuals have been targeted for their legitimate engagement in journalism, human rights protection and legal services, and for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

47. Saleh Nikbakht, the lawyer representing Jina Mahsa Amini's family, received a one-year prison sentence from Branch 28 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court for "spreading propaganda against the State", and a two-year ban on online activities.¹²⁰ The convictions appear to be linked to his media interviews regarding Ms. Amini's case. Due to a reported travel ban on the Amini family, Mr. Nikbakht represented them at the European Parliament on 12 December 2023, to accept the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought on their behalf.¹²¹ Upon his return to the Islamic Republic of Iran, the authorities reportedly confiscated the prize.¹²²

48. Mahdokht Damghanpour, the legal representative of the ninth executed protester, Mohammad Ghobadlou,¹²³ was summoned to the Culture and Media Court on 13 February 2024. The summons stemmed from her criticism of the judicial process and of the carrying out of Mr. Ghobadlou's sentence.¹²⁴ These instances illustrate the challenges faced by legal representatives working on legal cases that are politically sensitive, particularly those that are high-profile and visible.

49. The Secretary-General expresses serious concern about reports received by OHCHR indicating government interference with the independence of the Iranian Bar Association. On 7 February 2024, authorities reportedly obstructed the Association's attempt to hold an election for its executive board. Allegedly, the Tehran Public Places Administration ordered the cancellation of the election at the venue originally planned. Although the venue was changed to the office of the Central Bar Association, the election did not take place due to insufficient attendance.¹²⁵ The Government reportedly also questioned the Iranian Bar Association's legal status, advocating for cancellation of its elections, and for the adoption of a legal clause during an open session of Parliament on 21 August 2023 compelling all bar associations to follow the decisions of the Regulatory Board of the Ministry of Economic

¹¹⁶ See <https://www.isna.ir/news/1402071610370/هویتها-سجلی-برای-بی-هویتها> (in Persian).

¹¹⁷ See <https://www.mehrnews.com/news/5946818/غم-نامه-شناسنامه-ناگفته-های-از-دواج-زن-ان-ایرانی-با-اتباع-خارجی> (in Persian) and <https://irna.ir/xjPzqq> (in Persian).

¹¹⁸ See <https://www.irna.ir/news/85362847/%۲۵DB%۲۵ثبت-هویت-به-۲۶-هزار> (in Persian).

¹¹⁹ See <https://irna.ir/xjPzqq> (in Persian).

¹²⁰ See <https://www.sharghdaily.com/-/بخش-سیاست-901292/6-وکیل-خانواده-مهسا-امینی-به-اشد-مجازات-اتهام-شد> (in Persian).

¹²¹ See <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20231208IPR15773/sakharov-prize-parliament-honours-jina-mahsa-amini-and-iranian-women-protesters>.

¹²² See <https://hengaw.net/fa/news/archive/63439> (in Persian).

¹²³ See para. 10 above.

¹²⁴ See <https://www.sharghdaily.com/-/بخش-سیاست-918639/6-وکیل-محمد-قبادلو-احضار-شد> (in Persian); see also <https://humanrightsinir.org/soummon-206/> (in Persian).

¹²⁵ See <https://www.rferl.org/a/iran-bar-association-lawyers-blocked-new-leadership/32813462.html>.

Affairs and Finance.¹²⁶ Members of the Iranian Bar Association expressed concern that they were not able to challenge this in the Administrative Justice Court.

50. On 22 January 2024, special procedures of the Human Rights Council urged the Islamic Republic of Iran to respect and protect lawyers, emphasizing the need to implement measures to ensure that lawyers could fulfil their crucial role without facing prosecution or sanctions.¹²⁷

51. Human rights defenders continued to be targeted for their work in seeking accountability and justice. Nobel laureate, human rights defender and journalist Narges Mohammadi has remained imprisoned since 16 November 2021 in Evin Prison. At the time of writing, reports indicate that Ms. Mohammadi has been denied access to her lawyer and been prevented from contacting her family since 29 November 2023.¹²⁸ Reports received by OHCHR also indicate that she was prohibited from attending her father's funeral in late February 2024.¹²⁹ Her sentence was extended by an additional 15 months in January 2024 for "spreading propaganda against the State". This is the fifth of her convictions since March 2021, three of which appear to be in relation to her human rights activism in prison. Overall, she has been arrested 13 times and sentenced to a total of 31 years in connection with her human rights activism.¹³⁰

