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**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for
Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner
and the Secretary-General**

Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran

Report of the Secretary-General*

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 77/228, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit an interim report on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Human Rights Council at its fifty-third session.

* The present report was submitted after the deadline in order to reflect the most recent developments.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 77/228, requesting the Secretary-General to submit an interim report on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Human Rights Council at its fifty-third session. The report covers the period between 1 August 2022 and 15 April 2023.
2. The report contains information from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, non-governmental and media organizations, and submissions received by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). It also draws on observations of United Nations (UN) human rights mechanisms.
3. The Government continued to engage with OHCHR and the UN human rights mechanisms during the reporting period. The Secretary-General acknowledges the comments provided by the Government in response to this report. However, substantive engagement on the State's obligations under international human rights law remained limited and the level of implementation of recommendations from international human rights mechanisms remained low.
4. During the reporting period, the overall human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran has markedly deteriorated. Against the backdrop of continuously worsening socio-economic conditions, aggravated by sanctions and the persistent impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (described in more detail in previous¹ reports of the Secretary-General), the country experienced nation-wide protests following the death of 22-year-old Jina Mahsa Amini on 16 September 2022, three days after she had fallen into a coma in police custody, (see also para. 57).² The protests, which occurred to various degrees in the country's 31 provinces, brought to the forefront the underlying grievances of the population, including institutionalized discrimination against women and girls as well as minorities. According to information received by OHCHR, security forces used disproportionate force, and arbitrary detention of protestors, activists, human rights defenders, and lawyers significantly increased during the reporting period. The existing domestic justice and accountability mechanisms remained ineffective in addressing allegations of violations and victims' grievances. This has perpetuated a sense of impunity, particularly for women and minorities who continue to face discrimination and economic marginalization.
5. On 24 November 2022, the Human Rights Council convened a special session on the deteriorating situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, especially with respect to women and children, and adopted resolution S-35/1, establishing an independent international fact-finding mission with a mandate to investigate alleged human rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Iran related to the protests since 16 September 2022, especially with respect to women and children, establish the facts and circumstances surrounding the alleged violations; and collect, consolidate, analyse and preserve evidence of such violations, including in view of cooperation in any legal proceedings.³

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

A. Excessive use of force

6. Since nationwide protests erupted in September, information received by OHCHR indicates that security forces intentionally used disproportionate force, including lethal force, against protestors, in various parts of the country. Incidents of use of force that reportedly resulted in human rights violations were higher in areas where protests were more significant and sustained, including in the capital Tehran, Kurdish regions in the north-west and the

¹ A/76/268 (2021) para 46 – 53, A/75/287 (2020) para. 40.

² Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights Situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran (A/HRC/52/67), para 6.

³ Human Rights Council resolution S-35/1 of 24 November 2022 ([A/HRC/RES/S-35/1](#)).

Sistan and Bluchestan Province in the south-east. In addition to the anti-riot police (*yeganeh vize*), which is the only entity authorized under Iranian law to respond to and manage protests using less-lethal means, other security forces, including the Basij paramilitary force and plain-clothed security agents, were reportedly heavily deployed in some areas.⁴

7. Analysis of available information shows that security forces possibly used a variety of firearms in the context of protests, including handguns, assault rifles and in some cases automatic weapons against predominantly peaceful protests. Tear gas and batons were also used. In many of the cases analyzed, it was assessed by OHCHR that the use of lethal force was unwarranted, as security forces or other individuals were not facing an imminent threat to their lives or serious bodily integrity, which is the standard set by international human rights law⁵, raising concerns of unlawful killing of protestors. Reports indicated that shots to the eyes of women, men and children by security forces were particularly common during protests, resulting in the loss of sight.⁶

8. The Government noted that it operated according to a well-established system in responding to unrest using a series of measures favouring restraint and negotiations and the use of less-lethal means of control, including water cannons, paintball, and tear gas. It further added that gatherings were not predominantly peaceful as some individuals affiliated with “terrorist groups, certain foreign countries and Persian media outlets abroad” perpetrated violence and caused significant damage to public and private property and endangered citizens’ lives.⁷ It added that dozens of security officers were killed as a result of attacks by these individuals and that firearms were used “for legitimate self-defence of others when deemed necessary to save lives”.⁸ However, information analyzed by OHCHR suggests that adequate precautions were not taken to minimize injury and preserve human life, particularly in the context of large-scale security operations.

9. As stated by the Human Rights Committee, law enforcement officials should recognize that isolated acts of violence by some participants should not be attributed to others, to the organizers or to the assembly as such; and thus some participants in an assembly may be covered by the right of peaceful assembly, while others in the same assembly are not.⁹ The Human Rights Committee has also stated that law enforcement officials should seek to de-escalate situations that might result in violence, noting that they are obliged to exhaust non-violent means and to give prior warning if it becomes absolutely necessary to use force, unless doing either would be manifestly ineffective.¹⁰ Furthermore, according to the general provisions of the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials in cases where lawful use of force is unavoidable, law enforcement officials shall, *inter alia*, “exercise restraint in such use and act in proportion to the seriousness of the offence and the legitimate objective to be achieved”.¹¹ As stated by the Human Rights Committee, firearms are not an appropriate tool for the policing of assemblies. Any use of firearms by law enforcement officials in the context of assemblies must be limited to targeted individuals in circumstances in which it is strictly necessary to confront an imminent threat of death or serious injury.¹²

10. Excessive use of force by security forces was documented in several cities, including Divandareh, Garmsar, Hamedan, Kerman, Marivan, Mashhad, Mehrshahr, Rasht, Saghez, Sanandaj, Shiraz and Tehran.¹³ There are a number of incidents where use of force by security forces reportedly led to numerous losses of life of protesters and bystanders in the context of

⁴ Submission to OHCHR.

⁵ 1990 Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials.

⁶ <https://iranhumanrights.org/2023/02/iran-scores-blinded-as-security-forces-aim-guns-at-protesters-eyes/>.

