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Iran: Authorities Unleash Wave of Oppression After Hostilities with Israel

Widespread Arrests, Executions, Charges Against Minorities

(Beirut) – [Iranian](#) authorities are waging a terrifying crackdown under the guise of national security in the aftermath of the June 2025 hostilities with [Israel](#), Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch said today. The deepening crisis underscores the urgent need for the international community to pursue concrete criminal accountability measures.

Since June 13, 2025, Iranian authorities have [arrested](#) over 20,000 people, including dissidents, human rights defenders, journalists, social media users, families of victims unlawfully killed in nationwide protests, and foreign nationals. Others targeted include Afghan, members of the Baluchi and Kurdish ethnic minorities, and members of the Baha'i, Christian, and Jewish religious minorities.

"As people struggle to recover from the devastating effects of the armed conflict between Iran and Israel, Iranian authorities are unleashing a terrifying crackdown," said Sara Hashash, deputy Middle East and North Africa regional director at Amnesty International. "The authorities' domestic machinery of repression remains unrelenting as they ratchet up already oppressive widespread surveillance, mass arrests and incitement to discrimination, hostility, and violence against minorities."

Security forces have killed people at vehicle checkpoints, including a 3-year-old girl. [Officials](#) and state-affiliated media have called for expedited executions, in some cases advocating a repeat of the [1988 prison massacres](#) in which senior officials ordered the summary and extrajudicial execution of thousands of political prisoners. At least nine men have been executed on [politically motivated charges](#) and/or [accusations of](#)

espionage for Israel, and an expedited parliamentary bill further expanding the scope of the death penalty is awaiting final approval.

“Since June, the human rights situation in Iran has spiraled deeper into crisis with Iranian authorities scapegoating and targeting dissidents and minorities for a conflict they had nothing to do with,” said Michael Page, deputy Middle East and North Africa director at Human Rights Watch. “Iranian authorities’ iron fist against a people still reeling from the impact of the war signals a looming human rights catastrophe, in particular for the country’s most marginalized and persecuted groups.”

The Iranian authorities must immediately establish a moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty, release all those arbitrarily detained, and ensure that all others held are protected from enforced disappearance and torture and other ill-treatment. Other countries should investigate and prosecute crimes under international law committed by the Iranian authorities under the principle of universal jurisdiction, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch said.

Sweeping Arrests and Alarming Calls for Expedited Trials and Executions

Gholamhossein Mohseni Eje'i, the Head of the Judiciary, announced on July 22 that heavy punishments, including the death penalty, awaited people who he said “had cooperated with Israel.” In an August 12 statement, Saeed Montazer Al-Mahdi, spokesperson for the police, announced that about 21,000 people had been arrested.

Senior officials have called for expedited trials and executions for “supporting” or “collaborating” with hostile states. State-affiliated media outlets have advocated for the repetition of 1988 prison massacres, including in a Fars News article, which states that “the mercenary elements ... deserve 1988-style executions.”

The judiciary has also announced the formation of special courts to prosecute “traitors and mercenaries.” Parliament has fast-tracked emergency legislation, pending final approval by the Guardian Council, that would expand the use of the death penalty, including for vaguely worded national security charges such as “cooperation with hostile governments” and “espionage.”

Detainees are at serious risk of enforced disappearance, torture and other ill-treatment, unfair trials, and arbitrary executions, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch said.

Intensified Repression of Ethnic Minorities

The authorities have also used the post-conflict climate as justification to further crack down on oppressed ethnic minorities.

Amnesty International documented that security forces in Sistan and Baluchestan province unlawfully killed two women from Iran's oppressed Baluchi ethnic minority during a raid on the village of Gounich on July 1. A primary source told the organization that agents fired metal pellets and live ammunition at a group of women, killing one, Khan Bibi Bamri, at the scene, and fatally injuring Lali Bamri, who later died in hospital. At least 10 other women were injured.

The agents offered contradictory justifications for the raid, claiming the presence of a "terrorist group," "Afghans," and "Israel." [Video footage](#) of the incident reviewed by Amnesty International shows uniformed Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) agents pointing firearms toward the women while repeated sounds of gunshots are heard.

On June 25, state media [announced](#) the arrests of more than 700 people across the country for alleged collaboration with Israel, listing Kermanshah and Khuzestan provinces, home to ethnic minorities, including Kurdish and Ahwazi Arabs, among those with the largest number of arrests. According to the [Kurdistan Human Rights Network](#), by July 24, the authorities had arrested at least 330 people from the Kurdish ethnic minority.

