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**Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights
situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives**

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 [77/228](#), in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its seventy-eighth session on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution, including options and recommendations to improve its implementation. Accordingly, the report contains information on the patterns and trends with regard to the situation of human rights, the progress made in the implementation of resolution [77/228](#) and recommendations to improve the human rights situation.

* The present document was submitted for processing after the deadline for reasons beyond the control of the submitting office.



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [77/228](#) on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its seventy-eighth session on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution. It covers the period from 1 August 2022 to 31 July 2023.

2. The report contains information from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and non-governmental and media organizations, as well as submissions received by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). It also draws on observations of United Nations human rights mechanisms. The present report should be read in conjunction with the interim report of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, submitted at the fifty-third session of the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/53/23](#)).

3. The Government continued to engage with OHCHR and United Nations human rights mechanisms during the reporting period. The Secretary-General acknowledges the comments provided by the Government in response to the present report. However, substantive engagement on the State's obligations under international human rights law remained limited and the level of implementation of the recommendations of international human rights mechanisms remained low.

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

A. Death penalty and arbitrary deprivation of life

4. During the reporting period, executions were carried out at an alarming rate. According to information received by OHCHR, between 1 January and 31 July 2023, at least 419 people were executed, including 409 men and 10 women. This represents a 30 per cent increase in the number of executions compared with the same period in 2022 (323). Of the total number of executions, more than half (239) were reportedly for drug-related offences. This marks a 98 per cent increase in executions for drug-related offences compared with the same period in 2022 (121). In 2022, it is estimated that 1,206 individuals were sentenced to death. Of those, it is estimated that 582 people were executed and at least 624 individuals sentenced to death for *qisas* (retribution in kind) crimes were forgiven by the families of the victims, which resulted in the death sentence not being carried out. The estimated number of executions in 2022 increased by 75 per cent compared with 2021, during which 333 people were reportedly executed.

5. Individuals from minority communities continue to be overrepresented in the number of executions, in particular for drug-related crimes. According to information received by OHCHR, 20 per cent of the persons who were executed during the first six months of 2023 were from the Baloch ethnic minority, in particular for drug-related and security-related charges.¹ In 2022, one third of those executed were from the Baloch ethnic minority. During the first six months of 2023, six Afghan nationals were executed, representing a threefold increase compared with the same period the previous year.

¹ The Government, however, stated that individuals from the Baloch ethnic minority accounted for 6 per cent of total executions during the same period.

6. While three alleged child offenders were executed in 2022, there were no reports of executions of child offenders between 1 January and 31 July 2023. Only one alleged child offender had his death sentence postponed for three months, in case an agreement was reached with the plaintiff's family.² Branch 3 of Criminal Court One in Fars Province had convicted him of murder and sentenced him to death on 13 January 2020 for allegedly stabbing a classmate during a fight in 2018, when he was 17 years old, and the verdict was upheld by the Supreme Court in June 2020.

7. Seven men were executed in relation to or for their involvement in the nationwide protests during the reporting period, including 30-year-old Majid Kazemi, 37-year-old Saeed Yaghoubi and 36-year-old Saleh Mirhashemi, who were executed in Dastgerd prison in Isfahan Province on 19 May 2023. They were convicted for participating in the killing by gunshot of two Basij officers and one police officer in Isfahan Province on 16 November 2022 during the protests. However, the charges against the defendants did not explicitly accuse them of "murder". On 8 January 2022, the men were convicted of *moharebeh* (enmity against God)³ by the Isfahan Revolution Court. Although they appealed the verdict, the Supreme Court upheld their death sentences on 6 May 2023. Furthermore, in connection with their involvement in the protests, Mohsen Shekari, Majidreza Rahnavard, Mohammad Mehdi Karami and Seyed Mohammad Hosseini were convicted of *moharebeh* and *fesad fil-arz* (spreading corruption on earth) and executed between December 2022 and January 2023. In all seven cases, information received by OHCHR consistently indicated that the judicial proceedings did not fulfil the requirements for due process and a fair trial under international human rights law. Access to adequate and timely legal representation was frequently denied, with reports of coerced confessions, which may have been obtained as a result of torture.⁴ Their confessions were also broadcast on State television. Article 14 (3) (g) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights specifies that everyone has the right not to be compelled to testify against oneself or to confess guilt and article 7 prohibits the use of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

8. At the time of writing, at least seven men were allegedly considered at risk of execution, some of whom were from minority communities, in connection with the nationwide protests. They had been convicted of *moharebeh*, *fesad fil-arz* and *baghy* (armed rebellion against the State). The Government stated that all death sentences handed down to individuals in connection with the protests had been commuted to prison terms or overturned by the Supreme Court for retrial. No further information was provided on those individuals.

9. On 8 May 2023, two men were executed at Arak prison in Markazi Province following their conviction for blasphemy-related charges. In 2021, the Arak Criminal Court sentenced the men to death for "insulting the Prophet",⁵ reportedly in connection with views expressed on a widely used messaging application,⁶ and for burning a copy of the Qur'an.⁷ In his message on the occasion of the International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief, the Secretary-General noted that freedom of religion and belief is an inalienable human right.

² Submission to OHCHR.

