



Human Rights Council

Forty-ninth session

28 February–1 April 2022

Agenda item 4

Human rights situations that require the Council's attention**Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran****Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Javaid Rehman***Summary*

In the present report, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran details observations regarding trends, concerns and progress made in the protection of human rights, with a particular focus on accountability for human rights violations. Other aspects covered in the report include the imposition of the death penalty, arbitrary deprivation of life, arbitrary detention, restrictions on freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, the right to an adequate standard of living, the Government response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and the situation of women and minorities.



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted to the Human Rights Council pursuant to Council resolution 46/18. In the report, which contains information collected up until 1 December 2021, the Special Rapporteur provides an overview of some of the most pressing human rights concerns in the Islamic Republic of Iran and examines key obstacles to accountability for gross violations of human rights. This is followed by recommendations to the Government and to the international community.
2. The Special Rapporteur would again like to highlight that, despite repeated requests, he has not yet been granted access to the Islamic Republic of Iran. He reiterates his request to the authorities to allow him to undertake visits to the country in accordance with his mandate.
3. The Special Rapporteur was able to engage with victims, their families and members of civil society and collect information, most notably through submissions and interviews.¹ The Special Rapporteur emphasizes his support for the vital work being done by civil society actors and organizations despite the harassment and intimidation to which they have been subjected. Their work is indispensable to the Special Rapporteur as he seeks to fulfil his mandate.
4. The high risk of reprisals that individuals and organizations face for engaging with international human rights mechanisms represents in itself a serious human rights concern, but is equally a distressing sign of how the authorities view international human rights mechanisms and the individuals engaging with them. The Special Rapporteur calls on the Government to open the space for engagement, particularly with domestic actors and civil society.

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

A. Arbitrary deprivation of life

5. Between 1 January and 1 December 2021, at least 275 people were executed, including at least 2 child offenders and 10 women, for charges involving murder, drug crimes, *moharebeh* (taking up arms to take lives or property or to create fear in the public), *efsad-e fil-arz* (spreading corruption on earth), *baghy* (armed rebellion) and rape.² Over 80 of the executions, including of one woman and at least four nationals of Afghanistan, had been for drug-related charges, compared to 25 in 2020, representing an increase in executions for drug-related crimes. An increase in the execution of individuals from minority communities had also been observed, with over 40 Baluchi and over 50 Kurdish individuals executed between 1 January and 17 November 2021. There had also been an increase in the execution of women. Women and men living in poverty remain overrepresented in death penalty cases. The Government reiterated that the death penalty was imposed only for the most serious crimes.
6. The Special Rapporteur continued to receive consistent reports of the use of forced confessions under torture as evidence for death penalty convictions, and the continued lack of investigations into torture allegations. As elaborated in the Special Rapporteur's report to the General Assembly,³ the serious shortcomings in the legal framework and justice system, together with systemic violations of due process and fair trial, render most, if not all, executions in the Islamic Republic of Iran arbitrary deprivation of life. An emblematic case is that of Khezr Ghavidel, arrested in 2013 and sentenced to death for carrying drugs. His case was pending a decision at the Supreme Court when he was executed on 10 September

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, the substantive information in the present report is based on these submissions and interviews.

² Submission from Iran Human Rights.

³ [A/76/160](#).

2020. Almost a year after his execution, in July 2021, the Supreme Court overturned his death sentence.⁴ In its response, the Government rejected the notion of arbitrary deprivation of life and all allegations of due process violations contained in the report. It stressed that due process and fair trial were guaranteed in law and practice.

Executions of child offenders

7. At least two child offenders have been executed since 1 January 2021. On 2 August 2021, Sajad Sanjari was secretly executed for allegedly killing a man when he was 15 years old.⁵ Mr. Sanjari was first sentenced to death in January 2012. He stated that he had acted in self-defence after the man had tried to rape him, a claim that the court rejected. He was granted a retrial based on article 91 of the Penal Code, which exempts children under the age of 18 from the death penalty in cases where there is uncertainty about their full mental development. In November 2015, the court sentenced him to death again, concluding that he had attained “maturity” at the time of the crime, without referring him to the Legal Medicine Organization for an assessment and dismissing the opinion of an official court adviser that Mr. Sanjari had not attained maturity at the time of the crime.⁶ The Government denied the allegation of secret execution, stating that the man’s lawyer had been “present in the court, a week before that and at the time of the enforcement of Qisas” and that the assessment of the mental development of the individual by the initial court had been more accurate, compared to the assessment in the retrial.⁷

8. Arman Abdolali was executed on 24 November 2021. Mr. Abdolali was sentenced to death for a crime he allegedly committed while he was under 18 years of age, following a process marked by multiple violations of fundamental human rights, including the use of a forced confession extracted under torture that Mr. Abdolali subsequently recanted in court. His allegation of torture was not investigated. Over the course of three weeks, dating from 13 October 2021, his execution was scheduled and postponed six times, despite calls by special procedure mandate holders and other human rights mechanisms to halt the execution.⁸ The Special Rapporteur is alarmed at the mental anguish – amounting to torture – caused by the practice of repeated transfers of child offenders to solitary confinement in preparation for their execution, only for the execution to be postponed at the last minute.

Excessive use of force

9. The use of unlawful force by security, law enforcement and other State agents continued at an alarming scale in the context of peaceful assemblies, against border couriers and in places of detention, without subsequent investigations or accountability. The atmosphere of impunity surrounding arbitrary deprivation of life by State agents sends an affirmation that there will be no consequences for such illegal acts.

10. One of the most egregious examples in the context of peaceful protests during 2021 was the use of lethal force against participants in a series of protests that erupted in mid-July 2021 in over 20 cities in Khuzestan Province, subsequently extending to other areas, including Isfahan, Lorestan, Azarbaijan-e Sharqi, Tehran and Karaj, and that have been referred to as the “Uprising of the Thirsty”.⁹ Testimonies, photographs and video footage show widespread use of unlawful force against protesters, many of whom belong to the Arab minority. Security forces, riot police and armed plain-clothes agents fired live ammunition, leading to the killing of at least eight individuals, including two children, and the injuring of

⁴ See <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/4793/>.

⁵ See

<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26601>.

⁶ See <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/08/iran-secret-execution-of-young-man-arrested-at-15-a-cruel-assault-on-child-rights/>.

⁷ See <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadFile?gId=36583>.

⁸ See <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=27647>.

⁹ See <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27335> and <https://www.en-hrana.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Uprising-of-the-Thirsty-FINAL-for-upload.pdf>.

a large number of others.¹⁰ Internet shutdowns were reported in several places, reportedly to prevent the spread of information.¹¹ According to one State-media outlet, over 300 individuals were arrested in the city of Susangard alone.¹² Many of those injured went into hiding and did not go to hospitals for fear of being arrested. Reports confirm that over 360 individuals were arrested.¹³ At least nine children aged between 12 and 18 years were also reported to be arrested. While some were released under restrictive bail conditions, the situation of others remains unknown. The Special Rapporteur is concerned at the lack of investigation into the use of force during the events in Susangard.

11. In November 2021, several peaceful protests took place in Isfahan, culminating with thousands of farmers and others rallying on 19 November, to decry the drying up of the Zayandehrood river, the redirection of its water to neighbouring provinces, and the impact of drought.¹⁴ On 26 November a large number of security forces violently attacked the protest site and set the farmers' tents on fire to prevent further protests.¹⁵ They used batons, tear gas and pellet guns in a violent crackdown of the protests, leading to head and eye injuries and the arrest of at least 200 individuals.¹⁶ The police confirmed the arrest of at least 67 people.¹⁷ As at 29 November, health officials had confirmed that two injured protesters were in serious condition.¹⁸ Internet disruptions were reported at the time of the crackdown.¹⁹

12. The use of live ammunition against border couriers continued, leading to the killing and injuring of over 200 individuals between 1 January and 1 December 2021.²⁰ Among these are the killing by security forces in July 2021 of a Baluchi border courier selling bread at the border, and the killing in October 2021 of a Kurdish border courier, who was shot dead in Sardasht border area by border officials. In November 2021, anti-smuggling officials opened fire against a civilian vehicle in Sanandaj, killing an unarmed individual. There has been no investigation into these or any other killings of border couriers. In this connection, the Government asserted that border guards only targeted terrorist groups and armed smugglers in the context of controlling its borders.

Arbitrary deprivation of life in detention

13. The Special Rapporteur is concerned at the number of deaths in detention under unclear circumstances that are not investigated. The deaths in the Greater Tehran penitentiary in the course of one week are emblematic: Shahin Naseri was found dead in prison in September 2021. Mr. Naseri had given testimony, through multiple written affidavits, about witnessing the torture of fellow prisoner Navid Afkari in October 2018 by plain-clothes agents. Judicial authorities had previously threatened Mr. Naseri with criminal prosecution for his testimonies.²¹ Around 12 September 2021, the anniversary of the execution of Mr. Afkari, Mr. Naseri had been transferred to solitary confinement.²² In October, the judiciary

¹⁰ See <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/07/iran-security-forces-use-live-ammunition-and-birdshot-to-crush-khuzestan-protests/>.

