

Mandates of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief

Ref.: AL IRN 27/2022
(Please use this reference in your reply)

14 December 2022

Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacities as Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 51/8, 45/3, 51/21, 49/24 and 49/5.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning **allegations of the recent increase in the systematic targeting of members of the Baha'i religious minority, including through arrest, summoning for interrogation and mistreatment at detention places.**

Concerns at the targeting of members of the Baha'i religious minority have been raised by Special Procedures mandate holders in several communications, including most recently on 12 August 2022 (IRN 15/2022). We regret that no response has been received to this communication. Allegations about violations of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of individuals belonging to the Baha'i religious minority have been raised by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran in his reports to the Human Rights Council and General Assembly and in several joint communications by Special Procedures, including on 21 February 2021 (AL IRN 4/2021); 29 May 2017 (IRN 18/2017); 22 July 2016 (IRN 21/2016); 3 June 2016 (IRN 15/2016); and on 19 February 2016 (IRN 5/2016). We thank your Excellency's Government for the responses sent to these communications, but remain concerned that the violations continue.

Concerns at the specific situation of Mr. Afif Naemi were raised in joint communications on 19 May 2008 (IRN 24/2008); 17 October 2008 (IRN 53/2008); 26 January 2009 (IRN 4/2009); 13 August 2010 (IRN 22/2010); 22 February 2011 (IRN 4/2011); 12 February 2021 (IRN 4/2021); and 12 August 2022 (IRN 15/2022). Concerns at the specific situation of Ms. Mahvash Sabet and Ms. Fariba Kamalabadi were raised in joint communications on 19 May 2008 (IRN 24/2008); 26 January 2009 (IRN 4/2009); 13 August 2019 (IRN 22/2010); and 22 February 2011 (IRN 4/2011); 12 August 2022 (IRN 15/2022).

According to the information received:

Further to property confiscations and forced displacement of a number of families belonging to the Baha'i religious minority in August 2022, the

persecution of members of the Baha'i religious minority has increased, including through arrest, enforced disappearances, summoning for interrogation and mistreatment at detention places.

Ms. **Mahvash Sabet**, Ms. **Fariba Kamalabadi** remain in detention since their arrest on 31 July 2022, as reflected in the joint communication on 12 August 2022 (IRN 15/2022). On the accusations of Ms. Sabet and Ms. Kamalabadi, the judicial authorities have stated that they have participated in and organized Baha'i gatherings. Ms. Mahvash Sabet and Ms. Fariba Kamalabadi were each sentenced to 10 years in prison after a one-hour trial session before branch 26 of the Islamic Revolution Court in Tehran on 21 November. Ms. Sabet and Ms. Kamalabadi have previously spent ten years in prison from 2008 to 2018.

On 18 October 2022, Mr. **Afif Naemi**, arrested on 31 July 2022 as reflected in the joint communication on 12 August 2022 (IRN 15/2022), was visited by his family in Karaj prison for the first time. On 13 December, Mr. Naemi was released from detention on bail.

Since September 2022 and in the backdrop of the ongoing protests in the Islamic Republic of Iran, more individuals belonging to the Baha'i religious minority have been arrested or summoned for interrogation, including Mr. **Payam Vali**, Ms. **Ayda Rasti Ghalati**, Mr. **Enayatollah Naimi**, Mr. **Naim Vahidian**, Mr. **Saman Khadem**, Ms. **Malika Malaki**, Ms. **Shaghayegh Bahrami**, Mr. **Shayan Gholami**, Mr. **Hami Bahadori**, Mr. **Milad Sanai**, and Mr. **Pouya Momtazi Sarraf**. Notably, some of them are victims of enforced disappearance. The geographic span of the judicial harassment is significant, with arrests and enforced disappearances taking place in various provinces, including Alborz, Fars, Isfahan, Kerman, Mazandaran, South Khorasan, and Tehran.

On 24 September 2022, Mr. **Payam Vali** was arrested in the province of Alborz. He remains detained in Ghezel Hesar prison in the province of Alborz. During the arrest, Mr. Vali was allegedly severely beaten by the officers, in particular on his head. As a result of the beatings, he had severe headaches, dizziness, and nausea during the first three days of his detention. His requests for being examined by a forensic doctor to record the injuries inflicted on him during the arrest were denied. Mr. Vali has been denied access to a lawyer and is under pressure to give a forced confession. He has been accused of "propaganda against the State through teaching the Bahá'í Faith", "propaganda against the Islamic Sharia" and "communicating and cooperating with foreign media through interviews and sending news of human rights violations and inciting people to create ongoing protests through cyberspace".