52. The Secretary-General is alarmed at reports about the physical and mental well-being of human rights defender Fatemeh Sepehri. Ms. Sepehri has been imprisoned since 21 September 2023 in Vakilabad Prison in Mashhad.¹³¹ The Government asserts that Ms. Sepehri committed various crimes, including "communicating with hostile Governments", "encouraging teachers to stage illegal rallies", "conducting an interview with Israeli media" and "encouraging Israel to conduct military action against the Islamic Republic of Iran". Additionally, she was accused of signing a letter allegedly urging the President of the United States of America to exert greater economic pressure on the Iranian people, and insulting Iranian officials and authorities.¹³²

53. Ms. Sepehri was sentenced to 18 years in prison for "collaboration with hostile foreign governments", "assembly and collusion against national security", "insulting the Supreme Leader" and "propaganda against the Government".¹³³ Reports indicate that charges brought against her might stem from her human rights activism.¹³⁴

54. The Secretary-General is concerned by information indicating a possible lack of adequate medical care during Ms. Sepehri's time in prison. According to information received by OHCHR, Ms. Sepehri suffers from cardiovascular diseases in addition to other health conditions. Despite being granted a one-week medical furlough in October 2023 following open-heart surgery, Ms. Sepehri was rearrested by security forces at her residence, which interrupted her essential medical treatment and recovery.¹³⁵ In its concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Human Rights Committee underlined the need to ensure proper conditions of detention compatible with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) and the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and

¹²⁶ See <https://scoda.org/استقلال-وکلاء-کانونهای-مدیران-خط-قرمز-مدیران-کانونهای-وکلاء> (in Persian); see also <https://hammihanonline.ir/بحران-انتخابات-اتحادیه-کانون-های-وکلاء-پیشنهادی-به-دیوان-عالی-کشور> (in Persian).

¹²⁷ See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/01/un-experts-urge-iran-respect-and-protect-lawyers>.

¹²⁸ Submission to OHCHR.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ See https://www.instagram.com/p/C2HUcMDK5cp/?igsh=aHlxdDdxNjgxejM1&img_index=2 (in Persian); see also <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67986227>.

¹³¹ See <https://www.en-hrana.org/update-on-fateme-sepehris-health-in-vakilabad-prison/>.

¹³² Report of the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran submitted to OHCHR (February 2024).

¹³³ See <https://www.en-hrana.org/update-on-fateme-sepehris-health-in-vakilabad-prison/>.

¹³⁴ See communication IRN 2/2024, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=28716>.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules), including with regard to the provision of medical attention when needed.¹³⁶

55. The Government asserts that Ms. Sepehri is being held in a newly renovated and well-equipped prison facility with three other inmates¹³⁷ and has been transferred to external medical centres on more than 50 occasions for surgery and to receive proper medical care and the necessary medication.¹³⁸

56. There are also concerns regarding Ms. Sepehri's lawyer, Khosrow Alikordi, known for representing journalists, activists and families of protesters. He was reportedly transferred to Vakilabad Prison on 17 February 2024 to serve a one-year prison sentence for "propaganda activities in favour of groups opposing the Islamic Republic system".¹³⁹ The Human Rights Committee emphasized, in its concluding observations, the need to ensure that lawyers could exercise their profession without reprisals.¹⁴⁰

57. The Secretary-General is concerned by ongoing reports of pressure by the authorities during the reporting period against families for seeking justice for their loved ones killed or executed in relation to the 2022 nationwide protests. Manouchehr Bakhtiari, whose son Pouya was killed during the November 2019 protests, was sentenced in January 2024 to 18 years in prison and 74 lashes on security-related charges. Reportedly, this is in connection with his advocacy efforts aimed at holding authorities accountable for the death of his son. He has been detained since July 2021.¹⁴¹ The Government noted that the initial sentence had been overturned on appeal due to jurisdictional errors, and that the case had been transferred to another branch for further adjudication.¹⁴²

