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Briefing Notes Summary

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

Iran – January to June 2025

30 June 2025

13 January 2025

901 executions carried out in 2024

According to a statement released by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on 07.01.25, the number of people executed in Iran rose to 901 in 2024. This is the highest number recorded since 2015, when 972 people were executed; 853 people were executed in 2023.

Among those executed were 31 women, 19 of whom had been sentenced to death for murder because they had killed their partners due to domestic violence or after being forced into marriage.

Most of the executions, which included 12 women, were for drug-related offences, but dissidents and people connected to the 2022 protests held in the wake of the death of Jina Mahsa were also executed. According to the human rights organisation Hengaw, 13 of those executed were sentenced to death for political or religious activities or for alleged participation in the "Women, Life, Freedom" movement. According to Hengaw, more than half of those executed last year were members of ethnic minorities, including 183 Kurdish citizens.

According to the Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA), which focuses on human rights, as of 09.01.25, a total of 54 political prisoners are currently facing the death penalty.¹

Crackdown on ethnic minorities

According to media reports, at least 65 Kurdish citizens, including activists, environmentalists and former political prisoners, were arrested by agents of the Ministry of Intelligence (VAJA) in various cities, including Mahabad and Sanandaj, between December 2024 and early January 2025.

Reports indicate that many of the detentions were carried out by plainclothes agents without judicial warrants and involving physical violence. At the end of December 2024, for example, nine Kurdish citizens were allegedly arrested in Saqqez and Oshnavieh, whose current whereabouts remain unknown. Despite repeated attempts, families of the detainees have been unable to obtain any information about their loved ones' location, charges, or condition.

Furthermore, human rights organisations have reported that security forces arrested a total of 21 members of the Arab minority at the beginning of January 2025. Twelve people were arrested in Ahvaz on 08.01.25. The arrests were reportedly made while house searches were being conducted without an arrest warrant and the detainees are said to have been taken to unknown locations. In addition, two Sunni Arab Iranians are said to have been arrested in Ahvaz because of their religious activities.

In addition, according to press reports, at least 38 Baluch residents were arrested in raids in the city of Zahedan on

07.01.25. Details about the whereabouts of those arrested, the reasons behind their arrest and the charges brought against them remain unclear.²

20 January 2025

Freedom of the press: journalist sentenced to one year in prison

According to a media report issued on 15.01.25, a researcher and editor-in-chief of a Tehran-based research magazine was sentenced to one year in prison in Karaj (Alborz province).

In addition, the 36-year-old who is of Kurdish descent also received a two-year ban on online activities. The report refers to information provided by a Norway-based human rights organisation that campaigns for the interests of Kurds in Iran. According to the report, the defendant was charged in 2024 with spreading propaganda against the Islamic Republic after being temporarily arrested and released on bail.³

Protest against the death sentence for a Kurdish activist

According to media reports, several Kurdish activists gathered in the city of Sanandaj (Kordestan province) on 15.01.25 to protest against the confirmed death sentence of the well-known social worker and activist Pakhshan Azizi. Videos on social networks showed demonstrators holding up pictures of the defendant and chanting slogans demanding, among other things, an end to all executions and the immediate release of political prisoners. There were no reports of any confrontations with the security forces in attendance.

Pakhshan Azizi, who has been imprisoned in Tehran's Evin Prison since 2023, was convicted on several charges in July 2024 for alleged membership of opposition groups and armed rebellion against the state. In addition to a four-year prison sentence, the sentence also includes the death penalty (cf. BN of 30.09.24). The judgment was upheld by the Supreme Court on 09.01.25.

According to human rights organisations, the activist was denied access to a lawyer during the trial. She was also denied family visits.⁴

Two controversial Supreme Court judges assassinated

According to media reports, two judges were shot dead in Iran's Supreme Court building in Tehran on 18.01.25. The gunman, who had been employed in the building, reportedly acted alone. He committed suicide immediately after the attack. At least two other people were injured in the attack. The offence has been described as a terrorist attack in pro-government media.

The judges who were assassinated were reportedly two well-known high-ranking clerics who were primarily responsible for crimes against national security, such as espionage and terrorism. They were allegedly also responsible for numerous convictions of individuals critical of the government and opposition activists, and for confirming the death sentences of members of opposition groups in 1988. Both men had previously been targeted in assassination attempts.⁵

27 January 2025

Two young women arrested after dancing at a war memorial

According to media reports released on 24.01.25, two young women were arrested in Tehran after posting a video of themselves dancing on social media.

The video clip reportedly showed them dancing on the grounds of a cemetery near a memorial dedicated to anonymous war victims. According to the police, the women had disregarded the sanctity of the site and violated Islamic rules with inappropriate clothing and movements. The defendants' social media channels have been blocked. It was not reported whether any charges had been brought against the women.⁶

Arab activists arrested

According to media reports released on 21.01.25 and 22.01.25, multiple civil rights activists of Arab origin were

arrested in the province of Khuzestan, including in the cities of Ahwaz, Shadegan, Ramshir, Shushtar, Khorramshahr and Susangerd.

In some cases, police officers are said to have physically assaulted those arrested. The public prosecutor's office in Ahwaz has confirmed that more than 180 people were arrested. The reasons for the arrests were not reported. Several human rights organisations outside Iran have said the incidents constituted a systematic campaign waged by the Iranian leadership against the predominantly Arab population in the region.⁷

Baha'i women commence prison sentence

According to media reports released on 23.01.25 and 25.01.25, thirteen women belonging to the Baha'i faith community were arrested in Isfahan (Isfahan province).

The women were reportedly taken to a local prison on 22.01.25 to begin serving the prison sentences imposed on them. An appeals court had previously sentenced each of them to five years' imprisonment and imposed additional penalties such as fines and travel restrictions. Eleven of the women were reportedly arrested without prior judicial notice.

