

Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran; the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan; the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers; the Special Rapporteur on minority issues; the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief; the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls

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(Please use this reference in your reply)

3 July 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; Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan; Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers; Special Rapporteur on minority issues; Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief; Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 55/19, 54/1, 54/14, 53/4, 52/9, 52/4, 53/12, 52/5, 58/5, 52/7 and 50/18.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning serious serious human rights violations following hostilities since 13 June 2025 and after the ceasefire. Notwithstanding the impact of the military attacks on Iran raised in recent communications to the United States of America (USA 20/2025) and Israel (ISR 16/2025) these recent violations merit urgent attention by the Government of your Excellency.

According to the information received:

Since 13 June 2025, six men have reportedly been executed on charges of 'espionage for Israel', including three Kurdish men one of whom was an Iraqi national. Two of the executed individuals had originally been arrested between 2023 and 2024 on charges of smuggling alcoholic beverages but then allegedly forced to confess to espionage for Israel; one was arrested on the charges of allegedly assassinating an Iranian nuclear scientist.

Among the prisoners facing the death penalty allegedly for espionage is Swedish-Iranian specialist in emergency medicine, Ahmadreza Djalali. He has been detained since 2016 and reportedly tortured and ill-treated during his detention, including through solitary confinement, to illicit a confession (IRN 8/2025, IRN 9/2022; IRN 13/2020; IRN 6/2020; IRN 12/20019; IRN 7/2019; IRN 30/2017; IRN 7/2017). He has reportedly been transferred to

an unknown location which may indicate the imminent imposition of the death penalty.

Among those arrested include blogger and human rights defender, Hossein Ronaghi (IRN 24/2022, IRN 7/2016, IRN 9/2014, IRN 15/2013, IRN 12/2012), and his brother Hassan Ronaghi arrested on 24 June 2025. Furthermore, the arrests reportedly include social media users, journalists, human rights defenders, foreign nationals, in particular Afghans, and members of ethnic and religious minorities such as Baha'is, Kurds, Balouchis and Ahwazi Arabs – all of whom are facing intensified risk of being scapegoated at this time of heightened political pressure.

Since 13 June 2025, reports indicate that access to the internet had been severely restricted, significantly impeding citizens' ability to access information. Furthermore, individuals have reportedly received text messages from the crime prevention unit of the judiciary Islamic Republic of Iran warning that following or joining social media pages affiliated with Israel constitutes a criminal offense and may lead to prosecution. These measures have further heightened fears among the population of potential reprisals for online expression.

This has been concurrent with a sharp increase in reported hate speech within Persian social media and in Arabic media linked to the Islamic Republic of Iran, accusing whole minority communities of being traitors, using dehumanising language such as 'filthy rats', and implicating them in the hostilities. Such speech has reportedly called for the surveillance of Baha'is, linked this with the mass executions of the 'summer of 67', and even called for their massacre.

On 15 June 2025, the Head of Iran's Judiciary reportedly instructed prosecutors to pursue quick proceedings against those accused of collaboration with Israel. This position has been reflected in official State media, notably the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), which on 24 June 2025 asserted that judicial procedures were 'not necessary in times of war'.

Iran's Parliament has advanced a bill that would classify any intelligence or espionage activity for Israel or 'hostile governments', including the United States of America as 'corruption on earth (efsad fel-arz)'. The bill makes such acts punishable by death under article 286 of the Islamic Penal Code. The bill expands the scope of the death penalty by criminalising a broad range of activities, including political, cultural, media, and economic actions that support, reinforce, legitimise, or strengthen Israel. Particularly alarming is article 4(d), which criminalises sending videos or images to foreign networks that could result in 'public demoralisation' or 'division'.

These directives and measures, in conjunction with the increasing number of arrests and executions since 13 June, have contributed to growing alarm – particularly among the families of detainees and minorities, and migrant communities including Afghans residing in Iran.

More than 5 million Afghans in Iran are in a particular vulnerable situation as many of them are undocumented and fled from human rights violations in their

home country. The hostilities between Israel and Iran have also reportedly exacerbated the returns and deportations to Afghanistan, which take place in adverse circumstances and amid refoolment concerns. In June alone, 256.000 Afghans returned from Iran.¹

On 23 June 2025, Iranian authorities have reportedly transferred 170-180 prisoners in Ward 4 of Evin prison, following the Israeli attacks on its facilities. The prisoners were moved to the Great Tehran Penitentiary (known as Fashafouyeh). Many prisoners are reportedly sleeping on the floor due to overcrowding and shortage of beds with insufficient bathrooms and sanitary facilities, insect infestation, and poor quality of water. At least 70 women prisoners from Evin were reportedly transferred to Qarchak Prison in Varamin, Tehran Province. The transfer was allegedly conducted without allowing prisoners to take personal belongings or medicines. Reportedly, they also face overcrowding, extremely poor sanitary conditions, inadequate access to clean drinking water, insufficient food and beds, and reduced telephone access to their families. It has also been reported that a number of children, under the age of four, are present in the facility with their mothers under similarly deteriorating conditions. The fate and whereabouts of some of the detainees of Evin's ward 209, 240, 2-A and 241, administered by the Ministry of Intelligence and the Judiciary's Intelligence Protection Unit, are reportedly unknown.

While we do not wish to prejudge the accuracy of these allegations, we express grave concern about the reported imminent risk of execution faced by a number of individuals, including human rights defenders, who were arrested on accusations of espionage, particularly considering serious procedural, evidentiary, and legal irregularities. We are further concerned that the case proceedings to date do not appear to meet international standards for fair trial and due process, particularly those enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which the Islamic Republic of Iran ratified in 1975 and when it pertains to children, the CRC, which the Islamic Republic of Iran ratified in 1994.