58. On 17 December 2023, Masoumeh Yazdani, whose son was killed in the 2022 protests, commenced a 13-year prison sentence after being convicted of "insulting the Supreme Leader" and "activities against the Islamic Republic".¹⁴³ In early 2024, Bahareh Shiri and Farzaneh Barzekar, the mothers of protesters killed in 2022, were sentenced to six years and two years of prison respectively on various charges, including "inciting people to disrupt public security", "propaganda against the Government" and "insulting the Supreme Leader".¹⁴⁴ Mashallah Karami, whose son, Mohammad Mehdi Karami, was also executed in the context of the 2022 protests, has been detained for over five months on various charges including "membership in groups with the intention of acting against national security" and "propaganda against the State".¹⁴⁵ Masoud Shekari, whose son, Mohsen Shekari, was the first man to be executed in connection with the 2022 protests, was arrested on 27 February 2024 and subsequently released on 5 March 2024.

G. Human rights situation of minorities

59. OHCHR continued to receive reports documenting instances where individuals had been arrested, imprisoned, expelled from educational institutions or denied economic opportunities on the basis of their perceived affiliation with religious and/or ethnic minorities. In its concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Human Rights Committee expressed concerns regarding restrictions on and

¹³⁶ CCPR/C/IRN/CO/4, para. 34 (a).

¹³⁷ Government's comments on the draft of the present report.

¹³⁸ Report of the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran submitted to OHCHR (February 2024).

¹³⁹ See <https://iranhrs.org/خسرو-عليكردی-انتقال-به-زندان-وکیلاب/> (in Persian).

¹⁴⁰ CCPR/C/IRN/CO/4, para. 52 (c).

¹⁴¹ See <https://www.en-hrana.org/political-prisoner-manoochehr-bakhtiari-faces-extended-incarceration-and-corporal-punishment/?hilite=Bakhtiari>.

¹⁴² Government's comments on the draft of the present report.

¹⁴³ See <https://iranhrs.org/احضار-مادر-دادخواه-مهسا-یزدانی-به-زندان/> (in Persian).

¹⁴⁴ See <https://hengaw.net/en/news/archive/63719>.

¹⁴⁵ See <https://www.rferl.org/a/iran-father-executed-protester-detained-anniversary-amini/32561787.html>.

discrimination against members of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, including the Baluch, Ahwazi Arab, Kurdish and Baha'i minorities.¹⁴⁶

60. OHCHR received reports that, since October 2023, over 50 arrests and imprisonments had taken place in various cities, including Hamedan, Isfahan, Karaj, Shiraz and Yazd.¹⁴⁷ Over two thirds of those reported to have been arrested and detained were women. In addition, there are continuing concerns with regard to the right to education of Baha'i students. They are reportedly required to complete a mandatory form in order to sit national university entrance examinations requiring them to pledge not to take part in sectarian activities, which may have an impact on their right to freedom of religion or belief and their right to take part in cultural life.¹⁴⁸

61. At the time of writing, at least 17 Christians are reportedly detained with sentences of between three months and five years in connection with the peaceful exercise of their religion.¹⁴⁹ At least eight others have been sentenced for the same reason and await a summons while temporarily being released on bail.¹⁵⁰

H. Human rights situation of foreign and dual nationals

62. The Secretary-General acknowledges the release of five American-Iranian dual nationals in September 2023, including environmentalist Morad Tahbaz.¹⁵¹ However, concerns remain regarding the underlying basis for the detention of dual and foreign nationals, particularly those with backgrounds in sociopolitical, cultural, academic, environmental and journalistic fields. The Human Rights Committee expressed concern regarding the right to liberty and security of foreign and dual nationals being arbitrarily detained on the basis of national security charges, including charges that carry the death penalty.