On 28 September 2022, Ms. **Ayda Rasti Ghalati** was arrested at her home in the city of Tehran, the province of Tehran. She remains detained in Gharchak prison. She has been denied family visits and was only able to contact her family through phone call. Her detention has been extended for 30 more days.

On 28 September 2022, Mr. **Enayatollah Naimi** was arrested in the city of Isfahan, the province of Isfahan. His house and workplace were searched and a number of his personal belongings were confiscated. On 14 November, Mr. Naimi was released on bail.

On 1 October 2022, Mr. **Naim Vahidian** was arrested by security forces around Enghelab Street in Tehran, the province of Tehran. He was transferred to an unknown location. He contacted his relatives two times, but his whereabouts and charges were unknown. The deprivation of liberty of an individual, followed by the concealment of his or her fate and whereabouts amounts to an enforced disappearance. On 14 November, Mr. Vahidian was released on bail.

On 13 October 2022, a number of armed security forces raided the house of Mr. **Saman Khadem** in the city of Shiraz, the province of Fars. The security forces searched his home and confiscated some of his personal belongings, including a laptop and a mobile phone. Mr. Khadem was transferred to an unknown location. He remains in detention.

On 18 October 2022, Ms. **Malika Malaki**, was stopped by security officers in the street in the city of Birjand, the province of South Khorasan. The officers showed her a warrant and went to her house and confiscated phones and laptops. After seven hours of interrogation, she was released without bail.

On 22 October 2022, at 9:00 pm Mr. **Hami Bahadori**, was arrested by security agents at his home in the city of Tehran. The security officials confiscated the personal belongings of Mr. Bahadori and his family members, including mobile phones, laptops, computers, books, cameras, and jewellery. After a few hours, during a short phone call, Mr. Bahadori informed his family about his transfer to Evin prison. However, in response to his family's follow-ups, the prison authorities stated that no one with his name or profile had been registered at Evin prison. Also in this case, it is noteworthy that the deprivation of liberty of an individual by State authorities, followed by the denial that such a deprivation of liberty took place or the concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the person concerned, amounts to an enforced disappearance.

On 24 October 2022, Ms. **Shaghayegh Bahrami** and her husband, Mr. **Shayan Gholami** were arrested in the city of Kerman, the province of Kerman. They were recently transferred from the detention centre of the Intelligence Department to Kerman prison. Mr. Gholami is reportedly accused of "assembly and collusion to act against national security" and "blasphemy", and Ms. Bahrami is accused of "propaganda against the State" and "activities against national security". On 18 November, Ms. Bahrami and Mr. Gholami were released on bail.

On 25 October 2022, Mr. **Milad Sanai**, was arrested outside his home in the city of Sari, the province of Mazandaran. He was transferred to an unknown location. Mr. Sanai is a photographer and videographer. The agents searched his home and confiscated some of his personal belongings, including his mobile phone and laptop. The agents stated the reason for his arrest was "involving in protesting on social media." On 23 November, Mr. Sanai was released on bail.

On 2 November 2022, Mr. **Pouya Momtazi Sarraf**, was arrested by the security forces in the city of Karaj, in the province of Alborz. The security

forces searched Mr. Sarraf's workplace and home and confiscated a number of his and his family's personal belongings, including computers. His fate and whereabouts and the reasons for his arrest were unknown. He was reportedly transferred to a detention place in the city of Shiraz, in the province of Fars.

We express serious concern at what appears to be an increase in systematic targeting of Iranians belonging to the Baha'i religious minority throughout the country, including through arrests enforced disappearance, and raids on their homes, and confiscation of their personal belongings. We are particularly concerned about the arrest, summoning and continued detention of the above-mentioned individuals, as well as the enforced disappearance of some of them. We are concerned at the use of ambiguously formulated accusations such "acting against national security" or "propaganda against the state" to systematically restrict the peaceful exercise of their rights. We are further concerned about the continued criminalization of freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression of members of the Baha'i religious minority by the Iranian authorities. The systematic nature of these violations represents a continuous pattern of targeted discrimination and persecution of this community and its members based on their religious affiliation.

In connection with the above alleged facts and concerns, please refer to the **Annex on Reference to international human rights law** attached to this letter which cites international human rights instruments and standards relevant to these allegations.

