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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**

### **Note by the Secretary-General\*\***

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mai Sato, submitted in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution [58/21](#).

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\* [A/80/150](#).

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



## **Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mai Sato**

### *Summary*

The present report builds on the Special Rapporteur's previous report ([A/HRC/58/62](#)), with a focus on human rights developments in the Islamic Republic of Iran from 1 January to 31 July 2025.

## I. Introduction

1. The present report covers the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran during the period from January to July 2025. It includes information on the impact of the unlawful attacks by Israel and the United States of America against the Islamic Republic of Iran (13 to 24 June) and on the consequences of the bills, laws, policies and practices introduced by the Islamic Republic of Iran since the military escalation.
2. During the reporting period, the mandate holder, jointly with other thematic mandate holders, transmitted 10 communications to the Islamic Republic of Iran and received 6 responses thereto; they also transmitted one communication to Israel and one to the United States, and issued 12 public statements.<sup>1</sup>
3. The Special Rapporteur visited Austria and Germany in June 2025 to meet with civil society organizations, key interlocutors and representatives of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, visits that were made necessary by her lack of physical access to the Islamic Republic of Iran. She appreciates both Governments' acceptance of her requests and takes positive note of the fact that many Iranian human rights activists have received German residence permits under section 22 (2) of the Residence Act, although that scheme is currently suspended.
4. The Special Rapporteur remains ready to receive an invitation to conduct a country visit to the Islamic Republic Iran. In March 2025, she held in-person and online meetings with the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva and received written submissions in response to her public call for input.
5. The Special Rapporteur expresses her appreciation to the numerous individuals and civil society organizations that provided input.

## II. Right to life

### A. Loss of lives during the military escalation

6. The military escalation began with attacks carried out by Israel on 13 June and escalated when United States forces joined the military action.<sup>2</sup> The Special Rapporteur condemns the unlawful attacks carried out by Israel<sup>3</sup> and the United States<sup>4</sup> on the Islamic Republic of Iran in violation of the principles of international law, including the prohibition on the use of force, the prohibition on aggression and the duty of non-intervention, all of which are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/en/latest?field\\_content\\_category\\_target\\_id%5B158%5D=158&field\\_content\\_category\\_target\\_id%5B162%5D=162&field\\_content\\_category\\_target\\_id%5B161%5D=161&field\\_content\\_category\\_target\\_id%5B159%5D=159&field\\_content\\_category\\_target\\_id%5B9071%5D=9071&field\\_entity\\_target\\_id%5B1304%5D=1304](http://www.ohchr.org/en/latest?field_content_category_target_id%5B158%5D=158&field_content_category_target_id%5B162%5D=162&field_content_category_target_id%5B161%5D=161&field_content_category_target_id%5B159%5D=159&field_content_category_target_id%5B9071%5D=9071&field_entity_target_id%5B1304%5D=1304).

<sup>2</sup> The information provided in paras. 6–14 of the present report is drawn from the submission from the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran, unless otherwise specified.

<sup>3</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/06/un-experts-condemn-israeli-attack-iran-and-urge-end-hostilities](http://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/06/un-experts-condemn-israeli-attack-iran-and-urge-end-hostilities).

<sup>4</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/06/un-experts-condemn-united-states-attack-iran-and-demand-permanent-end](http://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/06/un-experts-condemn-united-states-attack-iran-and-demand-permanent-end).

<sup>5</sup> In its response, Israel notes that the attacks were part of an “ongoing armed conflict” and rejects the need to determine whether its use of force on 13 June was justified.

7. The attacks targeted nuclear facilities, energy and military infrastructure and residential and media buildings in multiple locations, including Evin prison. Core tenets of international humanitarian law appear to have been violated, namely, the need to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants, ensure the proportionality of military actions and minimize foreseeable harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure.

8. Approximately 1,100 people were killed, including 102 women and 45 children, and over 5,600 were injured. While the State has not provided the number of civilian casualties, non-State sources estimated that between 40 and 60 per cent of deaths were civilian.<sup>6</sup>

9. Israeli air strikes and evacuation orders forced millions of residents of Tehran to flee their homes. The lack of effective warning systems in densely populated areas, combined with fuel distribution restrictions, left civilians highly vulnerable and triggered widespread panic. Submissions indicate that restrictions on Internet access and mobile telephone networks during the escalation caused widespread anxiety among people unable to contact their loved ones or confirm their safety.

10. Israel attacked over 210 commercial centres, 16 educational centres, 17 energy installations, nearly 10,000 residential units and 23 medical facilities, including hospitals in Kermanshah and Tehran. The bombing critically worsened supply shortages and severely compromised the provision of healthcare.

11. The military escalation severely disrupted access to healthcare for vulnerable populations, worsening existing challenges in access to medication for persons with disabilities, thalassemia and rare diseases, a situation that was already affected by sanctions. Transgender individuals faced losing access to essential hormone therapy.<sup>7</sup> Many lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and other gender-diverse people had no choice but to return to family homes. These environments were often unsafe, which exposed those individuals to abuse, surveillance, homophobia and transphobia.<sup>8</sup>

12. One of the submissions received describes how during the military escalation, pregnant women lacked access to safe delivery options, prenatal care or emergency services due to road closures, bombing risks or hospital damage and overcrowding.<sup>9</sup> Others experienced traumatic miscarriages due to fear, displacement or stress, which caused physical harm and long-lasting emotional trauma. In response, some healthcare workers offered their services online, often free of charge, in an attempt to provide basic care remotely.<sup>10</sup>

13. On 16 June, Israel targeted the central building of Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, a public broadcasting station, during a live news broadcast, resulting in 3 casualties and more than 10 injured. Most significantly, on 23 June, Israel targeted Evin prison, killing approximately 80 people, including dozens of political prisoners,<sup>11</sup> families, nearby residents, prison staff and soldiers.<sup>12</sup> The strikes carried out by Israel also resulted in the unlawful killing of 14 Iranian nuclear scientists.

