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

## **Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran**

### **Report of the Secretary-General\***

#### *Summary*

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [76/178](#), in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its seventy-seventh session on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution, including options and recommendations to improve its implementation. Accordingly, the report contains information on the patterns and trends with regard to the situation of human rights, the progress made in the implementation of resolution [76/178](#) and recommendations to improve the human rights situation.

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\* 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 76/178 on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, requesting the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its seventy-seventh session on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution. It covers the period from 11 June 2021 to 31 July 2022.

2. The report contains information based on submissions and testimonies received by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, non-governmental and media organizations and individuals. It also draws on observations and recommendations of United Nations human rights mechanisms.

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

### A. Death penalty and arbitrary deprivation of life

3. The Secretary-General notes with concern the many individual cases related to the death penalty and arbitrary deprivation of life referred to in the interim report on the situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran presented to the Human Rights Council.<sup>1</sup> These cases could potentially constitute violations of the right to life (e.g., arbitrary executions, unnecessary and disproportionate use of force by security forces against peaceful protestors resulting in the death of protestors and arbitrary deprivation of life in detention caused by torture or denial of timely access to medical care) for which the State could be held responsible. As described below, these concerns remain valid for the full reporting period. As stated by the Human Rights Committee, States Parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights must investigate allegations of violations and ensure that those found responsible are brought to justice, and failure to do so could in and of itself give rise to a separate breach of the Covenant.<sup>2</sup>

#### Use of the death penalty

4. Based on the information received by OHCHR, it is estimated that at least 318 individuals, including 9 women, were executed from 1 January to 31 July 2022. This number for the first seven months of 2022 represents a sharp increase compared with the number of people executed during the whole of 2021 (at least 333). Reports indicate that ethnic and national minorities were disproportionately affected by executions. Of the 251 individuals reportedly executed from 1 January to 30 June 2022, non-governmental organization (NGO) sources indicate that 65 belonged to the Baluch minority,<sup>3</sup> 24 belonged to the Kurdish minority and 5 were Afghan citizens.<sup>4</sup> Of the total number of executions from 1 January to 30 June 2022, at least 86 were for drug-related offences, which continues the worrying trend of an increase in drug-related executions observed since 2021.<sup>5</sup> None of the drug-related executions have

<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/50/19 (advance unedited version), paras. 4–22. Available at [www.ohchr.org/en/documents/reports/ahrc5019-situation-human-rights-islamic-republic-iran-report-secretary-general](http://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/reports/ahrc5019-situation-human-rights-islamic-republic-iran-report-secretary-general).

<sup>2</sup> Human Rights Committee general comment No. 31 (2004) on the nature of the general legal obligation imposed on States parties to the Covenant, paras. 15 and 18.

<sup>3</sup> [www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/07/iran-horrific-wave-of-executions-must-be-stopped/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/07/iran-horrific-wave-of-executions-must-be-stopped/).

<sup>4</sup> Submission to Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

<sup>5</sup> [www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/07/iran-horrific-wave-of-executions-must-be-stopped/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/07/iran-horrific-wave-of-executions-must-be-stopped/); [https://iranhr.net/media/files/Annual\\_Report\\_on\\_the\\_Death\\_Penalty\\_in\\_Iran\\_2021\\_BwW7LPR.pdf](https://iranhr.net/media/files/Annual_Report_on_the_Death_Penalty_in_Iran_2021_BwW7LPR.pdf).

been officially reported. The number of executions rose significantly in connection with protests, including the protests that started on 7 May 2022 in response to the Government's cuts to State subsidies, which led to a threefold price increase in the cost of basic food commodities. It is estimated that 55 individuals were executed in May 2022 alone, marking the highest monthly rate of executions since 2017.<sup>6</sup> While only one public execution had been reported since the onset of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in February 2020, on 23 July 2022 Iman Sabzikar was executed in public, against the opinion of the Human Rights Committee that public executions are contrary to article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.<sup>7</sup> In its comments, the Government stated that, when comparing the period 2013–2018 and that of 2018–2022, the number of executions was down by 83 per cent.

5. Serious concerns remain about the mandatory imposition of the death penalty through *qisas* (retribution in kind). A lack of due process and fair trial which is consistently observed, precludes the objective assessment of the particular circumstances of the offence, especially as to whether the killing was intentional or premeditated, and whether the death penalty would be imposed for the “most serious crimes” in accordance with article 6 (2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.<sup>8</sup> Reports received indicate that many confessions, prior to death sentences, are obtained under duress and, in some cases, under torture. As highlighted by the Human Rights Committee, the mandatory imposition of the death penalty and violations of fair trial guarantees would in themselves render a death penalty sentence arbitrary in nature, in contravention of article 6 of the Covenant.<sup>9</sup>

#### **Execution of child offenders**

6. The Secretary-General has consistently called for a halt to the execution of child offenders. At least two child offenders were executed from 11 June 2021 to 31 December 2021. At the time of drafting the present report, at least 85 child offenders remained on death row, with several at risk of imminent execution. Among them is Hossein Shahbazi, who was transferred at least three times to solitary confinement, in preparation for his execution, in March, June and December 2021.<sup>10</sup> His execution was temporarily halted pending a judicial review. Authorities noted that the postponement of executions was to allow time for pardon negotiations with the families of the victims. Such postponement can cause significant psychological and emotional distress, and may violate the right to be free from torture and ill-treatment.<sup>11</sup> Other cases of juveniles at risk of imminent execution include those of Mostafa Emadi and Hamidreza Ajdari, who were 16 and 17 years old, respectively, at the time that they allegedly committed murder.

#### **Unnecessary and disproportionate use of force**

7. According to an OHCHR analysis, unnecessary and disproportionate use of force during peaceful assemblies continued during the reporting period, including in the context of protests in West Azerbaijan province in August 2021, protests in relation to water shortages in Isfahan in November 2021 and Khuzestan provinces in July 2021 (leading to the killing of at least nine people, including a minor), and

<sup>6</sup> <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/5322/>.

<sup>7</sup> International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 7; Human Rights Committee general comment No. 36 (2018) on the right to life, para. 40.

<sup>8</sup> International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 6 (2), Human Rights Committee general comment No. 36 (2018), para. 35.

<sup>9</sup> Human Rights Committee general comment No. 36 (2018), paras. 37 and 41.

<sup>10</sup> A/76/268, para. 8.

<sup>11</sup> Human Rights Committee general comment No. 36 (2018), para. 40.

nationwide protests against the increase in food prices in May 2022 (leading to the killing of at least four people).<sup>12</sup> The Secretary-General refers to his interim report for details on those events

8. OHCHR continued to receive reports of unnecessary and disproportionate use of force against *kolbar* (border couriers). Reports suggested that 19 border couriers were killed as a result of the use of firearms by security forces from 1 January to 15 May 2022, in Kermanshah and that more than 114 *kolbar* were injured during the same period. In its comments on the present report, the Government underlined the challenging security situation at the borders, noting its efforts to improve the livelihood of border residents. Citing the general policy to exercise restraint, the Government stated that, during the above time frame, 65 border couriers were shot and injured by border regiment forces, which resulted in the death of 2 border couriers and injury of 15 border guards by other actors.