The authorities have also waged a [mass arrest and expulsion campaign](#) against Afghans, subjecting them to sweeping arrests and vilifying them in state media.

Crackdown on Baha'i, Christian, and Jewish minorities

The authorities have also used the securitized climate to intensify repression of religious minorities.

People from the Baha'i minority have been especially targeted through a coordinated state propaganda campaign of incitement to hostility, violence, discrimination, and disinformation, falsely accusing Baha'is as spies and collaborators for Israel. In a July 28, [statement](#), the Ministry of Intelligence described the Baha'i faith as a "Zionist sect." On June 18, [Raja News](#), affiliated with the IRGC, accused Baha'is of being "proxies and spies of Israel."

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch's research found that measures taken against Baha'is include arbitrary arrest and detention, interrogations, raids on their homes, confiscation of property, and closure of businesses.

In one example, an informed source told the organizations that the authorities arrested 66-year-old Mehran Dastoornejad during a raid on his home in Marvdasht, Fars province, on June 28 after beating him and confiscating his belongings. The authorities denied the lawyer appointed by his family access to him and information about his charges. He was

released on bail from Shiraz prison on August 6. Another source told Human Rights Watch that married couple Noyan Hejazi and Leva Samimi were arrested in Mazandaran province on June 25 and July 7, respectively, and denied access to a lawyer until their release on bail on August 3.

In late June, the Iranian authorities summoned and interrogated at least 35 members of the Jewish community in Shiraz and Tehran about their ties to relatives in Israel and warned against maintaining contact, according to [Human Rights in Iran](#), an organization based outside Iran.

Despite initial state media denials, in late July and early August posts on the Telegram Channel of a Jewish member of parliament, Homayoun Sameyeh Najafabadi, [confirmed](#) that members of Iran's Jewish community were arrested in three provinces and that several were tried before a Revolutionary Court in Tehran on unidentified charges. The posts indicated that those arrested in Tehran had charges related to espionage but that those charges were dropped.

The Ministry of Intelligence in a July 28 [statement](#) also accused sectors of the Christian community of being "Mossad mercenaries" with connections to Israel, and state media aired "confessions" of detained Christians on August 17, raising serious concerns they were extracted under torture. On July 24, a human rights group outside Iran [reported](#) the arrest of at least 54 Christians since June 24.

Use of Unlawful Lethal Force at Security Checkpoints

Vehicle checkpoints introduced since the June conflict have become another instrument of repression. The authorities have conducted invasive vehicle and mobile phone searches, arresting people for "collaborating" with Israel, often based merely on social media posts on their phones, according to state media reports. The checkpoints have also been used to arrest "unauthorized" nationals, a discriminatory terms authorities use to refer to Afghans.

On July 1, security forces in Tarik Darreh, Hamedan province, shot and killed two individuals and injured a third under the pretext that they were fleeing checkpoints, media reported. In a July 2 [statement](#), Hemat Mohammadi, the head of the Judicial Organization of the Armed Forces of Hamedan province, said an investigation was being carried but claimed that security forces fired on a vehicle that attempted to flee. Activists on social media identified the two men killed as Alireza Karbasi and Mehdi Abaei.

Based on state media reports and official statements, on July 17, security forces in Khomein, Markazi province, also shot and killed four members of a family traveling in two cars, Mohammad Hossein Sheikhi, Mahboubeh Sheikhi, Farzaneh Heydari, and a 3-year-old girl, Raha Sheikhi. Vahid Baratizadeh, the governor of Khomein [announced](#) that security forces had

shot at two “suspicious” cars. On August 12 a government spokesperson [announced](#) without any further details that several agents involved in the shooting had been arrested.

Based on statements by officials, there is no evidence that those shot and killed in these incidents posed an imminent threat of death or serious injury. Under international law, the use of potentially lethal force for law enforcement purposes is an extreme measure that should be resorted to only when strictly necessary in order to protect life or prevent serious injury from an imminent threat.

Associated documents

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Iran

Article on human rights violations by Iranian authorities against dissidents, ethnic minorities and other groups since hostilities with Israel in June 2025

[Iran : Vague de répression après les hostilités avec Israël](#) (Appeal or News Release, French)

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