In particular, article 6,7,9,10, and 14 of the of ICCPR which respectively restricts the death penalty to only the 'most serious crimes' defined as intentional killing, prohibits torture, prohibits arbitrary detention, requires humane treatment of all persons deprived of liberty, and enshrine the right to a fair trial and due process that respects the minimum guarantees provided by international law as well as before an independent and impartial tribunal established by the law.

We are also concerned about the reported severe restrictions on access to the Internet, which seriously hinder the right to access information, protected under article 17 on the right to privacy and article 19(2) ICCPR. The measures taken in this regard do not seem to meet the conditions of necessity and proportionality required for any such restrictions under article 19(3) ICCPR. Article 19 of the ICCPR protects freedom of expression and information, includes the right "to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media". This right applies online as well as offline, protects the

¹ <https://www.iom.int/news/record-256000-afghan-migrants-return-iran-iom-warns-dire-funding-shortfall> and <https://www.unhcr.org/news/press-releases/unhcr-sees-sharp-increase-afghan-returns-adverse-circumstances-iran-afghanistan> <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/clyzzxk5p38o>

freedom of the press as one of its core elements and includes not only the exchange of information that is favourable, but also that which may criticize, shock, or offend. The Human Rights Committee stated that States parties to the ICCPR are required to guarantee the right to freedom of expression, including “political discourse, commentary on one's own and on public affairs, canvassing, discussion of human rights, journalism, cultural and artistic expression, teaching, and religious discourse” (CCPR/C/GC/34, para. 11). The Committee further asserts that there is a duty of States to put in place effective measures to protect against attacks aimed at silencing those exercising their right to freedom of expression (para. 23). Any attack against a person on account of their exercise of this right is contrary to article 19 and a breach of the ICCPR. Any restriction to this right must be provided by law; pursue one of the legitimate aims for restriction, which are the respect of the rights or reputations of others and the protection of national security or of public order (*ordre public*), or of public health or morals; and be necessary and proportionate for those objectives.

We further recall that the absolute prohibition of enforced disappearance is a norm of jus cogens and we emphasise that, pursuant to article 7 of the 1992 Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances, no circumstances whatsoever, whether a threat of war, a state of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked to justify enforced disappearances. Moreover, we recall articles 9 to 12 of the Declaration 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; and to the maintenance in every place of detention of official up-to-date registers of all detained persons.

Furthermore, the treatment of prisoners transferred from Evin Prison to overcrowded prisons with poor living conditions and without access to required medication constitutes violations of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (“the Nelson Mandela Rules”). In particular, rule 1 of the Nelson Mandela Rules provides that all prisoners shall be treated with the respect due to their inherent dignity and value as human beings. Further, in accordance with rule 24(f), the provision of health care for prisoners is a State’s responsibility, free of charge, without discrimination and at the same level as the health care services provided in the community. Rule 58 further requires that prisoners shall be able to communicate with family members at regular intervals by correspondence and receiving visits; while rule 59 mandates that prisoners should, to the extent possible, be accommodated close to their homes. We further recall that the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders (“Bangkok Rules”), which establish that women prisoners’ contact with their families and legal representatives “shall be encouraged and facilitated by all reasonable means” (rule 26). Rule 4 also specifies that female prisoners shall be allocated, as far as possible, close to their homes to be able to maintain family relations.

Additionally, the disproportionate impact of the above measures in particular the recent arrests on ethnic and religious minorities, as well as Afghan refugees may be in violation article 2 of the ICCPR and article 2 of the International Convention on the

Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination ratified by the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1968, which prohibit discrimination and guarantee equal protection under the law regardless of race, religion and belief, or national origin.

Finally, we would like to refer to the fundamental principles set forth in the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, also known as the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. In particular, we would like to refer to articles 1 and 2 of the Declaration, which state that everyone has the right to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels and that each State has a prime responsibility and duty to protect, promote and implement all human rights and fundamental freedoms

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 on the initial steps taken by your Excellency's Government to safeguard the rights of the above-mentioned person(s) 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. Please provide the number, nationalities and identities of individuals detained since 13 June 2025 on accusations of collaboration or espionage with Israel, their place of detention and the number of individuals charged with, or sentenced to, capital punishment for such accusations.
3. Please indicate the legal grounds for the parliamentary bill on espionage and elaborate how the bill aligns with international human rights standards relating to due process and fair trial and the right to life.
4. Please provide information on the fate and whereabouts and the state of health of the detainees of Evin's ward 209, 240, 2-A and 241, ran by the Ministry of Intelligence and the Judiciary's Intelligence Protection Unit.
5. Please provide information about the measures taken to ensure that the treatment of prisoners, who were moved from Evin Prison to the Great Tehran Penitentiary and Gharchak prisons, comply with international standards on treatment of prisoners (the Mandela Rules). Please provide information assuring that their families have been notified of their new locations.

6. Please provide information about measures to prevent torture and other ill-treatment of people taken into custody on espionage or related charges, and investigations into above-mentioned allegations of torture or other ill-treatment.
7. Please clarify the legal grounds to prohibit or minimise the use of social media by the people of Iran and explain how such measures comply with articles 17 and 19 of the ICCPR protecting the rights to privacy and freedom of expression.
8. Please provide information on measures adopted by your Excellency's Government to ensure a safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders in the Islamic Republic of Iran, to carry out their legitimate and peaceful human rights activities.
9. Please clarify why ethnic and religious minorities and Afghan nationals seem to be disproportionately impacted by the arrests and provide information on action taken to prevent discrimination towards these groups.

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, staying all executions of those sentenced to death on charges of 'espionage for Israel' and to prevent any irreparable harm to the life and personal integrity of all persons currently deprived of their liberty on similar or related charges, 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 to clarify the issue/s in question.

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

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