¹¹ See <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27335>; and <https://www.article19.org/resources/iran-bullets-detention-and-shutdowns-the-authorities-response-to-protests-in-khuzestan/>.

¹² See <https://hamshahronline.ir/x7gNQ> (in Persian).

¹³ See <https://www.hra-news.org/2021/hranews/a-31225/> (in Persian).

¹⁴ See <https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/thousands-rally-central-iran-protest-water-shortages-2021-11-19/>.

¹⁵ See <https://www.rferl.org/a/iran-water-protests-isfahan/31580547.html>; and <https://www.rferl.org/a/isfahan-protest-tents-burned/31578707.html>.

¹⁶ See <https://www.hra-news.org/2021/hranews/a-32638/>.

¹⁷ See <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20211127-iran-riot-police-deployed-after-67-arrested-in-isfahan>.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ See <https://netblocks.org/reports/internet-disruption-registered-in-iran-amid-water-protests-RyjnQRyg>.

²⁰ See <https://kurdistanhumanrights.org/en/july-monthly-report-human-rights-violations-in-iranian-kurdistan/>; and <https://kmmk-ge.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2021-Interim-Annual-Report-KMMK-G-.pdf>.

²¹ See <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/MDE1348682021ENGLISH.pdf>.

²² See <https://www.iranhr.net/en/articles/4928/>.

declared the cause of his death as drug poisoning, without providing further details.²³ On 22 September 2021, another detained individual, Amirhossein Hatami, died, reportedly under torture, in the Greater Tehran penitentiary, a few days after his arrest. Prior to his death, Mr. Hatami had made a brief phone call from prison, during which he stated that he had been severely beaten by prison guards.²⁴

14. Between 1 January and 1 December 2021, at least 11 Kurdish prisoners reportedly died in unclear circumstances in prison. Among them is Rahman Ahmadian, whose death in the detention facility of the Ministry of Intelligence in Orumiyeh was announced in mid-July. The authorities declared the cause of death as suicide, despite signs of bruises and beating found on his body.²⁵ Yasser Mangouri, arrested by Ministry of Intelligence agents in July 2021 in Azarbayjan-e Gharbi Province, was forcibly disappeared and security institutions denied knowledge of his whereabouts for two months. In September 2021, it became known that a death certificate had been issued, officially confirming his death as resulting from an exchange of fire during arrest. He was reportedly unarmed when arrested. His body was not returned to his family prior to his burial.²⁶ In Sanandaj Central Prison in Kurdistan Province, Khosrow Jamalifar died on 2 November 2021, reportedly after being severely beaten by prison guards. His body was secretly buried without being returned to his family.²⁷ The prosecutor in Kurdistan Province denied in a news segment the allegation that Mr. Jamalifar had been beaten by prison guards.

15. The Special Rapporteur reminds the Government that when an individual dies in unnatural circumstances while in State custody, there is a presumption of arbitrary deprivation of life by the authorities.²⁸ In order to overcome this presumption, the State must carry out prompt, impartial and effective investigations through competent authorities independent of the detaining authority.²⁹ The authorities systematically refuse to investigate cases of suspicious deaths in custody and only announce the result of autopsies by the Legal Medicine Organization, which lacks sufficient independence as it falls under the authority of the judiciary, which also controls the Prisons Organization.

Prison conditions

16. The Special Rapporteur regrets the continued ill-treatment by prison guards, overcrowding, and hygiene deficiencies in prison, as detailed in previous reports.³⁰ Leaked videos from closed-circuit television cameras in the public wards of Evin prison, hacked by the group Edalat-e Ali, show prison guards beating or otherwise ill-treating prisoners, overcrowded prison cells, and a solitary cell with inhuman conditions.³¹ On 24 August 2021, the head of the Prisons Organization apologized and promised to investigate abuses and prevent further violations.³² The Government noted that the relevant violations had been investigated months before the videos were published. According to testimonies by former prisoners, the revelations are only the tip of the iceberg of the reality of the country's prison conditions. The Special Rapporteur also received reports regarding deplorable conditions in secret detention centres under the control of the Ministry of Intelligence and the Intelligence Organization of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Individuals arbitrarily arrested on national security charges are held in these facilities for long periods of pretrial detention. Students Ali Younesi and Amirhossein Moradi have remained arbitrarily detained in section

²³ See <https://www.isna.ir/news/1400072114658/> (in Persian).

²⁴ See <https://kurdistanhumanrights.org/en/iran-prison-officers-beat-young-man-to-death/>.

²⁵ See <https://hengaw.net/en/news/murder-of-a-kurdish-youth-under-torture-by-urmia-intelligence-agents>.

²⁶ See <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/09/iran-a-decade-of-deaths-in-custody-unpunished-amid-systemic-impunity-for-torture/>.

²⁷ See <https://kurdistanhumanrights.org/en/iran-family-of-dead-prisoner-cites-torture-in-prison-as-cause-of-death/>.

²⁸ Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 36 (2019), para. 29.

²⁹ Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death, para. 17.

³⁰ A/HRC/43/61, paras. 60–67; and A/76/160, paras. 19–22.

³¹ See <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/08/iran-leaked-video-footage-from-evin-prison-offers-rare-glimpse-of-cruelty-against-prisoners/>.

³² See <https://twitter.com/Mmhajmohammadi/status/1430026191042490372> (in Persian).

209 of Evin prison, under the control of the Ministry of Intelligence, since their arrest in April 2020.³³ The secret nature of these detention centres, without oversight of independent bodies, increases the risk of serious violations. The reported widespread use of different methods of torture and ill-treatment against detained Kurdish political activists in the secret detention centres of the Ministry of Intelligence and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in Orumiye, Sanandaj and Kermanshah is deeply concerning.³⁴

17. In addition to the leaked videos, released documents from prison authorities give rise to grave concern about prison policies. In one such letter, a former official at Evin prison states that hunger strikes by prisoners or publication of statements and open letters are considered criminal behaviour, and that “in such cases, prisoners [accused] of violations should be held in isolation, their welfare [including private and public meetings] should be limited, and we should look into their demands”.³⁵ Denial of basic rights of prisoners forces many individuals to resort to hunger strikes. Khaled Pirzadeh has been on hunger strike since 23 August 2021 in protest of the refusal to grant him parole and at the lack of separation of prisoners based on their crimes.³⁶ He is serving a five-year prison sentence on national security charges. Kurdish political prisoner Ghader Mohammadzadeh went on hunger strike in July for 39 days in protest of the rejection of his furlough request while the provided amount of bail for furlough was seized by authorities. Mr. Mohammadzadeh has been serving a prison sentence for 17 years without furlough.³⁷ Political prisoners Narollah Lashani and Soheila Hejab went on hunger strike from 19 September to 3 October 2021 to protest the increasing pressures on political prisoners and the interference of the security establishment in court decisions.³⁸ On 16 November, Ms. Hejab was sent to Sanandaj prison.³⁹ In Orumiye prison, 43 prisoners in the political prisoners’ ward refused food on 22 September to protest denial of medical care to 12 seriously ill prisoners.⁴⁰ Human rights defender Atena Daemi, in exile in Lakan prison, started a hunger strike on 12 August 2021 to protest frequent restrictions on the right of prisoners to use the telephone.⁴¹ She ended her strike on 17 August 2021 following the resumption of telephone calls. However, her telephone card was confiscated and she was denied the right to make calls to her family⁴² until 24 November 2021. The Special Rapporteur is concerned at the lack of measures to guarantee the security of inmates, including from attacks by other prisoners. In October 2021, political prisoners Shapour Ehsanirad, Pouya Ghobadi, Esmail Gerami, Akbar Bagheri and Akbar Shirazi were seriously injured after being attacked by violent-crime prisoners.⁴³

18. The use of prolonged solitary confinement continued.⁴⁴ The Special Rapporteur reiterates his grave concern at the situation of Vahid and Habib Afkari, who have remained in solitary confinement since September 2020, reportedly to prevent them from sharing information about their situation and that of their brother Navid Afkari, executed in September 2020.⁴⁵ The brothers have been denied telephone contact with their family, access to a lawyer and medical care. The Special Rapporteur underlines that this form of treatment amounts to torture under international human rights standards, and regrets that the authorities, in their response to a communication on the situation of the two brothers, did not address this issue. The Special Rapporteur remains concerned at the harassment of their family members,

³³ See <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/5024/2021/en/>.

³⁴ See <https://kurdistanhumanrights.org/en/a-report-by-kurdistan-human-rights-network-on-secret-detention-centres-of-iranian-security-institutions-in-kermanshah-sanandaj-orumiye/>.