According to the latest report published by Human Rights Watch (HRW) on the global human rights situation, a disproportionately high number of Baha'i women were affected by reprisals by Iranian authorities in the year 2024. According to the Baha'i International Community (BIC), two thirds of imprisoned Baha'is are women. Members of the religious community have reportedly been charged with and sentenced for engaging in propaganda activities against the government and Islamophobic educational activities, among other things.⁸

Ninety-six Iranian Christians convicted in 2024

According to a recent report issued by Christian human rights organisations, a total of 96 Christians were sentenced to several years in prison in Iran in 2024. Compared to 22 sentenced the previous year, this represents a huge uptick that can be attributed to an increase in the number of arrests made in the second half of 2023. The number of unreported cases is also said to be higher.

According to the report, the charges and convictions were all related to the faith or religious activities of the individuals concerned.⁹

03 February 2025

Travel ban imposed on well-known film actress

According to a report published in a US entertainment medium on 30.01.25, the well-known Iranian film actress Soheila Golestani has been banned from leaving the country. This prevented her from serving on a jury at the International Film Festival in Rotterdam. In 2024, she took on a leading role in the Oscar-nominated film "The Seeds of the Sacred Fig Tree" by Iranian director Mohammad Rasoulof. Presumably due to her role in the film, the actress has been accused of engaging in propaganda activities against the Iranian government and promoting immoral behaviour. The film uses a fictional narrative to address the nationwide wave of protests in 2022.

The film director Mohammad Rasoulof, who is currently residing in Germany, had been sentenced to eight years in prison and was slapped with additional penalties in May 2024 on charges of making public statements and film productions that were critical of the government (cf. BN of 13.05.24).¹⁰

Fifty-seven kolbars (porters) killed and 282 injured in 2024

According to a report issued by a Kurdish human rights organisation based in Norway, a total of 57 Iranian kolbars were killed and 282 wounded in 2024. This marks a two percent increase from the previous year's tally. Kolbars transport untaxed goods for traders across often impassable terrain and mountainous borders, especially between Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan Region and Iran.

During the period under review, more than 80 percent of the people affected were reportedly killed or injured by direct fire from Iranian border guards. At least one man was killed by Iraqi border guards and three others were injured. Most of the incidents occurred in the region around the city of Sanandaj (Kurdistan province) and in the border region of Nowsud (Kermanshah province).

According to the human rights organisation, the phenomenon of carrying goods and loads has become the only means of gainful employment for many male members of the Kurdish population in the economically disadvantaged region. The main reason for this is allegedly the security policy the Iranian government has been pursuing against the Kurdish population for decades.¹¹

10 February 2025

Death penalty: 87 executions in January 2025

A Kurdish news portal based in Iraq reported on 01.02.25 that at least 87 prisoners were executed in Iran in the month of January 2025. That represents a 17 percent increase compared to the number of death sentences carried out in the same month last year

Several members of ethnic minorities were among the prisoners sentenced to death, including 17 Kurds, 10 Lors and four Baluchis. Human rights organisations consider the use of the death penalty to be one of the Iranian government's means of repressing members of ethnic minorities, such as people of Kurdish and Baluch descent.¹²

Reports of reprisals against environmental activists

According to a statement issued by a human rights organisation set up by Iranians living in exile in the USA on 03.02.20, an environmental activist in Darreh Shahr (Ilam province) was sentenced to two years in prison in January. The man was allegedly accused of spreading propaganda against the government and insulting the revolutionary leader, among other things. A total of 11 environmental activists were reportedly arrested in 2024. The reasons for the arrests were not reported.

According to a media report issued on 31.01.25, two Kurdish environmental activists were recently arrested in Saqqez (Kurdistan province). This is part of a wave of arrests of people from the Kurdish population in the provinces of Kurdistan and West Azerbaijan.

The respective reports cannot be independently verified.¹³

Increase in nationwide divorce rate

According to media reports released on 02.02.25, the latest figures from Iran's Civil Registration Organisation show an increase in the nationwide divorce rate. According to these figures, around 39 percent of all registered marriages ended in divorce in the first seven months of the Persian calendar year 1403 (as of 20.03.24, according to the Gregorian calendar). In the capital Tehran, divorce rates have reached 52 percent.

The number of marriages fell by 46 percent between 2010 and 2023. Economic factors, youth unemployment and a change in socio-cultural attitudes were cited as reasons for the decline in marriages.¹⁴

17 February 2025

Students protest after fatal robbery of a fellow student

According to media reports, students gathered on the university campus on 15.02.25 and 16.02.25 to protest against inadequate security measures following the alleged robbery and murder of a student attending the University of Tehran on 12.02.25. The students clashed with security forces. Four people were released after being briefly detained.¹⁵

Individuals arrested after call for a protest rally in Tehran

According to media reports, several people were arrested on 12.02.25 following a call for a protest gathering in the centre of Tehran. Marking the 14th anniversary of the day on which house arrest was imposed on leaders of the former political opposition, known as the Green Movement, several hundred people gathered at the main entrance to Tehran University for a "silent rally" that had been called for a couple of days earlier. According to eyewitness reports and videos circulating on social media, an increased presence of security forces around the University of Tehran was observed. Several people were arrested, including three anti-government activists who are said to have

initiated the gathering. Other people were blocked by security forces from leaving their homes in order to prevent them from taking part in the rally.

In 2009, the result of the presidential election led to mass demonstrations, which the Iranian leadership put a violent end to with the help of security forces. Three former leading figures of the Green Movement have been under continuous house arrest since 2011.¹⁶

Isolated anti-government protests in the Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province

According to media reports, isolated night-time protests took place in the city of Dehdasht (Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province) on 12.02.25. A number of people had reportedly gathered in the city's main square to demonstrate against persistent power cuts, rising food prices and air pollution, among other things. Some demonstrators are said to have chanted slogans against the Iranian government. An eyewitness reported that security forces used tear gas and gunfire to disperse the crowds. According to various reports, between four and six people were arrested. Media reports say videos shared on social networks show corresponding rallies in Dehdasht, but the time of the recordings cannot be verified. It is said that shared video material often includes footage of protests dating back to 2022.¹⁷

24 February 2025

Jaish al-Adl claims responsibility for attacks on administrative facilities in Sistan and Baluchestan

According to media reports issued on 22.02.25, the armed group Jaish al-Adl (Army of Justice), which is considered to be separatist, claimed responsibility for the attack on a building belonging to the local housing foundation in the city of Chabahar (Sistan and Baluchestan Province). On 22.02.25, the building was partially destroyed when a sound bomb exploded. No casualties were reported. In a statement, Jaish al-Adl cited the role the facility played in the displacement of the Baloch population as the reason for the attack.