³ Article 279 of the Penal Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

⁴ Submission to OHCHR.

⁵ Article 513 of the Penal Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

⁶ Human Rights Watch, "Iran: alarming surge in executions", 12 May 2023. Available at www.hrw.org/news/2023/05/12/iran-alarming-surge-executions.

⁷ Information from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

B. Arbitrary detention and prison conditions

10. The Secretary-General remains alarmed by the large-scale arrests and detentions carried out by security forces, targeting protesters and those who expressed support for the protests. According to information received by OHCHR, between 17 September 2022 and 8 February 2023, it is estimated that 20,000 individuals were arrested for participating in the protests. It is particularly concerning that most of the individuals arrested may have been children, given that the reported average age of those arrested was estimated to be 15 years, according to the Deputy Commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.⁸ The Government stated that children arrested during the protests were either released on bail or transferred to “specialized care centres”. Minorities continue to constitute a significant number of those detained. From 16 September 2022 to 23 May 2023, at least 2,129 Kurdish protesters (including 1,829 men and 300 women) were reportedly detained by security forces.⁹ From 30 September 2022 to 31 January 2023, at least 93 Baloch individuals, including 15 children, were also arrested in the context of the protests. Information on whether they have been released remains undisclosed by the authorities.

11. There were reported instances of disproportionate and excessive use of force against protesters, as detailed in the interim report of the Secretary-General (A/HRC/53/23), and of ill-treatment during arrest, as well as serious allegations of physical and psychological abuse and physical violence during detention, including beatings, and gender-based violence, including sexual violence.¹⁰

12. The Government stated that “a minimum of” 22,000 individuals arrested during the protests had been pardoned.¹¹ It remains challenging to ascertain how many were arrested in the context of the protests and how many were actually released. The Government also stated that over 90,000 individuals detained, not in connection with the protests, had also been pardoned.

13. The Secretary-General is deeply alarmed, however, that a number of the individuals pardoned received judicial summons as a result of new charges or, in some cases, charges that were not disclosed to the individual concerned, or that they were rearrested, including women activists, journalists and individuals belonging to minority groups. In February 2023, the Kurdish freelance journalist Nazila Maroufian was reportedly pardoned after being detained since 30 October 2022 on national security charges, under a two-year prison sentence, in connection with her interview with Jina Mahsa Amini’s father. On 4 July 2023, however, security forces reportedly raided and searched her home and seized her personal belongings without a warrant.¹² Four days later, she was allegedly summoned for questioning at the court in Evin prison, after which she was detained on charges allegedly not disclosed to her at the time, possibly in connection with photographs of her appearing unveiled when she was initially released.¹³ The Government stated that she was charged at the Prosecutor’s Office in Tehran for “inciting corruption, promoting prostitution and orchestrating a propaganda campaign against the State”.

⁸ See www.irna.ir/news/84904665/ - غفلت از به دلیل - غفلت از (in Farsi).

⁹ Submission to OHCHR.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ The decree applied to individuals who were arrested, detained or prosecuted, including those involved in the nationwide protests.

¹² Reporters without Borders, “Rearrests of two pardoned journalists shows that any freedom in Iran is conditional”, 12 July 2023. Available at <https://rsf.org/en/rearrests-two-pardoned-journalists-shows-any-freedom-iran-conditional>.

¹³ Submission to OHCHR.

14. On 15 March 2023, labour rights activist Sepideh Gholian was rearrested within 24 hours of her release from Evin prison.¹⁴ On 6 May 2023, Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolution Court sentenced her to two years in prison for “insulting the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran”, pursuant to article 514 of the Penal Code, and banned her from joining political or social groups, restricted her mobile phone usage and banned her from entering Tehran and neighbouring provinces for two years.¹⁵ In July 2023, the Court of Appeals of the Tehran Revolution Court upheld the sentence. These cases raise serious concerns regarding intimidation by the authorities to restrict freedom of expression.

15. The continued denial of adequate medical care in detention remains a serious concern. Reports received indicate that the health of the 69-year-old German-Iranian rights activist, Nahid Taghavi, has significantly deteriorated in prison.¹⁶ She has been held at Evin prison since she was detained in 2020 and is serving a sentence of seven years and six months after being convicted on national security charges. In its opinion No. 54/2022 of 29 November 2022, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention stated that Ms. Taghavi had faced an “alleged denial of medical care” (A/HRC/WGAD/2022/54, para. 91). The Government, however, stated that Ms. Taghavi had been to the prison hospital for regular visits and had also been transferred to external hospitals 52 times, including to Shohada hospital and Taleghani hospital. The Working Group also considered that the deprivation of Ms. Taghavi’s liberty was arbitrary and noted that she required medical treatment that reportedly could not be administered in Evin prison and called upon the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to ensure her immediate unconditional release. Furthermore, there have been alarming reports of deaths in detention, often due to torture, negligence or inadequate medical care by the authorities. According to information received by OHCHR, a 31-year-old Ahwazi Arab activist died in detention a few days after his arrest by security agents in Ahvaz in September 2022 for his alleged participation in the protests. His family was reportedly contacted to collect his body on the condition that no funeral or mourning ceremony was held for him. Prison officials claim that he suffered a heart attack, but his family insisted that he did not have a heart condition.¹⁷ The right not to be arbitrarily deprived of life is a fundamental and universally recognized right enshrined in article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In its general comment No. 36 (2018), the Human Rights Committee remarked that “the duty to protect the life of all detained individuals includes providing them with the necessary medical care” and “regularly monitoring their health” (para. 25).