³⁵ See <https://www.rferl.org/a/iran-evin-prison-leaked-documents/31544336.html>.

³⁶ See <https://www.hra-news.org/2021/hranews/a-32233/> (in Persian).

³⁷ See <https://www.iranhr.net/en/articles/4861/>.

³⁸ See <https://www.hra-news.org/2021/hranews/a-31967/>; and <https://www.hra-news.org/2021/hranews/a-31974/> (in Persian).

³⁹ See <https://www.hra-news.org/2021/hranews/a-32498/> (in Persian).

⁴⁰ See <https://www.hra-news.org/2021/hranews/a-31826/>.

⁴¹ See <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/4856/>.

⁴² See <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/fa/case/woman-human-rights-defender-aten-daemi-denied-access-phone-calls>.

⁴³ See <https://www.iranhr.net/en/articles/4912/>.

⁴⁴ A/76/160, paras. 65–66.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, para. 66; and IRN 18/2021, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26499>.

in particular in the context of their attempts to hold a memorial service. Another example of continued solitary confinement is that of Ali Chebshat, from the Arab minority, who has been held in the custody of intelligence services in Ahvaz Central Prison since his arrest in July 2020 on national security charges.⁴⁶

19. The Special Rapporteur is concerned at reports of a series of transfers since September 2021 of prisoners of conscience from Orumiye Central Prison to the security detention centre of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in Orumiye. Kurdish political prisoner Nayeb Askari was returned from the detention centre of the Intelligence Organization of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to Orumiye Central Prison. Five other prisoners of conscience – Mohyeddin Ebrahimi, Mohyeddin Tazehvared, Davoud Jabbari, Ebrahim Khalil Sedigh Hamedani and Salar Khalil Sedigh Hamedani – and three non-political prisoners – Farzin Ghaderi, Amir Mohammadi and Kamal Khakzad – are still being held in the detention facility. Reports indicate that the Intelligence Organization has taken over the special office that was previously under the control of the Ministry of Intelligence.⁴⁷

20. Following the fifth wave of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in the country, concerns were raised about prisoners convicted of national security charges who remained ineligible for furlough under the criteria announced by the judiciary. Many who tested positive for COVID-19 in prison were not granted temporary release or provided with sufficient health care.⁴⁸ Following reports about the high number of infections in the women's wards in Evin prison and denial of medical leave, several women political prisoners were subsequently granted leave,⁴⁹ which is welcomed. It is regrettable that the parole request of detained human rights defender Aliyeh Motallebzadeh was denied. In July 2021 she had spoken out about the prison conditions and the spread of COVID-19 in the women's ward in Evin prison.⁵⁰ The Government highlighted the protocol for prisons, prepared with the Ministry of Health, which included the conduct of over 6 million visits to prisons and the use of rapid tests, the hospitalization of 2,000 prisoners in specialized hospitals, quarantine measures and twice-a-day sanitation of prisons.

21. The Special Rapporteur continued to receive reports about denial of access to medical care in detention. Reports show an alarming number of individuals who have either become critically ill or have long-standing and serious medical conditions that have been left untreated in prison. In cases where medical furlough is granted, it comes at a critical or very late stage. Several cases of death in detention due to lack of timely access to medical care were reported, including the deaths of Nasser Karimi, Hossein Pahendipour⁵¹ and Shamseddin Tatari.⁵² Labour and social welfare journalist Khosrow Sadeghi-Boroujeni, arrested in 2019 and serving a five-year sentence on national security charges for his reports on poverty and social inequality, continues to be denied specialized medical treatment, despite his underlying medical condition.⁵³ The Special Rapporteur welcomes the medical furlough of Reza Taleshian Jolodarzadeh in November 2021, in accordance with the medical examiner's determination that he was not fit to be incarcerated. Since January 2021, he had been denied medication for seizures, which have caused serious eye complications.⁵⁴ The

⁴⁶ See <https://www.iranhr.net/en/articles/4859/>.

⁴⁷ See <https://kurdistanhumanrights.org/en/iran-interrogation-of-prisoners-taken-to-irgc-detention-centre-continues/>.

⁴⁸ See <https://iranhumanrights.org/2021/07/rising-covid-infections-unhygienic-conditions-raise-fears-of-more-deaths-in-iranian-prisons/>.

⁴⁹ See <https://www.hra-news.org/2021/hranews/a-31013/> (in Persian).

⁵⁰ See <https://www.hra-news.org/2021/hranews/a-32434/> (in Persian).

⁵¹ See <https://www.hra-news.org/2021/hranews/a-30652/> (in Persian).

⁵² See

<https://hengaw.net/fa/news/%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%AE%DB%8C%D8%B1-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%A8%D9%87-%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A7%DA%A9%D8%B2-%D8%AF%D8%B1%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86%DB%8C-%D9%85%D9%86%D8%AC%D8%B1-%D8%A8%D9%87-%D9%85%D8%B1%DA%AF-%DB%8C%DA%A9-%D8%B2%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86%DB%8C-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%B2%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%85%DB%8C%D9%87-%D8%B4%D8%AF> (in Persian).

⁵³ See <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/4909/>.

⁵⁴ See <https://www.en-hrana.org/journalist-reza-jolodarzadeh-released-from-greater-tehran-prison/>.

Special Rapporteur also welcomes the release of civil rights activist Mohammad Nourizad on 17 November 2021, following an early release order.⁵⁵

B. Arbitrary detention

Situation of human rights lawyers and defenders

22. The Special Rapporteur remains dismayed at the continued arbitrary detention of human rights defenders and lawyers following unfair trials, and their long prison sentences and harsh bail conditions as they face vaguely worded charges of “acting against national security” and using “propaganda against the regime”. They operate in an increasingly unpredictable and repressive environment for merely exercising the right to freedom of expression, association or assembly. Many defenders have been removed to prisons far from their homes as a form of punishment, even during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Women human rights defenders, minority rights defenders and lawyers defending the families of human rights defenders are particularly exposed to harassment, arrest and detention.

23. Human rights defender Narges Mohammadi⁵⁶ was violently arrested again in November 2021, without a warrant, while attending a memorial for victims of the November 2019 protests. She was informed that the 30-month prison sentence and 80 lashes handed down to her in May 2021 had come into effect.⁵⁷ Ms. Mohammadi is currently being held in solitary confinement in Evin prison. Prior to her rearrest, Ms. Mohammadi had been temporarily detained for having participated in other gatherings, including in support of protests in Khuzestan.⁵⁸

24. Cases of judicial harassment against lawyers include that of Javad Alikordi, who began serving his four-year prison sentence in July 2021, on charges including propaganda against the State and insulting the Supreme Leader for running a news channel on a messaging platform.⁵⁹ Farhad Mohammadi began serving his 10-month prison sentence in July 2021.⁶⁰ In October, Nemat Ahmadi was ordered to pay a 5-million-toman fine within 10 days or face six months in prison for “spreading falsehoods with the intention of causing public anxiety”.⁶¹ Amirshah Davoudi, previously sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment,⁶² was granted furlough in June 2021. In September 2021, Farzaneh Zilabi, a lawyer representing the syndicate of workers of the Haft Tappeh company, was sentenced to one year in prison and a two-year travel ban on the charge of “propaganda activities against the State”.⁶³ Mohammad Najafi, sentenced to 13 years of imprisonment in 2018 for demanding accountability for deaths in detention, was summoned to a revolutionary court in July 2021

⁵⁵ See https://www.en-hrana.org/mohammad-nourizad-released-from-evin-prison-ali-nourizad-returned-to-the-greater-tehran-prison-at-end-of-leave/?utm_source=dLvr.it&utm_medium=twitter.

⁵⁶ A/76/160, para. 15.

⁵⁷ See <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/narges-mohammadi-facing-new-charges-while-detained-solitary-confinement>.

⁵⁸ See <https://www.hra-news.org/2021/hranews/a-31199/>; <https://www.hra-news.org/2021/hranews/a-31653/> (in Persian).

⁵⁹ See <https://www.hra-news.org/2021/hranews/a-31182/> (in Persian).

⁶⁰ See <https://kurdistanhumanrights.org/fa/?p=16340> (in Persian).

⁶¹ See <https://www.isna.ir/news/1400072114919/%D9%87%D8%B4%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%A8-%D9%86%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF%DB%8C-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D9%BE%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%87-%D8%AC%D8%B1%D9%85-%D8%B3%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%B3%DB%8C-%D9%85%D8%AD%DA%A9%D9%88%D9%85%DB%8C%D8%AA-%D9%BE%D9%86%D8%AC-%D9%85%DB%8C%D9%84%DB%8C%D9%88%D9%86> (in Persian).

⁶² See <https://www.hra-news.org/2021/hranews/a-29646/>.