As it is our responsibility, under the mandates provided to us by the Human Rights Council, to seek to clarify all cases brought to our attention, we would be grateful for your observations on the following matters:

1. Please provide any additional information and any comment you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.
2. Please provide the factual and legal grounds for the arrest and detention all the individuals mentioned above, as well as updated information concerning their cases.
3. Please provide detailed information on the state of health of Ms. Mahvash Sabet, Ms. Fariba Kamalabadi, Mr. Payam Vali, Ms. Ayda Rasti Ghalati, Mr. Hami Bahadori, Mr. Saman Khadem, and Mr. Pouya Momtazi Sarraf as the type of health care provided to each one of them, and illustrate which measures have been adopted to ensure that each of them could communicate with their families and counsels and are brought before a judicial authority to assess the lawfulness of their deprivation of liberty and, where appropriate, order their immediate release.
4. Please provide information on the measures taken to ensure the rights to a fair trial and to effective legal representation of the individuals arrested, and how such measures are compatible with Iran's international human rights obligations.
5. Please provide detailed information and examples on how the national courts interpret the terms "acting against national security" and

“propaganda against the state”, when considering cases of minority religions and persons belonging to religious or belief minorities, and how these interpretations are compatible with the international norms and standards on freedom of religion or belief, freedom of expression, and freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

6. Please provide information on measures taken to ensure that Iranians belonging to the Baha’i faith are able to enjoy their right to freedom of religion or belief, including the right to manifest their religion in worship, observance, practice and teaching, and that they can enjoy security of tenure and property rights without discrimination in accordance with their rights under international law, and that as persons belonging to a religious minority they are not denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to profess and practise their own religion.

This communication and any response received from your Excellency’s Government will be made public via the communications reporting [website](#) within 60 days. They will also subsequently be made available in the usual report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

While awaiting a reply, we urge that all necessary interim measures be taken to halt the alleged violations and prevent their re-occurrence and in the event that the investigations support or suggest the allegations to be correct, to ensure the accountability of any person(s) responsible for the alleged violations.

We would like to inform your Excellency’s Government that after having transmitted the information contained in the present communication to the Government, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention may also transmit the case through its regular procedure in order to render an opinion on whether the deprivation of liberty was arbitrary or not. The present communication in no way prejudices any opinion the Working Group may render. The Government is required to respond separately to the allegation letter and the regular procedure.

We would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency’s Government that should sources submit the allegations concerning enforced disappearance for the consideration of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances under its humanitarian procedure, the case will be examined by the Working Group according to its methods of work, in which case your Excellency’s Government will be informed by separate correspondence.

We may publicly express our concerns in the near future as, in our view, the information upon which the press release will be based is sufficiently reliable to indicate a matter warranting immediate attention. We also believe that the wider public should be alerted to the potential implications of the above-mentioned allegations. The press release will indicate that we have been in contact with your Excellency’s Government’s to clarify the issue/s in question.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Mumba Malila
Vice-Chair of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention

Aua Baldé
Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances

Tlaleng Mofokeng
Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable
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Javaid Rehman
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran

Nazila Ghanea
Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief

Annex

Reference to international human rights law

In connection with the above alleged facts and concerns, we would like to draw the attention of your Excellency's Government to the relevant international norms and standards that are applicable to the issues brought forth by the situation above.

We would like to refer your Excellency's Government to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified by the Islamic Republic of Iran on 24 June 1975, and in particular articles 6, 7, 9, 10, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 26 and 27, read alone and in conjunction with article 2(3) which provide for the right to life, right to liberty and security of person, the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating their fundamental rights, privacy, freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, freedom of expression, freedom of association and peaceful assembly, the principle of non-discrimination, guarantees of humane treatment while in detention, the rights of persons belonging to minorities, right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law and the protection against arbitrary arrest or detention, and protection against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

We wish to recall that the prohibition of torture under article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is universally binding, absolute and may not be derogated under any circumstance, and it includes not only acts that cause physical pain, but also acts that cause mental suffering to the victim (see CCPR, General Comment No. 20, para. 5).

Moreover, we would like to refer to article 9 of the ICCPR enshrining the right to liberty and security of person and establishing in particular that no one shall be deprived of his or her liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedure as are established by law as well as the right to legal assistance from the moment of detention. Article 9 (4) also entitles anyone detained to challenge the legality of such detention before a judicial authority. In its General Comment No. 35, the Human Rights Committee has found that arrest or detention as punishment for the legitimate exercise of the rights as guaranteed by the Covenant is arbitrary, including freedom of opinion and expression (art. 19), freedom of assembly (art. 21), freedom of association (art. 22) and freedom of religion of belief (art. 18). It has also stated that arrest or detention on discriminatory grounds in violation of article 2, paragraph 1, article 3 or article 26 is also in principle arbitrary. Furthermore, article 14 upholds the right to a fair trial and equality of all persons before the courts and tribunals.