16. According to information received by OHCHR, overcrowding in prisons remains an ongoing concern, in particular following the large-scale arrests in the context of the protests. Prisons located in areas with minority populations are reportedly the most affected. While the Government stated that all detention facilities used during the protests were official and subject to judicial oversight, OHCHR received reports that, as a result of overcrowding in prisons in Kurdistan Province, in particular following the nationwide protests, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps resorted to using non-official detention facilities, including basements and houses, to detain protesters. According to testimonies analysed by OHCHR, there are serious allegations that torture and sexual abuse, or threats thereof, are being carried out by

¹⁴ Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, “Iranian activist Gholian rearrested hours after release from Evin prison”, 16 March 2023. Available at www.rferl.org/a/iran-activist-gholian-rearrested-hours-after-release-evin/32321387.html.

¹⁵ Front Line Defenders, “Sepideh Gholian sentenced to an additional fifteen months in prison”. Available at www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/sepideh-gholians-two-year-prison-sentence-confirmed-and-dormant-case-reopened-against-her.

¹⁶ Submission to OHCHR.

¹⁷ Ibid.

prison guards in those facilities. Individuals detained in those facilities, including women, were allegedly held in solitary confinement for up to a week.¹⁸

C. Freedom of opinion and expression

17. The authorities continued to apply a strict national security approach to justify restrictions on the right to freedom of opinion and expression, online and offline. Speaking before judicial officials on 27 June 2023, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran called on the judiciary to “eliminate dissenting voices” from online spaces.¹⁹ He also called on the judiciary to tighten control over cyberspace. This development is particularly concerning given that it risks further constraining an already heavily controlled and restricted digital space in the Islamic Republic of Iran. A number of social media applications remain blocked, with the latest ban affecting a newly established and widely used social media application. Disruptions to the Internet continue to be reported, including the curbing of the Internet speed.²⁰

18. The Secretary-General is concerned about reports of the surveillance of online spaces. On 27 April 2023, a political activist was arrested at his home and his electronic devices were confiscated days after participating in a virtual round table on a social media platform. He was released on bail three days later. His trial took place on 10 July 2023, at Branch 29 of the Tehran Revolution Court. He was charged with “gathering and colluding against the country’s security by participating in the dialogue meeting to save Iran”. At the time of writing the present report, no information was available on the verdict of the Court. In June 2023, five men and two women were reportedly arrested for composing a poem on the same platform.²¹ The specific charges against them have not been made public. The increased control over online spaces may result in greater self-censorship and stifle independent and diverse voices, in particular among women and girls.

19. Between 16 September 2022 and 31 March 2023, 17 journalists, including 9 men and 8 women, were reportedly detained in connection with the protests.²² In May 2023, the authorities proceeded with the closed trial of journalists Elahe Mohammadi and Niloofar Hamed. The journalists were detained in late September 2022 and charged with “conspiracy and rebellion against national security” and “anti-State propaganda”. They have been detained in Evin prison and Qarchak prison for women. Niloofar Hamed published a photograph of Jina Mahsa Amini’s parents in hospital with their daughter while she was in a coma and was among the first to report on Ms. Amini’s death. Elahe Mohammadi was arrested following her coverage of Ms. Amini’s funeral in her home town of Saqqez. Both journalists did not reportedly have access to their lawyers before their trials commenced.²³ In his interim

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ See <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=53222> (in Farsi).

²⁰ Article 19, “Iran: Supreme Leader orders judiciary to further restrict online freedoms”, 6 July 2023. Available at www.article19.org/resources/iran-supreme-leader-orders-judiciary-to-further-restrict-online-freedoms/.

²¹ Hengaw Organization for Human Rights, “Seven civil activists engaged in clubhouse platform have been detained in Tehran”, 26 June 2023. Available at <https://hengaw.net/en/news/2023/06/seven-civil-activists-engaged-in-clubhouse-platform-have-been-detained-in-tehran>.

²² Reporters without Borders, “Iran: RSF alerts on renewed wave of heavy-handed arrests targeting journalists”, 16 May 2023. Available at <https://rsf.org/en/iran-rsf-alerts-renewed-wave-heavy-handed-arrests-targeting-journalists>.

²³ Reporters without Borders, “RSF denounces sham trials of journalists Niloofar Hamed and Elahe Mohammadi in Iran”, 26 May 2023. Available at <https://rsf.org/en/rsf-denounces-sham-trials-journalists-niloofar-hamed-and-elahe-mohammadi-iran>.

report on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Secretary-General expressed concerns regarding their arbitrary detention (A/HRC/53/23).

20. In July 2023, a court in Tehran banned the editor-in-chief of *Etemad* newspaper from any press activities for one year. He was accused of “publishing false content” in connection with articles related to the nationwide protests, following a complaint lodged against him by the Tehran branch of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps.²⁴ The Secretary-General reiterates that, as stated in general comment No. 34 (2011) of the Human Rights Committee, “journalists should not be penalized for carrying out their legitimate activities”, including their coverage of the protests (para. 46).