According to media reports, the Director General of the Housing Foundation in the city of Zahedan (provincial capital of Sistan and Baluchestan) was the target of a gun attack in connection with the blast.

Jaish al-Adl also claimed responsibility for this attack and justified it by saying that it wanted to hold government bodies accountable for the demolition of houses and the confiscation of land belonging to the Baloch people.

Jaish al-Adl is classified as a terrorist organisation by the Iranian government. Among other things, the group carried out several attacks on security forces in the province of Sistan and Baluchestan in 2024 (cf. BN of 16.09.24, 28.10.24 and 11.11.24).¹⁸

Death penalty: at least 975 death sentences carried out in 2024

According to a joint report published by two European-based human rights organisations on 20.02.25, at least 975 death sentences were carried out in Iran in 2024. This represents an increase of 17 percent compared to the previous year (2023: 834 executions). Only 95 executions were officially announced by the Iranian authorities.

At least 503 people were executed for drug-related charges and around 419 for murder charges. At least 31 people were executed for security-related charges. Twenty-two death sentences were carried out for rape charges.

The people executed included at least 31 convicted women, 80 convicted Afghan nationals and one juvenile offender. A total of four death sentences are said to have been carried out in public spaces.

According to media reports, at least 649 people sentenced to death for murder charges were forgiven by the families of the murder victims during the reporting period. From the point of view of human rights organisations, this can at least be seen as a positive sign of a reduction in the death sentences. Overall, however, the report points to an increase in state-ordered executions.¹⁹

03 March 2025

Temporary arrest of a singer at a concert in Tehran

According to media reports issued on 01.03.25, the well-known singer Hiva Seyfizadeh was temporarily arrested by security forces during a live performance in Tehran on 27.02.25 and released again after paying bail. Quoting information provided by concertgoers, it was reported that after the end of the first piece of music, masked security

forces dressed in civilian clothes had stopped the concert. According to a director of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, the woman was arrested for singing solo without authorisation. In the meantime, the content of the artist's Instagram account was reportedly deleted and replaced with a notice saying the police had ordered the blocking of her account and issuing a warning.²⁰

Five-year-old child killed by shots presumably fired by police officers

According to media reports issued on 27.02.25, a five-year-old boy was killed in the city of Iranshahr (Sistan and Baluchestan province) after shots were fired at his family's vehicle. The boy's mother, who was pregnant, was also said to have been injured. Baluchestan human rights channels reported, citing eyewitness reports, that local police had opened fire at the family's vehicle. No explanation has been provided regarding the reason for the shooting. The police commander of the province of Sistan and Baluchestan, however, stated that the shots had been fired by as yet unidentified individuals. He said a police inquiry would be launched into the incident.²¹

Imprisoned teacher sentenced to three years in prison

According to a report issued by an Iranian-Kurdish human rights organisation based in Norway on 24.02.25, a retired teacher and activist who is currently imprisoned in Tehran has been sentenced to three years in prison. The charges against the 55-year-old included accusations of propaganda through collaboration with anti-regime groups and membership of opposition groups. The accused was arrested by security forces in August 2024 and spent around two months in solitary confinement in Tehran's Evin Prison. At the end of 2024, she was transferred to the prison's women's ward. It is reported that the woman had previously been arrested and sentenced for her civil activities.²²

Reprisals against organisers of online dating events

According to media reports issued on 24.02.25, fifteen people have been summoned, arrested or cautioned by security authorities for allegedly organising blind date events on social media. They claim several online platforms known for such events, some of which have over one million followers, have been blocked by Iranian authorities due to what they describe as criminal content contrary to public decency. According to Iranian police forces, the crackdown follows numerous complaints from families about social, cultural, and moral damage. The online content in question, which is mainly published on large international online platforms and is only accessible via technical circumvention services (VPNs) due to the official ban in the country, is attracting widespread interest, particularly among the young population.²³

10 March 2025

Four injured during labour protest in Takab (West Azerbaijan Province)

According to media reports issued on 06.03.25, four men participating in a workers' trade union gathering in Takab on 04.03.25 in front of the city administration building were injured. Security forces allegedly beat up a number of people and fired shots into the air.

The four injured individuals were reportedly discharged from the local hospital after receiving medical treatment. The workers are said to have been protesting against unpaid wages.²⁴

Announcement of criminal proceedings for hijab offences after journalists' guild awards ceremony

The Persian-language edition of BBC News reported on 08.03.25, citing information provided by the Iranian judiciary, that several people had been charged with failure to observe the Islamic dress code after an awards ceremony organised by the journalists' guild in Tehran on 06.03.25. The event is said to have been attended by female guests who were not wearing the obligatory headscarf (hijab), including a former journalist who accepted her award without wearing a headscarf.

According to judicial sources, legal action has been taken against all those involved in organising the event and those who took part without wearing headscarves.²⁵

Flogging sentence imposed on convicted musician carried out

According to media reports issued on 06.03.25, corporal punishment involving 74 lashes was carried out against the

well-known protest singer Mehdi Yarrahi. His lawyer had announced that the sentence against the musician had been administered, ending the criminal proceedings against her client.

In 2022, the musician released a song in which he encouraged women in Iran to remove the obligatory headscarf. According to media reports, he was sentenced based on the content of the lyrics. However, a pro-government news agency reported that the sentence was not imposed and enforced because of the singer's music, but rather for possession and consumption of alcohol.

The carrying out of the flogging sentence against the singer had caused outrage and elicited expressions of solidarity within Iran and internationally. The well-known human rights activist Narges Mohammadi described the execution of the sentence as revenge by the Iranian leadership for the support the singer has shown Iranian women.²⁶

17 March 2025

Activist sentenced to two years in prison

According to a report published by a human rights organisation based in the US on 11.03.25, a man imprisoned in Tehran has been sentenced to two years in prison for engaging in political activities. The conviction was based on charges of assembly and collusion against national security.