63. Two dual nationals, German-Iranian Jamshid Sharmahd and Swedish-Iranian Ahmedreza Djalali, remain at risk of execution. Mr. Djalali has been arbitrarily detained since April 2016¹⁵² and faces a serious risk of execution. It was reported that an official from the judiciary visited Mr. Djalali in prison on 22 December 2023 warning him that his conviction and death sentence had been "confirmed" and would "soon be implemented".¹⁵³ Swedish national Johan Floderus is detained in the Islamic Republic of Iran on charges of *efsad fil-arz* for espionage, which could carry the death penalty.¹⁵⁴ His court verdict is yet to be reached.

III. Accountability and international human rights obligations

64. The Secretary-General welcomes the directive of 28 November 2023 entitled "Referring to international human rights conventions in judicial decisions", presented by the deputy head of the judiciary. The directive instructs judges to align their decisions with the international human rights obligations of the Islamic Republic of Iran.¹⁵⁵

65. The Secretary-General also notes the executive summary of the report of the Special Committee to Investigate the 2022 Unrest, published in March 2024,¹⁵⁶ pending publication

¹⁴⁶ CCPR/C/IRN/CO/4, para. 57.

¹⁴⁷ Submission to OHCHR.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ See <https://articleeighteen.com/news/14486/>.

¹⁵⁰ Submission to OHCHR.

¹⁵¹ See <https://www.reuters.com/world/us-allows-6-billion-transfer-part-iran-prisoner-swap-2023-09-11>.

¹⁵² For more information, see A/HRC/49/75, para. 27; and A/HRC/WGAD/2017/92.

¹⁵³ See <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/12/iran-arbitrarily-detained-swedish-iranian-academic-ahmadreza-djalali-at-grave-risk-of-retaliatory-execution/>.

¹⁵⁴ See <https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2023/12/10/3004314/swedish-citizen-appears-in-iranian-court-for-hostile-activities>.

¹⁵⁵ See <https://www.ekhtebare.ir/بخشنامه-استناد-به-کنوانسیونهای-بین-المللی> (in Persian).

¹⁵⁶ See <https://geneva.mfa.ir/portal/newsview/741579>.

of the full report. The Special Committee was tasked with investigating violations in the context of the 2022 protests.¹⁵⁷ Its findings indicate that 292 individuals are currently detained in the context of the September 2022 protests for “perpetrating violent criminal acts”. It also notes that the judiciary addressed more than 244 complaints by the public against law enforcement officers in connection with the protests and that disciplinary measures were imposed on 21 security personnel found culpable or negligent by the Law Enforcement Command. The Special Committee also noted that the Supreme National Security Council had decided that, in an initial phase, 122 individuals would be compensated as part of the directive of 2022 to compensate victims of the 2022 protests.¹⁵⁸ The Secretary-General also notes the recommendations provided by the Special Committee, which include training of law enforcement officers to ensure that they perform their legal duties effectively, efforts to bolster and advance the involvement of women and girls in the legislative and regulatory process, and putting in place parliamentary proposals concerning assemblies and demonstrations.

66. While these efforts towards accountability are welcome, the Secretary-General is concerned by the lack of clarity as regards the independence of the Special Committee, given the lack of transparency in regard to the process for selecting its members. While the Special Committee stated that it had taken measures to protect victims and witnesses by protecting their statements, it is unclear whether it implemented other protection measures to sufficiently guarantee a safe environment for victims and witnesses to engage with it. Although the Special Committee stated that it relied on domestic and international law in its methodology, it remains unclear how international human rights law was applied. The Special Committee also did not provide information about preventing future human rights violations and addressing long-standing human rights grievances.

IV. Cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Human rights treaty bodies

67. The Government has reiterated its commitment to engaging with international human rights mechanisms. At the time of the finalization of the present report, however, the reports of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities remained overdue. The Government submitted its combined fifth and sixth periodic reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in November 2023.

Special procedures and the independent international fact-finding mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran

68. The Secretary-General regrets that the Government denied the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the independent international fact-finding mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran access to the country during the reporting period, as well as its limited engagement with both mechanisms. The Secretary-General notes that there was some interaction between the Special Committee to Investigate the 2022 Unrest and the fact-finding mission,¹⁵⁹ as well as some interaction between the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva and some thematic special procedure mandate holders.