21. The Secretary-General is further alarmed by actions²⁵ against individuals who are perceived to be critical of the State’s compulsory veiling policies. On 15 July 2023, actor Mohammad Sadeghi was arrested after he spoke on a social media platform defending the rights of women to choose how they want to dress.

D. Economic and social rights

1. Poverty, increased inequalities and cost of living

22. The Islamic Republic of Iran continued to experience high inflation coupled with a significant decrease in the value of the Iranian rial relative to the United States dollar.²⁶ Poverty and unemployment levels have concurrently increased. According to official figures of the Statistical Centre of Iran, from March to June 2023, unemployment in the Islamic Republic of Iran stood at 8.2 per cent. According to International Monetary Fund estimates, however, the unemployment rate was higher, standing at 9.8 per cent as at April 2023, which represents a 0.6 per cent increase compared with 2022.²⁷ According to an official report published in May 2023 by the Majlis Research Centre, which is the official research branch of the Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Majlis), the number of individuals living below the poverty line increased by 11 million between March 2011 and March 2021. The Majlis Research Centre further asserts that, in 2020, it is estimated that 30.4 per cent of the urban and rural population were living under the poverty line. The figure is estimated to be higher in rural areas (35.6 per cent) than in urban areas (28.8 per cent).

23. During the reporting period, high inflation led to a significant increase in the price of basic commodities. According to the Statistical Centre of Iran,²⁸ inflation increased from 44.8 per cent in October 2022 to a peak of 55.5 per cent in April 2023 and fell to 39.4 per cent in July 2023. According to information received, there are significant concerns over ongoing water and environmental mismanagement, which may affect food security in the country.²⁹ The significant increase in the country’s urban population, which is currently estimated to account for 75 per cent of the total population, has created further significant challenges and placed strain on the economy and the environment. These challenges include increased pollution, urban poverty, high energy consumption and a growing demand for essential infrastructure. In this regard, the Secretary-General reiterates the importance of assessing the human rights impact of the increase in the urban population in the context of significant

²⁴ See www.rferl.org/a/iran-bans-journalist-behzadi-etemad-editor/32525639.html.

²⁵ See www.bbc.com/persian/world-66172691 (in Farsi).

²⁶ At the time of publication, 1 United States dollar was equivalent to 42,000 Iranian rials, based on the exchange rate published by the Gold and Currency Exchange Centre of the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which was equivalent to the official rate. However, the exchange rate was higher in official exchange offices.

²⁷ See www.imf.org/external/datamapper/profile/IRN.

²⁸ See www.amar.org.ir/ (in Farsi).

²⁹ Submission to OHCHR.

economic challenges. A wide range of human rights, including the right to adequate housing, health, a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, water and food are negatively affected, in particular as a result of the increased use of highly polluting fuels such as mazut, given the limited accessibility to cleaner sources of energy owing to sanctions. Minorities and other vulnerable groups are the most affected by the worsening economic conditions owing to existing structural inequalities, as detailed in the interim report of the Secretary-General ([A/HRC/53/23](#)).

2. Sanctions

24. Since the onset of the nationwide protests in September 2022, additional sanctions have been imposed on the Islamic Republic of Iran by both the European Union and the United States of America. Notwithstanding most sanctions being lifted by the European Union or expiring upon the conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in 2015, the European Union imposed restrictive measures on 200 Iranian individuals and 37 entities for human rights violations committed in the context of the protests.³⁰ Similarly, the United States has further imposed sanctions over the past year, in particular against individuals and entities for the commission of similar violations. Sanctions have been imposed on Iranian State actors responsible for the wrongful detention of United States nationals in the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as on officials for serious human rights violations in the context of the protests and for Internet censorship.³¹ More than 40 individual sanctions have been imposed since September 2022.³²

25. While some exemptions were put in place, the Secretary-General reiterates his concern that the complex regulatory process, limited access to non-sanctioned banking services, shortages of foreign currency and overcompliance by potentially affected third parties have limited humanitarian transactions ([A/HRC/43/20](#), para. 54, and [A/74/273](#), para. 62). It remains concerning that significant restrictions on the Iranian banking sector have had an adverse impact on the health sector and the delivery of humanitarian aid ([A/75/287](#), para. 45).

26. The shortage of life-saving and specialized medication continues to be reported, in particular for asthma, cancer and multiple sclerosis patients, as well as those who suffer from other inherited diseases, such as epidermolysis bullosa, thalassemia, haemophilia, ichthyosis, certain forms of diabetes and heart disease.

3. Situation of Afghan migrants and refugees

27. The Islamic Republic of Iran continues to host one of the largest populations of migrants and refugees in the world, in particular from Afghanistan. In 2022, the Government undertook a headcount of all undocumented Afghan nationals in the country, including those who had arrived after the Taliban takeover on 15 August 2021.³³ As at 30 June 2022, more than 2.6 million undocumented Afghans were registered with the authorities and issued laissez-passer in order to provide them with a form of temporary protection against refoulement. Those registered were also included in the annual statistical report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) denoting their possible need for international protection.³⁴ Up until 2022, more than 780,000 refugees were registered with UNHCR, 762,000 of whom were Afghans and 18,000 Iraqi nationals. The

³⁰ See www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/iran/timeline-iran-eu-restrictive-measures/.