⁷ Report by the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran “Reviewing the methods that are used by Iranian law enforcement to deal with riots” 22 October 2022, p.3.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 37, paras. 17-20; See also OHCHR, United Nations Human Rights Guidance on Less-Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement, para. 6.3.2.

¹⁰ Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 37, para. 78.

¹¹ UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, para 4.

¹² Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 36, para. 12.

¹³ Submission to OHCHR.

protests, amounting to human rights violations. On 30 September 2022, in the city of Zahedan in the Sistan and Baluchestan Province, security forces reportedly fired live ammunition, teargas and metal pellets at protestors after Friday prayers killing dozens, including 15 children, and injuring hundreds, making it potentially the deadliest single incident in the context of the protests.¹⁴ Just prior, many had taken to the streets to protest the death of Ms. Amini and the alleged rape of a 15-year-old Baloch girl by the local police chief.¹⁵ Some of the footage analyzed by OHCHR appeared to show security forces and other security elements in plain clothes firing indiscriminately from rooftops at a gathering of protestors.¹⁶ Many of those injured were reportedly denied treatment at hospitals because they did not possess Iranian identity documents.¹⁷ The Government noted that it undertook a comprehensive official investigation into the incident. It alleged that, on the day of the incident, a group of people had attacked police station no.16 in the city and that many innocent citizens had been killed as they were caught in the crossfire between the attackers and defence forces.¹⁸ It informed that the investigation had concluded that the local security council had “accepted the negligence of some officers” and dismissed the commander of police forces of Zahedan while ordering compensation for the victims.

11. On 19 November 2022, security forces, reportedly including the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, were deployed to the mainly Kurdish city of Mahabad after weeks of protests. Armoured vehicles patrolled the streets as security forces reportedly shot at protestors and buildings. Internet access was also shut down during the operation. Security forces reportedly killed dozens in the week leading up to and during the security operation.¹⁹

12. The Secretary-General reiterates that, as indicated by the Human Rights Committee, any use of force must comply with the principles of legality, necessity, proportionality, precaution and non-discrimination. The Secretary-General further recalls that States have an obligation to investigate effectively, impartially and in a timely manner any allegation or reasonable suspicion of unlawful use of force.

B. Attacks by non-state actors

13. On 26 October 2022, three armed men opened fire at the Shah Cheragh holy shrine in the city of Shiraz resulting in the death of at least 15 people, including women and children, and injury to 30 others. The so-called Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack. The Secretary-General strongly condemned “the terrorist attack” against people “exercising their right to practice their religion”.²⁰ Two individuals were found guilty of *efsad-fil-arz* (corruption on earth) and “taking action against national security” for their involvement in the attack. On 18 March 2023, they were sentenced to death.

C. Death penalty and arbitrary deprivation of life

14. According to information received, it is estimated that 582 people were executed in 2022, marking a 75 per cent increase compared to 2021 in which 333 people were reportedly executed. There were three children among those executed in 2022. Of the total number of executions, 256 (44 per cent) were for drug-related offences, marking a six per cent increase

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/14/world/middleeast/iran-zahedan-crackdown.html>.

¹⁷ Many members of the Baloch minority are stateless and lack Iranian identity cards. The process for obtaining identity cards is complex and long. Many Baloch individuals had their identity cards revoked because state institutions suspected that they came from Pakistan and Afghanistan where there are also Baloch minorities. This undermines a host of rights - particularly access to education and health.

¹⁸ Report by the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran, “The third report on September 30 Incidents in City of Zahedan” 21 November 2022, p. 1.

¹⁹ Submission to OHCHR.

²⁰ <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2022-10-26/statement-attributable-the-spokesperson-for-the-secretary-general-attack-shah-cheragh-holy-shrine-shiraz-iran>.

in executions for drug-related offences compared to the previous year.²¹ This marks the highest rate of drug-related executions in the country since 2017. It is estimated that 15 people were executed under security-related charges while 288 individuals were executed for murder charges, and that 16 of those executed were women.²² At least 273 of the executions in 2022 were based on death sentences issued by the Revolution Courts.²³

15. The numbers of those executed from minority communities remain disproportionately high, particularly for drug-related or security-related crimes.²⁴ One-third of those executed in 2022 belonged to the Baloch minority, who also accounted for half of drug-related executions.²⁵ At least 16 Afghan nationals were executed in 2022, representing a threefold increase compared to the previous year.²⁶ In 2023, during January and February alone, at least 94 individuals were executed, marking a rise in executions compared to the same period in 2022.²⁷

16. Four people were executed for their involvement in the nationwide protests. On 8 December 2022, 22-year-old Mohsen Shekari was executed after being charged with *moharebeh*²⁸ (enmity against God) and accused of wielding a knife with the intention of creating terror and killing and causing injury to a Basij officer on duty. He was also accused of blocking a street in the capital on 25 September 2022. His confession, which appeared to have been forced, was aired on television after his execution.²⁹ Four days later, Majidreza Rahnavard, was executed after also being charged with *moharebeh* and accused of killing two Basij officers in November 2022. He was executed only 23 days after his arrest. His trial consisted of only one session before the Revolution Court. His confession also appeared to have been forced; his left hand was bandaged, suggesting that he may have been subjected to torture and ill-treatment.³⁰

17. On 7 January 2023, Mohammad Mehdi Karami and Seyed Mohammad Hosseini were executed after their conviction for *efsad-fil-arz* and for the killing of a Basij officer in the city of Karaj on 3 November 2022. The Government claimed that both Karami and Hosseini had attacked and killed a Basij officer who was removing debris from a road blocked by protestors on 3 November 2022. It further stated that “both defendants confessed to their crimes while fair trial standards were fully observed”.³¹ It added that a lawyer was provided by the court to represent the defendants, given that they did not have legal counsel.