14. During the military escalation, Israel and the United States targeted the nuclear infrastructures at Natanz, Fordow, Arak and Isfahan, which were under the

<sup>6</sup> See e.g. [www.en-hrana.org/twelve-days-under-fire-a-comprehensive-report-on-the-iran-israel-war/#\\_ftn1](http://www.en-hrana.org/twelve-days-under-fire-a-comprehensive-report-on-the-iran-israel-war/#_ftn1).

<sup>7</sup> Submission from Spectrum.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Submission from PEN America.

<sup>12</sup> See <https://amnesty.ca/human-rights-news/israeli-attack-evin-prison-must-be-investigated-as-war-crime/>.

supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Those attacks took place during ongoing negotiations to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Although IAEA reported no health consequences outside the targeted sites,<sup>13</sup> the Special Rapporteur underscores that armed attacks on nuclear facilities must never occur, as they could release radioactive material with catastrophic humanitarian and ecological impacts. In response, on 25 June, the Islamic Consultative Assembly unanimously passed the Law on the Suspension of Government Cooperation with IAEA,<sup>14</sup> which negatively affects international non-proliferation efforts and may result in additional sanctions on the Islamic Republic of Iran.<sup>15</sup>

## B. From lethal violence to lethal failure

15. Beyond the recent casualties, human rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Iran encompass a broader pattern of lethal violence that predates the military escalation. Violations of the right to life are manifested in multiple forms, namely, extrajudicial killings at borders, suspicious deaths in custody, repeated failures to fully investigate such deaths, and legal frameworks that enable gender-based violence.

16. During the reporting period, the Special Rapporteur received reports of extrajudicial killings of between 11 and 17 Kurdish border couriers (*kulbars*) and the injury of between 13 and 22 others,<sup>16</sup> in addition to at least 71 fuel porters (*sukhtbars*) killed and 54 wounded in Sistan and Baluchestan Province.<sup>17</sup> Landmines continue to kill those vulnerable populations.<sup>18</sup>

17. Similarly concerning are preventable deaths caused by the State. Deaths in custody received significant attention after the unlawful death of Jina Mahsa Amini, a Kurdish woman subjected to lethal force for wearing “improper” hijab.<sup>19</sup> The Special Rapporteur received reports of possible unlawful deaths in custody, including cases of medical neglect leading to death, including that of Anwar Chaleshi.<sup>20</sup> However, families rarely file complaints, for fear of reprisals. They are routinely pressured to remain silent and abandon efforts to seek justice, while others are coerced into accepting unlikely causes of death in order to receive the remains.<sup>21</sup>

18. The State is presumed responsible for deaths in custody or suspicious circumstances and must conduct thorough investigations under article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.<sup>22</sup> This presumption applies to all deaths in detention and during transport and hospital admission, and extends to deaths that occur shortly following release.<sup>23</sup> The lack of State investigation into deaths at borders or in custody does not make those deaths lawful: there remains a

<sup>13</sup> See [www.stimson.org/2025/nuclear-security-news-and-member-updates-roundup-june-2025/](http://www.stimson.org/2025/nuclear-security-news-and-member-updates-roundup-june-2025/).

<sup>14</sup> See <https://rc.majlis.ir/fa/law/show/1840923> (in Persian).

<sup>15</sup> See e.g. [www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/pressite\\_000001\\_01425.html#:~:text=On%20July%20202%20\(local%20time,serious%20concern%20over%20this%20announcement;www.rferl.org/a/iran-iaea-cooperation-germany-france-russia-deal/33462008.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/pressite_000001_01425.html#:~:text=On%20July%20202%20(local%20time,serious%20concern%20over%20this%20announcement;www.rferl.org/a/iran-iaea-cooperation-germany-france-russia-deal/33462008.html).

<sup>16</sup> Submissions by the Kurdistan Human Rights Network and the Kurdpa Human Rights Organization. The Kurdistan Human Rights Association-Geneva reports higher figures (40 killed and 43 injured).

<sup>17</sup> Balochistan Human Rights Group, monthly newsletters.

<sup>18</sup> Submission from Balochistan Human Rights Group.

<sup>19</sup> [A/HRC/55/67](https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/interim-reports/interim-report-no-55-67), para. 19.

<sup>20</sup> See <https://iranhumanrights.org/2025/03/iranian-authorities-are-killing-prisoners-by-denying-lifesaving-medical-care/>.

<sup>21</sup> See <https://cfppi.org/2025/04/28/violating-the-right-to-life-suspicious-deaths-in-custody-in-the-islamic-republic-of-iran/>.

<sup>22</sup> Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 36 (2018) on the right to life, para. 29.

<sup>23</sup> [A/HRC/53/29](https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/interim-reports/interim-report-no-53-29), para. 45.

presumption of State responsibility that is rebuttable only through thorough, independent investigations. Investigations should comply with the principles set out in the Manual on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions (Istanbul Protocol), as supplemented by the Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death.