³¹ See www.state.gov/iran-sanctions/.

³² Ibid.

³³ See <https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/irn>.

³⁴ UNHCR estimates that more than 40 per cent of those trying to cross the border are returned by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Government reported that, of the 2.6 million Afghans who had participated and obtained a headcount slip, approximately 1 million had arrived after August 2021. The validity of headcount slips was systematically extended until 20 April 2023.³⁵ In addition, more than 99 per cent of all registered Afghan refugees live in urban centres, while 1 per cent live in 20 settlements run by the Government. More than 750,000 Afghan refugees possess *Amayesh* cards, which provide registered refugees temporary work permits, access to education and health services.³⁶ Following the 2022 headcount exercise, no further announcements were made on the extension of the 2022 headcount slips. According to UNHCR, the Government is implementing a unified ID scheme that is aimed at providing a more stable legal status for foreign nationals in the Islamic Republic of Iran.³⁷

28. The worsening economic conditions, rising unemployment and cost of living have reportedly increased negative perceptions and harmful narratives relating to Afghan refugees by parts of the population who increasingly perceive them as a burden on the country's economy. Notwithstanding significant efforts by the authorities to host Afghan nationals, OHCHR has received concerning reports, in particular since November 2022, that Afghan refugees are increasingly facing discrimination, violence and more limited access to basic economic and social services, which negatively affects their enjoyment of human rights, including the rights to health and education. Between September and November 2022, there was a reported 29 per cent increase in Afghan returnees from the Islamic Republic of Iran and a 23 per cent increase in spontaneous returns.³⁸ A number of Afghans, who did not possess the *Amayesh* card, were undocumented or were in an irregular situation, reportedly left the country after being subjected to physical abuse by security forces, detention in unsanitary conditions and, in some cases, torture.³⁹ It is important to stop, investigate and sanction these concerning incidents and to prevent their reoccurrence; these incidents also highlight the urgent need to adopt additional protection measures for all migrants and refugees. It is also imperative that effective measures are applied to counter reported discriminatory practices and harmful perceptions of Afghan refugees.

E. Human rights situation of women and girls

29. In addition to the systemic discrimination against women and girls described in more detail in the interim report of the Secretary-General (A/HRC/53/23), new legislative and policy developments that may further reinforce discrimination against women and girls have been introduced. In that report, the Secretary-General expressed concerns over the draft bill on discretionary punishments, which is aimed at expanding the scope of punishments imposed on women and girls for not complying with compulsory veiling. The bill has yet to be approved. The Secretary-General is further concerned by the subsequent bill to support the family by promoting the culture of chastity and hijab (known as the chastity and hijab bill), which was initially proposed on 21 May 2023 by the Government and the judiciary before Parliament and is aimed at reinforcing public veiling requirements for women and girls. Since that date, the bill has undergone several amendments, with stricter measures introduced in the latest version thereof.

³⁵ See <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/102744>.

³⁶ See www.acaps.org/en/countries/iran#.

³⁷ See <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/102744>.

³⁸ Submission to OHCHR.

³⁹ Ibid.

30. It remains concerning that the latest draft of the chastity and hijab bill⁴⁰ would introduce a tier system of punishments, targeting primarily women and girls, which, in practice, would prevent them from fully enjoying certain rights, including their right to health, education and work and their freedom of movement. Punishments would also include monetary fines, restrictions on access to banking services, confiscation of personal property, travel restrictions and bans on online activity. Repeat offenders could face imprisonment of up to 25 years. In addition, the latest draft of the bill provides more severe punishments, including flogging for women who appear “uncovered in public” if they are “not wearing a *chador* or mask or a scarf or shawl”.

31. The draft bill also envisions the use of surveillance technology to identify offenders in public and online. Under the proposed bill, Government employees who are perceived to be in violation of the law could face salary and benefit deductions and could potentially lose their job. The draft bill would also extend its punitive measures to owners and managers of public places, including stores, restaurants, cinemas, sports facilities, recreational venues and artistic establishments. Penalties for non-compliance by business owners for providing services to or employing unveiled women would include fines and a travel ban. At the time of writing, reports indicate that hundreds of businesses have been forcibly closed for refusing to enforce compulsory veiling laws.⁴¹

32. On 15 June 2023, a police spokesperson announced that since April 2023, at least 108,211 reports had been recorded of women violating compulsory veiling in public and that 300 alleged offenders had been identified and referred to the judiciary.⁴² The Minister of the Interior presented a report on the implementation of the chastity and hijab plan by the police force of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which works under his direction.⁴³ He indicated that under the plan, women and girls who persist in defying compulsory veiling would be denied access to social services.

33. Information received by OHCHR shows that elements of the new bills might already be in force. Women are reportedly being refused medical care and banking and educational services for not wearing a veil or not wearing it properly. Female university students perceived to be in violation of compulsory veiling have allegedly been threatened with grade reductions and have reportedly been barred from taking exams.