## B. Access to justice and accountability mechanisms

9. The existing domestic legal framework creates inherent obstacles for the achievement of accountability for serious human rights violations by State actors.<sup>13</sup> Information received by OHCHR indicates that access to justice, through State institutions and mechanisms, remained severely impeded, compounding an existing environment of impunity. Political, ideological and security considerations have possibly weakened the independence of institutions that are vital to ensuring accountability. However, some oversight mechanisms exist. For example, article 90 of the Constitution stipulates that the Islamic Consultative Assembly can demand investigations into complaints received about the work of the executive, legislative and judicial powers. There is a lack of transparency on accountability mechanisms: data on the number of cases received by existing accountability mechanisms, the conviction rates for possible crimes by State actors or how penalties, if relevant, were administered was not available.

10. The effective mechanisms for accountability guarantee a measure of redress for families of victims, and their rights to truth, justice and reparation and are fundamental for society as a whole. The persistent lack of accountability and transparency on measures taken undermines trust in the judicial system and its impartiality. The continued lack of thorough, effective, independent, impartial and transparent investigations into the 2019 countrywide protests and the disproportionate use of force by State security forces remain emblematic of this pattern.<sup>14</sup> In this context, people who call for accountability continued to face harassment or arrest by various security agencies. Families of victims who testified before the “Iran Atrocities Tribunal” (Aban Tribunal), a people’s tribunal created by civil society organizations in the absence of official channels for accountability for violations during the November 2019 protests, faced intimidation and arrest during the reporting period. A pattern of reprisals against individuals calling for accountability was also observed. In a separate incident, in November 2021, Kamal Palangi was arrested in Mako by security forces after speaking out about his seven-year-old daughter, who was reportedly shot by police forces.

11. The continued targeting of lawyers constitutes a further impediment towards achieving accountability. There are continued concerns about directives issued by the judiciary in 2020, and still in force, which allow the judiciary to investigate complaints and cases against lawyers which was previously the prerogative of the

<sup>12</sup> [www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/5789/2022/en/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/5789/2022/en/).

<sup>13</sup> A/HRC/49/75, paras. 49–53.

<sup>14</sup> [www.hrw.org/news/2020/11/17/iran-no-justice-bloody-2019-crackdown](http://www.hrw.org/news/2020/11/17/iran-no-justice-bloody-2019-crackdown).

Iranian Bar Association, which had independent and impartial disciplinary bodies to handle such matters.<sup>15</sup> In the current environment, such directives curtail the independence of the bar association and further expose lawyers to arbitrary disciplinary measures. One example is the conviction of a group of lawyers and human rights defenders on national security charges for preparing a lawsuit against the authorities for mismanagement of the COVID-19 pandemic. In this case, in June 2022, Branch 29 of the Islamic Revolutionary Court in Tehran sentenced lawyers Mostafa Nili and human rights defender Mehdi Mahmoudian to four years' imprisonment each, and lawyers Arash Keykhosravi and Mohammadreza Faghihi to two years' and six months' imprisonment respectively. Furthermore, in contravention of the Bar Association Independence Law, the court banned Mr. Nili and Mr. Keykhosravi from practising law for two years and one year respectively.<sup>16</sup> A lawyer, Mohammadali Dadkhah, was arrested in July 2022 in Tehran to serve the eight-year prison sentence he had received in 2011 on national security charges, related to his representation of arrested protesters.<sup>17</sup> Amirsalar Davoudi was returned to Evin prison on 26 June 2022, after being granted temporary leave. He was sentenced in June 2019 to 111 lashes and 30 years in prison for creating an "illegal group" through a Telegram channel for lawyers.<sup>18</sup> Mohammad Najafi remains in prison serving a 54-month sentence for his activities, including investigating the case of Vahid Heydari, a protestor who died while in police custody in 2018.<sup>19</sup> There are serious concerns that such convictions lack due process and fair trial guarantees. Independent lawyers remain pivotal in providing adequate legal counsel to victims, in particular in relation to allegations of abuses by State security officials.

12. The Secretary-General is concerned about the continued use of article 48 of the Code of Criminal Procedure to unduly restrict the right to legal representation. The provision further weakens accountability and violates the right to a fair trial by requiring defendants in national security cases to choose from a list of State-approved lawyers.<sup>20</sup> It is also of concern that, as part of a directive issued by the head of the judiciary, defendants are no longer required to be present with their lawyers at their appeal hearings.<sup>21</sup>

13. Accountability in line with international human rights law, most notably through effective, thorough, independent, impartial and transparent investigations of past events, including the 2019 protests and the downing of the Ukraine Airlines flight PS752 in January 2020, remain fundamental to ensuring justice for the victims. The Secretary-General remains concerned at the continued harassment, intimidation, arrest and, in some cases, prosecution of those seeking accountability in relation to existing measures to address the grievances and demands of the victims.

14. Reports received suggest an ongoing lack of accountability for violations involving arbitrary deprivation of life through the imposition of the death penalty based on legal frameworks and procedures incompatible with international human rights standards, and the use of unnecessary and disproportionate force against peaceful protestors, border couriers and in places of detention. An increase in cases

<sup>15</sup> <https://iranhumanrights.org/2020/12/new-directive-allows-iranian-judiciary-to-control-lawyers-through-disciplinary-body/>; <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26681>.

<sup>16</sup> [www.hrw.org/news/2022/06/29/iran-rights-defenders-sentenced-questioning-covid-policies](http://www.hrw.org/news/2022/06/29/iran-rights-defenders-sentenced-questioning-covid-policies).

<sup>17</sup> <https://lawyersforlawyers.org/en/lawyers/mohammad-ali-dadkhah/>.

<sup>18</sup> <https://iranhumanrights.org/2022/03/interview-rights-lawyer-turned-political-prisoners-condemns-shameful-acts-against-lawyers-in-iran/>.

<sup>19</sup> <https://iranhumanrights.org/2022/03/joint-statement-free-imprisoned-human-rights-lawyer-mohammad-najafi-in-iran/>.

<sup>20</sup> [A/73/299](#), para. 14; [A/HRC/40/24](#), para. 12; and [A/74/273](#), para. 12.