The man is said to have been arrested in February 2025 during a gathering in front of Tehran University (cf. BN of 17.02.25) and was taken to the local Evin prison. It is reported that the man has a history of previous arrests and convictions related to his political activism.²⁷

Religious minorities: reprisals against Christian converts

According to reports issued by a Persian-language news portal that represents the interests of Christian converts in Iran, a Christian convert arrested in February 2025 was released from temporary detention in the city of Babol (Mazandaran province) on bail equivalent to around EUR 37,000 and was subsequently charged.

The woman was reportedly arrested on 06.02.25 by security forces who raided a gathering of Christian converts. According to unconfirmed reports from a Christian-based human rights organisation, the woman has been charged with gathering, collusion and propaganda against the regime.

According to media reports issued on 10.03.25, two Christian converts were also sentenced to prison terms of 10 and 15 years, respectively, and were slapped with additional penalties such as bans on leaving the country and fines. The two men were reportedly arrested in Tehran in November 2024 for allegedly founding a house church. They had been released on bail following their arrest. A Christian human rights organisation reported on 10.03.25 that, in addition to the two men, a 37-year-old woman had also been sentenced to 15 years in prison on charges relating to her Christian faith. None of the information can be independently confirmed.²⁸

24 March 2025

Isolated arrests in the context of Persian New Year celebrations

According to media reports issued on 23.03.25, several individuals who took part in the nationwide celebrations for the Persian New Year (Nowruz) were arrested on 21.03.25.

In at least three provinces, including Fars, Khorasan Razavi and Kurdistan, isolated arrests were made, according to the respective local public prosecutor's offices. The reasons for this reportedly include offences such as insulting and disrupting public order and violating Islamic norms. Anti-government slogans are said to have been chanted at historical sites during some ceremonies. Video footage circulating on social media showed women taking part in the celebrations without wearing the obligatory headscarf. The public prosecutor of Kurdistan province reportedly announced that the individuals detained were protest leaders who had been spreading propaganda against the regime and had links to groups and organisations without, however, defining them in detail.

A Kurdish human rights organisation based in Norway reported on 24.03.25 that at least 41 people had been arrested in the province of Kurdistan, including six minors. The information cannot be independently verified.

The Nowruz celebrations belong to the most important cultural events in Iran and other countries in the Middle

East. According to the Iranian constitution, they do not require official authorisation. Nevertheless, the government is endeavouring to curb the celebrations through measures such as summonses, threats and temporary arrests, particularly in provinces with a Kurdish population. The reasons for this are mainly seen in the pre-Islamic tradition of the festival.²⁹

Freedom of the press: prison sentences imposed after anti-regime reporting

According to a report issued by a Kurdish human rights organisation based in Norway on 17.03.25, five journalists, two women and three men, have been sentenced to prison terms of varying lengths. The charges were based on accusations such as spreading anti-government propaganda, gathering and conspiracy against national security. The defendants are said to have been sentenced to between three months and around three-and-a-half years in prison. The journalists were reportedly accused of criticising government corruption and officials' misconduct in relation to the Metropol building collapse incident that occurred in Abadan (Khuzestan province) in 2022.

On 23.05.22, the collapse of a high-rise building in the city of Abadan was reported, in which more than 43 people were killed and 37 were injured. Government officials were later accused of corruption in connection with the incident. The accident sparked local protests (cf. BN of 30.05.22).³⁰

31 March 2025

UN notes increase in human rights violations

On 12.03.25, a report by the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Iran was released, criticising the human rights situation and highlighting, in particular, the rise in executions, systematic discrimination against women and the oppression of minorities in 2024.

According to the UN Special Rapporteur, over 900 death sentences were carried out, the highest number since 2015. Human rights organisations said at least 975 executions were carried out in 2024 (cf. BN of 24.02.25). According to the report, women and ethnic minorities were particularly affected. Furthermore, the report says a lack of transparency in the justice system violates fundamental human rights, in particular, the right to a fair trial. The report highlighted that over half of the executions were related to drug offenses, prohibited under international law. In addition, executions of minors were also recorded, in violation of international human rights law.

With regard to the situation of women, the report states that Iran ranks 121st out of 193 countries in the UN Development Programme's (UNDP) gender inequality index. In Iran, for example, the report highlights gender-specific dimensions of human rights violations, including the disproportionate effect of discriminatory legal frameworks especially against women and girls in all aspects of life: from child marriage to marriage, divorce, inheritance, and access to justice. The report also reveals an increase in femicides. At least 179 women were victims of violent crimes in 2024 with many of these murders being categorised as so-called "honour killings", which are often carried out by male family members.

According to the report, minorities such as Kurds, Baluchis and Baha'is also continue to face repression. Although Baluch people make up only 2 to 4 percent of the population, they account for up to 13 percent of executions.

The crackdown on dissidents was also criticised. Activists and journalists are reportedly being deliberately persecuted, imprisoned and sometimes held in inhumane conditions.³¹

Further arrests in the context of Nowruz events

According to a Kurdish human rights organisation based in Norway, the Nowruz events, which have been taking place since 21.03.25, are ongoing, and participants are still being arrested (cf. BN of 24.03.25).

In the city of Sanandaj in Kurdistan province, for example, two civil rights activists, a man and a woman, were arrested by security forces without a warrant in their homes for participating in the Nowruz festivities. The two individuals were taken to an undisclosed location, according to the human rights organisation, and their families have been given no information about their condition or whereabouts. A man from the city of Bukan, who was arrested by agents of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Intelligence Agency on 25.03.25, is said to have suffered a similar

fate. His arrest is said to be directly linked to his participation in Newroz celebrations. His whereabouts also remain unknown.³²

07 April 2025

58 people executed in March 2025

According to foreign media reports, at least 58 prisoners were executed in March 2025.

A Kurdish Norway-based human rights organisation has confirmed the identities of all 58 executed prisoners. Four women were among those executed. Three of them had been convicted of murder, and one of drug-related offences. A majority of the executions were related to drug offences, which accounted for 52 % of the cases. The other executions were primarily linked to premeditated murder charges, accounting for 48 % of all executions.