19. Beyond direct lethal violence, the legal framework of the Islamic Republic of Iran violates the right to life by providing protections for perpetrators of gender-based killings through discriminatory provisions that exempt male perpetrators from standard penalties.<sup>24</sup> During the reporting period, at least 108 femicides were documented; the primary perpetrators were husbands, ex-husbands, fathers and brothers.<sup>25</sup> It is notable that both women offenders who are facing execution and women who become victims of femicide share similar experiences of domestic abuse, sexual violence and child marriages.

20. Such patterns of violence are further enabled by the absence of comprehensive domestic violence legislation, including the failure to criminalize marital rape, which contributes to an environment that normalizes violence against women. In her report to the Human Rights Council at its fifty-eighth session,<sup>26</sup> the Special Rapporteur examined the multiple revisions and stalled status of the Bill to Protect the Dignity and Security of Women against Violence, which has been pending in the Islamic Consultative Assembly since 2017.<sup>27</sup> In June 2025, the Government formally withdrew the bill, citing extensive legislative alterations that undermined its core objectives.<sup>28</sup> Government officials and several members of the Assembly have since suggested that dialogue between the executive and legislature may lead to its reintroduction in revised form.<sup>29</sup> The Special Rapporteur stands ready to support the State in developing comprehensive domestic violence legislation that effectively criminalizes violence against women, including marital rape, and ensures effective protection and remedies for victims.

### C. Death penalty

21. The State's use of the death penalty continues at an alarming pace, averaging three or four executions a day. During the reporting period, over 700 executions, including at least five public executions, were identified by civil society organizations working with families, lawyers and others connected to executed individuals.<sup>30</sup> Should that rate continue, known executions in 2025 will most certainly exceed 1,200. These executions comprised the deaths of at least 98 Baloch, 42 Kurds<sup>31</sup> and 8 Arabs – as well as a concerning rise in the number of Afghans executed, at 45.<sup>32</sup> There were at

<sup>24</sup> General comment No. 36 (2018), para. 20; [A/HRC/58/62](#), paras. 38 and 39.

<sup>25</sup> Submission from the Hengaw Organization for Human Rights. For individual cases see: <https://stopfemicideiran.org/category/femicide/>.

<sup>26</sup> See [A/HRC/58/62](#).

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, section VI.

<sup>28</sup> Submission from Impact Iran Secretariat.

<sup>29</sup> See [www.magiran.com/article/4625130](http://www.magiran.com/article/4625130) (in Persian).

<sup>30</sup> Submissions from the Abdorrahman Boroumand Center for Human Rights in Iran, which identified 741 executions; Iran Human Rights, which identified 716; and the Kurdpa Human Rights Organization, which identified 745.

<sup>31</sup> The Kurdistan Human Rights Association-Geneva identifies 668 executions between 1 January and 10 July 2025, of which 150 were of Kurds.

<sup>32</sup> Submission from Iran Human Rights. Similar figures have been submitted by the Kurdpa Human Rights Organization: 90 Baloch, 73 Kurds, 94 Lurs, 1 Arab.

least 18 executions of women convicted of homicide committed in the context of gender-based violence.<sup>33</sup>

22. Despite the extraordinary frequency of executions, the State has failed to honour its obligation of transparency; official sources acknowledge only 8 per cent of executions.<sup>34</sup> People have a right to know of the circumstances under which the right to life is being restricted.<sup>35</sup> That right is vital in death penalty cases, given the growing consensus that it is almost impossible to carry out the death penalty while adhering to all international safeguards and standards.<sup>36</sup> That is especially true of the Islamic Republic of Iran; allegations of procedural violations are raised in every criminal case that has reached the Special Rapporteur.

23. The execution of the Kurdish political prisoner Hamid Hosseinnzhad Heidaranlou on 20 April 2025 exemplifies the broader impact on families, which is compounded by State secrecy.<sup>37</sup> Despite repeated requests, Mr. Heidaranlou's remains have not been returned and his family has not been informed of the burial location. The refusal to return remains denies families the right to properly memorialize and bury their loved ones, and constitutes an additional cruel punishment that compounds their suffering. Similarly, the executions of Behrouz Ehsani and Mehdi Hasani on 27 July 2025 were carried out without prior notice, depriving their families of final visits.<sup>38</sup>

24. The Special Rapporteur observes that the death penalty is being applied in violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Despite the death penalty being applicable only for intentional killing,<sup>39</sup> half of the executions were imposed for drug offences (347), followed by homicides (310) – sentences of *qisas* (retribution in kind),<sup>40</sup> security-related offences (35) and rape (24).<sup>41</sup> Without transparency, States cannot show that they uphold the principles of non-discrimination and equality before the law. Based on the information received, minority groups continue to be disproportionately represented; Baloch minorities are the group most likely to be executed for drug offences, and Kurds for security-related offences.<sup>42</sup> Three women – the Kurdish humanitarian worker Pakshah Azizi, the Kurdish activist Varisheh Moradi and the labour activist Sharifeh Mohammadi – face execution for political offences on the grounds of *baghy* (armed rebellion against the State). Three Ahwazi Arab political prisoners, Ali Mojadam, Moein Khanfari and Mohammad Reza Moghadam, also face execution for *baghy* and were transferred to solitary confinement in Sepidar prison on 26 June 2025.<sup>43</sup> Among those executed for security-related offences, eight men, three of whom belonged to Kurdish minorities, were executed during the reporting period for alleged espionage for Israel. The Special Rapporteur underscores that six out of eight espionage-related executions occurred during or soon after the military escalation. While individuals were

<sup>33</sup> Submission from Iran Human Rights.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> See A/HRC/58/62.