<sup>21</sup> [A/HRC/43/20](#), para. 11; [www.yjc.news/00TPOp](http://www.yjc.news/00TPOp); and [A/HRC/43/20](#), para. 11.

of denial of timely medical treatment, in particular for political prisoners, has been reported which, according to the Human Rights Committee, could constitute an infringement of the State's duty to protect the victims' lives.<sup>22</sup>

15. On 14 July 2022, on the basis of universal jurisdiction, a Swedish court convicted a former Iranian official and sentenced him to life imprisonment for war crimes and murder for his involvement in the executions of political prisoners in 1988.<sup>23</sup> The trial was the first under universal jurisdiction against a former Iranian official and the first trial concerning the mass executions of 1988.<sup>24</sup> Civil society organizations and families of victims have long called for accountability for the 1988 executions and enforced disappearances of political dissidents. While convictions based on universal jurisdiction can bridge the accountability gap, the primary responsibility for ensuring accountability lies with the State where the crimes were committed, and it is thus imperative that national accountability mechanisms of that State fulfil their mandate to investigate allegations of serious violations of human rights.<sup>25</sup>

### C. Prison conditions

16. Reports received by OHCHR consistently indicate that the lack of oversight of the authority conferred on prison and prosecution officials for health-related decisions contributed to death due to denial of health care or delayed transfer of prisoners to health facilities. Civil society organizations have recorded that at least 96 prisoners, including four women, have died in custody from January 2010 to April 2022, including at least 10 in 2021, owing to denial of timely lifesaving medical care, of whom at least 64 reportedly died in prison and at least 26 died during transfer or shortly after admission to hospital.<sup>26</sup>

17. During the third cycle of the universal periodic review (2019), the Government supported the recommendation to ensure that prison conditions comply with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), in particular by providing adequate health care.<sup>27</sup> The Government, in its midterm report on the implementation of the universal periodic review (2022), notes measures, including in the field of culture and education, in detention facilities and measures to reduce prisons populations. The Government further reported on unhindered access for prisoners to health and medical care.<sup>28</sup> However, major obstacles remain in law and practice that hinder adequate and timely access to medical care for prisoners. For instance, restrictions remain in the Executive Regulations of the Iranian Organization of State Prisons (Prisons Regulations), adopted in May 2021.

18. Article 137 of the Prisons Regulations provides that the transfer of prisoners to medical facilities outside prison is conditioned upon an authorization from the prison director and the Judge for the Implementation of Sentences. This article disregards rule 27 of the Mandela Rules, which requires that clinical decisions may be taken only by the responsible health-care professionals and may not be overruled or ignored

<sup>22</sup> Human Rights Committee general comment No. 36 (2018), para. 25.

<sup>23</sup> The sentence is pending an appeal. See [www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-62162676](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-62162676).

<sup>24</sup> <https://twitter.com/UNHumanRights/status/1547876040311054337?cxt=HHwWgoChsdjDIPsqAAAA>; [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/07/iran-un-expert-welcomes-historic-verdict-universal-jurisdiction-case](http://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/07/iran-un-expert-welcomes-historic-verdict-universal-jurisdiction-case).

<sup>25</sup> Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 31 (2004).

<sup>26</sup> Amnesty International: "In death's waiting room: deaths in custody following deliberate denial of medical care in Iran's prisons", p. 12.

<sup>27</sup> [A/HRC/43/12](#), para. 26; and [A/HRC/43/12/Add.1](#), para. 11.

<sup>28</sup> Universal periodic review, report of the Islamic Republic of Iran, p. 50. Available at [www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/UPR-MID-TERM-REPORT-IRAN.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/UPR-MID-TERM-REPORT-IRAN.pdf).

by non-medical prison staff. The Prisons Regulations permit prison officials to authorize the transfer of sick prisoners to medical facilities in emergency cases, with the permission of the head of the prison but without obtaining prior approval from the Judge for the Implementation of Sentences. This provision, however, does not define the criteria for determining “an emergency situation” and allows the head of the prison to overrule clinical advice.<sup>29</sup>

19. Article 136 of the Prisons Regulations exacerbates this structural gap by specifying that the medical needs of sick prisoners shall be met, to the extent possible, in facilities inside the prison to remove the need for transfer to an outside medical facility.<sup>30</sup> The lack of adequately qualified staff and equipment in some prison facilities further compounds this deficit.<sup>31</sup>

20. An example of prison officials overruling medical advice is the situation of So’ada Khadirzadeh, who is held in pretrial detention in Orumiye prison. Ms. Khadirzadeh was pregnant at the time of her arrest in October 2021. While prison doctors in December 2021 confirmed that she required specialized medical care outside of prison for her heart condition, the prosecution authorities halted her transfer. On 26 April 2022, and in her eighth month of pregnancy, Ms. Khadirzadeh went on a hunger strike for 12 days to protest the denial of specialized health care. She ended her hunger strike following promises from officials that she would be transferred to a hospital. Ms. Khadirzadeh was transferred to a hospital only on 20 June 2022, while she was in active labour. After her child was born, authorities transferred her and her child back to prison on the same day, against medical advice.<sup>32</sup> In its comments, the Government stated that she and her child had received the necessary medical attention in prison. In another case, a 73-year-old journalist, Kayvan Samimi, was detained on 18 May 2022, despite a previous forensic opinion issued in January 2021 confirming that he was unable to withstand imprisonment owing to his health condition.<sup>33</sup>

21. Denial of the basic rights of prisoners compelled many prisoners to resort to hunger strikes. On 1 January 2022, Adel Kianpour died in unclear circumstances in Sheyban prison in Khuzestan province after a week-long hunger strike in protest against the denial of his fair trial rights.<sup>34</sup> The spokesperson for the judiciary denied that Mr. Kianpour was on hunger strike, without providing information on the cause of his death.<sup>35</sup> Labour rights defenders and trade unionists Reza Shahabi, Hassan Saeidi and Mohammadali Zahmatkesh initiated hunger strikes in June 2022 in protest against their arbitrary detentions.<sup>36</sup> Mr. Shahabi remains in a poor health condition owing to untimely access to adequate medical care and previous imprisonments.<sup>37</sup> Vahid Bagheri initiated a hunger strike in May 2022 to protest the authorities’ refusal to grant him parole. Mr. Bagheri was sentenced by an Islamic Revolutionary Court to five years’ imprisonment on national security charges for participating in the protests

<sup>29</sup> Amnesty International: “In death’s waiting room”, p. 12.

<sup>30</sup> Prisons Regulation, <https://rc.majlis.ir/fa/law/show/1661504>; [www.prisons.ir/news/1309](http://www.prisons.ir/news/1309).

<sup>31</sup> A/HRC/43/61, para. 65; Amnesty International, “In death’s waiting room”, p. 9.

<sup>32</sup> [www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/5827/2022/en/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/5827/2022/en/).

<sup>33</sup> [www.en-hrana.org/keyvan-samimi-arrested-and-transferred-to-semnan-prison/](http://www.en-hrana.org/keyvan-samimi-arrested-and-transferred-to-semnan-prison/).

<sup>34</sup> <https://iranhumanrights.org/2022/01/writer-in-coma-another-political-prisoner-dead-after-arbitrary-imprisonment-in-iran/>.

<sup>35</sup> [www.mizan.news/786749/](http://www.mizan.news/786749/).