⁶³ See <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/whrd-farzaneh-zilabi-sentenced-one-year-prison-and-two-year-travel-ban>.

on a new charge of “propaganda against the State” for calling for a boycott of the elections.⁶⁴ Despite a heart attack in August, he has been denied medical treatment.⁶⁵

25. The Special Rapporteur has shared his grave concern with the Government over the arrest, detention, torture and ill-treatment of human rights lawyer Payam Derafshan. As detailed in a communication,⁶⁶ the forced injection and transfer to psychiatric hospital of Mr. Derafshan is another example of a worrying trend of forced medical treatment of prisoners.⁶⁷ In October 2021, a court of appeals confirmed a seven-year prison sentence for professor and lawyer Reza Eslami, in addition to prohibiting him from teaching and leaving the country.⁶⁸ Lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh was granted medical furlough in July 2021.

26. Nosrat Beheshti, Hashem Khastar, Mohammadhossein Sepehri and Kamal Jafari Yazdani remain in prison after being convicted to lengthy prison sentences for signing a letter calling for the resignation of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Foreign and dual nationals

27. The arbitrary detention of dual and foreign nationals as a means to put pressure on foreign Governments remains of deep concern. Many of those arbitrarily detained have serious underlying medical conditions that have been left untreated, or health conditions that have significantly deteriorated. Ahmadreza Djalali has remained in prolonged solitary confinement since November 2020 and is in urgent need of surgery and dental care.⁶⁹ In August 2021, Massud Mossaheb was taken without prior notice to a revolutionary court to hear the result of his appeal verdict, which reduced his sentence from 10 to 8 years. His lawyers were not informed. Following a medical conclusion that he required hospital admission, Mr. Mossaheb was taken to hospital on 14 November but was returned to prison that same day without receiving the prescribed treatment. Kamran Ghaderi, imprisoned since 2016, was granted a one-week furlough in November 2021, which was extended for another week due to his testing positive for COVID-19. His third request for release for having served over half his sentence was rejected in October 2021. Nahid Taghavi and Mehran Raouf were each sentenced in August 2021 to 10 years of imprisonment on the charge of “participating in the management of a banned group”.⁷⁰ In November 2020, Emad Shargi was sentenced without a trial to 10 years of imprisonment, despite an earlier official announcement that had cleared him of the charges. He was not granted access to his family or a lawyer until September 2021. Anoosheh Ashoori, Morad Tahbaz, Jamshid Sharmahd and Siamak Namazi are among other foreign and dual nationals who remain imprisoned under inhumane conditions, including limitations on contact with their families. Baquer Namazi remains under a travel ban despite an urgent need for life-saving surgery. In October 2021, Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe’s lawyer was notified by telephone that the appeal of her second sentence to one year of imprisonment had failed, meaning that her sentence could be implemented any time. The Government stated that Iranian law did not recognize dual citizenship, and that enjoying the citizenship of another country neither granted privileges nor was cause for targeting.

C. Rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly

28. In November 2021, the Press Supervisory Board of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance revoked the operating licence of the State-run newspaper *Kelid*, forcing it

⁶⁴ See <https://www.hra-news.org/2021/hranews/a-30876/> (in Persian) and <https://www.iranhumanrights.org/2019/01/human-rights-lawyer-mohammad-najafi-facing-19-years-behind-bars-in-iran/>.

⁶⁵ See <https://iranhr.net/fa/articles/4865/> (in Persian).

⁶⁶ See IRN 31/2021, which will be available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/Tmsearch/TMDocuments>.

⁶⁷ See <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/10/20/iran-account-horrific-abuse-prominent-lawyer>.

⁶⁸ See <https://www.en-hrana.org/appellate-court-sentences-reza-eslami-to-five-years-in-prison/>.

⁶⁹ Submission received; and <https://iranhumanrights.org/2021/07/14-academic-rights-groups-call-for-release-of-iranian-swedish-scholar-ahmadreza-djalali/>.

⁷⁰ See <https://www.rferl.org/a/iran-sentences-taghavi-raouf/31393735.html>.

to stop publishing.⁷¹ The *Kelid* website was also taken offline. The ban was issued days after *Kelid* published an article with a headline that translates to “Millions of Iranians living under the poverty line”.

29. The authorities continued to unduly restrict freedom of expression online, including through the imposition of localized Internet shutdowns during protests or sensitive periods, such as in Kohgiluyeh va Boyer Ahmad Province and in Khuzestan Province.⁷² In addition, a number of arrests were made of individuals for their exercise of freedom of expression online. Among these are the arrests in June 2021 by the cyberpolice of three people for publishing news about election candidates online. In September 2021, human rights defender Payam Shakiba was sentenced to 13 months of imprisonment and a two-year ban on leaving the country and from joining political and social groups. His conviction was based on charges of supporting political prisoners, and encouraging the boycott of elections through online activities. The Special Rapporteur remains concerned at threats against journalists abroad and their families inside the country, including staff of the BBC Persian service, and the increased online misogynistic targeting of women journalists.

30. The Special Rapporteur is concerned at legislative efforts aimed at restricting the digital space. The bill on protecting the rights of users in cyberspace and organizing social media, currently before the parliament, provides for an increasingly isolationist infrastructure that would in effect consolidate a digital wall in the country, increase control over information and deny the right to freedom of expression set out in international law.⁷³

31. As highlighted elsewhere in the report, there were several protests related to environmental policies and climate change that had direct impacts on livelihoods. In addition, protests by workers, pensioners and farmers concerning wages, job security and the right to collective organization continued.

32. Over 350 protests took place between June and October 2021 in several sectors of the Iranian economy.⁷⁴ The most widespread strike was held by workers in the oil, gas and petrochemical industry between mid-June and the end of September 2021.⁷⁵ The strike was begun by temporary contract workers and spread to over 100 oil, gas and petrochemical sites across the country; workers’ demands included job security through the elimination of private contracts in the oil industry, increased wages and better safety and health conditions.⁷⁶ It is estimated that 75 per cent of the workers in the oil industry are contract workers, temporarily hired by private contractors and without the benefits granted under the labour laws.⁷⁷ The use of temporary contracts and delayed wages have resulted in protests among workers in other sectors, including municipality workers, nurses and teachers.⁷⁸

33. The criminalization of the defence of labour rights continued. Shapour Ehsani-Rad, a board member of the Free Union of Iranian Workers and a representative of workers expelled from the Saveh Rolling and Profile Mills Company, has been serving a six-year sentence since June 2020. He continues to be denied medical leave.⁷⁹ In June 2021, a court of appeals upheld a three-year sentence against labour rights defender Maziar Seyednejad in connection

⁷¹ See <https://cpj.org/2021/11/iran-shutters-newspaper-that-implicated-supreme-leader-was-responsible-for-poverty/>.

⁷² See <https://filter.watch/en/2021/07/15/network-monitor-june-2021/> and <https://filter.watch/en/2021/07/19/shutdown-monitor-local-internet-disruptions-target-escalating-water-protests-in-khuzestan/>.

⁷³ See <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26736>.

⁷⁴ See <https://www.hra-news.org/periodical/a-105/>, <https://www.hra-news.org/periodical/a-103/>, <https://www.hra-news.org/periodical/a-102/> and <https://www.hra-news.org/periodical/a-101/> (in Persian).

⁷⁵ See <https://www.radiozameh.info/u/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/LaborRightsReport-no18-July-September-2021en.pdf>, p. 15.

⁷⁶ See <https://www.radiozameh.com/673879> (in Persian).

⁷⁷ See <https://merip.org/2021/08/labor-organizing-on-the-rise-among-iranian-oil-workers/>.

⁷⁸ See <https://www.radiozameh.info/u/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/LaborRightsReport-no18-July-September-2021en.pdf>, pp. 11–22.

⁷⁹ See <https://www.hra-news.org/2021/hranews/a-31754/> (in Persian).

with his support of the strike by the workers of the Haft Tappeh company.⁸⁰ Esmail Abdi, a teachers' rights advocate due for release in November 2020 after serving a five-year sentence, remains imprisoned after authorities revived a suspended 10-year sentence against him.⁸¹ In October 2021, the Ministry of Education finalized its decision to dismiss teachers' rights advocate Mohammad Habibi from his position, despite his appeal.⁸² Mr. Habibi had worked as a teacher for 17 years and had been released from prison in November 2020. The workers of the Haft Tappeh company started a new wave of protests in July 2021, demanding the payment of delayed wages, the return of fired workers, and an end to the prosecution of their lawyer.⁸³

D. Adequate standard of living

34. Official data show that year-on-year inflation in the period of August to September 2021 was 45 per cent, with food prices increasing by 60 per cent compared to the same period the previous year.⁸⁴ According to the Statistical Centre of Iran, about 20 per cent of the population with the highest income holds 47 per cent of the wealth, while the 20 per cent with the lowest income holds 0.5 per cent of the wealth.⁸⁵ High food and living costs, combined with low wages, continued to push people below the poverty line and increase the inequality gap.⁸⁶ Over 30 per cent of the population was estimated to live below the poverty line as of August 2021, while some lawmakers estimate the number to be 60 per cent.⁸⁷ At least 25 million people are in absolute poverty, unable to meet their most basic needs, such as food, water, housing and education. A State charitable organization estimated that the poverty line in 2020 was a monthly income of 10 million tomans.⁸⁸ The supreme assembly of Iranian workers announced in November 2021 that the minimum expenditure basket for a three-member family had reached 12 million toman,⁸⁹ three times more than the minimum wage set by the Supreme Labour Council for that year.⁹⁰ The high inflation rate has continued without a commensurate increase in the minimum wage for workers. The economic recession and budget deficit has caused delays in the payment of salaries to government employees and retirees covered by State pension and social security funds.⁹¹ The Government emphasized the negative impact of sanctions imposed by the United States of America on the enjoyment of human rights.