According to press reports, state media and judiciary did not officially report any of these executions. Moreover, four executions were conducted secretly. This meant that the families were not notified, nor were any final visits allowed.³³

Christian converts arrested

According to a Norway-based Kurdish human rights organisation and an NGO based in England which represents the interests of Christians in Iran, two Christian convert brothers were each sentenced to four years in prison back on 05.01.25, plus five years of deprivation of social rights, for “propaganda against the government through promotion of Christianity”. They were furthermore banned from residing in Isfahan Province and each sentenced to two years of exile in Ardal County, located in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province. The two brothers were originally arrested on 22.12.21 during a Christmas gathering in a house church in Fuladshahr, and later released on bail.

According to a report by the NGO based in England, all in all 96 Christians were sentenced in 2024 to a total of 263 years’ prison. According to the report, in 2023 22 Christians were sentenced to 43.5 years’ imprisonment. The increase was said to be partly due to the rise in the number of arrests in the second half of 2023, which then needed to be processed in court.³⁴

14 April 2025

Amnesty’s 2024 annual report: Iran accounted for 64 % of all death sentences carried out globally

According to a report from the human rights organisation Amnesty International (AI) of 08.04.25, Iran accounted for 64 % of all 1,518 executions recorded globally for 2024, with 972 death sentences being carried out. The figure in Iran is said to have risen by 119 cases, and therefore by roughly 14 %, in comparison to the previous year 2023.

The report states that executions were only recorded in 15 countries worldwide in 2024. After China and Iran, the largest number of documented executions is said to have been recorded in Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Yemen. According to AI, Somalia came sixth on the list, followed by the USA, Egypt, Singapore and Syria.³⁵

Film-makers convicted

According to media reports of 07.04.25, the acclaimed film directors Maryam Moghadam and Behtash Sanaeeh themselves state that they have each been sentenced to 14 months behind bars and a fine.

The film-makers are said to have been accused of propaganda against the Islamic Republic. An additional one-year sentence each is also said to have been imposed on charges of producing obscene content, also applying to film producer Gholamreza Mousavi. The respective sentences are said to have been suspended for five years on probation.

The two directors gained international renown with their latest film production (Engl. title *My Favorite Cake*). Iranian authorities had complained that the film amongst other things showed women without mandatory hijabs, and contained scenes with relationships between unmarried couples.³⁶

28 April 2025

Execution of a Kurdish detainee for alleged participation in the murder of security forces

According to media reports of 21.04.25, the death sentence has been carried out on a 40-year-old Kurdish detainee. The man is said to have shared responsibility for the killing of eight border forces in the Chaldoran border region in the northwest (West Azerbaijan province) in 2017. He had also been accused of being a member of the PKK and of engaging in armed rebellion.

The case is said to have involved some legal irregularities. Relatives of the accused stated that he had submitted a confession under torture, but had been innocent. According to information from the Persian edition of BBC News, the convict's lawyer had stated that there had been evidence rebutting the man's guilt.

According to a report by a Norway-based human rights organisation, the man had been sentenced to death and executed without observing minimum fair trial standards. Neither the family nor his lawyer had been notified of the time of the execution.³⁷

Alleged testing of new surveillance technology in Isfahan

According to the recently-published report of a UK-based online portal which lobbies for Internet freedom in Iran and the Middle East, Iranian authorities in the city of Isfahan are said to be testing new technologies for telecommunications surveillance, presumably for the purpose of compliance with the compulsory hijab. Amongst other things so-called International Mobile Subscriber Identity (IMSI)-Catchers, contactless card readers and municipal surveillance cameras are being used, according to the reports. IMSI-Catchers operate by impersonating telecom towers, and can track and intercept mobile phone communications. This is said to enable surveillance authorities to connect with mobile devices of targets, such as women who do not wear a hijab in public, and retrieve their mobile numbers. In connection with contactless card readers and surveillance cameras, according to the report, a multi-layered surveillance tool is said to be created – in conjunction with possible access to government databases and the cooperation of telecom operators – for monitoring hijab compliance, amongst other things. Testing of such measures appears so far to be limited to Isfahan, a city which is regarded as being predominantly conservative.

A new draft Chastity and Hijab law, which provided for a tightening up of punishments for violations of hijab compliance for women, was blocked in September 2024 by Iran's Supreme National Security Council, and never came into force.³⁸

05 May 2025

Alleged Israeli spy executed

According to media reports, Iran carried out the death sentence on a 34-year-old detainee on 30.04.25. According to a statement by the state news agency Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), the executed person had allegedly spied for Israel and assisted in the May 2022 assassination of a colonel in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard (IRGC). He was furthermore said to have played a role in a January 2023 drone attack on an industrial centre linked to the defence ministry in Isfahan. He was also said to have been involved back in 2011, at the age of 20, in the murder of a Brigade general of the IRGC who had established the Iranian missile programme. He is furthermore said to have met twice with senior Mossad intelligence officers in Georgia and Nepal.

A foreign-based press agency focussing on human rights violations in Iran reported on 28.04.25 that the condemned man had made three separate requests for a retrial, all of which had however been rejected. According to the press agency, he had had a final visit in prison with his parents on 29.04.2025. His father subsequently stated that his son had not had a fair trial, and that the case had been riddled with inconsistencies and legal flaws. The executed person had furthermore been reportedly forced to make confessions during his detention, according to

another source who it was said was close to him. According to press reports, the executed person had also been kept in solitary confinement for up to a solid 43 days. The UN definition regards solitary confinement in excess of 15 days as torture.

Amnesty International (AI) stated in its annual report on the state of human rights published on 29.04.25 that Iran had arbitrarily executed hundreds of people in the period examined. The authorities are furthermore said to have used the death penalty as a tool of political repression against protesters, dissidents and ethnic minorities.³⁹

12 May 2025

Jailed poet and environmental activist sentenced to death

According to a report by a Norway-based Iranian human rights organisation of 06.05.25, well-known Iranian poet and environmental activist Peyman Farahavar has been sentenced to death in prison. He stands accused of armed rebellion and “waging war against God”. The man is additionally said to have received a three-month prison term for propaganda against the government. The convict is said to have been accused of expressing criticism of government institutions and officials in his publications, amongst other things over environmental damage and structural irregularities in Gilan province. He was arrested by force in September 2024 in Rasht (Gilan province) and detained in the local Lakan Prison. Referring to information from the man’s family, his health is said to have deteriorated considerably while in detention. The convict is said to have previously been detained because of his publications and engagement in criticism of authorities.