<sup>36</sup> [www.en-hrana.org/trade-union-activist-reza-shahabi-goes-on-hunger-strike-in-evin-prison/](http://www.en-hrana.org/trade-union-activist-reza-shahabi-goes-on-hunger-strike-in-evin-prison/); [www.rferl.org/a/iran-teacher-hunger-strike-health/31938474.html](http://www.rferl.org/a/iran-teacher-hunger-strike-health/31938474.html); and [www.rferl.org/a/unions-iran-warn-deteriorating-health-jailed-activists/31928476.html](http://www.rferl.org/a/unions-iran-warn-deteriorating-health-jailed-activists/31928476.html).

<sup>37</sup> [www.hrw.org/news/2017/12/16/iran-free-ailing-labor-activist](http://www.hrw.org/news/2017/12/16/iran-free-ailing-labor-activist).

of November 2019. Reportedly, he lost consciousness on 11 June 2022 and was transferred to a hospital but was returned to prison within a few hours.<sup>38</sup>

22. Despite a specific provision in the Prisons Regulations about hygiene and cleanliness inspection in prison facilities,<sup>39</sup> reports indicate that prison authorities failed to address dire sanitation situations in a number of prisons. In particular, dire sanitary conditions have persisted in Qarchak Penitentiary for Women.<sup>40</sup> The prison, initially developed as an industrial chicken farm, lacks sufficient sanitation and hygiene services, bedding and food of adequate nutritional value.<sup>41</sup> Reports indicate that the water source designated for drinking is often contaminated, and frequently unavailable during the summer, and that the city's sewage system occasionally overflows into the wards' courtyards. Reports further indicate that prisoners in pretrial detention were not separated from those that have been convicted, inconsistent not only with the Mandela Rules but also the Prisons Regulations<sup>42</sup>.

23. OHCHR has received concerning reports about the situation of children with incarcerated mothers. Article 523 of the Criminal Procedure Code bans the separation of children from their mothers until they reach two years of age, except in special circumstances. The Prisons Regulations permit children from 2 to 6 years of age to reside with their incarcerated mothers, depending on the decision of prison authorities. In its midterm report on the implementation of the universal periodic review, the Government reported on measures to support female prisoners, including prioritizing female prisoners who have children for "electronic tagging", as well as special services for children with imprisoned mothers, including kindergarten.<sup>43</sup> However, the State Welfare Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran authorizes only prisons that accommodate more than 10 children to establish a kindergarten.<sup>44</sup> Reports from civil society indicated that the number of child-care facilities in prisons were limited and the existing child-care facilities lack sufficient services. As a result, children of incarcerated mothers spend most of their time among other prisoners, at risk of physical and psychological harm.<sup>45</sup> The Government noted that there are currently 16 active kindergartens in prisons. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has stated that the best interests of the child should be the central consideration at all stages of the process relating to the incarceration of a parent, and States parties should ensure the provision of sufficient social services at an adequate quality, including health and educational facilities, to children living with incarcerated parents.<sup>46</sup>

#### D. Civic space

24. In the reporting period, the State continued to apply a strict national security approach towards civil society actors and activities. In February 2022, speaking before the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, the President, Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, stressed the importance of applying the declaration of the second step

<sup>38</sup> <https://ipa.united4iran.org/fa/prisoner/6089/>.

<sup>39</sup> Prisons Regulation, arts. 120–122, <https://rc.majlis.ir/fa/law/show/1661504>; [www.prisons.ir/news/1309](http://www.prisons.ir/news/1309).

<sup>40</sup> A/76/268, para. 16.

<sup>41</sup> <https://iranhumanrights.org/2022/08/gharchak-prison-in-iran-a-cauldron-of-abuse-and-violations/>.

<sup>42</sup> Prisons Regulation, art. 31, <https://rc.majlis.ir/fa/law/show/1661504>; [www.prisons.ir/news/1309](http://www.prisons.ir/news/1309).

<sup>43</sup> Universal periodic review, report of the Islamic Republic of Iran, p. 59. See footnote 28.

<sup>44</sup> [www.isna.ir/news/96042514427/](http://www.isna.ir/news/96042514427/).

<sup>45</sup> Children of Imprisoned Parents International, "Investigative report on the situation of children and mothers inside prisons in Iran", February 2022, pp. 6–8. Available at [https://coipi.org/fa/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Report\\_on\\_Child\\_Motehr\\_in\\_Prison\\_Situation\\_COIPI\\_Farsi\\_02272022.pdf](https://coipi.org/fa/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Report_on_Child_Motehr_in_Prison_Situation_COIPI_Farsi_02272022.pdf) (in Farsi).

<sup>46</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, report and recommendations of the day of general discussion on "Children of Incarcerated parents", paras. 30–34.



of the Islamic revolution.<sup>47</sup> Issued in 2019, the aim of the Declaration was, inter alia, to remove any influence in society deemed non-Islamic, and it sets out macro policies including on “lifestyle” and “freedom”.<sup>48</sup> The Human Rights Committee has noted that the recognition of a State religion “shall not result in any impairment of the enjoyment of any of the rights under the Covenant”.<sup>49</sup>

25. In addition to the legislative developments, including the “user protection bill”, analysed in the interim report of the Secretary-General,<sup>50</sup> restrictive policies continued to extend to online content. In June 2022, the Telecommunication Infrastructure Company targeted encryption protocols and circumvention tools. These measures add to the already restricted information environment in the country.<sup>51</sup>

26. Information received indicated that civic space continued to be subject to severe control in the form of arbitrary arrest and detention of lawyers, artists and teachers, as well as human rights, minority rights and labour rights defenders. Instances of unnecessary and disproportionate use of force against and arbitrary arrest of peaceful protesters, and increasing undue interference with associations and reprisals against people calling for accountability were also reported, as indicated elsewhere in the present report<sup>52</sup> and in the interim report.<sup>53</sup> Charges brought against civil society actors included: “propaganda against the State”; “assembly and collusion with the intention of disturbing national security”; “spreading corruption on earth”; “*moharebeh*”;<sup>54</sup> “spreading false news”; and “disruption of public order”. Reports received pointed to the fact that the authorities increasingly labelled civil society activities, including accountability efforts, as engagement with foreign intelligence services and as national security crimes. Within a context of increased protests and criticism against the authorities, the Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, issued a statement to the judiciary in July 2022 comparing the current situation with that in the 1980s and calling on the judiciary to deal with those who “ruin the minds of the people”.<sup>55</sup>

27. In the first two weeks of July 2022, at least 13 civil society actors were reportedly arrested. On 6 July 2022, security forces arrested family members of victims of the 2019 protests, including mothers of victims of government violence known as “Mothers For Justice”, accusing them of “trying to instigate riots”, “establishing contact with a foreign secret service” and receiving money from them to “instigate riots and insecurity in the country under the guise of seeking justice”.<sup>56</sup> Those arrested were reportedly taken to undisclosed locations and denied access to counsel or family. Two film directors, Mohammad Rasoulof and Mostafa Aleahmad, were arrested on 8 July and accused of “inflaming passions and disturbing people’s psychological security” after they launched the “lay down your gun” social media campaign against the harsh response of the authorities against protesters in Abadan.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>47</sup> <https://irangov.ir/detail/379811>.