<sup>36</sup> See A/HRC/36/27 and A/77/270.

<sup>37</sup> See communication IRN/7/2025. All communications mentioned in the present report are available from <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/Tmsearch/TMDocuments>.

<sup>38</sup> See communication IRN/1/2025.

<sup>39</sup> See general comment No. 36 (2018).

<sup>40</sup> See A/HRC/58/62, paras. 18 and 19, concerning the application of the death penalty to homicides with sentences of *qisas*.

<sup>41</sup> Iran Human Rights.

<sup>42</sup> While Baloch comprise approximately 2–4 per cent of the population, they accounted for 19 per cent of all known drug executions. Kurds comprise approximately 9–10 per cent of the population; however, they accounted for over half of all known security-related executions.

<sup>43</sup> See IRN/9/2023.

convicted before the military escalation,<sup>44</sup> it is worth noting that the number of executions on the grounds of espionage appears to be higher than in previous years.<sup>45</sup>

25. Most executions affecting the Baloch community involve drug-related offences. Those cases are often marked by poverty, undocumented status lack of due process protections and the use of forced confessions as evidence.<sup>46</sup> The Law on Combating Illicit Drugs is focused on drug quantities, but other factors, such as whether or not the defendant was aware of the contents of the cargo, are excluded. The application of the Law has resulted in executions of individuals, including truck drivers, who had been unaware that they were transporting illicit drugs.<sup>47</sup> The revision to the Law made in 2017 was welcomed<sup>48</sup> on the grounds that it narrowed the use of the mandatory death penalty by setting higher thresholds for illicit drug quantities subject to capital punishment.<sup>49</sup> The amendment initially led to a dramatic reduction in executions; but that progress was short-lived, as the numbers surged after 2021.

26. In November 2024, the Government submitted a new draft amendment to the Islamic Consultative Assembly.<sup>50</sup> The bill, which is currently under review, proposes some positive social support measures for people who use drugs, but other provisions therein raise serious concerns: allowing indefinite detention in rehabilitation facilities; expanding military involvement in drug enforcement; and permitting the confiscation of all assets, not only those related to drugs – all of which could worsen conditions for marginalized populations. The Special Rapporteur would welcome the opportunity to work with the State authorities to further develop the existing Law in order to align it with international standards while addressing legitimate public health and safety concerns.<sup>51</sup>

### III. Treatment of detainees and prisoners

27. As noted above, the indiscriminate Israeli attacks on Evin prison – a civilian facility – caused casualties and destroyed buildings inside the prison and in nearby residential buildings, actions that constitute serious violations of international humanitarian law.<sup>52</sup> A number of submissions highlight the treatment of prisoners during and after the military escalation, with violations ranging from physical abuse to enforced disappearance. The Special Rapporteur notes that in its submission, the High Council for Human Rights acknowledges “shortcomings” following the attack on Evin prison.<sup>53</sup>

28. At least 170 male prisoners were transferred to Greater Tehran prison and 70 women prisoners to Qarchak prison, many without their belongings or medication. Both facilities are severely overcrowded and unsanitary and lack adequate food, clean water and sleeping arrangements, forcing many to sleep on the floor.<sup>54</sup> The deeply

<sup>44</sup> Submission from the High Council for Human Rights.

<sup>45</sup> Eight known executions for espionage for Israel were identified during the reporting period, whereas six were reported in 2023 and five were in 2024 (see [www.iranhr.net/en/reports/37/](http://www.iranhr.net/en/reports/37/) and [www.iranhr.net/en/reports/42/](http://www.iranhr.net/en/reports/42/)).

<sup>46</sup> See IRN/9/2025.

<sup>47</sup> Balochistan Human Rights Group.

<sup>48</sup> See, for example, A/73/398.

<sup>49</sup> See [www.iranrights.org/library/document/3262](http://www.iranrights.org/library/document/3262).

<sup>50</sup> See [www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1404/03/20/3332224/-قوانین-و-مقررات-مبارزه-با-موادمخدر-نیاز-به-اصلاح-دارد](http://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1404/03/20/3332224/-قوانین-و-مقررات-مبارزه-با-موادمخدر-نیاز-به-اصلاح-دارد) (in Persian).

<sup>51</sup> See A/HRC/54/53 and [www.humanrights-drugpolicy.org/site/assets/files/1640/hrdp\\_guidelines\\_2020\\_english.pdf](http://www.humanrights-drugpolicy.org/site/assets/files/1640/hrdp_guidelines_2020_english.pdf).

<sup>52</sup> Submissions from the High Council for Human Rights and Human Rights Watch.

<sup>53</sup> Submission from High Council for Human Rights.