34. On 23 June 2023, the head of the Justice Department in Isfahan Province announced that 1,200 judicial cases had been filed against women for defying compulsory veiling in the province.⁴⁴ Two days earlier, the prosecutor of Qazvin Province stated that the police had filed 173 cases of “people who are unveiled and have disturbed social order” in the province.⁴⁵

35. Authorities have relied on the note to article 638 of the Penal Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran to prosecute, convict and sentence women who appear in public without a headscarf. The note provides that women who are seen in public without veiling are to be punished with a prison term of between 10 days and two months or

⁴⁰ See www.ekhtebare.ir/%D9%85%D8%AA%D9%86-%D9%86%D9%87%D8%A7%DB%8C%DB%8C-%D9%84%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%AD%D9%87-%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D8%AE%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%87-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D8%B7%D8%B1%DB%8C/ (in Farsi).

⁴¹ See www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/7041/2023/en/.

⁴² See www.etemadonline.com/بخش-اجتماعی-617677/23-نیروی-انتظامی-عفاف-حجاب (in Farsi).

⁴³ See www.alef.ir/news/4020129044.html (in Farsi).

⁴⁴ See www.radiofarda.com/a/32473424.html (in Farsi).

⁴⁵ See www.asriran.com/fa/news/898325/-۱۷۳-دادستان-قزوین-از-ابتدای-اجرای-طرح-عفاف-و-حجاب-تاکنون-برای نفر-پرونده قضایی-تشکیل-شده (in Farsi).

security forces in Rasht.⁵³ On 14 June 2023, a police spokesperson confirmed that almost 1 million women had received SMS warnings for not veiling and were threatened with having their vehicle confiscated if they were caught driving unveiled. As a result, 2,000 cars were confiscated for a period of at least two weeks and more than 4,000 women were referred to the judicial authorities.⁵⁴

F. Human rights situation of lawyers

40. The continued targeting of lawyers constitutes a further impediment to achieving accountability for past and ongoing violations. On 27 June 2023, the request to investigate the operations of bar associations and their union motion was passed in Parliament, which will enable the judiciary and State security agencies, including the Ministry of Intelligence and the intelligence organization of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, to investigate bar associations throughout the country as well as their central union in Tehran. Under the same motion, the State security apparatus will also be empowered to review the legal qualification of lawyers who are members of the bar association, thus enabling it to select the lawyers that are allowed to officially work in the country. In the current environment, such directives curtail the independence of the bar association and of lawyers.

41. The judicial authorities summoned 55 male and female lawyers to Branch 2 of the General and Revolution Prosecutor's Office in Bukan, Kurdistan Province. The Bukan prosecutor filed a complaint against these lawyers on 5 July 2023 for signing a statement announcing their willingness to provide legal assistance to Jina Mahsa Amini's family in pursuing justice for her case.⁵⁵ According to reports, human rights lawyers, Mohammad Seifzadeh and Marzieh Nikara were sentenced to one year of imprisonment on charges of "anti-regime propaganda activities" and "dissemination of falsehoods" on 14 May 2023, for signing a joint letter with lawyers and experts addressed to the Secretary-General concerning the suppression and intimidation of citizens during the nationwide protests in 2022 and 2023. Those convictions were imposed during proceedings that may have lacked due process and fair trial guarantees and highlight the use of pretexts to target lawyers and restrict their activities. Defence counsels remain pivotal in providing adequate legal counsel to defendants, in particular in relation to allegations of human rights violations by State security officials.

G. Human rights situation of minorities

42. Ethnic and religious minorities continue to be discriminated against and face systemic marginalization in law and in practice. Members of ethnic minorities, in particular the Baloch, Kurd and Ahwazi Arab ethnic minorities, reportedly constitute the majority of political prisoners and a disproportionate percentage of persons executed on political and national security-related charges. They also continue to be disproportionately affected by the excessive use of force, thus suffering injury and loss of life, in particular in the context of the latest protests. Between 19 September 2022 and 23 May 2023, at least 490 Kurdish protesters were reportedly killed in that context, among them 445 men and 45 women. Between 16 September 2022 and 23 May 2023, 150 Kurdish protesters, including 135 men and 15 women, were seriously injured, reportedly as a result of gunfire from security forces. According to reports received, the protesters were unarmed and did not present an imminent threat

⁵³ See www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/7041/2023/en/.

⁵⁴ See www.etemadonline.com/بخش-اجتماعی-617677/23-نیروی-انتظامی-عفاف-حجاب/. (in Farsi).

⁵⁵ See www.hrw.org/blog-feed/iranian-society-under-crackdown#blog-385453.

of death or serious injury to others. Injured protesters did not reportedly seek medical care due to fear of reprisals.⁵⁶

43. Members of the Baha'i religious minority were reportedly subjected to human rights violations for practising their faith, including arbitrary detention, interrogation, torture, other ill-treatment and enforced disappearance. The authorities imposed increasingly burdensome demands upon the Baha'i community when attempting to bury their loved ones. On 4 April 2023, a notice was posted on the wall of the Baha'i cemetery, within Khavaran cemetery, located outside Tehran, stating that the city council had decided that the Muslim Cemetery Organization would manage all the affairs of the cemetery as of 21 March 2023. This has allegedly affected Baha'i burial traditions and resulted in additional burial fees being imposed. On 2 June 2023, a number of Baha'i community members in Tehran were forbidden from entering the Baha'i cemetery to hold a funeral ceremony.⁵⁷