<sup>48</sup> <https://irandataportal.syr.edu/wp-content/uploads/Budget-1401-2022-2023-Bill.pdf> (in Farsi); <https://english.khamenei.ir/news/6415/The-Second-Phase-of-the-Revolution-Statement-addressed-to-the>.

<sup>49</sup> Human Rights Committee general comment No. 22 (1993) on the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, para. 9.

<sup>50</sup> A/HRC/50/19, paras. 30–34. See footnote 1.

<sup>51</sup> A/HRC/50/19, para. 33. See footnote 1.

<sup>52</sup> See paras. 8, 12, 13, 15, 29–33, 36 and 41.

<sup>53</sup> A/HRC/50/19, paras. 38–45. See footnote 1.

<sup>54</sup> Article 279 of the Islamic Penal Code.

<sup>55</sup> <https://farsi.khamenei.ir/news-content?id=50539>.

<sup>56</sup> [www.farsnews.ir/news/14010420000731/](http://www.farsnews.ir/news/14010420000731/); and <https://hamshahrionline.ir/x7Sjz>.

<sup>57</sup> [www.irna.ir/news/84815648/](http://www.irna.ir/news/84815648/); <https://irna.ir/xjJW8C>; and <http://fna.ir/1q0qjr>.

A film director, Jafar Panahi, was arrested after visiting the prosecutor's office to inquire about Mr. Rasoulof's detention.<sup>58</sup>

28. The actions of the Ministry of Intelligence and the Ministry of Interior vis-à-vis civic space actors remain concerning, both through the role provided to them by domestic law to exercise control over associations, assemblies, media, educational centres, the legal profession and other areas, but also through reported acts of intimidation, threats and violence. On 26 May 2022, an Appeals Court upheld the decision to dissolve the Imam Ali Popular Students Relief Society, the country's largest non-governmental organization, following a case brought against the organization and several senior staff by the Ministry of Interior.<sup>59</sup> The Secretary-General reiterates his call to reverse the decision and allow the organization to operate without interference.<sup>60</sup>

### **The right to peaceful assembly**

29. Article 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights enshrines the right of peaceful assembly and provides that no restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of the legitimate aims as listed in the article. Article 27 of the Constitution regulates assemblies, holding that "public gatherings and marches may be freely held, provided arms are not carried and that they are not detrimental to the fundamental principles of Islam". The Law on Operation of Political Groups and Parties limits the right to hold assembly to political parties that submit a prior request for permission. This law limits the formation of political parties to persons whose "worldviews, ideologies and beliefs" are aligned with Islamic principles; and have belief in and demonstrated commitment to the Constitution and the principle of absolute guardianship of the Islamic jurist" and exclude those convicted of national security crimes or suspected by security or intelligence bodies of espionage and those who "commit vice".<sup>61</sup> As stated by the Human Rights Committee, having to apply for permission from the authorities undercuts the idea that peaceful assembly is a basic right.<sup>62</sup>

30. Authorities responded to the exercise of the right of peaceful assembly by resorting to unnecessary and disproportionate use of force, Internet disruptions and the arrest and prosecution of protesters.<sup>63</sup> Protests were held against poverty, inflation, low wages, food price hikes and the unequal distribution of water resources. Following the collapse on 23 May 2022 of a 10-storey building in Abadan, killing at least 40 people, protests broke out in several cities against corruption and against the Government.<sup>64</sup> City officials had authorized the construction of the building despite assessments made by technical experts on several occasions that building plans were flawed and lacked resilience. The Government noted that several municipality officials are being prosecuted.

<sup>58</sup> [www.mehrnews.com/xY4D8](http://www.mehrnews.com/xY4D8).

<sup>59</sup> [www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2022/06/presentation-secretary-generals-report-situation-human-rights-islamic-republic](http://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2022/06/presentation-secretary-generals-report-situation-human-rights-islamic-republic); A/HRC/47/22, para. 42; and [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2020/07/bachelet-alarmed-threats-against-prominent-iranian-ngo](http://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2020/07/bachelet-alarmed-threats-against-prominent-iranian-ngo).

<sup>60</sup> A/HRC/47/22, para. 42.

<sup>61</sup> Law on Operation of Political Groups and Parties, arts. 2, 4 and 5; and <https://www.article19.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/FINAL-REPORT-English-Deceit-denials-and-delays.pdf>.

<sup>62</sup> Human Rights Committee general comment No. 37 (2020) on the right of peaceful assembly, para. 70.

<sup>63</sup> Human Rights Committee general comment No. 37 (2020), paras. 10–16.

<sup>64</sup> <https://en.isna.ir/photo/1401030201709/Collapse-of-10-story-building-in-Abadan>.

31. The reporting period saw an increase in protests by labour rights defenders and unions, followed by a large number of arrests and prosecutions.<sup>65</sup> Teachers continued to hold frequent protests over wages, limitations to free public education and the arrest of their colleagues. In addition to protests mentioned in the interim report,<sup>66</sup> the Iranian Teachers Trade Unions Coordination Council, comprising independent teachers' unions in various cities, called for a nationwide gathering on 1 May, which the authorities met with arrests. From 30 April to 26 June 2022, over 230 teachers and labour rights defenders across the country were detained, and 23 were summoned to judicial and intelligence bodies<sup>67</sup> in the context of demonstrations.<sup>68</sup> Several were reportedly held incommunicado in solitary confinement in wards controlled by the Ministry of Intelligence.<sup>69</sup>

### Foreign and dual nationals

32. An estimated 20 foreign and dual nationals remained detained, primarily on espionage charges.<sup>70</sup> A Swedish-Iranian national, Ahmadreza Djalali, arbitrarily detained since 2016, remains at risk of imminent execution. At least two other foreign and dual nationals, a German-Iranian, Jamshid Sharmahd, and a Swedish-Iranian, Habib Chaab, are also at risk of execution, after having been transferred to the Islamic Republic of Iran from a third country. Other arbitrarily detained dual nationals include Kamran Ghaderi, Massud Mossaheb, Mehran Raoof, Emad Shargi, Fariba Adelkhah, Nahid Taghavi and Siamak Namazi. In May 2022, two French nationals were arrested on national security charges for having had contact with teachers' unions in the Islamic Republic of Iran.<sup>71</sup> In July 2022, it was reported that a Belgian aid worker had been detained in the Islamic Republic of Iran since February 2022.<sup>72</sup> The Islamic Republic of Iran and Belgium concluded an extradition treaty, which the Parliament of Belgium ratified in July 2022. The treaty enabled the return of an Iranian diplomat, Assadollah Assadi, convicted in Belgium in 2021 for "attempted murder and involvement in terrorism".<sup>73</sup>

### Environmentalists

33. Seven imprisoned environmentalists from the Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation, whose cases have been raised in previous reports,<sup>74</sup> should have been made eligible for parole under the code of criminal procedure, having served one third of their prison sentences. In an open letter in May 2022, more than 2,700 academics and civil society actors requested the head of the judiciary to re-examine their case and to grant them parole.<sup>75</sup> In June 2022, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) reiterated the call for the release of former UNEP employee, Niloufar Bayani, and other environmentalists detained in the Islamic Republic of Iran.<sup>76</sup> On 27 July 2022, a British-American-Iranian conservationist, Morad Tahbaz, was released on bail with an electronic bracelet. The Secretary-General reiterates his call for the release of all the arbitrarily detained environmentalists.