<sup>54</sup> Submission from Human Rights Watch.

concerning conditions in Qarchak prison, including serious overcrowding, were described in the previous report of the Special Rapporteur.<sup>55</sup> Children up to the age of 4 were also detained with their mothers in deteriorating conditions.<sup>56</sup> At the end of July 2025, there were 13 mothers, 13 young children and 8 pregnant women in ward 8 of Qarchak prison, where they reportedly shared space with other prisoners in poor conditions.<sup>57</sup>

29. Numerous submissions, including first-hand prisoner accounts, describe how those individuals and others were caught between the bombing carried out by Israel, which killed fellow prisoners, and their subsequent treatment by the Iranian security forces, who chained them and forcibly transferred them to inadequate facilities under armed guard.<sup>58</sup> The whereabouts of prisoners transferred from Evin prison are unknown, which raises concerns of enforced disappearance. For example, Ahmadreza Djalali, a Swedish-Iranian researcher on death row for espionage charges, was transferred from Evin prison to an undisclosed location.<sup>59</sup> Before his removal, his health had continued to deteriorate, raising concerns about his well-being and access to medical care.<sup>60</sup>

30. Beyond the immediate human rights impact of the military escalation, violations of due process, including inadequate legal representation, torture and other ill-treatment, such as the use of forced confessions and the denial of medical care, remain alarming.

31. First, the much-criticized note to article 48 of the Code of Criminal Procedure restricts defendants in national security cases to State-approved lawyers, thereby undermining fair trial rights under article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.<sup>61</sup> In February 2025, the Legal and Judicial Commission of the Islamic Consultative Assembly approved a draft amendment to remove that restriction, which was a welcome development. However, the amendment introduces a concerning provision whereby prosecutors are allowed to deny access to legal counsel for up to 10 days during investigations in cases related to national security. If enacted, that provision would undermine the right to prompt legal assistance and raise serious concerns about fair trial guarantees, particularly given the prevalence of capital punishment in such cases. Both the current and proposed provisions violate fair trial rights.

32. Second, the Special Rapporteur continues to receive reports of physical, psychological and sexual abuse, particularly during pretrial detention, with many cases involving ethnic minorities.<sup>62</sup> Allegations include those relating to: torture during the detention of Azerbaijani Turk activists; the denial of urgent medical care for Zeinab Jalalian, a Kurdish woman political prisoner serving life imprisonment; and the death of a Kurdish man under torture by Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps intelligence in Kermanshah Province.<sup>63</sup> Despite the State's frequent citations of constitutional prohibitions against torture, continued reports of torture reveal

<sup>55</sup> See [A/HRC/58/62](#).

<sup>56</sup> Submission from Children of Imprisoned Parents International.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> Submissions from Abdorrahman Boroumand Center and Human Rights Watch. See e.g. <https://iranhumanrights.org/2025/07/firsthand-account-from-evin-prisoners-trapped-between-israels-unlawful-attacks-and-iranian-authorities-shocking-abuses/>.

<sup>59</sup> Submission from Human Rights Watch.

<sup>60</sup> See communication IRN/8/2025.

<sup>61</sup> See communication IRN/11/2025.

<sup>62</sup> Submission from PEN America.

<sup>63</sup> Submissions from Hengaw Organization for Human Rights, Kurdistan Human Rights Association-Geneva and Association for the Human Rights of the Azerbaijani People in Iran. See also communication IRN/5/2025.

significant gaps between law and practice, demonstrating the ineffective enforcement of legal protections against a practice that is prohibited under the peremptory norms of international law. Those violations are compounded by the systematic persecution of lawyers in the Islamic Republic of Iran who defend political prisoners, human rights activists and ethnic and religious minorities. That situation raises legitimate concerns about the erosion of the independence of the legal profession.<sup>64</sup> Lawyers have faced arbitrary detention, surveillance, harassment and the use of disbarment as a political weapon, and bar associations have increasingly come under judicial control.<sup>65</sup> Women who are lawyers face additional gender-based repression, including the enforcement of compulsory hijab laws as a disciplinary mechanism.<sup>66</sup>

33. Third, this pattern of torture and ill-treatment is further exemplified by the State's use of such forms of corporal punishments as amputation and flogging. The Special Rapporteur is dismayed to receive information that, on 31 July 2025, three men – Hadi Rostami, Mehdi Sharafian and Mehdi Shahivand – had four fingers each amputated from their right hands using a guillotine, as a punishment for theft, at Urmia Central prison in Azarbayjan-e Gharbi Province.<sup>67</sup> This State-sanctioned mutilation represents a flagrant violation of fundamental human rights. Those subjected to such punishments are reportedly predominantly from vulnerable and disadvantaged communities. Upon release, the resulting physical disfigurement will likely severely compromise their capacity to earn a living and achieve self-sufficiency. In addition to that act of cruelty, the three men remain imprisoned, unable to be released because they cannot afford the fine that was imposed alongside the amputation.

34. Flogging constitutes another form of corporal punishment. The Penal Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran prescribes flogging for at least 149 acts.<sup>68</sup> Judges may also impose flogging on those sentenced to death, with flogging carried out before execution. During the reporting period, at least 44 flogging sentences were identified for: economic offences (16), sexual offences (8), theft (6), offences related to the protests in 2022 (5), hijab-related offences (3), blasphemy (1), insulting the President (1), assault and battery (1) and three other offences.<sup>69</sup>

#### IV. Civic space

35. While the ceasefire of 24 June 2025 ended military operations, the Special Rapporteur recognizes the deep anxiety felt by the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran, particularly among groups with unique histories of repression who fear that the State may repeat the mass repression that devastated the country in previous post-conflict periods. She urges the State to reassure its people of the country's commitment to human rights and refrain from using post-conflict situations to increase repression against minorities or suppress dissent. Following the ceasefire, the world is watching how the Iranian authorities treat their own people – a defining measure of the country's commitment to human rights.<sup>70</sup>

36. Following the military escalation, the Iranian authorities used sectarian rhetoric to accuse religious groups of colluding with foreign enemies. Reports reveal rising hate speech in State-affiliated media, which fuels hostility towards minorities –

<sup>64</sup> Submissions from Lawyers for Lawyers and the Law Society of England and Wales.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> See communication IRN/4/2025.