The PEN Centre Germany writers’ association expressed its criticism of the death sentence in a press release of 08.05.25.⁴⁰

Femicide: woman killed by husband in street attack

According to a media report of 08.05.25, an Iranian teacher was killed by her husband in a street attack in Sabzevar (Razavi Khorasan province). The woman was the mother of three children, and is said to have been living separately from her husband and to have filed for divorce shortly before the attack. The exact reason for the deadly attack was however unknown. The murder victim is said to have previously submitted complaints to the local education department against her husband, who is also employed in the education sector, citing instances of violence and threats on his part. No protective measures had been taken in response to this.

The information on the case is based on a report from a Norway-based human rights organisation, and cannot be verified via other sources.⁴¹

19 May 2025

Execution of inmate who was a minor at the time of the offence

According to media reports, a 20-year-old was executed at Malayer central prison on 13.05.25 for a murder that he had committed when he was 16 years old. The executed person from Hamadan province had been convicted of killing a friend during a fight.

No official announcement regarding the execution had been made by state media or judiciary-affiliated news outlets.

According to a report by an Iranian Norway-based human rights organisation, at least five juvenile offenders were executed in 2024. These individuals had been under the age of 18 at the time of their crimes, but had been sentenced to death and subsequently executed.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by the majority of countries worldwide, explicitly guarantees the fundamental rights of children, including the prohibition of severe and inhumane punishments such as the death penalty for individuals aged under 18. Iran acceded to the Convention with a reservation.⁴²

Hormozgan: several days of raids involving violent clashes

According to press reports, raids and violent clashes took place in Hormozgan province from 10.05. to 13.05.25 between security forces and residents of the municipality of Bandar-Kalahi.

The raids started on 10.05.25 with the deployment of security forces and special units because local people had

been accused of fuel smuggling. There was also disruption of internet access during the raids. Fishing equipment and motorcycles were destroyed in the raids which were allegedly used in smuggling; homes were stormed without court warrants and some destroyed, and the majority Baloch residents who demonstrated against the actions of the security forces were met with violence. According to media reports, some homes had also been looted by security forces. According to information from an Iranian Norway-based human rights organisation, dozens of persons, including women and minors, were wounded and detained.⁴³

26 May 2025

16 femicides in April and May 2025

According to a media report of 21.05.25, 16 women were killed by male relatives across the country in April and May 2025. The killings spanned several cities such as Mashhad, Kermanshah and Firouzabad. Some of the women had been killed by their husbands. Others had been killed by other relatives. One of the murder victims for instance wanted to leave her older husband whom she had been forced to marry, whereupon she and her mother, who had supported her, were killed by the daughter's husband.

Rights activists attribute the deaths to a combination of patriarchal attitudes and inadequate legal protection for women. Most of the women had been murdered because they had refused to enter into forced marriages or had attempted to leave abusive, violent relationships. An attempt was for instance also made by the husband's family in one case to justify the wife's murder by accusing her of immoral conduct. The information cannot be verified via other sources.⁴⁴

So-called hijab law suspended

According to media reports of 25.05. and 26.05.25, the National Security Council has officially suspended the enforcement of the "Law to promote chastity and hijab". Parliamentary speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf stated that the Security Council had instructed lawmakers not to enforce the law for the time being, and that this decision of the Security Council had overriding authority under the constitution.

The law, which had already been passed by parliament, had provided for tougher punishments for breaches of the dress code, which for instance includes a mandatory hijab for women. The punishments included fines, exclusion from public services, and imprisonment in cases of repeat offences. The law was originally intended to come into force in late 2023, but had been postponed several times.

President Massoud Pezeshkian, who is regarded as a moderate, is also among the critics of the law. He has warned that enforcing it might trigger fresh unrest similar to that which followed the death of Jina Mahsa Amini in police custody in September 2022. Conservative parliamentarians however continue to call for the law to be enforced, and lament the influence of western values.

According to statements made by women's rights activists in January 2025, despite its official suspension, provisions contained in the law were nonetheless being informally enforced. Women were for instance being harassed because of their dress in educational facilities, public authorities and public life, or had been subjected to verbal and physical attacks.⁴⁵

02 June 2025

Truck drivers on strike across the country

According to media reports of 30.05. and 31.05.25, truck drivers have been on strike since 22.05.25, with eleven drivers having been arrested in Kermanshah province. On 29.05.25, another truck driver had been detained in the city of Behbahan.

The movement, which began in the port city of Bandar Abbas, has expanded across the country, and is gaining support from the public as well as from trade unions and dissidents. The strike has expanded to encompass more than 130 cities in at least 30 provinces, making it one of the most extensive labour protests in recent years.

The primary drivers of the strike include increased insurance premiums, government plans to reduce subsidised

diesel allocations, and a proposed rise in fuel prices. The government's proposed fuel price increase, from approximately 0.04 USD (roughly 0.035 EUR, as of: 02.06.25) to nearly 0.50 USD (roughly 0.44 EUR) per litre by late June has been a further flashpoint, with truckers warning that such measures would force many out of work. Iran has a history of protests rooted in economic mismanagement. Demonstrations in 2017 and 2018 began over local economic issues, but escalated into broader anti-Islamic republic unrest. In 2019, the government's removal of a gasoline subsidy triggered nationwide protests, leading to over 1,000 arrests.⁴⁶

Alleged Israeli spy executed

According to press reports of 28.05. and 30.05.25, a man who was arrested in 2020 has been executed. He was reported to have been executed for spying for Israel and "acquiring wealth through illegitimate means." Human rights groups said that the case was filled with fundamental flaws and based on confessions made under duress. He had for instance been sentenced to death by the revolutionary court on charges of "corruption on Earth". That sentence had however been overturned by the supreme court three times before the latter had confirmed it on the fourth attempt.

