

Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues; the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran; the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief and the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

Ref.: UA IRN 4/2026
(Please use this reference in your reply)

13 April 2026

Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacity as Special Rapporteur on minority issues; Working Group on Arbitrary Detention; Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran; Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief and Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 52/5, 60/8, 54/14, 58/21, 58/5 and 52/7.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received regarding **allegations of the arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance, torture and/or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, extraction of false confessions, and detention of members of the Bahá'í religious minority, including Mr. Peyvand Naimi and Mr. Borna Naimi, whose lives are reportedly in imminent danger.**

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 31 July 2024 (IRN 14/2024). 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 reports to the Human Rights Council and General Assembly and in several joint communications by Special Procedures, including on 14 December 2022 (IRN 27/2022); 15 August 2022 (IRN 15/2022); 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); 30 May 2016 (IRN 14/2016) 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.

According to the information received:

Members of the Bahá'í community are increasingly being scapegoated in Iran, including through State media narratives and an accompanying surge in acts of persecution. Multiple programmes broadcasted on Channel 2 State television have allegedly disseminated false and inflammatory accusations against the Bahá'í community. These broadcasts have reportedly included forced confessions obtained from Bahá'ís in detention. For example, on 1 February 2026, forced confessions of Mr. Peyvand Naimi, a Baha'i, were broadcasted by

the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), the regime's principal State media outlet. At the same time, reports indicate a sharp increase in arrests and detentions of Bahá'ís across the country, suggesting a coordinated campaign of intimidation and persecution. There are reportedly more than 50 Baha'ís currently incarcerated in various prisons across the country. At the same time, during the current context of war, large numbers of prisoners have been released, sent on temporary leave, or granted furlough under judicial supervision – except for numerous Baha'i prisoners.

Case of Mr. Payam Vali

As brought to your attention in IRN 27/2022, on 24 September 2022, Mr. Payam Vali, a Bahá'í residing in Karaj, was arrested and beaten by eight agents of the Ministry of Intelligence at his workplace in Karaj. The charges brought against Mr. Vali include “propaganda against the regime through the propagation of the Bahá'í Faith”, “propaganda against sacred Islamic Sharia”, “communication and association with foreign media through interviews and sending news of human rights violations and inciting people to create ongoing protests through the internet”. Mr. Vali was first imprisoned in Karaj Central Prison and was later put in detention in Ghezel Hesar Prison in Karaj without due process. He was initially sentenced to 16 years in prison, a sentence later reduced to six years upon appeal. In July 2024, he faced a new case for writing letters and pursuing legal complaints from inside prison, resulting in an additional one-year sentence being handed down. Alongside these prison sentences, he is also subject to a travel ban and exile to Yasuj after his release. During this entire period, all of Mr. Vali's requests for leave, including to attend his mother's funeral, were rejected by the Revolutionary Court. His family's only source of income, a family-run optical shop, has also remained sealed by security authorities for about 17 years, with all legal and administrative appeals proving fruitless.

Case of Ms. Roya Sabet

As brought to your attention in AL IRN 14/2024, Ms. Roya Sabet is a Bahá'í resident of the United Arab Emirates who had travelled to Shiraz in January 2024 to visit and care for her elderly parents. She had been arrested by Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) intelligence agents on 15 February 2024 and sentenced to 25 years in prison, of which 10 years are enforceable, on charges of “membership in the misguided Bahá'í sect” and “propaganda against the regime.” Ms. Roya Sabet had denied all charges and formally protested her conviction. In the end, Ms. Roya Sabet's detention and imprisonment appear to have been a case of mistaken identity.