18. In these four cases, the defendants’ due process and fair trial rights were reportedly not respected.³² Many of the trials relied on confessions, which were allegedly obtained under duress, including torture. Furthermore, confessions were often aired on television before legal proceedings had taken place. Additionally, it appeared that many of those convicted had not been provided the opportunity to prepare and present a defence, given that in many cases the trials were concluded in a single day, and defendants were unable to retain lawyers of their own choosing, but were required to accept court-appointed lawyers. According to the Human Rights Committee, the violation of fair trial guarantees in proceedings resulting in the imposition of the death penalty would render the sentence arbitrary in nature, and in violation of the right to life.³³ The High Commissioner for Human Rights noted that the death penalty and criminal proceedings in the Islamic Republic of Iran were “being weaponized”

²¹ Submission to OHCHR.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/12/iran-public-execution-of-majidreza-rahnvard-exposes-authorities-revenge-killings/>.

²⁵ Submission to OHCHR.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/03/iran-chilling-execution-spree-with-escalating-use-of-death-penalty-against-persecuted-ethnic-minorities/>.

²⁸ Article 279 of the Penal Code.

²⁹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-63900099>

³⁰ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/12/iran-public-execution-of-majidreza-rahnvard-exposes-authorities-revenge-killings/>.

³¹ Report by the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

³² Submission to OHCHR.

³³ Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 36, para. 41.

by the Government to punish individuals participating in protests and strike fear into the population.³⁴

19. Since the execution of the four individuals, an additional 19 people were sentenced to death in the context of the protests and are considered at imminent risk of execution.³⁵ In some cases, appeals have been reportedly granted by the Supreme Court.³⁶ In addition, information received indicates that there are currently 100 individuals who face charges that carry the death penalty in relation to the protests. They are predominantly from Khuzestan, Sistan and Baluchistan, and Tehran Provinces.

20. The Secretary-General reiterates his concern at the high number of death penalty sentences and executions, the inclusion in Iranian law of the death penalty for a range of acts, and the imposition of the death penalty in violation of fair trial standards. Those concerned include persons that were children at the moment the offences were committed, persons convicted on drug-related charges not involving intentional killings, and demonstrators subjected to expedited trials that failed to meet minimum due process and fair trial standards. The Secretary General opposes the imposition of the death penalty in all circumstances.

D. Arbitrary detention and conditions in detention

21. The Secretary-General is alarmed by large-scale arrests and detentions since the onset of the protests. According to information received, between 17 September 2022 and 8 February 2023, it is estimated that 20,000 individuals have been arrested and detained for supporting or participating in the protests.³⁷ Many women who have expressed their public support for the protests by dancing or removing their veil (hijab), have reportedly faced arbitrary arrests.³⁸ Such arrests have allegedly taken place at protest sites, homes, workplaces, and academic institutions. In many instances, individuals claimed they were not informed of the reason for their arrest, and some were subsequently released without charge, or they were released on bail. On 22 September 2022, the head of the judiciary reportedly stated that these arrests were “preventative detentions”.³⁹

22. The Secretary-General is concerned by reports of security forces using disproportionate force⁴⁰ while arresting individuals, despite a directive issued on 22 September 2022 by the Commander-in-Chief of Law Enforcement that called for “maximum self-restraint” and that prohibited acts of violence, unlawful detentions, or entering universities.⁴¹ For example, on 2 October 2022, riot police, some in plain clothes, barricaded the Sharif University of Technology in Tehran to prevent students from exiting the premises and protesting outside the university premises. Dozens of students were reportedly arrested as part of the operation, in which the police allegedly used batons and teargas against them.⁴²

23. Many of those arrested in relation to the protests were charged with offences under the Penal Code, including engaging in “propaganda against the state”, “assembly and collusion to act against national security”, “insulting the supreme leader”, “establishing or being a member of a group to disrupt national security”, and “destroying public facilities and equipment to disrupt public order”.⁴³ Other serious charges include *efsad-fil-arz* and *moharabeh*, which are punishable by death.

³⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/01/respect-lives-voices-iranians-and-listen-grievances-pleads-un-human-rights>.

³⁵ Submission to OHCHR.

³⁶ <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/5714/>.

³⁷ Submission to OHCHR.

³⁸ <https://iranhumanrights.org/2023/02/analysis-khameneis-pardon-is-a-public-relations-stunt-that-cedes-no-ground-to-the-protesters/>.

³⁹ <https://iranhumanrights.org/2022/10/iran-protests-scores-of-civil-society-members-detained-preventatively/>.

⁴⁰ Submission to OHCHR.

⁴¹ Report by the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran “Reviewing the methods that are used by Iranian law enforcement to deal with riots” 22 October 2022, p.2.

⁴² <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-63111767>.

⁴³ Submission to OHCHR.

24. In some instances, individuals were arrested or detained for actions or behaviours that, when committed, did not constitute crimes under Iranian law. For example, Parviz Broumand, a former Iranian national team football player, was temporarily detained on 15 November 2022 for “leading riots”,⁴⁴ which at that time was not a statutory criminal offence,⁴⁵ but was only contained in Article 60 of a Bill on Discretionary Punishments⁴⁶ which had been proposed by a number of parliamentarians in October 2022 and which remains under discussion in parliament.⁴⁷ There are concerns that if it is passed into law, Article 60 would further criminalize the exercise of the right of peaceful assembly by introducing a new crime of organizing or leading a demonstration, assembly, strike or sit-in.⁴⁸

25. On 6 November 2022, the parliament approved a resolution urging the judiciary to impose harsh penalties, including executing “rioters”, arguing that doing so would “serve as a good lesson in the shortest possible time” and would “act as a deterrent to others”.⁴⁹

26. The authorities have insisted that individuals were not arrested for simply exercising their rights of peaceful assembly and to freedom of expression, but for violent acts committed in the context of the protests. However, OHCHR considers that the large-scale and circumstances of the arrests, including the use of force and the detention conditions, cumulatively, appeared to suggest that they were deliberately intended to punish, intimidate, and silence individuals for the exercise of their fundamental rights.

27. On 5 February 2023, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran granted pardons to or reduced prison sentences of those arrested, detained, or prosecuted, including in the context of the protests. Subsequently, in March 2023, the Head of the Judiciary announced that 22,000 individuals arrested during the protests had been pardoned.⁵⁰ While this is a notable step, OHCHR is yet to receive information on how the decree was implemented and whether all of those arrested in the context of the protests were released. Furthermore, it is concerning that some individuals were released on bail while others were re-arrested.

28. It is particularly concerning that individuals arrested on “national security” charges punishable by death sentences were reportedly denied the right to appoint a legal counsel of their own choosing, and were required to select one from a list of court-appointed lawyers, as provided in an explanatory note to Article 48 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.⁵¹ Pursuant to article 14(3)(d) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a State Party, all persons charged with a criminal offense have a right to defend themselves in person or through legal assistance of their own choosing. Furthermore, OHCHR received reports pointing to court-appointed lawyers setting extortionate fees, refusing to visit their clients, and inadequately representing them. As stated by the Human Rights Committee, it is the duty of all public authorities to refrain from prejudging the outcome of a trial, including by abstaining from making public statements affirming the guilt of the accused. The media should also avoid news coverage undermining the presumption of innocence.⁵²

⁴⁴ <https://iranwire.com/en/sports/111255-iranian-athletes-who-join-stir-face-death-arrest-heavy-sentences/>.

⁴⁵ <https://www.tlabproject.org/blog/iranian-law-and-judicial-practice-towards-protestors-from-the-women-life-freedom-movement>.

⁴⁶ See para 40.

⁴⁷ Submission to OHCHR.

⁴⁸ Article 60 provides that “If the person leads [such demonstrations, assemblies, strikes or sit-ins] they shall be sentenced to an imprisonment sentence of degree three or four [between five and fifteen years]”.

⁴⁹ <https://www.irna.ir/news/84934370/-درخواست-۲۲۷-نماینده-مجلس-از-قوه-قضائیه-برای-برخورد-قاطع-با-تحریک-کنندگان> (in Persian).

⁵⁰ <https://en.irna.ir/news/85056317/22k-Iranian-prisoners-related-to-recent-riots-pardoned>.

⁵¹ Submission to OHCHR.

⁵² Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 32, para. 30.

29. There have been numerous allegations of torture and ill-treatment of individuals by security forces during arrest and interrogation to extract forced confessions.⁵³ There are also serious allegations of sexual and gender-based violence committed against women, men and children, particularly in detention.⁵⁴ In some instances, protestors allegedly were forcibly disappeared. The use of incommunicado and solitary confinement was also reported. For example, Toomaj Salehi, an Iranian rapper who was arrested on 30 October 2022, was accused of *ifsad-fil-arz* likely in connection with his music and online activities perceived to be critical of the authorities. Reports received alleged that Salehi is held in prolonged solitary confinement and may have been subjected to torture and ill-treatment.⁵⁵

30. Prison conditions in the Islamic Republic of Iran remain of serious concern as highlighted in previous reports of the Secretary-General, including the denial of medical care, dire sanitary conditions, contaminated drinking water, overcrowding and the lack of independent oversight.⁵⁶ A member of parliament stated on 19 October 2022 that due to the high number of detainees in the Greater Tehran Central Penitentiary, the prisoners were living in unacceptable and difficult conditions.⁵⁷ It is likely that the overcrowding has been exacerbated by the large-scale arrests made since the start of the nationwide protests. The difficult conditions in detention compelled some prisoners to continue to resort to hunger strikes, as observed in a previous report.⁵⁸ In January 2023, 15 Iranian women in the Kachoui prison, who had been detained in the context of the protests, went on hunger strike to protest the conditions of their imprisonment, including the lack of medical care.⁵⁹

31. On 15 October 2022, a fire broke out in a section of the Evin prison in Tehran where a number of human rights defenders and political prisoners are held. The authorities reported that the prisoners in ward seven of Evin prison had intentionally set fire to a sewing workshop, which subsequently engulfed the ward.⁶⁰ Although details of the incident remain unclear, there were alarming reports of shootings that occurred before the fire broke out, and that anti-riot police allegedly used tear gas, metal pellets, and batons on prisoners.⁶¹ Authorities confirmed that 8 prisoners died due to “smoke inhalation caused by the fire” while 61 others sustained fire-related injuries.⁶² The facility had been the subject of previous allegations of torture and ill-treatment, particularly of political prisoners and human rights defenders.⁶³ The events at Evin prison raise serious concerns regarding possible intentional lethal use of force and firearms by security forces in cases when it might not have been strictly unavoidable to protect life, that authorities should investigate thoroughly and transparently.

E. Freedom of opinion and expression and access to information

32. Since the onset of protests, respect for the rights to freedom of opinion and expression and access to information has markedly deteriorated in law and in practice. Reportedly, a significant portion of arrests made in the context of the protests were for exercising the right to freedom of opinion and expression online and offline.⁶⁴ During the reporting period, more

⁵³ Submission to OHCHR.

⁵⁴ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/09/iran-leaked-documents-reveal-top-level-orders-to-armed-forces-to-mercilessly-confront-protesters/>.

⁵⁵ <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/urgent-actions/14-people-sentenced-death-relation-protests> and <https://iranhumanrights.org/2023/04/imprisoned-dissident-rapper-toomaj-salehi-voice-of-irans-protests-faces-possible-execution/>.

⁵⁶ A/77/525 (2022) para 16 - 23, A/76/268 (2021) para 13, A/75/287 (2020) para 29.

⁵⁷ <https://kalanshahr.ir/news/i/26828>.

⁵⁸ A/77/525 (2022) para 20 – 21.

⁵⁹ <https://www.rferl.org/a/iran-women-launch-hunger-strike-prison-conditions/32211043.html>.

⁶⁰ Report by the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran, “Special efforts to maintain, health, safety and security of inmates in Evin prison” 17 October 2022, p. 2.