44. Between 1 June and 17 July 2023, over 69 Christians were reportedly subjected to arbitrary arrest by authorities across 11 cities, including Eslamshahr, Garmsar, Isfahan, Semnan, Shiraz and Varamin, with at least six women and four men still in detention at the time of writing. According to information received, some of those detained were charged with "acting against the national security through establishing or membership of a house church". Those released were reportedly forced to sign commitments to refrain from further "Christian activities" or forced to attend Islamic re-education sessions. Others were summoned for further questioning in the days after their release, ordered to leave the country or had their employment terminated.⁵⁸

45. The possible introduction of "social birth certificates based on region and territory", as proposed in article 16 of the chastity and hijab bill to "strengthen the family-oriented Islamic lifestyle and the culture of chastity and hijab", could further entrench discrimination and the marginalization of minority communities.

46. Furthermore, during the reporting period, the authorities reportedly continued to employ disproportionate lethal force at border crossings against unarmed Kurdish and Baloch fuel carriers, known as *kulbar* (border couriers) and *sukhtbar* (fuel couriers), respectively, in Sistan and Baluchestan Province. These fuel carriers engage in irregular cross-border fuel transportation. In 2022, 105 *sukhtbar* were killed and 52 were reportedly injured, owing partly to gunfire from Iranian security forces.⁵⁹

47. According to information received, between September 2022 and February 2023, there was an increased use of derogatory language by State actors against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons in the Islamic Republic of Iran, which may be a reaction to the participation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons in the nationwide protests and their increased visibility.⁶⁰

H. Human rights situation of foreign and dual nationals

48. The Secretary-General welcomes the release of 11 foreign and dual nationals, including 8 men and 3 women, during the reporting period. He remains concerned, however, that at least 12 foreign and dual nationals are reportedly detained on national security charges. It is highly concerning that two dual nationals were executed during the reporting period. British-Iranian, Alireza Akbari, was executed on 14 January 2023 following his conviction on espionage charges. Swedish-Iranian, Habib Chaab,

⁵⁶ Submission to OHCHR.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ See <https://6rang.org/english/3511/>.

was reportedly abducted during a visit to Türkiye in October 2020 and was subsequently executed on 6 May 2023 after being convicted of masterminding an attack on a military parade in Ahvaz in 2018. His fair trial rights were reportedly violated, including his right to have access to the lawyer of his choice.⁶¹ The Secretary-General is also concerned that 68-year-old German-Iranian political prisoner, Jamshid Sharmahd, is at risk of execution after Branch 15 of the Tehran Revolution Court convicted him and sentenced him to death on 10 January 2023 for *fesad fil-arz* in connection with the 2008 bombing in Shiraz, Fars Province.

49. Furthermore, the families of foreign and dual nationals have allegedly been intimidated while seeking the release of their relatives. On 18 June 2023, Fariba Molazehi, a French-Iranian human rights defender who resides in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, reported that security forces in Iranshahr, in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, arrested her 18-year-old son, who had returned to the Islamic Republic of Iran from the United Kingdom after visiting her, along with his uncle.⁶² The Government confirmed that Ms. Molazehi's relatives had been detained on charges of "possessing and retaining unlicensed firearms as well as insulting the sanctities of Islam" and had been subsequently released on bail.

I. Human rights situation of students and teachers

50. The Secretary-General is concerned at the lack of protection provided to primary and university students and reports of the continued targeting of university students for exercising their right to freedom of expression. Reports indicate that approximately 720 students have been arbitrarily arrested since the onset of the protests, although some were subsequently released. In addition, at least 60 teachers have reportedly faced expulsion, suspension, forced retirement or the termination of their salaries for allegedly supporting the protests or sit-ins.⁶³

51. On 30 May 2023, the Security Office of the University of Art in Tehran allegedly banned 40 female students from entering the campus for their alleged non-compliance with veiling rules.⁶⁴ Female students at Shahid Beheshti University were allegedly warned that if they violated compulsory veiling, their academic progress would be nullified. The Secretary-General is concerned about the disproportionate measures adopted by academic institutions to punish a large number of female students for not adhering to compulsory veiling laws. This may have a negative impact on the right to education of women and girls. On 10 July 2023, student activists, Hasti Amiri and Zia Nabavi, from Allameh Tabataba'i University in Tehran, appeared before Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolution Court and were charged with "propaganda against the State" for participating in a protest against alleged school poisonings.⁶⁵

III. Accountability

52. The Secretary-General is deeply concerned at the lack of transparent and independent investigations into reported human rights violations, in particular in the context of the latest nationwide protests. In its most recent replies to the list of issues in relation to its fourth periodic report to the Human Rights Committee of July 2023 (CCPR/C/IRN/RQ/4), the Government insisted on the conclusions of the Fact-Finding Commission of the Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran that the death

⁶¹ See <https://iranhr.net/fa/articles/5874/> (in Farsi).

⁶² See www.hrw.org/blog-feed/iranian-society-under-crackdown#blog-385297.