On 25 October 2025, eight agents from the IRGC Intelligence Division in Shiraz arrested Ms. Roya Sabet at her sister's home and transferred her to an undisclosed location. On 26 October 2025, the family learned that Ms. Roya Sabet had been incarcerated in Adelabad Prison in Shiraz to begin serving the maximum enforceable portion of her sentence – 10 years of imprisonment. Ms. Roya Sabet reported during a phone call to relatives in February 2026 that inmates were repeatedly moved due to severe overcrowding, eventually being

housed in a cold prayer hall without sanitation, forced to bathe in cold water, and given very limited phone access or outdoor time. By March 2026, she described further deterioration, with 49 inmates confined in a single small cell without access to outdoor facilities. Food shortages, restricted access to essential items, and ongoing denial of family visits and phone contact have left inmates, including Ms. Roya Sabet, unable to meet basic needs.

Case of Mr. Peyvand Naimi

On 8 January 2026, Mr. Peyvand Naimi, a 30-year-old Baha'i, was reportedly arrested at his workplace on charges of instigating unrest during the January 2026 protests. He was reportedly detained at the IRGC Detention Centre. Reportedly, following physical and psychological torture and/or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, a forced confession was extracted from Mr. Naimi and broadcast on State television by an interrogator on 1 February 2026. Mr. Naimi was transferred to Kerman Prison after the broadcast. On 2 February 2026, the Iranian judicial authorities reportedly announced that the charges against Mr. Naimi were "propaganda against the regime," "assembly and collusion," and "membership in a subversive group." Around this time, a letter authorising Mr. Naimi's temporary release on bail from Kerman Prison was reportedly issued. However, despite the issuance of this order, his release was prevented by IRGC agents, and another order revoking his release was issued shortly thereafter. On 28 February 2026, Mr. Naimi was transferred to the IRGC detention centre in Kerman and placed in solitary confinement. It was claimed that Mr. Naimi had celebrated the death of the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, and Mr. Naimi was accused of being involvement in the killing of three Basij agents on 8 January 2026. At the time and place of this alleged attack, however, Mr. Naimi was already in IRGC custody, rendering his participation materially impossible. During this time at the IRGC detention centre, Mr. Naimi was reportedly subjected to 10 days of severe physical and psychological torture and/or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. His hands and feet were bound for 48 hours, while he was tied to a wall, and he was beaten repeatedly and denied food and water. For the following three days, he endured additional beatings, psychological abuse, and intense interrogations. During these interrogations, Mr. Naimi was forced to confess both to celebrating the death of the Supreme Leader and to the involvement in the killing of three Basij agents. During this period, Mr. Naimi was also reportedly subjected to two mock executions. To date, there has been no trial held for Mr. Naimi, nor sentencing, and no evidence presented to justify the charges against him. Mr. Naimi remains in solitary confinement in Kerman Prison, suffering from involuntary eye twitching and gastrointestinal distress, while being denied essential medical care.

Case of Mr. Adib Shahbazzpour

On 19 January 2026, Mr. Adib Shahbazzpour, a 30-year-old Baha'i, was reportedly arrested by IRGC agents outside his residence in Kerman. The agents searched both his father's home and his own residence, confiscating a laptop, a mobile phone, and other personal belongings. While in detention, Adib was able to place two calls, each of less than one minute, to his family, confirming his

detention without disclosing his location, the detaining authority, or reasons for his arrest. After repeated visits to courts, the prosecutor's office, and citizens' rights offices, the family was told: "His name is not on our list." Even during a public meeting with the prosecutor and his deputy, no specific information was provided. Nearly two weeks after the arrest, the family finally learned informally that a case had been opened for Mr. Shahbazzpour by the IRGC intelligence, but the file had not yet been sent to a judicial branch. Following Mr. Shahbazzpour's arrest, he was subjected to enforced disappearance and held for 27 days in an undisclosed location by the IRGC Intelligence, before being transferred to Kerman Prison. Mr. Shahbazzpour has had no visits with his family, no official charges have been declared to his family, and he has been denied access to legal counsel. Mr. Shahbazzpour suffers from migraines and experiences heart palpitations in stressful situations, requiring medication. Due to stressful conditions, interrogations, and the family's uncertainty about his access to essential medication, there is serious concern for his mental and physical health.