⁶¹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/6129/2022/en/>.

⁶² Report by the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran, “Special efforts to maintain, health, safety and security of inmates in Evin prison” 17 October 2022, p. 2.

⁶³ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/6129/2022/en/>.

⁶⁴ <https://www.justsecurity.org/83633/countering-irans-brand-of-digital-authoritarianism/>, and <https://www.accessnow.org/press-release/iran-mass-arrests-hrds/>.

than 70 journalists have been arrested⁶⁵, among them 25 women.⁶⁶ At least 16 of these journalists remain imprisoned.⁶⁷ It is deeply concerning that they have received harsh prison sentences ranging from 12 months to 18 years, as well as travel bans and suspension of their work permits, for their journalistic activities.

33. During the reporting period, 44 per cent of journalists detained were women, which represents a 4 per cent increase from the proportion of women journalists detained in the context of the 2019 protests.⁶⁸ Journalists Niloofar Hamedi and Elahe Mohammadi have been detained since October 2022 on espionage-related charges stemming from their reporting on the death of Ms. Amini. On 28 January 2023, journalist Nazila Maroofian was sentenced to two years in prison, fined 15 million rial (approximately \$355) and subjected to a five-year travel ban after being charged with “propaganda against the state” and “spreading false news” following the publication of her interview with Ms. Amini’s father, in which he denied that his daughter had health issues that would have caused her death.⁶⁹

34. The authorities continued to retain broad control over the Internet and the digital space and have intensified online censorship. Since 21 September 2022, access to some social media and messaging platforms remains banned.⁷⁰ The Government stated that these restrictions were temporary, with the aim of maintaining public order.⁷¹ Frequent Internet shutdowns were reported in several locations on most days of the protests, limiting access to information, including to essential public services, and the ability to conduct economic activities online. The authorities also resorted to curbing the use of Virtual Private Networks (VPNs). Reports received indicate that in many instances, the cities where Internet shutdowns were most extreme were those that saw an intensified use of lethal force by state security forces.⁷² These include Zahedan, in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, and Sanandaj and Saqqez in Kurdistan Province - all predominantly populated by Kurdish and Baloch ethnic minorities.⁷³ Mobile internet shutdowns are tantamount to a total Internet shutdown in these regions as most users rely on mobile connections to access the Internet. According to information received, these restrictions particularly and disproportionately impacted impoverished ethnic and national minority communities and areas with limited landline communications.⁷⁴ Access to the Internet is widely recognized as an indispensable enabler of a broad range of human rights.⁷⁵ While Internet shutdowns deeply affect many human rights, they most immediately affect freedom of expression and access to information.

35. On 19 October 2022, the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology announced that the Government was in the process of criminalizing VPNs, one of the key elements of the User Protection Bill.⁷⁶ In his previous report, the Secretary-General warned that the partially-adopted Bill placed governance of Internet systems in the hands of security forces, eliminating and criminalizing the use of all VPNs, and rendering all foreign Internet services unusable if foreign companies refused to adhere to the laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran.⁷⁷ Without VPNs, it is extremely difficult to access and share independent sources of information on the ground, including human rights reporting.

36. The Secretary-General is concerned by the use of administrative measures that so far resulted in the shutdown or sanctioning of numerous media outlets and the detrimental effect

⁶⁵ <https://rsf.org/en/iranian-reporters-not-giving-after-six-months-protests-and-persecution>.

⁶⁶ <https://rsf.org/en/everyday-occurrence-iran-three-more-women-journalists-jailed-tehran-marking-55-arrests-start>.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ <https://rsf.org/en/unprecedented-number-women-journalists-are-now-detained-iran>

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ <https://rsf.org/en/iran-reins-access-instagram-and-whatsapp-last-platforms-available-iranians..>

⁷¹ Report by the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic republic of Iran, “Ensuring and implementing the right to freedom of expression and access to the Internet in the Islamic Republic of Iran”, p.6.

⁷² Submission to OHCHR.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Human Rights Council resolution 47/16; and A/66/290, para. 12.

⁷⁶ <https://twitter.com/Way2PayMedia/status/1582643872165134336>.

⁷⁷ A/HRC/50/19, para 33.

this has had on independent reporting. On 20 February 2023, *Sazandegi* newspaper was temporarily suspended by the Press Supervision Council, under the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, on charges of “publishing false content” and for “disturbing public opinion” under Articles 5 and 6 of the national press law for an article on rising inflation. The suspension was overturned on 1 March 2023 by the prosecutor for media and culture, as the investigation did not find any content deemed unlawful.⁷⁸

37. In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran announced sanctions⁷⁹, including asset freezes, against the London-based Persian-language broadcaster Iran International and BBC Persian on 19 October 2022, accusing the media outlets of inciting riots, providing false information, and supporting terrorism by their coverage of the protests.⁸⁰

38. On 30 January 2023, a group of parliamentarians introduced a draft bill that would include Article 512 *bis*, in Book Five of the Penal Code on Discretionary Punishments.⁸¹ The new article provides that anyone deemed to have a “professional or social status” and who spreads false information through various means, including through “interviews, articles, messages”, online or offline, regarding issues on which an official statement has not been made is committing a criminal offence. The punishment could include the death penalty if the defendant were to be convicted in conjunction with the charge of *ifsad-fil-arz*. If enacted, Article 512 *bis* would amount to a violation of the right to freedom of expression, and would further endanger journalists, human rights defenders, writers, actors, and others deemed to “hold social status” and place them at increased risk of lengthy prison terms, and would also likely further facilitate the application of the death penalty in such cases. Individuals may also be deterred from reporting on human rights violations fearing possible reprisals against them.