<sup>68</sup> See [www.iranrights.org/library/document/3643](http://www.iranrights.org/library/document/3643).

<sup>69</sup> Submission from the Abdorrahman Boroumand Center.

<sup>70</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/07/un-experts-urge-iran-choose-protection-over-repression-after-ceasefire](http://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/07/un-experts-urge-iran-choose-protection-over-repression-after-ceasefire).

particularly the Baha'i community, which is subjected to surveillance calls and threats referencing the executions in 1988.<sup>71</sup> The portrayal of Baha'is in State-linked media as Israeli spies reflects long-standing patterns of harassment, which intensify as authorities use them as scapegoats. Between 13 and 29 June, Baha'is faced arbitrary arrests, over 50 violent raids on homes, raids on businesses, property confiscations and increased surveillance.

37. Similarly, the authorities and State media portrayed evangelical Christians as collaborators with Israel and the West, claiming that they celebrated the Israeli attacks and served as agents of "global Zionism".<sup>72</sup> At least 96 Christians in 24 cities were arrested for religious activities in 2025; 56 arrests occurred between 24 June and 31 July.<sup>73</sup>

38. Intensified militarization, surveillance and checkpoints in minority-populated border regions have created a climate of fear. On 24 June 2025, Yasin Bakr-Pushideh, a Baloch man, was arrested at a Sanadaj checkpoint while returning from work in Marivan. He was using borrowed identity papers, as many Baloch cannot obtain their own. He was detained by plainclothes forces belonging to an unknown agency and has not been heard from since. His family's inquiries have yielded no information about his whereabouts. Iranian forces also conducted raids using live ammunition in Baluchestan, notably on 1 July 2025 in Gonich village, where at least 10 villagers were injured and two Baloch women protesters were fatally shot. Amir Mirbalochzehi was critically injured by police fire when leaving an oil shop and died on 18 July after a 10-day hospitalization. Similar patterns occurred in Azerbaijani border towns in Ardabil Province.<sup>74</sup>

39. Over 1.5 million Afghans, including thousands of unaccompanied children, returned or were forced to return to Afghanistan in 2025.<sup>75</sup> In May 2025, the head of the unit responsible for foreign nationals and immigration affairs under the Ministry of the Interior of the Islamic Republic of Iran announced that all census forms for Afghan nationals had been invalidated. Except for six specific groups that were eligible for temporary cards, all unauthorized Afghans were given until 5 July 2025 to leave the country. The returns have intensified following the military escalation, affecting even individuals with valid documentation. Simultaneously, State-led security-focused rhetoric has contributed to heightened anti-Afghan sentiment.<sup>76</sup>

40. Many deportees face serious risks of persecution, torture and death under the Taliban regime upon return.<sup>77</sup> Afghan women face particularly acute challenges, as the policies of de facto government – including the ban instituted in December 2024 on women's secondary education and the increasingly stringent restrictions on movement – impose devastating daily constraints that deprive them of fundamental rights.<sup>78</sup> Serious gender-based violations have been documented: for example Taliban forces have imposed forced marriages on women deported back to Afghanistan, and

<sup>71</sup> Submission from Baha'i International Community.

<sup>72</sup> Submission from Article 18.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Joint submission from Baham with contributions from the Association for the Human Rights of the Azerbaijani People in Iran, Balochistan Human Rights Group, Centre for Supporters of Human Rights, the Kurdistan Human Rights Network, Kurdistan Human Rights Association-Geneva, Shiwar, the Baloch Activist Campaign and Miaan Group.

<sup>75</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/07/un-experts-appalled-mass-forced-returns-afghan-nationals](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/07/un-experts-appalled-mass-forced-returns-afghan-nationals).

<sup>76</sup> See [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/07/un-experts-appalled-mass-forced-returns-afghan-nationals](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/07/un-experts-appalled-mass-forced-returns-afghan-nationals).

<sup>77</sup> Submission from Afghanistan Independent Bar Association in Exile.

<sup>78</sup> See <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/06/1164476>.

domestic violence has increased since legal protections were dismantled.<sup>79</sup> As a result of the deportation campaign, some undocumented Iranian Baloch citizens have been detained and deported alongside Afghan nationals because they did not have official identity documents.<sup>80</sup> That situation reflects deeper systemic problems that are rooted in historical administrative neglect and systematic discrimination, which have left many Baloch families without formal identification documents, including birth certificates (*shenasnameh*).<sup>81</sup>

41. Despite assertions that security measures protect public safety, new legislation signals a further crackdown on civil liberties. The Bill on Strengthening the Penalty for Espionage and Cooperation with the Zionist Regime and Hostile States was introduced immediately after the military escalation.<sup>82</sup> At the end of July 2025, it was undergoing final revisions between the Islamic Consultative Assembly and the Guardian Council, after being resubmitted to the latter for second reading. The bill significantly expands the scope of conduct considered to be espionage to include activities linked to the dissemination of information and media work, such as contact with foreign and diaspora media outlets defined as “enemy media” (*resaneha-ye mo‘aned*).<sup>83</sup> In a joint statement, 57 lawyers from inside the Islamic Republic of Iran highlighted numerous fundamental flaws, including the criminalization of broad activities linked to civil rights – in particular, the freedom of information, expression and assembly – as well as the concerning expansion of offences punishable by long-term imprisonment and execution.<sup>84</sup> Another legislative development, which was withdrawn by the Government on 30 July following domestic and international criticism, was the Bill on Combating the Spread of False News Content in Cyberspace. While its withdrawal is positive, officials indicated that the bill may be reintroduced in a revised form following “further review”.<sup>85</sup>