Case of Mr. Artin Ghazanfari

On 19 January 2026, Mr. Artin Ghazanfari, a Bahá'í residing in Tehran, was allegedly arrested by security forces at his private residence. After his arrest, he was subjected to an enforced disappearance. 11 agents with a judicial warrant thoroughly searched his home from 9 a.m. until around 4 p.m. During the search, they confiscated his electronic devices, books, as well as his work and personal equipment. Following the search of his residence, security agents continued their investigation at his workplace. Authorities have released no information regarding his legal status, the location of detention, or the conditions under which he is being held. Despite repeated efforts by his lawyer, no judicial or security body has accepted responsibility for his arrest, and his name has not appeared in any court records or detention facility registries. This prolonged lack of transparency has left his family in a state of deep anxiety and ongoing uncertainty.

Case of Ms. Shakila Ghasemi

On 2 February 2026, Ms. Shakila Ghasemi, a 26-year-old Bahá'í resident of Kerman, was arrested by the Kerman branch of the IRGC Intelligence Organisation. Prior to her detention, authorities allegedly searched her home and confiscated all electronic devices belonging to her and her family, including mobile phones and laptops. The reasons for her arrest and any charges brought against her remain unknown. Ms. Ghasemi was transferred to Kerman prison after 47 days in solitary confinement at a detention facility run by the IRGC intelligence unit. She continues to be held in isolation.

Case of Mr. Borana Naimi

On 1 March 2026, Mr. Borana Naimi, a 29-year-old Baha'i residing in Kerman, was arrested by agents of the Kerman Intelligence Office. The arrest allegedly took place at his workplace, where six armed plainclothes officers violently detained him, handcuffing and transferring him to an IRGC detention centre. His

family remains seriously concerned about his health and well-being. Mr. Naimi is the father of a three-year-old child who is deeply distressed by his absence. Since he was arrested, he has reportedly experienced at least two mock executions, electric shocks causing severe burns to his feet, and other forms of torture and/or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. During the first days of detention, Mr. Naimi was reportedly repeatedly beaten, receiving multiple blows to his sides, ribs, beneath the chest, and his back. During this time, he was reportedly held in a special section of the prison called the “suite” – the “death suite” – in which death row prisoners are held 48 hours before execution. He was reportedly held under solitary confinement in a small room about two-by-two metres in size, in such a way that he could not distinguish between night and day. He was reportedly transferred several times to places near his residence, where he was pressured with threats concerning his wife and young daughter, including threats that his child would be sent to a State orphanage if he did not cooperate. Mr. Naimi was forced to sign a false confession in which he implicated himself and his cousin, Mr. Peyvand Naimi, in killing Basij guards during 8 January 2026 protests.

While we do not wish to prejudge the accuracy of these allegations, we are 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. We wish to recall articles 7 and 10 of the ICCPR, which establish the absolute prohibition of torture and/or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, and the right of all detainees to be treated with humanity and dignity. Allegations of interrogation without access to legal counsel (guaranteed under ICCPR article 14(d)), are deeply concerning and, if confirmed, would constitute serious violations of international legal standards.

On a separate note, we would like to emphasize that the inadmissibility of evidence obtained through torture or other ill-treatment constitute an essential component of the general and absolute prohibition of torture and other ill-treatment ([A/HRC/25/60](#)), as implied in article 7 of the ICCPR. It is both a fundamental safeguard against torture or ill-treatment, and a cornerstone of the right to a fair trial (article 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and 14 of the ICCPR).