F. Human rights situation of women

39. Individuals from a wide cross-section of society participated in the nationwide protests, with women and girls playing a prominent role. The protests, under the banner “*Zan, Zendegi, Azadi*” (“Women, Life, Freedom”), emphasized that women’s rights were central to the larger struggle for human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Despite years of tireless activism by Iranian women demanding an end to deeply embedded discrimination against them in law and practice, the authorities have not only failed to address their grievances, but also intensified the repression against them. Women and girls belonging to minority groups are particularly affected by the intersecting nature of discrimination.⁸² On 14 December 2022, the UN Economic and Social Council adopted a resolution expressing grave concern about the continuing gross and systematic violation of the human rights of women and girls in Iran by the authorities and deciding to terminate the membership of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Commission on the Status of Women effective immediately.⁸³

40. During the reporting period, state policy has become more stringent in enforcing mandatory veiling, imposing harsher penalties that significantly impact on the daily lives of women and girls. On 15 August 2022, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran signed a decree for more rigorous enforcement of compulsory veiling. The decree includes the introduction of face-recognition technology to monitor and fine unveiled women or to refer them for “counselling”, and a mandatory prison sentence for any Iranian national who questions or publishes online content critical of compulsory veiling.⁸⁴ In September 2022, the Secretary of the Headquarters for Promoting Virtue and Preventing Vice announced plans

⁷⁸ <https://rsf.org/en/rsf-denounces-reformist-daily-s-closure-iran..>

⁷⁹ <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2022/10/iran-sanctions-bbc-persian.>

⁸⁰ Report by the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran, “Inciting, promoting, and directing violence, hatred, chaos, by Iran International Television Channel”, p.1.

⁸¹ Submission to OHCHR. Also see para 25.

⁸² UN Guidance Note on Intersectionality, Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (2022).

⁸³ [E/2023/L.4..](https://www.un.org/press/en/2022/220901.htm)

⁸⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-62984076.>

to use facial recognition technology in public spaces to identify women who were non-compliant.⁸⁵

41. On 10 January 2023, the Prosecutor General ordered the Law Enforcement Command to impose compulsory veiling “decisively”.⁸⁶ On 3 February 2023, the head of parliament’s legal and judicial commission announced that a draft bill was being considered to suspend identity cards of women who refused to comply with compulsory veiling, and to deny them banking services until they paid a fine.⁸⁷ On 27 March 2023, a member of parliament presented a plan to enforce compulsory veiling which, if implemented, would fine unveiled women up to 30,000,000,000 rials (approximately \$60,000).⁸⁸ On 1 April 2023, the head of the judiciary threatened to prosecute unveiled women “without mercy”.⁸⁹

42. Concerning measures were also taken at the legislative level. New draft provisions to the Penal Code are being considered in parliament to expand the scope of offenses on women and girls for non-compliance, allowing imprisonment, flogging, and other punishments.⁹⁰ Article 178 of the draft Bill on Discretionary Punishments would enable judicial bodies to take women and girls who do not adhere to compulsory veiling into custody and to require them to sign a written document stating that they would not repeat the “offence”. Women who refuse to do so could face a number of punishments, including being placed under “supervision” for six months; a travel ban; and expulsion from governmental or public positions. Article 180 of the draft Bill imposes responsibility on business owners, including of shops and restaurants, to enforce compulsory veiling, effectively policing women and girls in public spaces. Furthermore, the same draft article would subject women who work in the service sector to harsher punishments for non-compliance with compulsory veiling. For example, in March 2023, a video was published of a man pouring yogurt on two women while they were in a shop, which appeared to be his reaction to them for not adhering to compulsory veiling.⁹¹

43. The Secretary-General is concerned by the failure to disband the morality police -- which as noted in his previous reports -- is responsible, in great part, for subjecting women to verbal and physical harassment, as well as arrests, and for the closure of businesses deemed non-compliant with enforcing compulsory veiling.⁹² At the time of writing, no official order confirming the disbandment of the morality police has been published.

G. Human rights situation of children

44. The authorities have acknowledged⁹³ that a significant number of protesters were children. It has also been estimated that thousands of children may have been among those who were arrested.⁹⁴ During the reporting period, at least 44 children, including 10 girls, were reportedly killed by the security forces using lethal force.⁹⁵ The highest number of deaths of children in the context of protests was reported in Sistan and Baluchistan Province, where at

⁸⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/sep/05/iran-government-facial-recognition-technology-hijab-law-crackdown>.

⁸⁶ <https://www.isna.ir/news/1401102013051/دستور-دادستانی-کل-کشور-به-پلیس-برای-برخورد-با-کشف-حجاب> (In Persian).

⁸⁷ <https://www.etemadonline.com/بخش-سیاسی-595117/9-حجاب-ها-کارت-ملی-محرومیت-خدمات> (In Persian).

⁸⁸ <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/iran-update-march-27-2023>.

⁸⁹ <https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/reuters/raisi-says-hijab-is-the-law-in-iran-as-unveiled-women-face-yoghurt-attack-/48410666>.

⁹⁰ Submission to OHCHR.

⁹¹ https://twitter.com/iranintl_en/status/1641805731832778752?s=21&t=FWxZEwfVf_OzW_JWKWjhMg.

⁹² A/77/525 (2022) para 38 and A/HRC/47/22 (2021) para 39.

⁹³ <https://www.farsnews.ir/news/14010726000804/-اغتشاشات-در-اعتصامات-با-جوانان-دستگیر-شده-در-ملاقات-با-جوانان-دستگیر-شده-در-اغتشاشات> خدارا شکر یک نفر

⁹⁴ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/03/iran-child-detainees-subjected-to-flogging-electric-shocks-and-sexual-violence-in-brutal-protest-crackdown/>.

⁹⁵ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/6104/2022/en/>.

least 10 children were killed.⁹⁶ The Secretary-General strongly denounces all forms of violence against children, particularly the disproportionate use of force and its impact on children of minority communities.