42. Amid escalating repression of minorities and civil liberties, the protection of civic space remains essential. Inside the Islamic Republic of Iran, civic space continues to shrink. The Law Enforcement Command of the Islamic Republic of Iran (known as Faraja) reported that it had detained 21,000 individuals, as well as 2,774 foreign nationals, during the military escalation, 261 of whom have been arrested on suspicion of espionage, 172 for possession of unauthorized visual media and 30 for security-related activities.<sup>86</sup> Civil society organizations also reported arrests and the targeting of activists, including transgender and gay activists, writers, journalists, lawyers and social media users.<sup>87</sup> The judiciary of the Islamic Republic of Iran sent text messages to citizens, particularly activists and their families, warning that social media interactions with outlets that the State deemed to be linked to Israel could be prosecuted:

<sup>79</sup> See <https://hammihanonline.ir/>-بخش-جامعه-45852/23-ازدواج-اجباری-بی-خانمانی-خودسوزی-گفت-وگو-با- (in Persian).

<sup>80</sup> See <https://hammihanonline.ir/>-بخش-جامعه-44580/23-بازار-سیاه-شناسنامه-طرح-اخراج-مهاجران- (in Persian).

<sup>81</sup> Submission from Balochistan Human Rights Group.

<sup>82</sup> See communication IRN/10/2025.

<sup>83</sup> For the text of the bill see <https://www.didarnews.ir/fa/news/187078/>-اصلاح-طرح-تشدید-مجازات- (in Persian).

<sup>84</sup> See <https://vokalapress.ir/>-بیانیه-انتقادی-۵۷-از-وکلا-و-حقوقدانان-پ/ (in Persian) and <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/7693/>.

<sup>85</sup> See [www.irma.ir/news/85903809/](http://www.irma.ir/news/85903809/)-استرداد-لایحه-مقابله-با-انتشار-محتوای-خلاف-واقع-در-فضای-مجازی- (in Persian).

<sup>86</sup> See [www.mehrnews.com/news/](http://www.mehrnews.com/news/)-سردار-منتظر-المهدی-۲۱-هزار-مظنون-با-گزارش-های-مردمی- (in Persian).

<sup>87</sup> Submissions from PEN America and 6Rang (Iranian Lesbian and Transgender Network). See also [www.en-hrana.org/the-eleventh-day-of-israeli-strikes-key-developments/?hilite=705+arrested](http://www.en-hrana.org/the-eleventh-day-of-israeli-strikes-key-developments/?hilite=705+arrested).



that the authorities claimed were being used to promote dissent.<sup>93</sup> The targeting of Kurdish cultural expressions extends to religious minorities within Kurdish communities. The Yarsan religious minority, which is primarily ethnically Kurdish and resides in Kermanshah Province, in the west of the country, remains unrecognized under the Constitution of 1979 and faces systematic discrimination similar to that imposed on the Baha'i community. Such discrimination includes exclusion from government employment and parliamentary representation, restrictions on education, a prohibition on the establishment of *jam'khanehs* (places of worship), and the repeated destruction of sacred sites by security forces.<sup>94</sup>

47. The State-led exploitation of resources in the Islamic Republic of Iran has caused severe human rights violations, particularly affecting ethnic minorities. The State's water management policies prioritize resource-intensive projects that benefit central provinces while neglecting peripheral regions. Water diversion schemes have caused ecological damage in such provinces as Khuzestan and Sistan and Baluchestan, leading to the forced displacement of Kurdish, Arab, Baloch, Turkmen and Gilak communities and undermining their rights to water, health and adequate housing.<sup>95</sup> The water crisis has reached critical levels. The water level of the Amir Kabir reservoir that supplies water to Tehran has dropped by 58 per cent, forcing the authorities to impose 12-hour water cuts and declare public holidays to conserve resources. In Isfahan, the complete drying of the Zayandeh Rud river has provoked violent protests and pipeline sabotage by desperate farmers facing the threat of destruction of their livelihoods.

48. The combination of energy mismanagement and corruption has triggered nationwide blackouts, thereby severely disrupting education, healthcare and employment, and particularly affecting minority-populated areas. The convergence of those factors proved deadly during the extreme heatwave of July 2025, when temperatures reached 52°C. Combined with power and water shortages, those conditions caused at least 21 heat-related deaths, predominantly among vulnerable populations and children in underserved areas, exposing the State's inadequate emergency response.<sup>96</sup> The authorities have responded to peaceful environmental protests with repression, including through arbitrary arrests and restrictions on fundamental freedoms, further eroding civic space and denying communities access to environmental justice.<sup>97</sup>

## VI. Conclusions and recommendations

**49. During the reporting period from January to July 2025, there has been a deeply troubling deterioration in the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran, which was profoundly affected by the devastating military escalation and its aftermath. While the military escalation between States ceased on 24 June, its end has not brought relief to the people of the Islamic Republic**

<sup>93</sup> See [https://kurdistanhumanrights.org/en/news/2025/03/18/kurdish-civilians-summoned-arrested-as-iran-tightens-security-ahead-of-newroz?utm\\_source](https://kurdistanhumanrights.org/en/news/2025/03/18/kurdish-civilians-summoned-arrested-as-iran-tightens-security-ahead-of-newroz?utm_source).

