

**Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran; the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; the Special Rapporteur on minority issues and the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment**

Ref.: AL IRN 7/2025  
(Please use this reference in your reply)

28 May 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 Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; Special Rapporteur on minority issues and Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 55/19, 54/14, 53/4, 52/5 and 52/7.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning the reported execution of Mr. Hamid Hosseinnzhad Heidararlou, an Iranian political prisoner of Kurdish ethnicity from the town of Chaldoran, West Azerbaijan Province. We are gravely alarmed by reports and allegations of serious violations of international human rights law in connection with his arrest, trial, execution, and the refusal to return his remains to his family.

According to the information received:

On 13 April 2023 Mr. Hamid Hosseinnzhad Heidararlou, was arrested and detained for 11 months and 10 days at a Ministry of Intelligence facility in Urmia. During this time, he was allegedly subjected to severe physical and psychological torture aimed at coercing a false confession regarding alleged involvement in an armed clash between Kurdish militants and Iranian border forces, which resulted in the deaths of eight border guards. He was reportedly denied access to legal counsel, family visits, medical care, and interpretation during interrogations, despite being illiterate and primarily Kurdish-speaking.

He stated that he was compelled to stamp his fingerprints on interrogation documents, despite being unable to read them due to his illiteracy and limited proficiency in Farsi. Moreover, the interrogation team reportedly failed to explain the contents of the documents he was coerced into endorsing.

In July 2024, he was sentenced to the death penalty on charges of *baghi* (armed rebellion against the foundations of the Islamic Republic of Iran), based on alleged cooperation with an armed militant group in 2017.

Reports indicate that Mr. Heidararlou had multiple solid alibis for the date of the alleged clash. His passport records and phone data confirm he was in Türkiye at the time of the alleged offence and he was reportedly with his family.

Despite Mr. Heidaraniou's repeated requests during trial for security camera footage from the Iran-Türkiye border to be reviewed, these requests were allegedly denied.

Mr. Heidaraniou was reportedly convicted in a trial lasting only a few minutes at the Islamic Revolutionary Court in Urmia, and the conviction was upheld by Branch 9 of Iran's Supreme Court.

On the night of 17 April 2025 heavy security forces and an ambulance were reportedly deployed at Urmia Central Prison. The next morning, prison officials claimed the execution had been suspended and that the prisoner had been transferred.

On 21 April 2025, the family of Mr. Heidaraniou was reportedly informed about the execution and told that his body had been buried in a "safe place". Their request to have his body returned was denied, as was their subsequent appeal to be informed of the burial location. Officials also reportedly warned that further inquiries would result in 'legal consequences'. That same week, a family member was summoned by security forces in Chaldoran, compounding the family's distress. Two weeks later, the family was given a death certificate issued by the civil registration office of the city of Chaldoran. The certificate was issued on 5 May 2025 and stated that the execution had taken place on 20 April 2025.

To date, the family does not know the location of Mr. Heidaraniou's remains, depriving them the opportunity to mourn or bury him according to their religious beliefs and cultural traditions.

While we do not wish to prejudge the accuracy of these allegations, we remind the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran of its obligations under article 6(2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified by your Excellency's Government in June 1975, which restricts the use of the death penalty to the "most serious crimes," interpreted by the Human Rights Committee as limited to intentional killing. The allegations against Mr. Heidaraniou do not appear to meet this threshold. Further, the reported violations of Mr. Heidaraniou's fundamental right to a fair trial, if accurate, are deeply concerning and render his execution arbitrary.

We also recall articles 7 and 10 of the ICCPR, which prohibit torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, and require all detainees to be treated with dignity, including during interrogation/interviews. The refusal to return Mr. Heidaraniou's body or disclose the burial site constitutes a continuing violation and denies his family their right to know the truth.