45. On 17 October 2022, the Committee on the Rights of the Child stated that families have reported being coerced by security forces to falsely claim that their children committed suicide.⁹⁷ In one case, the parents of a 16-year-old girl were reportedly forced by the authorities to make false public statements that their daughter committed suicide, after she was beaten to death by security forces for reportedly refusing to sing a pro-government song when her school was raided in the city of Ardebil on 13 October 2022.⁹⁸

46. According to UNICEF, security forces raided schools.⁹⁹ On 12 October 2022, the Minister of Education confirmed that an unspecified number of children arrested had been transferred to “psychological centres” for correction and education, which is a matter of grave concern.¹⁰⁰

47. The Ministry of Education announced on 24 October 2022, that 164,000 students who had dropped out of school had re-enrolled.¹⁰¹ However, on 3 April 2023, it further announced that educational services would be denied to those who did not comply with the “chastity and hijab” rules.¹⁰² While acknowledging progress in terms of students enrolment, the Secretary-General expresses deep concern about further reinforcement of state policy for compulsory veiling in schools and its impact on the right to education of women and girls.

48. The Secretary-General expresses grave concern over reports of suspected poisonings in schools across the country, in particular girls’ schools. The first incident of poisoning was reported on 30 November 2022 in Qom Province. Since then, similar incidents continued to be reported across the country. As of 2 March 2023, more than 1,000 students, the majority of whom are girls, had reportedly been impacted by suspected poisoning in 91 schools in 20 provinces.¹⁰³ Many parents have removed their daughters from school for fear of these attacks. Similar symptoms were reported, including breathing difficulties, burning throats, nausea, headaches, numbness in the body, and heart palpitations, with some being hospitalized. While arrests were reportedly announced, it appears that investigations were not carried out transparently and swiftly. The authorities provided conflicting accounts concerning these incidents and downplayed the severity of the events, attributing 90 per cent of the cases to “stress”, despite their investigations finding that an irritant substance had been used.¹⁰⁴ The fact that the majority of cases involved girls or girls’ schools suggests that girls were targeted deliberately. UN special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council noted that this could be retribution for their participation in the protests and defying compulsory veiling.¹⁰⁵ The State’s failure to protect the physical and mental well-being of female students and to prevent further attacks from taking place, and the negative impact this has on the rights of girls to attend schools, is deeply concerning. The reported intimidation of the families of the students who were demanding information on the alleged poisonings is also concerning.

⁹⁶ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/10/iran-at-least-23-children-killed-with-impunity-during-brutal-crackdown-on-youthful-protests/>.

⁹⁷ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2022/10/iran-end-killings-and-detentions-children-immediately-un-child>.

⁹⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/oct/18/iranian-schoolgirl-beaten-to-death-for-refusing-to-sing-pro-regime-anthem>.

⁹⁹ <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/unicef-calls-protection-children-against-all-forms-violence-iran-amid-public-unrest>.

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2022/10/iran-end-killings-and-detentions-children-immediately-un-child>.

¹⁰¹ Report by the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

¹⁰² <https://www.asriran.com/fa/news/885007/اطلاعیه-آموزش-و-پرورش-به-دانش-آموزان-بدهجاب-8C%80%80E2%80%80شود-خدمات-آموزشی-ارائه-نمی> (in Persian).

¹⁰³ <https://iranhumanrights.org/2023/03/20-prominent-iranian-lawyers-call-on-un-agencies-to-urgently-investigate-school-girl-poisonings/>.

¹⁰⁴ Report by the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/03/iran-deliberate-poisoning-schoolgirls-further-evidence-continuous-violence>.

H. Human rights situation of minorities

49. In addition to the systemic discrimination and marginalization described in more detail in previous reports¹⁰⁶ of the Secretary-General, ethnic and religious minority communities were significantly affected in the context of the latest protests. The number of reported deaths amongst minorities appeared to be higher relative to the total population.¹⁰⁷ Death sentences appear to have been disproportionately imposed on individuals belonging to ethnic minorities, including members of the Baloch, Arab and Kurdish minorities.¹⁰⁸ Latest figures indicate that since the start of 2023, the authorities executed at least 13 Baloch, one Ahwazi Arab, and 14 Kurds.¹⁰⁹ The generally worsening economic conditions are compounded in regions predominantly populated by minorities groups, which already suffer from chronic underdevelopment. The current protests also served as an opportunity for minorities to express discontent regarding persistent discrimination affecting a host of their fundamental rights. Conditions in the Sistan and Baluchistan Province continued to worsen, particularly in relation to health and medical infrastructure.¹¹⁰ More than half of the population lives under the poverty line,¹¹¹ while an estimated 100,000 people in the province do not have official documents and are considered stateless. This prevents them from enjoying a range of human rights, such as accessing a host of state entitlements, including health services, education, social benefits, and the right to vote and the acquisition of a nationality.

50. During the reporting period, members of the Baha'i community as well as Armenian and Assyrian Christians continued to face discrimination, particularly in relation to their freedom to practise their religion. Many have been arrested on national-security charges and had their places of worship raided. Many shops and businesses belonging to members of the Baha'i community have reportedly been closed, depriving many of them of their incomes.¹¹² The rate of arbitrary arrests of members of minority communities has also reportedly increased in the context of recent protests.

I. Human rights defenders and lawyers

51. Scores of human rights defenders remain imprisoned while authorities continue to harass, arrest, and prosecute those seeking accountability and justice. Hundreds of human rights defenders were arrested, summoned, and interrogated in relation to the protests. According to information received, there was an upward trend of targeting of human rights defenders, with at least 218 arrested or convicted between 16 September 2022 and 30 November 2022 related to the protests, double the number for 2021.¹¹³ Lawyers representing protesters and human rights defenders have been targeted at an unprecedented rate. From 16 September 2022 to 10 January 2023, a total of 44 lawyers were arrested for their work; 27 of those have reportedly been released while the rest remain in detention.¹¹⁴

52. While the Secretary-General notes the release of 29 human rights defenders as of 17 February 2023, there are serious concerns about reports that hundreds of them remain deprived of liberty.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁶ A/77/525 (2022) para 4, A/HRC/47/22 (2021) para 41.

¹⁰⁷ See para 4.