⁶³ Submission to OHCHR.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ See www.hrw.org/blog-feed/iranian-society-under-crackdown#blog-385453.

of Jina Mahsa Amini “is not in any way related to the use of force of any type, not even physical assaults during any stages of her interactions with law enforcements” (ibid., para. 29). As highlighted in the interim report of the Secretary-General ([A/HRC/53/23](#)), numerous reports suggest that she was beaten, including on the head, while she was in the custody of the morality police. In addition, the redeployment of the morality police described earlier (see paras. 40 and 41) sends a worrying signal regarding justice and accountability considering the circumstances surrounding the death of Jina Mahsa Amini.

53. On 7 May 2023, the President issued a decree establishing a Special Committee “to conduct a detailed and impartial investigation and compensate for any possible violation of citizens’ rights” during the protests in September 2022. The Committee is tasked with receiving and investigating complaints lodged by victims and their families. The Government confirmed that the findings of the Special Committee would be made public. No findings had been made public at the time of writing of the present report.

54. With regard to the alleged school poisonings, detailed in the above-mentioned interim report of the Secretary-General, in May 2023, the Government stated that the investigations showed that “no toxic substance was found” and that the incidents were attributed to “stink bombs”, “pepper spray” and the “mass hysteria” of students.⁶⁶ The Secretary-General continues to be concerned by the lack of prevention and protection measures to protect schools and students, in particular given the large-scale nature of the incidents reported, which reportedly affected more than 1,000 students, the majority of whom were girls ([A/HRC/53/23](#)).

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

A. Human rights treaty bodies and special procedures

55. The Government has reiterated its commitment to engaging with international human rights mechanisms. On 2 June 2023, the Government submitted its replies to the list of issues in relation to its fourth periodic report to the Human Rights Committee ([CCPR/C/IRN/RQ/4](#)). The reports of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are overdue. The Government noted that the preparation of overdue reports is under way and it is currently resubmitting its fifth and sixth periodic reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which was initially submitted on 7 August 2023.

56. In April 2023, by its resolution [52/27](#), the Human Rights Council renewed the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Secretary-General regrets that the Government continues to deny the Special Rapporteur access to the country ([A/HRC/52/67](#), para. 3).

57. Between 1 August 2022 and 31 July 2023, special procedures mandate holders issued 13 press releases and 24 communications on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Government replied to 16 communications.

⁶⁶ Report by the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

B. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

58. The Secretary-General welcomes the dialogue between the Government and OHCHR and encourages the Government to continue and enhance its engagement with OHCHR in substantive technical cooperation. On several occasions, the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and OHCHR raised concerns with the Government about imminent executions, discrimination against women and girls and the issue of accountability.

V. Recommendations

59. The Secretary-General urges the Government to:

(a) Immediately halt the execution of all individuals, including child offenders, persons sentenced to death for drug-related offences and persons sentenced to death for their involvement in the protests, and commute their sentences as appropriate;

(b) Abolish the death penalty and introduce an immediate moratorium on its use, and prohibit the execution of child offenders in all circumstances and commute their sentences;

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

(d) Guarantee the right of peaceful assembly and ensure that security measures in relation to protests are undertaken in line with international human rights norms and standards, including the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials;

(e) Uphold the full respect for due process and fair trial rights in line with international human rights norms and standards, among others by 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;

(f) Ensure prompt, transparent, thorough and effective investigations by an independent and impartial body into allegations of excessive and lethal use of force and firearms when not strictly unavoidable to protect life, as well as into deaths in custody, torture or other ill-treatment, gender-based violence, including sexual violence, and inadequate prison conditions; and prosecute and hold accountable those responsible, including law enforcement or other public officials; and make the findings of investigations public;

(g) Take further steps to eliminate all forms of gender-based discrimination and violence against women and girls in law and in practice, including through the revision and repeal of laws and policies that criminalize non-compliance with compulsory veiling; and urgently implement effective measures to respect and protect their fundamental human rights, in accordance with international norms and standards, and advance their equal and safe participation in public life;

(h) Conduct independent, impartial, transparent, prompt, thorough and effective investigations into reported poison attacks on schoolgirls with a view to holding the perpetrators to account; and guarantee the right to education without discrimination;

- (i) Guarantee the rights to freedom of opinion and expression and peaceful assembly to ensure that any limitation to rights offline and online complies with the established criteria under international human rights law;
- (j) Ensure that human rights defenders, lawyers, journalists, writers and labour rights activists are not harassed, detained or prosecuted for exercising their legitimate work;
- (k) Ensure that migrants, refugees and 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;
- (l) Protect the rights of all persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities and address all forms of discrimination against them without delay;
- (m) 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;
- (n) Take effective measures to enhance the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants and refugees, regardless of their migration status; and address any form of discrimination and counter harmful narratives against migrants and refugees;
- (o) 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 International Labour Organization conventions;
- (p) Submit outstanding periodic reports to human rights treaty bodies, implement the recommendations of international human rights mechanisms, including the treaty bodies, special procedures mandate holders and 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) Continue to engage with OHCHR in implementing all the recommendations made in the reports of the Secretary-General and those of international human rights mechanisms and consider strengthening its cooperation with OHCHR, including by facilitating a visit by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Islamic Republic of Iran and through OHCHR in-country engagement.

60. 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 effects in order to minimize their adverse consequences.