35. Environmental and land-related issues pose a threat to the right to an adequate standard of living, particularly in minority populated provinces. In addition to the water crisis in Khuzestan and Isfahan, there is a severe water shortage in Sistan va Baluchestan Province, leading inhabitants to fetch water from nearby rivers, with a high risk of drowning. About 28 million of the country's 83 million people live in areas with water shortages, mainly in the central and southern regions of the country.⁹² Access to clean drinking water, a right in itself, is inextricably linked to the right to the highest attainable standard of health, and is thus protected under both articles 11 and 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

⁸⁰ See <https://www.en-hrana.org/maziar-seyednejad-still-in-detention-one-month-after-arrest/>.

⁸¹ See

<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26375>.

⁸² See <https://www.hra-news.org/2021/hranews/a-31995/> (in Persian).

⁸³ See <https://www.radiozameh.com/682348/index.html> (in Persian).

⁸⁴ See <https://www.amar.org.ir/news/ID/15837/> (in Persian).

⁸⁵ See <https://www.amar.org.ir/Portals/0/News/1400/zaribjini99.pdf> (in Persian).

⁸⁶ See <https://www.radiozameh.info/u/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/LaborRightsReport-no18-July-September-2021en.pdf>, p. 5.

⁸⁷ See <https://khabaronline.ir/news/1502880> (in Persian).

⁸⁸ See <https://www.radiozameh.com/681664> and <https://www.asriran.com/fa/news/798246/> (in Persian).

⁸⁹ See <https://www.ghatreh.com/news/nn61370368/> (in Persian).

⁹⁰ See <https://www.eghtesadnews.com/fa/tiny/news-399376> and <https://iranhumanrights.org/2021/03/irans-new-minimum-wage-falls-below-poverty-line/> (in Persian).

⁹¹ See <https://www.radiozameh.info/u/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/LaborRightsReport-no18-July-September-2021en.pdf>, p. 9.

⁹² See <https://financialtribune.com/articles/environment/99018/28m-people-in-water-stressed-regions>.

36. Destruction of property continued, in contravention of recommendations by the United Nations to halt forced evictions during the pandemic. Among these are the demolition of residential houses in Zahedan and Chababar, largely populated by the Arab minority, in September and October 2021 by the housing and urban development foundation, together with military forces, without providing compensation or shelter. Confiscation of Baha'i-owned property also continued, in violation of international law, including through the judiciary's arbitrary notification in August 2021 to confiscate six properties in Semnan Province under article 49 of the Constitution.

E. COVID-19 response and the right to health

37. The Islamic Republic of Iran faced a fifth wave of COVID-19, with a higher surge of infections and deaths compared to the previous waves. According to data made available by the Ministry of Health and published on a World Health Organization dashboard, from 5 August to 17 September the daily death toll remained about 400 to 600,⁹³ with over 709 deaths in 24 hours on 24 August 2021, the highest number since the start of the pandemic.⁹⁴ Health professionals estimated the daily death toll to be higher. In August 2021, the World Health Organization expressed concern over the COVID-19 outbreak in the country and the low level of vaccination coverage, and the impact on the lives and livelihoods of people.⁹⁵ Other reports indicate a severe shortage of medical supplies in hospitals, with concerns that sanctions have placed additional constraints on access to medical equipment and products. Wards and corridors are packed to capacity with COVID-19 patients waiting to access care.⁹⁶ According to health experts, the limited supplies of vaccines and the slow vaccination campaign contributed significantly to the health crisis. The Government launched the COVID-19 vaccination campaign on 18 February 2021. As at 1 June, 536,326 people out of a population of 83 million people had received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine.⁹⁷

38. Following widespread criticism and the failure of domestic producers to deliver the pledged amount of vaccine doses,⁹⁸ the initial policy ban on vaccine importation was reversed. On 10 August, the Supreme Leader announced that vaccines should be acquired through every way possible, including by importing them.⁹⁹ More than 30 million doses were imported between 23 August and 23 September.¹⁰⁰ The pace of COVID-19 vaccination rollouts increased significantly over the months of September and October. Following this acceleration in the vaccine campaign, over 57 million people had received two doses of vaccine as at 29 November 2021.¹⁰¹

39. The Special Rapporteur recalls that the components of the right to health imply that every person has a right to have access to a vaccine for COVID-19 that is safe, effective and based on the application of the best scientific developments.¹⁰²

F. Situation of women and girls

40. In November 2021, the Guardian Council ratified the law on young people and protection of the family. The Special Rapporteur has previously raised grave concerns about

⁹³ See <https://covid19.who.int/region/emro/country/ir>.

⁹⁴ See <http://www.irna.ir/news/84447592/> (in Persian).

⁹⁵ See <http://www.emro.who.int/iran/news/statement-on-covid-19-vaccination-in-islamic-republic-of-iran-by-who-representative-dr-jaffar-hussain.html>.

⁹⁶ See <https://observers.france24.com/en/middle-east/20210715-iran-s-failed-covid-19-vaccination-campaign-due-to-political-power-struggle> and <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/13/world/middleeast/iran-virus-delta-variant.html>.

⁹⁷ See <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1400/03/11/2513701/> (in Persian).

⁹⁸ See <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/08/19/iran-government-mismanagement-compounds-covid-19-crisis>.

⁹⁹ See <http://www.irna.ir/news/84434077/> (in Persian).

¹⁰⁰ See <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/22/iran-eyes-normalisation-as-covid-vaccination-drive-accelerates>.

¹⁰¹ See <http://www.imna.ir/news/538672/> (in Persian).

¹⁰² E/C.12/2020/2, para. 2.

the damaging consequences of the law in terms of the right of women and girls to sexual and reproductive health.¹⁰³ The law is aimed at increasing population growth by imposing severe restrictions and prohibitions on abortion, voluntary sterilization and access to modern contraceptive goods, services and information. While abortion was already criminalized in the Penal Code, the new law repeals the 2005 law on therapeutic abortion. The vaguely formulated article 61 allows the imposition of the death penalty under the charge of “corruption on earth” for anyone who performs abortion on a large scale.¹⁰⁴

41. The 2021 law also provides direct and indirect incentives to increase early marriage, without providing an age restriction.¹⁰⁵ The legal age of marriage for girls remains 13, and girls at a younger age can also enter into a marriage contract with the consent of their father and the permission of a competent court, in violation of international law.¹⁰⁶ According to official figures, between March 2020 and March 2021, over 31,000 marriages of girls between the ages of 10 to 14 were recorded, an increase of 10.5 per cent compared to the previous year.¹⁰⁷ During the same period, there was a 6 per cent increase in marriage of girls aged between 15 to 19, and over 66,000 births registered among mothers aged between 15 and 19 years. The Special Rapporteur has previously warned that banks offering “marriage loans” without age restrictions have increased child marriage,¹⁰⁸ a concern reiterated by a deputy minister in July 2021.¹⁰⁹ This is particularly concerning in the context of increased poverty, which has prompted families in marginalized areas to seek new sources of income.

42. The Special Rapporteur notes with regret that there has been no development in the adoption of the bill on preserving the dignity of women and protecting them against violence.¹¹⁰ The Special Rapporteur continued to receive reports of “honour” killings,¹¹¹ where perpetrators are exonerated or their punishments reduced due to particular exemptions from criminal liability in law or the families’ reluctance to pursue the prosecution of a family member.

G. Situation of minorities

43. The Special Rapporteur continued to receive reports about the targeting of the rights of individuals belonging to ethnic and religious minority groups. As highlighted elsewhere in the present report, minorities are disproportionately affected by the imposition of the death penalty and arbitrary deprivation of life, and are also disadvantaged with regard to recognition of rights in law and as a matter of policy.