With regard to the alleged enforced disappearance, if confirmed, it would amount to violations of articles 6, 7, 9 and 16 of the ICCPR, read alone and in conjunction with article 2(3). Moreover, it would entail a violation of article 7, read alone and in conjunction with article 2(3) of the ICCPR with regard to the relatives of the disappeared person. We are further drawing your Excellency’s Government’s attention to the United Nations Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances, should the above allegations be confirmed, they would be in violation of articles 1, 2, 7, 9-12 and 13. We also recall the absolute and non-derogable prohibition of enforced disappearances (articles 2 and 7 of the Declaration) which has attained the status of *jus cogens*. We wish to reiterate the joint statement of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances and the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances on so-called “short-term” enforced disappearances, which affirms that duration is not a constitutive element of enforced disappearance under international human rights law, therefore regardless of the duration of an enforced

disappearance, it produces serious harm and consequences for the disappeared and their families, and also presents practical challenges as regards seeking protection as well as defence of their rights. Moreover, we also make to the Working Group's study on Enforced disappearance and economic, social and cultural rights (A/HRC/30/38/Add.5), in particular paragraph 13, which highlights the increased vulnerabilities to disappearance of ethnic-minority groups and paragraph 40 which explains the impact of the disappearance on the community and the right to take part in cultural life.

Furthermore, we wish to emphasize that the criminalisation of a religious identity and the arbitrary detention of members of a religious minority constitute flagrant violations of the right to freedom of religion or belief, protected under article 18 of the ICCPR. This article guarantees the freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest one's religion or belief in worship, observance, practice, and teaching. Under article 27 of the ICCPR, in States where religious minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to profess and practise their own religion. This is reiterated by the 1992 UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, which obliges States to protect the existence and the religious identity of minorities within their respective territories. A context of crisis or conflict cannot justify the suspension of these fundamental rights nor the collective stigmatization of a minority.

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 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. Please provide the factual and legal grounds for the arrest and subsequent detention of Mr. Payam Vali, Ms. Roya Sabet, Mr. Peyvand Naimi, Mr. Adib Shahbazzpour, Mr. Artin Ghazanfari, Ms. Shakila Ghasemi, and Mr. Borna Naimi, and explain how these actions are in compliance with international human rights law and standards.
3. Please disclose information on the fate and whereabouts of Mr. Artin Ghazanfari and, in particular, his place of deprivation of liberty and elements relating to his state of health, as well as the measures undertaken to ensure that he can communicate with, and be visited by, his family, counsel or any other person of choice.

4. Please address the allegations of torture and/or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and mock executions concerning Mr. Peyvand Naimi and Mr. Borna Naimi during their detention.
5. Please explain how your Excellency's Government has ensured that any confessions obtained under coercion and duress are not used as evidence in legal proceedings against Mr. Peyvand Naimi and Mr. Borna Naimi.
6. Please clarify whether Mr. Peyvand Naimi, Mr. Borna Naimi and Mr. Adib Shahbazzpour have had timely and unrestricted access to legal counsel of their choosing throughout their detention, as well as access to adequate medical care.
7. Please explain the measures undertaken by your Excellency's Government to investigate the reported arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearance and torture and/or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, with a view to identify those responsible and held them accountable.
8. Please detail the steps taken by your Excellency's Government to ensure that the Bahá'í minority is protected against collective stigmatisation, arbitrary arrests, and hate speech, in full compliance with articles 18 and 27 of the ICCPR.

We respectfully urge your Excellency's Government to ensure that the aforementioned individuals have immediate access to medical care and an independent and impartial judicial review of their cases in full compliance with international legal obligations.

This communication, and any response received from your Excellency's Government, will be made public via the communications reporting [website](#) at the 60 days mark. Should Your Excellency's Government respond within 60 days, both the communication and the response, may be published before the 60 days mark. The communications and responses will also be made available in the subsequent periodic report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

While awaiting a reply, we urge that all necessary interim measures be taken to prevent any irreparable harm to the life and personal integrity of Mr. Payam Vali, Ms. Roya Sabet, Mr. Peyvand Naimi, Mr. Adib Shahbazzpour, Mr. Artin Ghazanfari, Ms. Shakila Ghasemi, and Mr. Borna Naimi, 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 having transmitted an urgent appeal 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 this urgent appeal and the regular procedure.

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.

Nicolas Levrat
Special Rapporteur on minority issues

Ganna Yudkivska
Vice-Chair on communications of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention

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

Mai Sato
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