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 legal and evidentiary basis for Mr. Heidaraniou's conviction and execution, particularly in light of the documented alibi, and clarify why requests to review border security footage were reportedly denied.
3. Please address allegations of an unfair trial, torture and/or other ill-treatment, denial of legal counsel and interpreter assistance during legal proceedings and the lack of transparency surrounding the execution process.
4. Please clarify the exact date of Mr. Heidaraniou's execution and the precise location of his remains.
5. Please explain why Mr. Heidaraniou's family have been denied the return of his remains and the measures that your Excellency's Government plans to adopt to return the remains to the family, so that they can perform their burial rituals.
6. Please provide details on the steps taken to ensure the rights of his family to truth, justice, and a dignified burial.

We urge your Excellency's Government to disclose without delay the location of Mr. Heidaraniou's remains and to ensure their return to his family.

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 would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government that should sources submit the allegations concerning individual cases of enforced disappearances 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.

Mai Sato

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

Gabriella Citroni

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

Morris Tidball-Binz

Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions

Nicolas Levrat

Special Rapporteur on minority issues

Alice Jill Edwards

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

## Annex

### Reference to international human rights law

In connection with above alleged facts and concerns, we would like to refer your Excellency's Government to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR or "the Covenant"), ratified by the Islamic Republic of Iran on 24 June 1975, including the right to life under article 6, to liberty and security of person under article 9. article 6(2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified by your Excellency's Government in June 1975, which restricts the use of the death penalty to the "most serious crimes," interpreted by the Human Rights Committee as limited to intentional killing.

Under article 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and articles 14 and 7 of the ICCPR, all individuals are entitled to a fair and public hearing, the presumption of innocence, and certain minimum guarantees. These include the right to be promptly informed of the charges in a language they understand to be represented by legal counsel of their choosing and to receive legal aid if necessary; to examine witnesses against them and to the free assistance of an interpreter if required.

In addition, paragraph 4 of the [United Nations Safeguards Protecting the Rights of those Facing the Death Penalty](#), provides that capital punishment may be imposed only when the guilt of the person charged is based upon clear and convincing evidence leaving no room for an alternative explanation of the facts.

Article 20 of the UDHR and article 19(2) of the ICCPR affirm the right to seek and receive information – integral to victims' right to truth.<sup>1</sup> and the 2016 Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death affirms the right of families to know the cause, manner, and location of potentially unlawful deaths. Further, principle 2 of the Updated Principles on Impunity underscores that the right to the truth is a safeguard against recurrence. The Human Rights Committee has established clear jurisprudence affirming the right to truth for the next of kin. It holds that the victim's family – particularly in cases where the individual is presumed to have been executed – possesses specific rights, including the right to know the circumstances of [a kin's] death. These rights, in fact, transcend even *ratione temporis* restrictions to the competence of international human rights mechanisms.<sup>2</sup> We also make reference to the Working Group on enforced or involuntary disappearance's General comment on the Right to the Truth in Relation to Enforced Disappearances (A/HRC/16/48), which elaborates that the right to the truth about the fate and whereabouts, includes, when the disappeared person is found to be dead, the right of the family to have the remains of their loved one returned to them, and to dispose of those remains according to their own tradition, religion or culture. The General Comment reiterated that the State, or any other authority, should not undertake the process of identification of the remains, and should not dispose of those remains, without the full participation of the family and without fully informing the general public of such measures (para. 6).

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations General Assembly, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran*, A/79/371, 26 September 2024, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/79/371>.

<sup>2</sup> *Quinteros v. Uruguay*, Communication No. 107/1981, UN Doc CCPR/C/OP/2 at 138 (1990), para. 14. (emphasis added).

The Human Rights Committee has also affirmed that failure to return the remains amounts to a violation of article 7 and 17 of the ICCPR, read in conjunction with its article 2(3) with regard to the executed person, as established in *Shedko and Bondarenko v. Belarus* (CCPR/C/77/D/886/1999) and *Mandic v. Bosnia and Herzegovina* (CCPR/C/115/D/2064/2011). Furthermore, denying families access to the remains of their loved ones inflicts prolonged psychological suffering, obstructs burial rites, and may itself constitute cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, a point reiterated by the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions in his report.<sup>3</sup>

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.

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<sup>3</sup> United Nations General Assembly, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions*, A/77/270, 5 August 2022, paras. 85-86 <https://docs.un.org/en/A/77/270>.