44. Limited economic opportunities push many, including single women heading households, into becoming border couriers for survival. The Special Rapporteur recalls comments made by the Government on his most recent report to the General Assembly, regarding the range of measures aimed at improving the economic situation in the border provinces, including the creation of job opportunities. While these measures are welcome, they do not replace the duty to investigate the killing of border couriers, nor the duty to ensure accountability. The Special Rapporteur regrets that impunity is legally established through the 1995 law on the use of firearms by armed forces in necessary instances, article 3 (9) of which allows law enforcement officers to use firearms, inter alia, for stopping people who intend to enter or exit through illegal border crossings and who do not heed the warnings of border guards. The Special Rapporteur reiterates the need to strengthen the regulatory

¹⁰³ A/76/160, para. 30.

¹⁰⁴ See <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27817&LangID=E>.

¹⁰⁵ For instance, in articles 10–11, 13 and 68–69.

¹⁰⁶ Civil Code, art. 1041.

¹⁰⁷ See <https://www.rferl.org/a/iran-child-marriages/31420642.html>.

¹⁰⁸ A/HRC/46/50, para. 43.

¹⁰⁹ See <https://www.hamshahrionline.ir/x7d7h> (in Persian).

¹¹⁰ See IRN 25/2020, available at

<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=25651>.

¹¹¹ See <https://www.hra-news.org/2021/hranews/a-32109/> and <https://www.hra-news.org/2021/hranews/a-31574/> (in Persian).

framework for the use of force by border and security agents, and to ensure training in line with international standards.

45. The Special Rapporteur notes with concern the continued repression of religious minorities, including through the forcible closing of houses of worship on national security grounds. In June 2021, over 10 individuals of the Baluchi minority of the village of Ramin were summoned to court after participating in a rally to prevent the destruction of an area reserved for Sunni Muslims for prayer. Between 1 January and 1 December 2021, at least 53 Christians were arrested for the practice of their religious beliefs. The Special Rapporteur notes with concern the continued targeting of members of the Baha'i community and their properties, and the intensified smear campaign on social media against some of its representatives. In October 2021, four members of the Baha'i community were sentenced to five years of imprisonment for seeking to access higher education.¹¹² The Government stated that minorities were respected and that Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians were free to perform their religious rites under article 13 of the Constitution.

46. Between January and October 2021, close to 500 Kurdish individuals, including teachers, border couriers, artists, human rights and environmental rights defenders, journalists, artists and lawyers, were arrested or detained. At least 140 of these were charged with national security-related crimes. In June, Kurdish writer and human rights defender Aram Fathi and human rights defender Soraya Haghdoost were arrested at their respective homes in Marivan.¹¹³ Mr. Fathi was transferred to the police station and reportedly subjected to electric shocks and threatened with being killed. They were both released on bail on 28 June.

47. Limitations on the right to education in one's mother tongue remains a concern for minorities. Abbas Lisani and Alireza Farshi, Azerbaijani-Turk minority rights defenders, remain detained.¹¹⁴ In November, another Azerbaijani-Turk activist, Parviz Siabi, was sentenced by a revolutionary court to 16 years of imprisonment (a maximum 10 of which are enforceable). Mr. Siabi was arrested amid protests in Tabriz in July 2021.¹¹⁵ The Government noted that his sentence is under consideration by a Court of Appeals. In October 2021, 12 Azerbaijani-Turk activists who were arrested during protests in Ardabil in October 2020 were each sentenced to 14 months in prison and 74 lashes. The Government noted that article 15 of the Constitution permitted the teaching of local and ethnic languages in schools, and that several universities used local languages in teaching.

III. Accountability for human rights violations

48. Institutional impunity and the absence of a system for accountability for violations of human rights permeate the political and legal system of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The absence of accountability derives from various deficiencies within State structures, including negation of the principles of rule of law and separation of powers.¹¹⁶ Accountability for serious human rights violations represents a core obligation of States under international law.¹¹⁷ A key condition for ensuring a viable system of accountability is the establishment of appropriate legal and political structures of governance.¹¹⁸ At the institutional level, it will be necessary to entrench the principles of rule of law and separation of powers, including independence of the judiciary, political pluralism and democratic participation in decision-making. In addition, steps must be taken to ensure minority and women's rights, to establish

¹¹² See <https://iranhumanrights.org/2021/10/four-bahais-sentenced-to-five-years-in-prison-for-trying-to-access-higher-education/>.

¹¹³ See <https://www.iranhr.net/en/articles/4782/>.

¹¹⁴ A/76/160, para. 34.

¹¹⁵ See <https://www.en-hrana.org/azerbaijani-turk-activist-parviz-siabi-sentence-to-16-years-imprisonment/>.

¹¹⁶ Within the United Nations system, see the definition of the rule of law laid down by the Secretary-General in a report to the Security Council (S/2004/616, para. 6). See also General Assembly resolution 57/221.

¹¹⁷ Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 31, paras. 15 and 18.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

systems of oversight and transparency and to provide security and law enforcement forces with the capacity and training to use less lethal weapons.

Structural impediments for accountability

49. The fundamental challenge to accountability in the Islamic Republic of Iran is presented by the institutional legal and political apparatus, which in itself is not compliant with the State's obligations under international law.¹¹⁹ The exercise of power, the basis for governance, including the relationship between those in power and those subject to that power, is based on the Constitution of 1979, which entrenches an Islamic political ideology as both the foundation for and the aim of governance.¹²⁰ The form of government, known as *velayat-e faqih*, consolidates executive, legislative and judicial authority in the position of the Supreme Leader, which is not a popularly elected position.¹²¹ The Assembly of Experts, an 88-member clerical body, is authorized to appoint, monitor and dismiss the Supreme Leader,¹²² but has never questioned the Supreme Leader in practice. As such, and as elaborated in the Constitution, there is no meaningful separation of power within this system of governance. The Constitution further establishes a system of governance bodies that are either not subject to popular elections, for example the Guardian Council and the Expediency Council, or that are subject to elections based on strict criteria for candidates who are vetted by the Guardian Council, such as the parliament, the Assembly of Experts and the President. The ideology of the State features as a precondition for any form of political participation,¹²³ is foundational for the policies of the State and its various bodies,¹²⁴ and is further used for the interpretation of individual rights. It is clear that this system of governance establishes a particular relationship between individuals and the State, where the maintenance of the system of governance and the political ideology takes precedence over protecting and respecting the rights of individuals. Within this configuration, there is no meaningful way by which the population can freely participate in decision-making mechanisms, including legislative processes, or hold decision makers accountable. The Government stressed the right of each nation to choose its form of government and that the political structure of the Islamic Republic of Iran was a religious democracy. It further noted the complete independence of the judiciary, and that accountability and countering impunity was provided for in law and in the practice of law and justice enforcement entities.

50. While systems of oversight are established, for example in the prison or health systems, these bodies are not granted the tools to fulfil their responsibilities nor the power to ensure independent oversight. Conditions for ensuring accountability are missing at the legislative and executive levels, and the judiciary acts as a repressive organ instead of an independent body towards which individuals can seek recourse. In addition, parallel institutions have gradually gained a central role in governance, such as the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, answerable only to the Supreme Leader.

51. This system of governance stands at odds with the principle of rule of law and with international human rights law that sets standards for what the State can do and how it can do it. Ensuring rule of law requires the establishment of a set of institutions and procedures, including an independent judiciary, that scrupulously observes and can guarantee due process.¹²⁵

¹¹⁹ The Islamic Republic of Iran is party to, among others, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

¹²⁰ Arts. 2 and 3.

¹²¹ Constitution, preamble and chap. VIII.

¹²² *Ibid.*, art. 107.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, arts. 2–3, 26, 91, 112 and 115. See also the 2016 law on the operation of political groups and parties.

¹²⁴ Constitution, art. 3.

¹²⁵ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 14; and Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 13 (1984). See also [A/65/274](#).

Lack of independence of the judiciary

52. The lack of an independent judiciary and its politicization is a major contributing factor to failings of accountability. According to article 156 of the Constitution, the judiciary is an independent power, the protector of the rights of the individual and society, and responsible for the implementation of justice. The independence of the judiciary is negated, however, by constitutional provisions that fail to enable this independence, including those that stipulate that all State powers must function under the supervision of the Supreme Leader. Article 61 of the Constitution limits the powers of the judiciary, which must be conducted in accordance with Islamic criteria.

