

Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran; the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers and the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

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(Please use this reference in your reply)

14 April 2025

Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacity as Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran; Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers and Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 55/19, 51/8, 52/9, 50/17, 53/12 and 52/7.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning allegations of continued arbitrary detention and torture of **Ruhollah Khosravi**, a political prisoner.

According to the information received:

On 23 August 2023, armed plain-clothes security forces arrested Mr. Khosravi in Izeh, without an arrest warrant. The arrest took place in connection with the anniversary of the Woman, Life, Freedom movement. The security forces beat him during the arrest and placed a gun in his mouth, allegedly threatening to kill him if he did not comply.

The security forces took Mr. Khosravi to an Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) intelligence detention facility. He was detained there for 31 days, during which time he alleges he made false confessions under torture.

On 23 September 2023, Mr. Khosravi was transferred to Sheiban Prison in Ahvaz. He was first held in Ward 2 (where newly detained inmates are held), before being moved to Ward 8 of the prison (where religious minorities and political prisoners are reportedly held).

On 11 July 2024, Mr. Khosravi began a week-long dry hunger strike in solidarity with fellow political prisoners detained in connection with the Woman, Life, Freedom protests. The strike protested the prisoners' prolonged legal limbo in Sheiban Prison. As punishment for the protest, the prisoners were allegedly temporarily taken to solitary confinement, before being released back to the ward.

On 19 October 2024, Mr. Khosravi began another hunger strike to protest his prolonged detention without trial. Again, he was moved to solitary confinement for the duration of his strike and was subsequently returned to the ward.

In early November 2024, prison authorities reduced the number of phones available to inmates and removed several gas stoves used by prisoners to heat their food. Mr. Khosravi voiced his objections, he received death threats from prison officials and was placed in solitary confinement at Sheiban Prison. He was later transferred to solitary confinement at Sepidar Prison in Ahwaz. After almost 20 days in solitary confinement in Sepidar Prison, Khosravi contacted his family.

Mr. Khosravi was reportedly subjected to physical and psychological torture during the periods of solitary confinement, including beatings with a PVC pipe. He was also moved to Ward 1 of Sepidar Prison, a section designated for inmates convicted of serious offences, including violent crimes, rather than being held in a ward for political prisoners.

As of 20 December 2024, Mr. Khosravi is facing charges including propaganda against the system, disturbing public order, collaboration with groups hostile to the system, and rebellion.

Mr. Khosravi's case is under review in Branch 2 of the Ahwaz Revolutionary Court, Mr. Khosravi has reportedly not had access to an attorney since his arrest. Other sources indicate that the case is alternatively under review in an Izeh court.

On 22 January 2025, an audio file was published on social media platform X. It detailed Mr. Khosravi's account of his time in Sepidar Prison. On 28 January 2025, Mr. Khosravi was transferred to solitary confinement, as punishment for the publication of the audio file. This came a day after Mr. Khosravi was informed by officials of the Izeh Revolutionary Court and the Prosecutor of Branch 2 that he would also be charged with drug-related offences.

To date, Mr. Khosravi remains under temporary arrest and has not been formally charged. His lawyer has been denied access to his case files.

While we do not wish to prejudge the accuracy of these allegations, we express grave concern of Mr. Ruhollah Khosravi's wellbeing, his treatment during detention, and his alleged arbitrary arrest and detention.

We wish to remind your Excellency's Government that article 9 of the ICCPR guarantees the right not to be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention, and that the prohibition of arbitrary detention is absolute. We also recall that the arrest or detention of an individual as punishment for the legitimate exercise of the rights guaranteed by the ICCPR, including the right to freedom of expression and opinion (art. 19), the right of peaceful assembly (art. 20), and the right to freedom of association (art. 21) is arbitrary (see CCPR/C/GC/25, para. 17 and the jurisprudence of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention). In addition, as reiterated by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, a deprivation of liberty is arbitrary when it constitutes a violation of

international law on the grounds of discrimination, including discrimination based on gender or political or other opinion.