On 27.05.25, human rights organisation HRW published a report on executions in Iran. The report told of at least 113 executions having been carried out in the first 25 days of May 2025. A total of 478 people had been executed in the current year up to 27.05.25 according to a Norway-based human rights organisation, corresponding to a 75 % increase in executions compared with the same period in the previous year.⁴⁷

16 June 2025

Major Israeli strike on Iranian nuclear and military facilities as well as civilian buildings

According to media reports of 13.06. and 16.06.25, the Israeli army has flown several waves of airstrikes against Iranian targets since the night of 12.06. to 13.06.25. The attacks targeted amongst other things nuclear facilities, military bases, defence and missile positions, airports, oil refineries and natural gas fields, but also urban residential complexes. According to Israeli sources, several targets had been attacked in the cities Teheran, Tabriz, Kermanshah, Arak, Isfahan, Natanz, Fordo and Mashhad. According to Israeli head of government Netanyahu, the central facility for enriching nuclear material in Natanz had been destroyed. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) had also previously stated that an aboveground part of the Natanz nuclear enrichment complex had been destroyed.

Several military facilities and civilian buildings in the capital Teheran were attacked, including two residential complexes in the northern districts of Farahzad and Saddat Abad. According to the Iranian government, civilians had also been killed or injured in the attacks. According to Iran's health ministry, as of 16.06.25 at least 224 people had been killed across Iran and another more than 1,200 injured, most of whom were civilians, since the Israeli strikes began.

According to information from the Israeli military, senior members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and of the regular Iranian armed forces had been killed in the attacks, including IRGC commander-in-chief General Hossein Salami, chief of staff of the regular armed forces Mohammad Bagheri, as well as his deputy Gholamali Rashid and IRGC intelligence chief Mohammad Kazemi. Iranian media also confirmed the deaths of several nuclear scientists, including persons said to have played a leading role in developing the Iranian nuclear programme. The military leadership had already been replaced by successors.

After revolutionary leader Ali Khamenei announced on 13.06.25 that retaliation would be taken on Israel, Iran flew drone and missile attacks on the Israeli cities of Tel Aviv and Haifa, amongst others. The airstrikes on Iranian targets are to continue, according to the Israeli government.

According to media reports, the Israeli attacks have caused considerable disquiet among the Iranian population, which reportedly led on 15.06.25 to gridlocked roads in the capital and queues at petrol stations leading out of the city. Iranian media have since announced that Metro stations and mosques would be available as shelters.⁴⁸

Reprisals against Iranian relatives of BBC journalists

According to a report by British news broadcaster BBC News of 02.06.25, there had been an escalation of intimidation against relatives of BBC journalists living inside Iran who reported from outside Iran. Relatives in Iran

were reportedly confronted with random interrogations, travel bans, passport confiscations and asset seizure threats. Staff - both in the United Kingdom and in other countries - had also not been able to return to Iran. Some of the media workers outside Iran had also been directly targeted with violence and threats aimed at pressuring them to abandon their work.

The Iranian government reportedly denied all such allegations, and instead accused the BBC of spreading false information to encourage a coup d'état.⁴⁹

Violent clashes in local protest against mine in Dehkahan (Kerman province)

According to a report from the Persian-language edition of BBC News, clashes are said to have broken out between security forces and protesters in the city of Dehkahan on 10.06.25.

The local protests are said to have been against the commissioning of a chromite mine and fears of its impact on the environment and on the health of the population. Security forces are said to have used paintball ammunition and teargas against some protesters, whilst eyewitnesses report of an unknown number of detentions.⁵⁰

Civil activist and two retirees given prison sentences

According to a report from a Norway-based Kurdish human rights organisation of 05.06.25, a 64-year-old civil activist from the city of Qorveh (Kordestan province) has been sentenced to 13 months' imprisonment. The woman was reportedly convicted of propaganda against the government, spreading false information and disturbing public opinion because of her outspoken criticism of local irregularities such as drug trafficking and corruption. Ten months out of the total 13-month sentence were to be served. The activist had previously been summoned, interrogated and charged after expressing criticism of local governance.

According to a further report of the above human rights organisation of 12.06.25, two retirees in the city of Ahvaz (Khuzestan) had each been sentenced to two years in prison in 2022 for taking part in retirees' protests. One of the men had previously been briefly arrested by security forces in 2024 following protests by workers and retirees in Ahvaz, and later released.

The reports cannot be confirmed via other sources.⁵¹

Conviction and reprisals against members of the Baha'i faith

According to reports of a Kurdish human rights organisation of 10.06.25, six members of the Baha'i religious minority were each sentenced to ten months in prison in Alborz province in May 2025 on charges of propaganda against the government. In addition to the prison terms, they were each banned from leaving the country for two years. The convicts had initially been charged in Karaj (Alborz province) in July 2024, and later released on bail and surety pending trial.

According to a media report of 12.06.25, there had been further reprisals against Baha'i on 08.06.25 in Yazd (province of the same name). Security forces reportedly searched the homes of four members of the Baha'i faith and seized personal belongings such as books and valuables from the persons affected.

The reports cannot be confirmed via other sources.⁵²

Afghanistan / Iran / Pakistan

Returns of Afghan nationals from Iran and Pakistan

According to the governor of Tehran province, Mohammad Sadegh Motamedia, an estimated 800,000 undocumented Afghan migrants currently living in Tehran province are considered to be in the country illegally, and thus face arrest and deportation.

The comment followed recent statements by Iran's interior ministry spokesperson, who said that up to four million Afghan nationals (including two million whose registration documents had expired) were expected to leave Iran by 06.07.25 (cf. BN of 02.06.25). Iranian authorities have detained more than 660 undocumented persons in the southeastern city of Zahedan in this context. The operation falls under a larger government initiative known as the "Social Security Promotion Plan", which Iranian authorities say is aimed at combating organised crime and public

disorder. According to the UNHCR, more than 632,000 Afghan migrants returned from Iran in the first five months of 2025.