¹⁰⁸ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/03/iran-chilling-execution-spree-with-escalating-use-of-death-penalty-against-persecuted-ethnic-minorities/>.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Submission to OHCHR.

¹¹¹ <https://iranwire.com/en/features/65841/>.

¹¹² Submission to OHCHR.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ <https://iranhumanrights.org/2023/01/iran-protests-at-least-44-defense-attorneys-arrested-since-september/>.

¹¹⁵ <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/statement-report/statement-iran-should-unconditionally-release-all-detained-human-rights-defenders>.

III. Accountability

53. Domestic avenues for accountability remain weak and ineffective, particularly in addressing violations in the context of recent protests. While there have been some investigations into several incidents, most resulted in inconclusive outcomes with very few leading to the accountability of alleged perpetrators. Similarly, after more than five months since the first incident of a school poisoning, the authorities have failed to prevent these attacks and to identify and hold accountable those responsible. While the Secretary-General notes the establishment of a national committee to investigate violations in relation to recent protests, information on the work of the committee is not publicly available. OHCHR requested but is yet to receive information regarding the outcome of the work of this committee.

54. The Secretary-General reiterates that effective mechanisms for accountability are essential to ensure justice for victims and their families and to ensure that their rights to truth, justice and reparation are respected. The lack of thorough, impartial, effective, independent, and transparent investigations into all incidents potentially involving serious human rights violations also undermine trust in the judicial system.

55. In relation to circumstances surrounding the death of Ms. Amini, the Islamic Consultative Assembly Special Investigation Committee of the Islamic Republic of Iran issued a report¹¹⁶ in which it asserted that “there has been no assault or physical attack during the dealing with, transfer to and stationing of the deceased in the Public Security Police Headquarters”. The report¹¹⁷ from the Legal Medicine Organization noted that Ms. Amini suffered from a disorder she developed after removing a brain tumour at the age of eight, leading to “decreased blood pressure and subsequently a reduced level of consciousness”. Her death was diagnosed as cerebral hypoxia.¹¹⁸ Numerous reports, including eyewitness accounts, however, suggest that she was beaten—including on the head—by morality police during and after her violent arrest on 13 September 2022.¹¹⁹ She reportedly fell into a coma a few hours after her arrest and was transferred to the Kasra hospital in Tehran. She died three days later. The lack of transparency in sharing information with the family after her death also raises serious concerns. Ms. Amini’s father noted that he was prevented by medical staff from seeing his daughter’s body and was only allowed to see it after it was wrapped for burial.

56. In relation to the reported deaths of children in the context of protests, the High Council for Human Rights noted that the authorities undertook an initial investigation into these incidents which included 23 children allegedly killed in the protests. However, the outcome of these investigations has yet to be made public.¹²⁰

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

A. Human rights treaty bodies

57. The Government has reiterated its commitment to engaging with international human rights mechanisms. The Islamic Republic of Iran has overdue reports to the Committee on

¹¹⁶ Report by the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran, “Report of the Islamic Consultative Assemblies, Special Investigation Committee on the Death of Mahsa Amini” p. 2.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, p. 4.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/6060/2022/en/>.

¹²⁰ Report submitted by the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran, “The preliminary results of Investigations conducted by the High Council for Human Rights regarding allegations about deaths of under 18 people during recent riots”, 20 October 2022, p. 1.

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Committee on the Rights of the Child; and to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

B. Special Procedures

58. In April 2023, by its resolution of (A/HRC/52/27), the Human Rights Council renewed the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

59. Between 1 August 2022 and 15 April 2023, Special Procedures issued 11 press releases and 20 communications on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Government replied to 12 communications.

C. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

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

V. Recommendations

61. **The Secretary-General urges the Government to:**

(a) **Immediately halt the execution of all individuals, including those sentenced to death in the context of protests and for drug-related offences, and to refrain from further application of the death penalty;**

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

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

(d) **Ensure that Internet shutdowns are never applied as they inherently impose unacceptable consequences for human rights;**

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

(f) **Uphold the full respect for due process and fair trial rights in line with international standards, amongst others by ensuring that all defendants, including those accused of crimes against national security, have effective access to legal counsel of their choosing during the preliminary investigative stage and all subsequent stages of the judicial process;**

(g) **Ensure prompt, transparent and effective investigations by an independent and impartial body into allegations of the excessive and lethal use of force and firearms when not strictly unavoidable to protect life, including during protests, deaths in custody, allegations of torture or other ill-treatment and inadequate prison conditions; prosecute and hold accountable public officials, including law enforcement officials, for issuing or carrying out the relevant orders; and make the findings of investigations public;**

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

(l) Conduct independent, impartial, prompt, thorough and effective investigations into reported poison attacks on girls' schools with a view to hold the perpetrators to account; provide full reparations to the victims and guarantee the right to education without discrimination;

(m) Guarantee the rights to freedom of opinion and expression and of peaceful assembly, including by reviewing the draft Bill on Discretionary Punishments and the User Protection Bill, to ensure that any limitation to rights offline and online complies with the established criteria for permissible restrictions under international human rights law;

(n) Ensure that human rights defenders, lawyers, journalists, writers, and labour rights activists can engage in their respective activities safely and freely, without fear of reprisals, harassment, arrest, detention or prosecution;

(o) Protect the rights of all persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities, and address all forms of discrimination against them without delay;

(p) Join the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; and the fundamental International Labour Organization conventions;

(q) Submit outstanding periodic reports to UN human rights treaty bodies, implement the recommendations of international human rights mechanisms - the treaty bodies, special procedure mandate holders and Universal Periodic Review - and cooperate with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Iran, including by accepting visits by these mandate-holders;

Continue to engage with OHCHR in implementation of all the recommendations made in the reports of the Secretary-General and those of international human rights mechanisms, and consider strengthening its cooperation with OHCHR, including by facilitating a visit by the High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Islamic Republic of Iran and through OHCHR in-country engagement.