53. The principles of judicial independence and separation of powers are further impaired by provisions related to the appointment of the Head of the Judiciary and judges. The Head of the Judiciary is directly appointed for a period of five years by the Supreme leader.¹²⁶ The Head of the Supreme Court and all judges are directly or indirectly selected by the Head of the Judiciary.¹²⁷

54. The criteria for becoming a judge are additionally politicized by requirements such as having “faith and practical commitment to Islam”, “practical commitment to the Constitution and the principle of *velayat-e faqih*” and “lack of any affiliation or sympathy with illegal groups, parties and organizations”.¹²⁸ Legislation precludes women judges,¹²⁹ and vetting processes attached to the appointment of judges ensure that the political and religious beliefs of judges are fully aligned to that of the State ideology.¹³⁰ Judges who challenge the official State ideology risk being subjected to punishment, including being dismissed, and permanently barred, from holding judicial positions based on vague and arbitrary criteria. The law on selection based on religious and ethical standards allows investigations by the Supreme Selection Council and the Ministry of Intelligence into an individual’s beliefs, previous political opinions and affiliations and any repentances (*towbeh*) in respect of those opinions and affiliations. Such processes contravene international standards and allow for the exclusion of applicants merely on the basis of holding beliefs that are not in line with State-sanctioned political and religious ideologies.

55. The Special Rapporteur remains concerned at the role of revolutionary courts in the criminal justice system. Established after the 1979 revolution following an order by the Supreme Leader, these courts conducted summary and arbitrary trials to exterminate political opponents of the revolution. Despite a lack of constitutional basis, revolutionary courts have continued to operate and sentence political activists, journalists, lawyers and human rights defenders behind closed doors, with convictions in such cases influenced by intelligence bodies. An amendment to the Code of Criminal Procedure (art. 303) in 1980 established the original purpose of the revolutionary courts, which was to exercise jurisdiction over drug crimes and other offences, including national security-related crimes. Since their inception, these courts have consistently violated fundamental human rights, including due process rights and the right to a fair trial as contained in article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

56. The revolutionary courts are responsible for issuing the vast majority of the death penalty sentences, including thousands of summary and arbitrary executions.¹³¹ In the period 2010–2020, the available statistics indicate that of 6,033 executions, 3,619 (60 per cent) were based on sentences issued by the revolutionary courts.¹³²

¹²⁶ Constitution, arts. 110 and 157.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, art. 158.

¹²⁸ See https://www.amnestyusa.org/files/flawed_reforms_-_irans_new_code_of_criminal_procedure.pdf.

¹²⁹ Law on the conditions for the selection of judges of 1982. See also https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CCPR/Shared%20Documents/IRN/INT_CCPR_NGO_IRN_42317_E.pdf, p. 20.

¹³⁰ See https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/docs/ngos/AI_CESCRWG49_Iran.pdf, pp. 4–5.

¹³¹ See <https://www.ecpm.org/wp-content/uploads/Rapport-iran-2021-gb-290321-HD.pdf>.

¹³² See <https://iranhr.net/media/files/Rapport-iran-2021-gb-290321-BD.pdf>, p. 68.

57. The Special Rapporteur has consistently highlighted the flaws in the Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure in ensuring the right to a fair trial.¹³³ The structural deficiencies impede victims from pursuing accountability within the existing legal and judicial framework. The diminished independence of the legal profession in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the harassment of human rights lawyers have also undermined accountability efforts. As reflected in previous reports, human rights lawyers are subjected to intimidation and prosecution under national security charges.¹³⁴ Many have served lengthy prison sentences in connection with their professional duties.¹³⁵ The Special Rapporteur has previously raised with the Government his concerns at the series of legislative efforts that undermine the independence of the bar associations.¹³⁶ In June 2021, the judiciary adopted by-laws that introduced new channels for initiating disciplinary proceedings against lawyers and revoking their licences, and that can be used to arbitrarily remove lawyers.¹³⁷

58. Within the above-mentioned system of governance, it is clear that obtaining accountability for human rights violations becomes arbitrary at best and impossible at worst. The system of governance, and with it the absence of accountability, is one of the reasons why the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran continue to live without minimum guarantees of protection against the power of the State, including its security and intelligence forces.

Emblematic examples of failure to ensure accountability

59. The Special Rapporteur, other human rights mechanisms and civil society have, over the years, documented examples of grave violations of human rights. These include the large-scale use of lethal force by security, law enforcement and other State agents against peaceful protesters in nationwide protests in 2009, 2019, 2020 and 2021, leading to alarmingly high numbers of injuries and deaths, together with arrests, enforced disappearances, detentions, prosecutions and executions.¹³⁸ Other examples include large-scale enforced disappearances and summary executions of real or perceived political dissidents, including children, in 1982 and 1988, which to date have not been the subject of any investigation or accountability, but where destruction of evidence for those crimes is ongoing, in what appears to be an official State policy of wiping these events from memory.¹³⁹ The assassinations in the period 1988–1998 of dissidents, intellectuals and artists, known as the “chain murders”, remain without accountability,¹⁴⁰ as do killings of activists outside of the country’s borders.¹⁴¹ More examples include the downing of Ukraine Airlines flight PS752 and the systematic use of lethal force against border couriers.

60. Moreover, deaths in State custody due to violence by prison officials or other State agents, as documented elsewhere in the present report, and deaths in State custody due to denial of medical care, continue to take place without being the subject of investigation or accountability. Civil society organizations estimate that over 70 men and women died in State custody between January 2010 and September 2021, reportedly due to torture, use of force, firearms and tear gas, at various stages of the process, from as early as the preliminary investigation, and in detention facilities run by the investigative unit of the police (Agahi),

¹³³ A/76/160, paras. 65–67; and A/HRC/43/61, paras. 46–48.

¹³⁴ A/76/160, para. 16; A/74/188, paras. 15–18; and A/HRC/46/50, paras. 9–11.

¹³⁵ See communications IRN 16/2021, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26471>; IRN 21/2016, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=3251>; and IRN 12/2012, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26375>.

¹³⁶ See communication IRN 26/2021, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26681>.

¹³⁷ See <https://iranhumanrights.org/2021/07/iranian-judiciary-assumes-sweeping-new-powers-over-lawyers/>.

¹³⁸ See A/76/160, A/75/213, A/74/188, A/HRC/46/50, A/HRC/43/61 and A/HRC/40/67.

¹³⁹ See communication IRN 15/2021, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26439>.

¹⁴⁰ See <https://www.rferl.org/a/two-decades-later-still-no-justice-for-iran-chain-murders-of-intellectuals/30997536.html> and <https://www.iranhumanrights.org/tag/chain-murders/>.

¹⁴¹ See <https://www.iranrights.org/newsletter/issue/120>.

the Ministry of Intelligence, regular city police, border or immigration guards, the cyberpolice and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.¹⁴² None of the deaths have been subject to an independent investigation or accountability. Instead, authorities ascribe deaths in custody to drug overdose, illness or suicide, without conducting an independent investigation. Family members and lawyers are often subjected to harassment and intimidation, particularly when publicly disputing the official explanation for the deaths or when pursuing legal action. The Government has routinely stated that allegations of torture are baseless as the Constitution and the Penal Code forbid the use of torture and the use of confession extracted under duress. The Special Rapporteur regrets the authorities' denial of this problem, which in itself constitutes an obstacle to accountability.¹⁴³

61. The above examples of absence of accountability for direct violations of the right to life are by no means exhaustive. The accountability problem also extends to other areas, including accountability for government policies, such as in the areas of health or the environment.

November 2019 protests

62. Over two years have passed since the brutally repressed nationwide protests of November 2019, without any concrete measures taken to ensure accountability for the use of force against protesters and for subsequent actions against them and family members who seek justice. The Special Rapporteur has previously reported on the unprecedented use of excessive and lethal force by State security forces during those protests, including by the police and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, including its Basij militia. According to confirmed reports, at least 324 people, including 22 children and 10 women, were killed between 15 and 19 November 2019 in 37 cities across the country, although the death toll is believed to be much higher.¹⁴⁴ In addition to the substantial loss of life as the consequence of blatantly unlawful lethal force used by State security forces, there have been no investigations, no one has been held accountable, and there has been no subsequent amendment to the legislative framework and policy regulating the use of force in managing assemblies. As with other protests, the death and injury figures from the November 2019 protests have not been officially announced.

Government mismanagement of the COVID-19 pandemic

63. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the absence of any inquiry into excessive deaths caused by the Government's pandemic response stands as another example of absence of accountability. In January 2021, the Supreme Leader banned the import of vaccines produced in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland or the United States, a decision criticized by health experts and human rights organizations.¹⁴⁵ The Government was criticized for delaying the import of available vaccines while prioritizing the development of domestic vaccines, in which it had reportedly invested substantial resources.¹⁴⁶ Concerns have been raised that the policy of reliance on the production of local vaccines rather than urgent import of available vaccines was guided by the financial self-interest of State-owned business enterprises rather than public health concerns.¹⁴⁷ The criticism was echoed by health officials, including the head of the COVID-19 task force in Tehran.¹⁴⁸ The Special Rapporteur has previously raised grave concerns about the impact that

¹⁴² See <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/09/iran-a-decade-of-deaths-in-custody-unpunished-amid-systemic-impunity-for-torture/>.

¹⁴³ A/76/168, para. 50.