<sup>65</sup> [www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/06/iran-un-experts-alarmed-civil-society-crackdown](http://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/06/iran-un-experts-alarmed-civil-society-crackdown); [www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/29/iran-labor-protests-surge](http://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/29/iran-labor-protests-surge).

<sup>66</sup> A/HRC/50/19, paras. 10–13, 45 and 47. See footnote 1.

<sup>67</sup> [www.hra-news.org/2022/hranews/a-35494/](http://www.hra-news.org/2022/hranews/a-35494/).

<sup>68</sup> [www.en-hrana.org/iranian-teachers-protests-update-230-arrests-during-last-two-months/](http://www.en-hrana.org/iranian-teachers-protests-update-230-arrests-during-last-two-months/).

<sup>69</sup> <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=27367>.

<sup>70</sup> <https://iranhumanrights.org/2018/05/who-are-the-dual-nationals-imprisoned-in-iran/>.

<sup>71</sup> [www.france24.com/en/middle-east/20220517-iran-says-two-french-nationals-held-for-trying-to-foment-unrest](http://www.france24.com/en/middle-east/20220517-iran-says-two-french-nationals-held-for-trying-to-foment-unrest).

<sup>72</sup> [www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-62048753](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-62048753).

<sup>73</sup> [www.tehrantimes.com/news/473656/Top-Iran-rights-official-blasts-illegal-trial-of-Assadi](http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/473656/Top-Iran-rights-official-blasts-illegal-trial-of-Assadi).

<sup>74</sup> A/HRC/47/22, para. 35.

<sup>75</sup> [www.didarnews.ir/fa/news/133502/](http://www.didarnews.ir/fa/news/133502/).

<sup>76</sup> [https://twitter.com/andersen\\_inger/status/1533125789885124610](https://twitter.com/andersen_inger/status/1533125789885124610).

## E. Situation of women and girls

34. Discriminatory laws, notably on marriage, divorce, child custody, freedom of movement and employment, remained in place. As detailed in the interim report, the slow progress and dilution of the provisions in the bill on the protection of women against violence remains concerning.<sup>77</sup> The Government noted that the bill is in its final stages of approval.

35. In its midterm report under the universal periodic review submitted in March 2022, the Government reported that the female literacy rate had increased to 80.8 per cent and the literacy gap between men and women had decreased to less than 6.3 per cent by 2020. Despite these advances, discrimination prevailed in access to, and within, the job market. According to the World Economic Forum 2022 Global Gender Gap Index, the Islamic Republic of Iran ranks 144th out of 146 countries in terms of economic participation and opportunity, with women accounting for only 14 per cent of the labour force.<sup>78</sup> According to the official Statistical Centre of Iran, women's wages are estimated to be 41 per cent lower than men's.<sup>79</sup>

36. Despite previous recommendations by international human rights mechanisms and the Secretary-General to increase the minimum age for marriage for both girls and boys to 18 years of age,<sup>80</sup> the legal marriage age remains 13 years of age for girls and 15 years of age for boys. Girls as young as 9 can be married with the consent of their father and a judge.<sup>81</sup> The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child have considered that child marriage is a form of forced marriage, given that one or both parties cannot express full, free and informed consent.<sup>82</sup> In its midterm report under the universal periodic review, the Government stated that the judiciary monitors the marriage of girls below the age of 13 to ensure compliance with the conditions provided by law.<sup>83</sup> However, the high rate of marriage in this age range may suggest that courts do not consider child marriage a harmful practice and generally authorize it. According to the Statistical Centre, over 127,000 marriages involving girls below the age of 15 were registered from March 2017 to March 2021 and, from 21 March to 21 December 2021, the marriages of over 25,000 girls under the age of 15 were registered. The femicide in February 2022 of a 17-year-old girl decapitated by her husband in Khuzestan province illustrates how the courts did not safeguard the best interest of the child.<sup>84</sup> The girl was married when she was 12, with the authorization of her father and a judge in line with article 1041 of the Civil Code.<sup>85</sup> The newly adopted Youthful Population and Protection of the Family Law and its regulations provide more financial and other benefits to families to encourage early marriage and pregnancy, without providing any age restriction.<sup>86</sup>

37. The impact of the Youthful Population and Protection of the Family Law on women and girls' rights to sexual and reproductive health is deeply concerning,<sup>87</sup>

<sup>77</sup> A/HRC/50/19, paras. 27–29. See footnote 1.

<sup>78</sup> [www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2022/](http://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2022/).

<sup>79</sup> [www.amar.org.ir/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=AKeF5ZI6HcE%3D&portalid=1](http://www.amar.org.ir/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=AKeF5ZI6HcE%3D&portalid=1).

<sup>80</sup> CRC/C/IRN/CO/3-4, para. 28; and CCPR/C/IRN/CO/3, para. 28.

<sup>81</sup> Civil Code, art. 1041.

<sup>82</sup> Joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2019) on harmful practices, para. 20.

<sup>83</sup> Universal periodic review, report of the Islamic Republic of Iran, p. 103. See footnote 28.

<sup>84</sup> A/HRC/50/19, paras. 28 and 29. See footnote 1.

<sup>85</sup> <https://observers.france24.com/en/asia-pacific/20220216-femicide-iran-honour-killing-beheading>.

<sup>86</sup> Articles 10, 11, 13, 68 and 69 of the Law. Available at [www.cbi.ir/showitem/23342.aspx](http://www.cbi.ir/showitem/23342.aspx); <https://dotic.ir/news/10763>; and [qavanin.ir/Law/PrintText/295651](http://qavanin.ir/Law/PrintText/295651).