We would like to remind your Excellency's Government that restrictions on the right to freedom of expression must be compatible with the requirements set out in article 19(3), that is, they must be provided by law, pursue a legitimate aim, and be necessary and proportionate. The State has the burden of proof to demonstrate that any such restrictions are compatible with the Covenant. The Human Rights Committee held in CCPR/C/GC/34 that an attack on a person because of the exercise of his or her freedom of opinion or expression, including arbitrary arrest and torture, cannot be compatible with article 19.

Articles 7 and 10 of the ICCPR prohibits torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and requires that all persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with the inherent respect for human dignity of the human being, respectively. The absolute prohibition of torture is an international norm of jus cogens that is not subject to derogation under any circumstances, as reflected inter alia, in Human Rights Council resolution 25/13 and General Assembly resolution 68/156.

Moreover, paragraph 22 of Human Rights Council resolution A/HRC/RES/46/15 "*Stresses* that States must ensure that no statement or evidence that is established to have been obtained as a result of torture is invoked as evidence in any proceedings, except against a person accused of torture as evidence that the statement or evidence was obtained, urges States to extend that prohibition to statements or evidence obtained as a result of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and recognizes that adequate corroboration of statements, including confessions, used as evidence in any proceedings constitutes one safeguard for the prevention of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (see also reports of Special Rapporteurs on torture A/HRC/52/30 and A/HRC/25/60).

We are especially concerned about the various periods of subjecting Mr. Khosravi to solitary confinement, including one period of 20 days which is beyond the maximum permissible pursuant to the United Nations' Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, which specifies that 15 consecutive days of solitary confinement is automatically considered torture in violation of international law (rule 44). The allegations would also be in breach of the guarantees of a fair trial, provided by article 14 of the ICCPR, which sets out a general guarantee of equality before courts and tribunals and the right of every person to a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal established by law. Article 14 of the ICCPR provides a set of procedural guarantees that must be made available to persons charged with a criminal offence, including the right of accused persons to have access to, and communicate with, counsel of their own choosing. Moreover, these guarantees provide that lawyers are entitled to perform their professional functions without any threat, intimidation, harassment or interference, and without suffering, or being threatened with, prosecution or any administrative or disciplinary sanctions for actions undertaken in accordance with professional duties and ethical standards.

Finally, we note that Mr. Khosravi may be facing charges that are punishable by death in the Islamic Republic of Iran, if convicted. We would like to remind your

Excellency's Government that the imposition of the death sentence for broadly defined national security charges would not amount under international law to the required threshold of the most serious crimes. We reiterate that retentionist States are required under article 6 of the ICCPR to abide by the strict application of the death penalty to the "most serious crimes", meaning intentional killing. We also recall the requirement set out by the Human Rights Committee to "revoke death sentences issued for crimes not qualifying as the most serious crimes and pursue the necessary legal procedures to resentence those convicted for such crimes" (general comment No. of the Human Rights Committee (HRC), para. 35).

The full texts of the human rights instruments and standards recalled above are available on www.ohchr.org or can be provided upon request.

In view of the urgency of the matter, we would appreciate a response as soon as possible on the initial steps taken by your Excellency's Government to safeguard the rights of the above-mentioned person in compliance with international instruments.

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 also 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. What measures have been taken to investigate the allegations of torture including those of solitary confinement beyond the maximum period permissible in international law, against Mr. Khosravi during his detention at the IRGC intelligence facility and in Sepidar Prison, and how does your Excellency's Government ensure that any confessions obtained under alleged torture are not used as evidence in legal proceedings against him?
3. Please explain why Mr. Khosravi has been held without formal charges since August 2023, why his lawyer has been denied access to case files, and how these circumstances align with the fair trial guarantees under article 14 of the ICCPR?
4. Given that Mr. Khosravi may be facing charges related to national security that could potentially carry the death penalty, how does your Excellency's Government ensure that any such charges meet the 'most serious crimes' threshold required by article 6 of the ICCPR, particularly in light of allegations that the charges may be in response to his exercise of freedom of expression?
5. Please indicate what steps have been taken by Iran to ratify or accede to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

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 responsible of the alleged violations.

Further, 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 present communication and the regular procedure.

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

Mai Sato

Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran

Ganna Yudkivska

Vice-Chair on Communications of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention

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