The right to religious practices and manifestations is provided by article 18 (1) of the ICCPR which stresses that "[e]veryone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom [...] either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching." General Comment No. 22 of the Human Rights Committee further explains that "[t]he freedom to manifest religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching encompasses a broad range of acts. The concept of worship extends to ritual and ceremonial acts giving direct expression to belief, as well as various practices integral to such acts, including the building of places of worship [...] the display of symbols [...] In addition, the practice and teaching of religion or belief includes acts integral to the

conduct by religious groups of their basic affairs, such as freedom to choose their religious leaders, priests and teachers, the freedom to establish seminaries or religious schools and the freedom to prepare and distribute religious texts or publications.” (CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.4, para. 4).

We draw your Excellency’s Government’s attention to the United Nations Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances, which establishes that no State shall practice, permit or tolerate enforced disappearances. The Declaration also proclaims that each State shall take effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent and terminate acts of enforced disappearance in any territory under its jurisdiction. We further recall that the Declaration sets out the necessary guarantees to be offered by the State and in particular, articles 7, 9 to 13 and 19 which relate to the rights to a prompt and effective judicial remedy to determine the whereabouts of persons deprived of their liberty; to access of competent national authorities to all places of detention; to be held in an officially recognized place of detention, and to be brought before a judicial authority promptly after detention; to accurate information on the detention of persons and their place of detention being made available to their family, counsel or other persons with a legitimate interest; to the maintenance in every place of detention of official up-to-date registers of all detained persons and to the right of victims to obtain redress and adequate compensation. Article 13 also stipulates that steps shall be taken to ensure that all involved in the investigation, including the complainant, relatives, counsel, witnesses and those conducting the investigation, are protected against ill-treatment, intimidation or reprisal. The Working Group also further draws your Excellency’s Government’s attention to its General Comment on Women affected by enforced disappearances (A/HRC/WGEID/98/2) to highlight in particular the gender perspective that increases their vulnerability and enhances State obligations to protect them with proper understanding and underscoring their needs.

In addition, we wish also to recall that while the manifestation of religion or belief may be restricted as per article 18(3) of the ICCPR, to protect public safety, order, health, morals and the fundamental rights and freedoms of others, any such limitation must fulfil a number of obligatory criteria of legality, proportionality and necessity, including being non-discriminatory in intent or effect and constitute the least restrictive measure.

We further refer to article 19 of the ICCPR, which guarantees the right of everyone to freedom of opinion and expression, which includes “freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice”.

In its General Comment No. 34 on the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the Human Rights Committee has found that restrictions of the right to freedom of opinion and expression that a government seeks to justify on grounds of national security and public order should adhere to the principles of necessity and proportionality, be designed and implemented in a way that respects the universality of human rights and the principle of non-discrimination, and should not be used to prosecute human rights defenders. With regard to the laws under which the victims have been prosecuted we would like to remind your Excellency’s Government of paragraph 25 where it is established that a norm, to be characterized as a “law”, must be formulated with sufficient precision to enable an individual to regulate his or her

conduct accordingly. A law may not confer unfettered discretion for the restriction of freedom of expression on those charged with its execution. Laws must provide sufficient guidance to those charged with their execution to enable them to ascertain what sorts of expression are properly restricted and what sorts are not (CCPR/C/GC/34).

We would also like to refer to Human Rights Council resolution 24/5 in which the Council “reminds States of their obligation to respect and fully protect the rights of all individuals to assemble peacefully and associate freely, online as well as offline, including in the context of elections and including persons espousing minority or dissenting views or beliefs, human rights defenders, trade unionists and others, including migrants, seeking to exercise or to promote these rights, and to take all necessary measures to ensure that any restrictions of the free exercise of the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association are in accordance with their obligations under international human rights law” (OP2, emphasis added).

We would like to respectfully remind your Excellency’s Government of the 1981 United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (A/RES/36/55), which states in its article 2 (1) that: “[n]o one shall be subject to discrimination by any State, institution, group of persons, or person on grounds of religion or other belief.” In article 4 (1), the General Assembly further states that: “[a]ll States shall take effective measures to prevent and eliminate discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the recognition, exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms [...]” Furthermore, we would like to refer your Excellency’s Government to article 4(2) according to which: “All States shall make all efforts to enact or rescind legislation where necessary to prohibit any such discrimination, and to take all appropriate measures to combat intolerance on the grounds of religion or other beliefs in this matter. According articles 6 (d) and (e), the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief includes also the freedom “to write, issue and disseminate relevant publications in these areas”, and the freedom “to teach a religion or belief in places suitable for these purposes”.