<sup>87</sup> A/HRC/50/19, paras. 23–26. See footnote 1.

including its prohibition of free distribution of contraceptives (art. 51), ban on voluntary sterilizations for men and women (art. 51), restriction of access to information on family planning (art. 48) and expansion of the criminalization of abortion (art. 61).<sup>88</sup> In June 2022, a new regulation for the implementation of the law was issued, stipulating that the medical licences of staff involved in abortions would be revoked.<sup>89</sup> The Health Ministry announced in July 2022 that, in line with the new law, the final decision on therapeutic abortions – in case of threat to the life of the pregnant woman or fetal anomalies – would be made by a judge, rather than a doctor as the previous law had provided.<sup>90</sup> The Health Ministry further announced that doctors should register information about pregnant women on a national portal, to which Government authorities unrelated to the health sector are granted access.<sup>91</sup> In addition to privacy concerns, this raises concerns that the portal is established with the aim of identifying and prosecuting cases of abortion.<sup>92</sup>

38. The Secretary-General is concerned at the increased repression of women and girls who peacefully protest compulsory hijab.<sup>93</sup> Over the reporting period, the Government intensified social restrictions and the enforcement of compulsory hijab, including a new regulation imposing stricter hijab rules for female government employees and punishment for those who do not abide by the prescribed rules.<sup>94</sup> The morality police expanded street patrols, subjecting women perceived to be wearing “loose hijab” to verbal and physical harassment and arrest, and shut down several businesses for lack of strict enforcement of hijab rules.<sup>95</sup> In July 2022, the President called on all government entities to “strictly implement the hijab law”, and the Head of the Judiciary called on intelligence services to take strong action against those advocating against the mandatory wearing of hijab.<sup>96</sup> The prosecutor’s office in Mashhad required the municipality to “ban women not wearing proper head covering from accessing the subway” and ordered the governor to ban services in banks and government offices to women who do not wear the hijab properly.<sup>97</sup> On 12 July 2022, the authorities organized events in various venues “to honour, celebrate and promote” wearing the hijab,<sup>98</sup> while civil society actors held campaigns against compulsory hijab.<sup>99</sup> Several women were arrested following their participation in online campaigns posting videos without hijab on social media. The Human Rights Committee has stressed that specific regulations on clothing to be worn by women in public may involve a violation of a number of rights, including: non-discrimination; liberty and security of person, when failure to comply with the regulation is punished by arrest; freedom of movement, if liberty of movement is subject to such a constraint; privacy without arbitrary or unlawful interference; and freedom of opinion and expression and thought, conscience and religion.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.; A/76/268, para. 33.

<sup>89</sup> [www.isna.ir/news/1401033021172/](http://www.isna.ir/news/1401033021172/).

<sup>90</sup> [www.isna.ir/news/1401042215427/](http://www.isna.ir/news/1401042215427/).

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Youthful Population and Protection of the Family Law, art. 54.

<sup>93</sup> A/76/268, para. 31; A/74/273, para. 36; and A/73/299, paras. 46–49.

<sup>94</sup> [www.farsnews.ir/news/14010311000393/](http://www.farsnews.ir/news/14010311000393/); and <https://isna.ir/xdLPB6>.

<sup>95</sup> [www.article19.org/resources/iran-protest-against-mandatory-hijab/](http://www.article19.org/resources/iran-protest-against-mandatory-hijab/).

<sup>96</sup> [www.mizan.news/?p=4352967](http://www.mizan.news/?p=4352967).

<sup>97</sup> [www.yjc.news/fa/news/8179801/](http://www.yjc.news/fa/news/8179801/).

<sup>98</sup> [www.farsnews.ir/tehran/news/14010421000196/](http://www.farsnews.ir/tehran/news/14010421000196/); and [dana.ir/news/1882656.html/](http://dana.ir/news/1882656.html/).

<sup>99</sup> [www.reuters.com/article/iran-women-rights-idINL1N2YT0FC](http://www.reuters.com/article/iran-women-rights-idINL1N2YT0FC).

<sup>100</sup> Human Rights Committee general comment No. 28 (2000) on the equality of rights between men and women, para. 13.

## F. Adequate standard of living, economic situation and poverty

39. As described in the interim report, despite ongoing international sanctions, the country witnessed some economic growth, but high inflation and widespread unemployment compounded widening income and economic disparities.<sup>101</sup> Climate change challenges impacted growth, in particular in the agricultural and industry sectors. While the oil and service sectors experienced growth, the agricultural sector contracted by 2.1 per cent owing to drought and energy blackouts.<sup>102</sup> The economic crisis, including the effects of the imposition of sanctions, continued to have a devastating impact on the adequate standard of living for the vast majority of the population. The annual inflation rate of the Islamic Republic of Iran topped 40 per cent from March 2021 to March 2022. Food prices rose faster than the general inflation rate, reaching 51.5 per cent in the same period. In the reporting period, social protection measures partly mitigated pressure on household welfare, but inadequate targeting of benefits and a lack of adjustment for inflation reduced their impact.

40. Housing became increasingly unaffordable. According to the Tehran Real Estate Consultants Union, in the past three years rents have risen 300 per cent in Tehran.<sup>103</sup> In June 2022, the President, Speaker of the Parliament and Chief Justice approved a 25 per cent cap on annual rent increases in Tehran and 20 per cent in other cities.<sup>104</sup> The same month, Parliament approved the general outlines of legislation that would control the rental market.

41. According to the official Statistical Centre, 40.4 per cent of the population aged 15 years and above were economically active.<sup>105</sup> Among retirees, an estimated 55 per cent did not receive a pension, and 89 per cent of retirees had a monthly income lower than the minimum subsistence basket estimated by the Supreme Labour Council.<sup>106</sup> Since May 2022, thousands of retirees have demonstrated in front of State Welfare Organization offices across the country to demand an increase in pensions in line with inflation. In June 2022, the State Welfare Organization announced that 62 per cent of State retirees with the lowest pensions, which account for approximately 2.7 per cent of people, would receive a 57 per cent increase.<sup>107</sup>

### Sanctions, budget and transparency

42. In May 2022, the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights undertook a country visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran, and noted the multifaceted negative impact of unilateral sanctions across all sectors, including on inflation and on the capabilities of the national health-care system.<sup>108</sup> Notwithstanding the negative impact of sanctions on some sectors, it remains challenging to identify their precise effects given the lack of transparency on official data, including on pre-sanctions data, as well as compounding

<sup>101</sup> A/HRC/50/19, paras. 49–52 (see footnote 1);

[www.worldbank.org/en/country/iran/publication/economic-update-april-2022](http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/iran/publication/economic-update-april-2022).

<sup>102</sup> [www.worldbank.org/en/country/iran/publication/economic-update-april-2022](http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/iran/publication/economic-update-april-2022).

<sup>103</sup> [www.tehrantimes.com/news/474309/Housing-rental-rises-46-5-in-Tehran-city-in-a-month-on-year](http://www.tehrantimes.com/news/474309/Housing-rental-rises-46-5-in-Tehran-city-in-a-month-on-year).

<sup>104</sup> <https://irna.ir/xjJKSS>; [www.farsnews.ir/news/14010329000196/](http://www.farsnews.ir/news/14010329000196/) and [www.snn.ir/fa/news/1016744/](http://www.snn.ir/fa/news/1016744/).

<sup>105</sup> [www.amar.org.ir/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=AKeF5ZI6HcE%3D&portalid=1](http://www.amar.org.ir/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=AKeF5ZI6HcE%3D&portalid=1).

<sup>106</sup> [www.radiozamaneh.info/u/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/LaborRightsReportSpecial-Retirees-November-2021en.pdf](http://www.radiozamaneh.info/u/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/LaborRightsReportSpecial-Retirees-November-2021en.pdf), p.6.

<sup>107</sup> <http://www.imna.ir/news/579851/>.