¹⁵⁷ See <https://geneva.mfa.gov.ir/files/mfageneva/geneva/Summary%20-%20EN.pdf>.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ A/HRC/55/67, para. 2.

69. Between 1 August 2023 and 31 March 2024, special procedure mandate holders issued 14 communications on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.¹⁶⁰ The Government replied to 12 communications.¹⁶¹

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

70. The Secretary-General welcomes ongoing dialogue between the Government and OHCHR and the regular information-sharing by the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Secretary-General also welcomes the mission conducted by the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Islamic Republic of Iran from 3 to 5 February 2024 to discuss critical human rights issues.

V. Recommendations

71. **The Secretary-General urges the Government:**

(a) **To immediately halt the execution of all individuals, including those sentenced to death in the context of protests, and for drug-related offences, and to refrain from further application of the death penalty;**

(b) **To abolish the death penalty and introduce an immediate moratorium on its use as a first step towards its prompt abolition, and to prohibit the execution of all offenders who were under the age of 18 at the time of the crime, in all circumstances, and commute their sentences;**

(c) **To release immediately all persons detained arbitrarily, including women and girls, human rights defenders, lawyers and journalists who were detained for legitimately exercising their rights to freedom of opinion, expression, association and peaceful assembly;**

(d) **To ensure that Internet shutdowns are never applied, as they inherently impose wide-ranging and disproportionate consequences on the people and the enjoyment of their basic human rights;**

(e) **To guarantee the right of peaceful assembly and ensure that security measures in relation to protests are carried out in line with international human rights norms and standards, including the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials and the United Nations Human Rights Guidance on Less-Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement;**

(f) **To uphold full respect for due process and fair trial rights in line with international norms and standards, by, inter alia, ensuring that all defendants, including those accused of crimes against national security, have effective access to legal counsel of their choosing during the preliminary investigative stage and all subsequent stages of the judicial process;**

(g) **To ensure prompt, transparent and effective investigations by an independent and impartial body into allegations of the excessive and lethal use of force and firearms when not strictly unavoidable to protect life, including during protests and in relation to deaths in custody, torture or other ill-treatment and inadequate prison conditions;**

(h) **To prosecute and hold accountable public officials, including law enforcement officials, for issuing orders or acting in breach of applicable international human rights law, and to make the findings of investigations public;**

(i) **To take further steps to eliminate all forms of gender-based discrimination and violence against women and girls in law and in practice, including revising and repealing laws and policies that criminalize non-compliance with compulsory veiling; and to urgently implement effective measures to respect and**

¹⁶⁰ See <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/LatestReports/CommunicationSent>.

¹⁶¹ See <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/LatestReports/RepliesReceived>.

protect their fundamental human rights, in accordance with international norms and standards, and advance their equal and safe participation in public life;

(j) To guarantee the rights to freedom of opinion and expression and of peaceful assembly, and to ensure that any limitation to rights offline and online complies with the established criteria under applicable international human rights law;

(k) To ensure that human rights defenders, lawyers, journalists, writers and labour rights activists are not harassed, detained or prosecuted for carrying out their legitimate work;

(l) To ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons do not face reprisals or harassment and are not arrested, detained or prosecuted for exercising their human rights;

(m) To protect the rights of all persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities, and to address all forms of discrimination against them without delay;

(n) To take all measures necessary to mitigate the effects of economic challenges and to meet its obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, including on the protection of at-risk groups;

(o) To join the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, and the fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organization;

(p) To submit the overdue periodic reports to the human rights treaty bodies, implement the recommendations of the international human rights mechanisms – the treaty bodies, the special procedures of the Human Rights Council and the universal periodic review, and cooperate with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the independent international fact-finding mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran, including by accepting visits by these mandate holders;

(q) To continue to engage with OHCHR and the United Nations country team in the implementation of all the recommendations made in the reports of the Secretary-General and those of international human rights mechanisms.

72. Noting the economic and financial challenges experienced by the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Secretary-General reiterates his call on States that have imposed unilateral sanctions on it to take appropriate steps to ensure that measures such as humanitarian exemptions are given prompt, broad and practical effect in order to minimize the adverse consequences.