The Human Rights Committee in its General Comment No. 22, paragraph 2, raised concern over “any tendency to discriminate against any religion or belief for any reason, including the fact that they are newly established, or represent religious minorities that may be the subject of hostility on the part of a predominant religious community.”

We would like to recall that the General Assembly, in its resolution 63/181 paragraph 9 (j) urges States “[t]o ensure that all public officials and civil servants, including members of law enforcement bodies, the military and educators, in the course of fulfilling their official duties, respect all religions or beliefs and do not discriminate for reasons based on religion or belief, and that all necessary and appropriate education or training is provided.”

In addition, we would like to refer your Excellency’s Government to articles 12 and 2.2 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), ratified by Iran on 24 June 1975, which establishes that an obligation to respect the right to health by, inter alia, refraining from denying or limiting equal access for all persons, including prisoners or detainees to preventive, curative and palliative health services (Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

(CESCR), General Comment No. 14, para. 34). In addition, we would like to underline the Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 45/111, according to which prisoners should have access to health services available in the country without discrimination on the grounds of their legal situation (Principle 9).

Additionally, we would like to refer to the Mandela Rules, adopted unanimously by the UN General Assembly (A/RES/70/175), which recognize the responsibility of States to provide health care for prisoners, free of charge without discrimination (Rule 24), paying special attention to those with special healthcare needs or with health issues that hamper their rehabilitation (Rule 25) and indicate that prisoners requiring specialized treatment shall be transferred to specialized institutions or to civil hospitals (Rule 27). We wish to also remind Rule 46 that stresses that health-care personnel shall “pay particular attention to the health of prisoners held under any form of involuntary separation, including by visiting such prisoners on a daily basis and providing prompt medical assistance and treatment at the request of such prisoners or prison staff” and that “[h]ealth-care personnel shall report to the prison director, without delay, any adverse effect of disciplinary sanctions or other restrictive measures on the physical or mental health of a prisoner subjected to such sanctions or measures and shall advise the director if they consider it necessary to terminate or alter them for physical or mental health reasons”.

Moreover, we wish to refer to the report of the former Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, in which he makes reference to the fact that “[i]n contexts of confinement and deprivation of liberty, violations of the right to health interfere with fair trial guarantees, the prohibition of arbitrary detention and of torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and the enjoyment of the right to life” and that “[v]iolations of the right to health emerge as both causes and consequences of confinement and deprivation of liberty”.¹ He also stresses that “for the right to health to be enjoyed in detention centres, health-care facilities, goods and services must be available, accessible, acceptable and of good quality”.² In addition, the Special Rapporteur urges States to “[f]ully abide by, and implement, the Nelson Mandela Rules, in particular as regards the provision of health care in prisons”.³

Furthermore, article 27 of the ICCPR establishes that in those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities have the right, in community with the other members of their group, “to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language”.

We wish to refer to the 1992 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, adopted in General Assembly resolution 47/135, which refers to the obligation of States to protect the existence and the identity of minorities within their territories and to adopt measures to that end (article 1) as well as to adopt the required measures to ensure that persons belonging to minorities can exercise their human rights without discrimination (article 4). Article 2 further establishes that persons belonging to minorities have the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own

¹ Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, A/HRC/38/36, para. 18.

² *Ibid.* para. 34.

³ *Ibid.* para. 98 (a).

religion, and to use their own language, in private and in public, freely, without any interference or any form of discrimination and provides for the effective participation of minorities in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life, as well as in decision-making processes on matters affecting them.

Furthermore, we would like to draw your Excellency's Government's attention to the recommendations of the sixth session of the Forum on Minority Issues on "Guaranteeing the rights of religious minorities" (A/HRC/25/66) and in particular Recommendation 17, which calls on States to ensure that "there is no discriminatory treatment in regard to the legal and administrative recognition of all religious and belief groups. Any registration and administrative procedures, including those relating to the property and the functioning of places of worship and other religious-based institutions, should be conducted according to non-discrimination standards. International standards do not allow non-recognition of religious or belief groups to result in denial of their rights. Such standards require an inclusive approach to be taken".

Finally, in a recent report to the 75th session of the UN General Assembly on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the former Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief has expressed concerns about the criminalization of apostasy in Iran and he highlighted a number of cases in which states have used national security imperatives as the stated objective in criminalizing membership in and/or activities of certain religious or belief groups (A/75/385, paras 16 and 17).