Returns from Pakistan also continue unabated. Media have reported that the Pakistani interior ministry has announced plans to step up its deportation campaign as part of the “Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Program”. The ministry also issued a renewed stern warning that anyone helping illegal foreigners, for instance by employing them, providing them accommodation or conducting business with them, would face legal action.⁵³

23 June 2025

US airstrike on Iranian nuclear sites and ongoing Israeli airstrikes on Iranian targets

According to media reports of 22.06. and 23.06.25, the USA bombed Iranian nuclear sites in Fordo, Natanz and Isfahan in the night from 21.06. to 22.06.25. The US administration initially announced the total obliteration of the sites; the US joint chiefs of staff however did not confirm this. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the precise extent of the damage, in particular at the site in Fordo, could not yet be determined. There was however no radiation risk for the areas affected.

According to media reports of 19.06., 20.06. and 23.06.25, the Israeli military itself states that it has flown further airstrikes in Iran. These are said to have included attacks on targets in Teheran, Tabriz (East Azerbaijan province), Rasht (Gilan province), Kermanshah, and other regions in the country, including military facilities for the production of missiles, satellites and radar equipment, airports, a nuclear research facility, as well as an inactive heavy water reactor near Arak (Markazi province). According to Iranian media, an ambulance was hit in an Israeli attack in Isfahan province, killing at least three people.

According to Iran’s health ministry, more than 400 people had been killed and another more than 2,000 injured, most of whom were civilians, since the Israeli airstrikes started (cf. BN of 16.06.25). A US-based press agency focussing on human rights violations in Iran puts total Iranian victim numbers at 865 fatalities and 3,396 injuries, including civilians and military personnel (as of: 22.06.25). The respective information cannot be independently confirmed.⁵⁴

State internet blackouts make communication and reporting difficult

According to media reports of 20.06.25, the Iranian population in the affected regions had been warned via the internet platform X prior to the strikes to get to a safe place with regard to Israel’s latest airstrikes, citing Israeli sources. It appears questionable whether such warnings reached people on the ground at all, since there have been ongoing internet blackouts across the country since 18.06.2025, with Iranian authorities completely blocking connectivity in some cases. According to reports from an organisation for the observation of internet blackouts, the Iranian population had been largely cut off from global communication, apart from a few VPN services that were being used to circumvent the blackouts.

According to Iranian authorities, the internet blackouts continue to be necessary due to the national communication network being abused by enemy forces for military purposes and to place the Iranian population at risk. According to media reports, the restricted data transmission is also causing less information as well as fewer videos and reports on the current situation in Iran to reach the outside world, thus making reporting more difficult overall.⁵⁵

Alleged collaborator with Israel executed, further arrests

According to a media report of 23.06.25, a man has been executed because of allegations of working for Israeli intelligence. According to the Iranian judiciary, the man is said to have led a cyber team affiliated with Israel’s Mossad intelligence service and to have worked for an Iranian news portal operating in exile. Another man is said to have been sentenced to death in Isfahan for collaborating with unfriendly foreign countries and for espionage, and immediately executed.

According to media reports of 18.06. and 19.06.25, Iranian security authorities are said to have initiated a wave of arrests targeting alleged spies and collaborators with Israel in connection with the Israeli airstrikes on Iran. This is said to have involved dozens of apprehensions. According to Iranian media, at least 18 people had been arrested in the northeastern city of Mashhad (Razavi-Khorasan province) for allegedly manufacturing and operating drones.

The detainees are said to have been illegal immigrants, presumably of Afghan origin. Eight people had been arrested in the central Iranian city of Yazd (province of the same name), and five more people in Lorestan province, with Iranian authorities claiming that they had disseminated false reports and disturbed public opinion through articles on the web. According to an Iranian media report of 16.06.25, Iran's chief justice Eje'i had threatened to sentence people in summary proceedings who were accused of cooperation with Israel or with foreign intelligence services. Such accusations are punishable with the death penalty under Iranian criminal law.⁵⁶

30 June 2025

End of fighting between Israel and Iran

According to media reports of 24.06.25, both Iran and Israel have agreed to a ceasefire since 13.06.25, which has so far held, after carrying out several days of airstrikes on one another.

According to information from the Iranian health ministry, more than 620 people had been killed and another 5,332 wounded in Iran since the start of the Israeli airstrikes, also including 71 people who were reportedly killed in an Israeli attack on Tehran's Evin prison on 23.06.25. A US-based human rights network, by contrast, puts the victim numbers in Iran at least 1,054 dead and 4,476 wounded, including civilians and members of the military (as of 27.06.25). The respective figures cannot be independently confirmed.

According to media reports of 26.06.25, Iranian airspace had only been partially reopened once the ceasefire came into effect. International airspace over Tehran's Imam Khomeini airport remained closed. Shops had gradually begun to reopen in the capital Tehran, which had been targeted by Israeli airstrikes until the ceasefire came into force, with traffic returning to the streets, and work had begun on clearing up destroyed infrastructure.⁵⁷

State crackdown on alleged anti-government activities

According to media reports of 26.06.25, the Iranian government is said to have stepped up internal security measures to prevent anticipated anti-government activities. According to information from an international news agency, this had involved arrests, executions and a greater military presence on the streets, and the setting up of checkpoints in border regions in the country. The measures were said to be focussing on alleged activities on the part of Israeli intelligence, ethnic separatists and the People's Mujahideen Organisation (MEK), an exiled opposition group which had carried out attacks within Iran in the past. They were also said to focus on potential internal unrest, particularly in the country's predominantly Kurdish provinces. There had been no sign yet of any anti-government protests.

According to information from a US-based Iranian human rights organisation of 23.06.25, at least 705 people had been arrested on security charges since the start of the Israeli airstrikes. Media reports state that the latest arrests had focussed on Kermanshah, Isfahan, Khuzestan, Fars, Lorestan, Gilan and Tehran provinces. Several of those arrested have reportedly been accused of spying for Israel. At least six death penalties are said to have been so far carried out in this context.

Furthermore, according to the BBC's Persian news site, there have been reports of Iranian intelligence agencies sending warning texts calling on recipients to cease visiting social media pages related to Israel, otherwise they would face prosecution.

According to media reports of 29.06.25, the Iranian parliament approved a law tightening up punishments for alleged Israeli spies and collaborators. Amongst other things, this is said to include using Starlink satellites to connect to the internet. The bill is still to be confirmed by the guardian council, a body composed of clergy and jurists and headed by the supreme leader.⁵⁸

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