

**Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment**

Ref.: UA IRN 4/2025  
(Please use this reference in your reply)

9 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 and Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 55/19 and 52/7.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning an imminent risk of amputation of Mr. **Hadi Rostami**, Mr. **Mehdi Sharfian**, and Mr. **Mehdi Shahivand**.

We would like to note that concerns have been raised regarding the application of corporal punishment in previous communications on 28 June 2013 (IRN 9/2013), 20 August 2015 (IRN 14/2015) and 19 April 2017 (IRN 15/2017). In particular, the cases of Mr. Rostami, Mr. Sharafian and Mr. Shahivand were raised in a previous communication on 8 October 2020 (IRN 24/2020) and 13 June 2022 (UA IRN 13/2022). We thank your Excellency's Government's letter dated 16 December 2020 in response to the first communication and regret that no further response was received to the second communication sent in relation to this case.

According to the information received:

In August 2017, Mr. Rostami, Mr. Shahivand and Mr. Sharafian were arrested on charges of theft and detained in Orumiyeh Central Prison in West Azerbaijan Province.

While detained at the Orumiyeh Criminal Investigation Department, they were allegedly subjected to severe torture including beatings, kicks, cable flogging, and being hung by their wrists and feet during interrogations resulting in injuries. They were allegedly coerced into signing blank papers and denied legal representation during investigation.

On 19 November 2019, the Criminal Court One of West Azerbaijan tried all three men in a joint case and sentenced them to amputation of four fingers each from their right hands, only to leave their palm of their hands and thumbs, in accordance with article 278 of the Islamic Penal Code.

The convictions were based on confessions the men claimed were extracted through torture; furthermore, the men retracted these confessions during trial.

On 10 May 2020, despite allegations of torture, Branch 13 of the Supreme Court upheld the verdict without initiating investigations. Since their conviction, the

men have staged several hunger strikes in prison to protest the inhumane prison conditions and the ongoing threat of amputation sentences.

In February 2021, the authorities allegedly flogged Mr. Rostami 60 times for “disrupting prison order” in reprisal for his hunger strikes. Mr. Rostami has also attempted suicide several times resulting in severe health complications to which he was denied medical attention.

The three men have endured significant mental anguish while waiting for the execution of their amputation sentences for years. They have reported being unable to sleep or eat, living in constant anxiety over the impending enforcement of their sentences.

On 13 March 2025, the three men were reportedly summoned to the Enforcement of Judgements Office of Orumiyeh Central Prison where they were formally informed by Deputy Prosecutor that their amputation sentences would be executed as early as 11 April, unless they obtain the consent not to execute the amputation sentence from the theft victims in their case. Since 1979, the Islamic Republic of Iran has reportedly carried out amputation sentences in various cases, particularly for theft. However, no official data is available on the number of such sentences carried out. At present, we have received information that several other prisoners, detained in Orumiyeh Central Prison, are also under the sentence of amputation for theft. Similarly, in October 2024, two individuals reportedly had four fingers each amputated from their right hands in Orumiyeh Central Prison, using a guillotine device.

While we do not wish to prejudge the accuracy of information made available to us, we continue to urge for an imminent amendment to the penal code to abolish judicial and administrative corporal punishments. We would like to express grave concern for the physical integrity and mental health of Mr. Rostami, Mr. Sharfian, and Mr. Shahivand and for their imminent risk of amputation. We are also concerned that the majority of those subjected to such punishments reportedly come from disadvantaged and marginalized communities. If exercised, their mutilation would significantly impact their ability to work and support themselves, further limiting their opportunities, especially in a society where individuals with disabilities often face discrimination.

We would like to remind your Excellency's Government that corporal punishments, such as amputation, violate the absolute and non-derogable prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, as codified, inter alia, in article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which Iran ratified on 24 June 1975. The ICCPR states that “no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”. The Human Rights Committee has also called for the abolition of judicial corporal punishment, in paragraph 5 of general comment No. 20 (1992). The Committee stated that the prohibition of torture and ill-treatment extends to corporal punishment, including excessive chastisement ordered as punishment for a crime as an educative or disciplinary measure. Furthermore, in paragraph 7a of resolution 8/8 of the Human Rights Council reminded Governments that corporal punishment, can amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment or even to torture.

We would further like to draw your Excellency's Government's attention to the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture to the 60th session of the General Assembly (2005), in which he concluded, with reference to the jurisprudence of UN treaty bodies, that any form of corporal punishment is contrary to the prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The Rapporteur also noted that States cannot invoke provisions of domestic law to justify violations of their human rights obligations under international law, including the prohibition of corporal punishment and called upon States to abolish all forms of judicial and administrative corporal punishment without delay (para. 28, A/60/316, 2005). This position has been reiterated in the 2012 report to the General Assembly of the Special Rapporteur on Torture (para. 28, A/67/279, 2012). On this, see also the report of the Special Rapporteur on Torture to the General Assembly (para. 29, A/77/502, 2022 and references therein to Questions relating to the Obligation to Prosecute or Extradite (*Belgium v. Senegal*), Judgment, I.C.J. Reports 2012, p. 422, para. 99).

Further concerns are expressed at the allegations of torture to extract confession, and the courts' failure to order investigation into such allegations and to exclude forced confessions as evidence. In this regard, we would like to remind your Excellency's Government of its duty to ensure that complaints of torture are promptly and impartially investigated by competent authorities. We recall article 7 of the ICCPR which refers to the absolute prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and stress that, attached to such prohibition are obligations to criminalize and investigate all acts of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, to prosecute suspects, to punish those responsible and to provide remedies to victims (see Report of the Special Rapporteur on Torture A/HRC/52/30). We would also like to highlight that the deprivation of fundamental safeguards, if confirmed, would contravene international standards of fair trials and due process, in particular article 9 of the ICCPR.

The full texts of the human rights instruments and standards recalled above are available on [www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org) or can be provided upon request.

In view of the urgency of the matter, we would appreciate a response on the initial steps taken by your Excellency's Government to safeguard the rights of the above-mentioned persons 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 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 address allegations of torture, including the use of forced confessions obtained under duress? If no actions have been taken, please explain why.
3. Kindly provide data on the number of amputation sentences passed and those that have been carried out in the Islamic Republic of Iran since

January 2025.

4. What measures have been taken to ensure that the three men above receive due process and fair trial guarantees, including effective access to legal assistance as mandated by international human rights law?
5. Can you provide details on any investigations conducted or planned into the allegations of forced confessions concerning the three men? If no investigations have occurred or have been inconclusive, please explain why.
6. What measures have your Excellency's Government taken to ratify the Convention Against Torture?

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.

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.

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

Alice Jill Edwards  
Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment