



*Mission Permanente
de la République Islamique d'Iran
auprès des Nations Unies
et des autres Organisations Internationales à Genève*

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

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The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and with reference to the latter's Communication No. AL IRN 37/2021 dated 26 January 2022 concerning **the water and environmental policies and situation in Khuzestan Province**, has the honor to transmit, herewith, the comment of the High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran in that regard.

The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 8 March 2022



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In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Comment

By

The High Council for Human Rights

Of the

Islamic Republic of Iran

Concerning the water and environmental policies and situation in

Khuzestan Province

With reference to communication received from the Special Procedures Mandate-Holders and allegations raised therein appertaining to demonstrations in Khuzestan Province against water scarcity, facts enumerated hereinunder are presented for any necessary action thereof:

The province in question has in recent years faced a shortage of water due to reduced rainfall and increased tendency of farmers to cultivate water crops such as rice, as well as rationing of dams, inflation, reduced financial power of farmers and ranchers to provide essential items as a result of the United States' illegal and inhumane unilateral coercive measures against the Iranian nations, have all together caused dissatisfaction among citizens and farmers and led to protests. The protests slid into violence in some cities of the province after provocations by certain media outlets affiliated to hostile and subversive groups, with certain people disturbing public order therein. Ultimately, the majority of the people who had legitimate demands parted ways with the rioters and subversive elements, spelling an end to the riots. The Special Procedures Mandate-Holders have claimed that the protests had spilled over in 41 cities of the Khuzestan Province, this is while there are less than 30 cities there.

Police exercised maximum restraint in response to riots by giving a non-violent response thereto. The police however were forced to brandish weapons, in full observance of the Law on the Use of Firearms, in response to terrorist-backed armed thugs who had sought to cause and fuel unrest by using combat and hunting arms as well as shotguns. Two law enforcement officers who had been targeted with firearms were martyred and nearly 60 others sustained injuries. It proves the presence of violent elements in the riots and their use of Molotov cocktails and a variety of assault and hunting rifles against legitimate protesters and law enforcement officers.

Be advised that during the riots and in response to violence perpetrated by the rioting minority, nine individuals, three of whom had criminal convictions, lost their lives during the armed conflict in the cities of Mahshahr, Shoush and Shadegan – contrary to allegations, no child has ever been killed.

During the riots, the rioters inflicted heavy damage upon public and private property in different cities of the province, most notably breaking car windows, setting shops ablaze, destroying ATMs, bridges, street lights, traffic signs, assaulting ordinary citizens and breaking into houses thereof. These are only a few examples of the extent of violence perpetrated by the rioters.

All arrests have been made upon order from the judicial authority – against, contrary to allegations, no child has ever been arrested; and, no arrest has been made in the city of Susangerd.

There is no evidence to support allegations made pertaining involuntary disappearance of those who were arrested due to non-citation. Restrictions placed on mobile networks in some cities were only temporary and in accordance with directive issued by the relevant authorities which was in fact in response to the unrest, insecurity made by the rioters and their destruction of public and private property.

Nevertheless, the principled policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in dealing with real protesters is to pursue the solution of problems and respond to demands thereof through legal means and to exercise restraint so as to fend off any abuse by riotous elements; therefore, allegations raised to that effect are devoid of any standing and rendered null and void.