¹⁴⁴ See <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/MDE1323082020ENGLISH.pdf>.

¹⁴⁵ See <https://iranhumanrights.org/2021/01/iranian-rights-groups-call-on-khamenei-to-allow-purchase-of-u-s-and-uk-covid-19-vaccines/>.

¹⁴⁶ See <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/08/19/iran-government-mismanagement-compounds-covid-19-crisis>.

¹⁴⁷ See <https://www.dw.com/en/irans-patriotic-vaccination-policy-is-making-some-people-rich/a-59342029>; <https://iranhumanrights.org/2021/08/iran-should-lift-deadly-ban-on-foreign-covid-vaccines/>; and <https://www.radiozamaneh.com/691022/> (in Persian).

¹⁴⁸ See <https://www.khabaronline.ir/news/1544278/> (in Persian).

the politicization of the COVID-19 vaccination policy and the ban on the import of certain COVID-19 vaccines have had on the right to health.¹⁴⁹

Culture of impunity and reprisals

64. The system of governance and the corresponding absence of a system of accountability has created a culture of impunity that perpetuates the cycles of violence, since violations of human rights have no consequences for the State or for individual perpetrators. There appears to be a State policy of intimidating, prosecuting or silencing those who call for accountability, justice and truth, whether they are victims themselves, relatives, human rights defenders, lawyers or organizations. Emblematic examples are the imprisonment of Maryam Monfared for seeking truth and justice for her relatives who were forcibly disappeared and executed in 1988;¹⁵⁰ threats and harassment against individuals seeking accountability for the loss of their family members following the downing of Ukraine Airlines flight PS752;¹⁵¹ and attacks against and arrests of family members seeking accountability for their children killed in protests or in prison, such as the arrest and imprisonment of Manouchehr Bakhtiari, the father of a protester killed in the November 2019 protests.¹⁵² In the context of COVID-19, instead of acceptance of criticism or apologies for excessive deaths and casualties as a consequence of State policies, there has been repression, intimidation and harassment of human rights defenders. This includes the arrest, charging and detention of human rights lawyers Arash Kaykhosravi and Mostafa Nili and human rights defender Mehdi Mahmoudian in August 2021 for national security crimes for merely planning a lawsuit against the authorities for mismanagement of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁵³

Civil society accountability initiatives

65. Although consistent calls for accountability have been made by United Nations bodies, human rights mechanisms and civil society, given the absence of an official system of accountability civil society actors have, over the years, seen no other recourse but to pursue their own initiatives to highlight the absence of accountability and to obtain recognition of the violations. Among these initiatives are the Iran People's Tribunal, for investigating the execution of political prisoners in the 1980s,¹⁵⁴ the Mourning Mothers, who seek justice for sons and daughters killed by government agents,¹⁵⁵ associations of the families of victims of Ukraine Airlines flight PS752,¹⁵⁶ and the Iran Atrocities Tribunal (also known as the Aban Tribunal), set up to investigate the killing of protesters by State security forces in November 2019.¹⁵⁷

66. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, sustained and systematic impunity for gross violations of human rights has been a major contributing factor in the recurrence and continued violation of rights. As described in the present report, the sacrifice of rights has been particularly high for individuals who challenge or are perceived to challenge the system of governance. These individuals are often described as threat to national security, as terrorists, as spies or as involved in organized crime.¹⁵⁸ The Special Rapporteur stresses that such circumstances,

¹⁴⁹ See communication IRN 25/2021, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26639>.

¹⁵⁰ See communication IRN 14/2021, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26438>.

¹⁵¹ See <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/05/27/iran-ukraine-airline-victims-families-harassed-abused>.

¹⁵² See <https://www.en-hrana.org/manouchehr-bakhtiari-sentenced-to-imprisonment-and-exile/>.

¹⁵³ See communication IRN 27/2021, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26682>.

¹⁵⁴ See <https://irantribunal.com/sessions/court/>.

¹⁵⁵ See <https://www.rferl.org/a/grieving-in-iran-mothers-brought-together-by-tragic-deaths-state-pressure/30332687.html>.

¹⁵⁶ See <https://www.ps752justice.com/about/>.

¹⁵⁷ See <https://abantribunal.com/>.

¹⁵⁸ Government responses to communication IRN 22/2021, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadFile?gId=36628>; to communication IRN 18/2021, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadFile?gId=36418>; to communication IRN 16/2021, available at

whether real or perceived, do not justify the continuation of repressive practices or legislation that contributes to human rights violations. He notes that insisting upon rule of law and a rights-based framework anchored in international human rights law as the basis for governance is not a political bias, nor does it support terrorism. The Islamic Republic of Iran cannot claim exemption from its fundamental human rights obligations.

IV. Recommendations

A. Accountability for human rights violations

67. **The Special Rapporteur recommends that the Islamic Republic of Iran:**

(a) **Undertake fundamental reforms towards the establishment of a system of accountability in line with international law, including constitutional, legislative and administrative reforms to ensure separation of powers, political pluralism and democratic participation in governance and decision-making;**

(b) **Undertake reforms to ensure the complete independence of the judiciary, including through the dissolution of the revolutionary courts, and reforms to ensure transparency in judicial appointments, which should be made based on merit and in the absence of any discriminatory conditions;**

(c) **Conduct an independent, impartial and transparent inquiry consistent with international standards concerning the use of force by security forces during the November 2019 protests and hold accountable all perpetrators of human rights violations during those and other protests, including protests in Khuzestan and Isfahan in 2021;**

(d) **Conduct a national and public inquiry into the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic;**

(e) **Ensure the independence of bar associations in the Islamic Republic of Iran.**

B. Death penalty

68. **The Special Rapporteur calls on the authorities to immediately abolish, through legislation, the death penalty for all offences. Pending abolition, he recommends that the authorities:**

(a) **Impose an immediate moratorium on executions and commute all death sentences;**

(b) **Urgently amend legislation to prohibit the execution of persons who committed a crime while under the age of 18 years, and urgently amend legislation to commute all death sentences for child offenders on death row;**

(c) **Abolish the death penalty for offences that do not amount to the most serious crimes under international human rights law;**

(d) **Publish disaggregated data regarding the number of death sentences implemented annually.**

C. Other human rights issues

69. **The Special Rapporteur recommends that the Islamic Republic of Iran:**

<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadFile?gId=36497>; and to communication IRN 10/2021, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadFile?gId=36383>.

(a) Ensure that prisoners and detainees are protected from all forms of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; ensure that confessions obtained through torture or ill-treatment are never admitted as evidence in court; establish mechanisms for investigating claims of torture and deaths in detention consistent with international standards; and ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;

(b) Ensure the right to a fair trial to all individuals charged with a criminal offence, including access to a lawyer of their choosing during all stages of the judicial process;

(c) Ensure that human rights defenders, including women human rights defenders, lawyers, journalists and dual and foreign nationals, as well as their families, are not threatened with or subjected to intimidation, harassment, arbitrary arrest, deprivation of liberty or life or other arbitrary sanctions; release all those detained in connection with their work; and extend the policy for temporary release of prisoners in the context of COVID-19;

(d) Release all individuals arrested for the exercise of their rights to freedom of opinion, expression, association and peaceful assembly, and promptly report the whereabouts and situation of detainees to their families;

(e) Ensure in law and practice the rights to freedom of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly and association; ensure that any limitation on these rights is in accordance with international law; and withdraw the bill on protecting the rights of users in cyberspace and organizing social media;

(f) Repeal the law on young people and protection of the family and other laws that violate the rights of women and girls; take measures to advance women's equal participation in public life consistent with international law; and ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;

(g) Revise legislation to eliminate child marriage, and undertake comprehensive awareness-raising programmes on the harmful effects of early marriage on the girl child's rights to health, education and development;

(h) Repeal all laws that exonerate "honour killings" and violence against women; adopt the bill on preserving the dignity of women and protecting them against violence, and adopt effective policies to end violence against women;

(i) Ratify and implement all fundamental International Labour Organization conventions and recognize independent trade unions;

(j) Undertake concrete actions to reduce existing economic inequalities and ensure an adequate standard of living, including access to basic services, without discrimination;

(k) Take all measures necessary to mitigate the effects of sanctions;

(l) Make substantial investments in all prisons to reduce overcrowding, improve hygiene, and ensure prompt access to medical treatment;

(m) Continue to engage with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including by permitting the Special Rapporteur to visit the country.

70. The Special Rapporteur urges States imposing sanctions on the Islamic Republic of Iran to ensure that measures such as humanitarian exemptions are given broad and practical effect and are promptly and effectively implemented to minimize the adverse consequences of sanctions on human rights, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

71. The Special Rapporteur urges the international community to call for accountability with respect to long-standing emblematic events that have been met with persistent impunity, including the enforced disappearances and summary and arbitrary executions of 1988 and the November 2019 protests.