<sup>108</sup> <https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ohchr.org%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2F2022-05%2FIran-country-visit-conclusions-SR-UCM-17May2022%2520-EnglishPersian.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK>.

factors, such as domestic policies and corruption. Many policy reforms are needed to address the challenges of the economic situation and resource management.

43. The country's budget consists of the general budget, which for 2022–2023 was projected at approximately \$50 billion, and an additional budget of nearly \$75 billion given to companies, banks and for-profit government-owned entities. Parliament and the Supreme Audit Court of the Islamic Republic of Iran do not have the authority to monitor the latter. The 2022–2023 general budget included a significant increase for the police, security forces and military, raising the budgets for the Supreme National Security Council by 70 per cent, for the Ministry of Intelligence by 82 per cent, for the Law Enforcement Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran by 51 per cent, for the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps by 143 per cent, and for the Joint Staff of the Islamic Republic of Iran Army by 69 per cent. The World Bank considered that the continued lack of a coherent and stable foreign exchange market contributed to inflation and to making the market susceptible to corruption.<sup>109</sup> The June 2022 report by the Supreme Accounting Office showed that government revenues were only 37 per cent of the projected budget revenues.<sup>110</sup> Only 15 per cent of oil export revenues were collected, despite claims by officials that oil exports had increased by 40 per cent over the past year, raising questions about the distribution of oil export revenues to entities outside of the general budget.<sup>111</sup>

44. The Secretary-General underlines the importance of reliable data and transparency on the budget and in public finances, allowing the public to monitor public expenditure. The right to access government data and statistics is part of the right to access to information, guaranteed by article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which the Islamic Republic of Iran is a State party. Further, reliable statistical information is key to monitoring progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>112</sup> The Statistical Centre of the Islamic Republic of Iran is the main government entity responsible for official data. Various government entities continued to publish conflicting statistical reports, including on budget, health, employment and resources. Other challenges to the statistical infrastructure included the lack of independent channels of data collection and reporting, leading to a government monopoly on data. There was also an underutilization of existing data and statistics, due to lack of reliability, transparency and accountability. This exacerbated a difficult environment for those seeking to challenge government policies or data, given the challenges in presenting statistical evidence to the contrary.

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

#### **A. Human rights treaty bodies and the universal periodic review**

45. The Government reiterated its commitment to engaging with international human rights mechanisms and to submitting its outstanding periodic reports. The State submitted its periodic reports under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in July 2021, and under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in January 2022, overdue since 2013 and 2018,

<sup>109</sup> [www.worldbank.org/en/country/iran/publication/economic-update-april-2022](http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/iran/publication/economic-update-april-2022).

<sup>110</sup> [www.jamran.news/fa/tiny/news-1558672](http://www.jamran.news/fa/tiny/news-1558672).

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>, para. 48.

respectively. The Secretary-General welcomes the submission in March 2022 of the State's voluntary midterm report under the universal periodic review.

## **B. Special procedures**

46. In March 2022, by its resolution 49/24, the Human Rights Council extended the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Secretary-General encourages the Government to pursue constructive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur and to invite him to visit the country. In May 2022, the Government received a country visit by the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights.

47. From 11 June 2021 to 27 July 2022, special procedures mandate holders issued 32 communications regarding the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Government replied to 22 communications. Twelve public statements were issued in the same period.

## **C. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights**

48. The Secretary-General welcomes the dialogue between the Government and OHCHR and its openness regarding a possible visit to the country and encourages the Government to continue and enhance its engagement with OHCHR in technical cooperation. In this context, OHCHR organized training for Iranian diplomats on international human rights mechanisms in November 2021. The Secretary-General welcomes the request of the Islamic Republic of Iran of May 2022 to OHCHR to establish a national recommendations tracking database. Additionally, on several occasions, the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and OHCHR raised concerns with the Government about the situation of child offenders at imminent risk of execution.

## **IV. Recommendations**

49. **The Secretary-General urges the Government:**

(a) **To abolish the death penalty and introduce an immediate moratorium on its use, and to prohibit the execution of child offenders in all circumstances and to commute their sentences;**

(b) **To undertake reforms to strengthen the right to a fair trial in line with international standards, inter alia by ensuring that all defendants, including those accused of crimes against national security, have effective access to meaningful legal representation, including by counsel of their choosing during the preliminary investigative stage and all subsequent stages of the judicial process;**

(c) **To release immediately all persons detained arbitrarily for legitimately exercising their rights to freedom of opinion and expression and of association and right of peaceful assembly, and to ensure that security measures in relation to protests are undertaken in line with international standards, including the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials;**

(d) **To ensure prompt, thorough, transparent and effective investigations by an independent and impartial body into the use of excessive and lethal force**



during protests, deaths in custody and reports of torture or other ill-treatment of persons in custody, and to prosecute and hold accountable public officials, including law enforcement officials found responsible for issuing or carrying out the relevant orders, and to contribute to truth, justice and reparations for victims;

(e) To guarantee the right to freedom of opinion and expression, to reconsider legislative measures that unduly limit freedom of opinion and expression, including the user protection bill, and to ensure that any limitation to the right to freedom of opinion and expression offline and online is in line with the established criteria for permissible restrictions under international human rights law;

(f) To ensure that human rights defenders, lawyers, media workers, writers, labour rights activists, artists and environmentalists can engage in their respective activities safely and freely, without fear of reprisal, harassment, arrest, detention or prosecution, to reverse the decision to dissolve the Imam Ali Popular Students Relief Society and allow it to operate without interference, to extend the categories of prisoners eligible for temporary release in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic to all detainees who pose no threat to public safety, and to provide public space for those peacefully calling for change and the fulfilment of their basic rights;

(g) To take further steps to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls, to implement effective measures to protect them from other human rights violations, in accordance with international standards, and to advance their equal participation in public life, including by:

(i) To prioritize the revision and adoption of the bill on “preserving the dignity and protection of women against violence” and ensure that the adopted law is in compliance with international standards;

(ii) To expand support services for survivors of domestic violence, in particular by providing legal advice and medical support and increasing the number of shelters, their capacity and accessibility;

(h) To revise the Youthful Population and Protection of the Family Law to bring it into line with international standards, and to strengthen rights to sexual and reproductive health, in particular for women and girls;

(i) To protect the rights of all persons belonging to national, ethnic and religious minorities, and to address all forms of discrimination against them without delay;

(j) To join the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organization.

50. Noting the economic and financial challenges experienced by the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Secretary-General reiterates his call on States that have imposed sanctions on it to take appropriate steps to ensure that measures such as humanitarian exemptions are given prompt, broad and practical effect in order to minimize the adverse consequences of the sanctions.

**51. Furthermore, the Secretary-General encourages the Government:**

**(a) To submit outstanding periodic reports to the United Nations human rights treaty bodies, to implement the recommendations of the treaty bodies and the special procedures mandate holders and to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including by accepting a country visit by the mandate holder;**

**(b) To continue to engage with OHCHR in following up on all the recommendations made in the reports of the Secretary-General and those of international human rights mechanisms.**

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