<sup>94</sup> Submissions from the Yarsan community and United for Iran.

<sup>95</sup> Submissions from Impact Iran secretariat, Association pour la défense des droits de l'homme et des revendications démocratiques/culturelles du peuple Azerbaïdjanais, Iran – ARC, the Association for the Human Rights of the Azerbaijani People in Iran and the Association for the Defence of Azerbaijani Political Prisoners in Iran. See also communication IRN/2/2025.

<sup>96</sup> Submission from Impact Iran secretariat.

<sup>97</sup> Submissions from Impact Iran secretariat, Association pour la défense des droits de l'homme et des revendications démocratiques/culturelles du peuple Azerbaïdjanais, Iran – ARC, the Association for the Human Rights of the Azerbaijani People in Iran and the Association for the Defence of Azerbaijani Political Prisoners in Iran.

of Iran, who continue to face systematic repression. The State has implemented some emergency measures during the crisis, but the overall response has been characterized by the scapegoating of ethnic and religious minorities, the mass deportations of vulnerable Afghan nationals and the introduction of draconian legislation that further criminalizes legitimate civil rights activities. In parallel, the State's use of the death penalty has reached alarming levels, averaging three or four executions a day, and over 700 executions have been identified during the reporting period. The continued persecution of lawyers, journalists and human rights defenders, both within the country and through transnational repression, constitutes a concerning trend. The State must recognize that post-conflict periods present critical opportunities for national unity and healing. It has an opportunity to reassure its people of its commitment to human rights and demonstrate that commitment through concrete steps to improve the human rights situation.

50. The Special Rapporteur appeals to the Islamic Republic of Iran to:

- (a) Make publicly available data disaggregated by sex, age, nationality and ethnicity on the use of the death penalty, including data on the characteristics of convicted and executed persons and on the offences with which they were charged;
- (b) Make judgments publicly available;
- (c) Establish a moratorium on the death penalty with a view to its complete abolition;
- (d) Abolish the death penalty for offences that do not meet the threshold for the most serious crimes;
- (e) Remove mandatory sentencing and give judges discretion to consider mitigating factors;
- (f) Ensure fair trial rights, including access to a lawyer of the defendant's choosing during all stages of the judicial process; and remove both the current and proposed notes to article 48 of the Code of Criminal Procedure;
- (g) Protect prisoners and detainees from all forms of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including such corporal punishments as amputation and flogging;
- (h) Exclude from evidence confessions obtained through torture or ill-treatment and establish investigation mechanisms consistent with the Istanbul Protocol and the Minnesota Protocol;
- (i) Provide prisoners with access to timely and adequate healthcare;
- (j) Ensure that detention conditions comply with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) and the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules);
- (k) Protect human rights defenders, activists, journalists, lawyers and families from threats, intimidation and arbitrary detention, and immediately release those detained for exercising fundamental rights;
- (l) End all forms of transnational repression, including violence, harassment, kidnapping and threats of assassination;
- (m) Criminalize gender-based violence, including domestic violence, and enact clear penalties;

- (n) **End the legal distinction between honour-related killings and other murders, and repeal all laws that mitigate penalties for or excuse perpetrators of honour-related killings;**
- (o) **Ensure equal treatment before the law without distinction on the basis of ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or political opinion;**
- (p) **End the targeting of ethnic and religious minorities, including arbitrary arrests and discrimination;**
- (q) **End hate speech and incitement to violence in State-controlled media;**
- (r) **Respect freedom of expression and privacy rights online and offline;**
- (s) **Reinstate legal documentation for undocumented minorities and guarantee access to public services;**
- (t) **Uphold civil liberties for environmental defenders and engage with international partners in relation to technical assistance and the rights-based governance of resources;**
- (u) **Halt the mass deportation of Afghan nationals and ensure compliance with non-refoulement obligations;**
- (v) **Ensure that the use of lethal force by law enforcement and border officials is compliant with the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials and the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials.**

**51. The Special Rapporteur invites States to:**

- (a) **Support journalists, human rights defenders and others in exile and provide appropriate protection mechanisms for those facing threats;**
- (b) **Increase financial and technical support for civil society organizations, particularly in the light of recent funding gaps, to ensure that they can sustain their work to defend the rights of Iranians;**
- (c) **Coordinate efforts with like-minded States to tackle transnational repression by the Iranian authorities;**
- (d) **Call for the Special Rapporteur's reports and public statements to be translated into Persian and other languages used in the Islamic Republic of Iran;**
- (e) **Expand the availability of humanitarian visas for at-risk Afghans and support the Islamic Republic of Iran, as a host country, in ensuring that Afghan refugees have access to education, healthcare and means of earning a livelihood;<sup>98</sup>**
- (f) **Ensure compliance with international humanitarian law in military actions, recognizing that force should be used only as a last resort in legitimate self-defence and that military escalations entail severe human rights consequences that must be avoided;**
- (g) **Ensure that humanitarian exemptions are given broad and practical effect and are promptly and effectively implemented so as to minimize the adverse consequences of sanctions, with a view to supporting the realization of human rights.**

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<sup>98</sup> See [A/HRC/59/25](#).

(h) **Encourage compliance with the obligation to provide redress and reparation to victims of attacks that occurred between 13 and 25 June 2025 in the Islamic Republic of Iran.**

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