

Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran; 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 situation of human rights defenders and the Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy

Ref.: AL IRN 6/2026

(Please use this reference in your reply)

6 May 2026

Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacities as Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran; 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 situation of human rights defenders and Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 58/21, 52/9, 59/4, 61/22 and 55/3.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning Fariba Balouch, a prominent Iranian Baloch human rights defender, and her son Mohammad Amer Dadafarin, who has reportedly been subjected to multiple arbitrary detentions, acts of torture, and attempts at coerced confession, seemingly in relation to his mother's human rights advocacy abroad.

Similar concerns regarding threats, harassment, and the proxy punishment of relatives or associates who remain in the country, directed against Iranian human rights defenders and journalists seeking to hold Your Excellency's Government accountable, have been raised by several Special Procedures mandate holders, most recently in communications IRN 12/2025 and IRN 13/2025.

According to the information received:

On 30 January 2026, at approximately 6.00 p.m., two unmarked vehicles carrying six armed men with covered faces allegedly stopped Mohammad Amer Dadafarin and the individual accompanying him as they were driving in Iransharh, Sistan and Baluchistan Province. The men forcibly removed Mr. Dadafarin and the other passenger from their vehicle, beat them, blindfolded them, and then separated them into two different vehicles. Both were then taken to a facility belonging to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC.)

The individual accompanying Mr. Dadafarin's was released approximately two hours later at the site of their arrest, still blindfolded, and explicitly warned not to inform his family of the incident.

Mr. Dadafarin was tortured throughout the night and pressured to confess to possessing weapons, which he maintains he has never possessed. He was also threatened that, if he refused to confess, he would be transferred to Zahedan

prison that same night and executed. His interrogators allegedly showed him screenshots of social media stories/posts that he had posted on his Instagram account and informed him that they may be used as justification to execute him.

There is reason to suspect that Mr. Dadafarin was allegedly threatened and detained in connection with his mother, Fariba Balouch's human rights activities abroad, seemingly as a means to gain leverage over her.

Mr. Dadafarin's interrogators accused Ms. Balouch of antigovernment activities and interrogated him extensively about the period in which he lived with her in London. He was allegedly specifically questioned about which foreign journalists his mother had communicated with and/or interviewed, as well as about other members of their family who are, or have been, engaged in activism.

At around midnight, Mr. Dadafarin was transferred to the Ministry of Intelligence, where he was held in a cell until approximately 11.00 a.m. the following morning, when he was released and transported home. Upon his return, his family immediately transferred him to the hospital for medical treatment.

Mr. Dadafarin's arrest represents his second detention seemingly in connection with his mother's human rights activities. In 2023, when he travelled from London to the Islamic Republic of Iran after visiting family, he and another individual were detained by the Ministry of Intelligence for 44 days. During that period, they were allegedly subjected to constant intimidation and were forced to give coerced confessions on camera. Since being released on heavy bail in 2023, Mr. Dadafarin has been subject to regular surveillance and is barred from exiting the country.

During the period between her son's first and second arrests, as well as throughout his first arrest, Mr. Dadafarin and some of Ms. Balouch's other family members, were allegedly continuously used as a means to pressure and intimidate Ms. Balouch. While her son and family member were arrested in 2023, the authorities allegedly pressured Ms. Balouch's extended family to inform her to contact the authorities directly, apologize, and state that her activities against your Excellency's government were due to her poor mental health.

The authorities suggested that if she did this, she might be forgiven and, in return, her son and family member could be released. Ms. Balouch's family was also allegedly told that she could easily be harmed in London, while her son was informed that they knew where she lived and that they had pictures of him at his workplace in London whilst he was living there.

Mr. Dadafarin was also repeatedly summoned for questioning during this period. On different occasions, he was told to persuade his mother to travel to Turkey to visit her family; he was informed that, because she had visited the White House in Washington, D.C., there was no longer any possibility of forgiveness for her; and, following the opening of the Baloch Advocacy and

Studies Centre (BASC), Mr. Dadafarin was told that Pakistani intelligence had contacted the Iranian authorities and issued a warning about her.

Finally, during this period, Ms. Balouch also received numerous threatening messages, including death threats claiming to know her address in London, from unknown individuals on Instagram.

Without prejudging the accuracy of these allegations, we must express our concern regarding the reported arbitrary arrest and detention of Mohammad Amer Dadafarin, the attempts to coerce confession, the coerced confessions, and the allegations of torture, all of which occurred on two separate occasions. We are primarily concerned that these actions, together with the other circumstances described above, including the sustained surveillance of Mr. Dadafarin and the attempts to coerce him and his family into divulging information about his mother, Fariba Balouch, or to coerce her into compromising situations, may constitute examples of transnational repression. We view this, specifically the proxy punishment of Mr. Dadafarin as indicative of a broader trend, highlighted by the Special Rapporteur on Iran in her report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/61/59), whereby your Excellency's Government seeks to silence members of the Iranian diaspora who speak out about human rights violations by targeting them or their families inside Iran.

With this in mind, we would like to remind your Excellency's Government that the Human Rights Committee held in CCPR/C/GC/34 "that as persons who engage in the gathering and analysis of information on the human rights situation and who publish human rights-related reports," are frequently subjected to threats, intimidation and attacks because of their activities, all "such attacks should be vigorously investigated in a timely fashion, and the perpetrators prosecuted". We express our strong concern that Iranian human rights defenders such as Ms. Balouch, whether in exile or otherwise operating abroad, continue to face threats and harassment in connection with their work. We urge your Excellency's Government to refrain from committing, co-opting or condoning acts of transnational repression, online and offline, and to ensure that all such acts are investigated and promptly, fully and effectively prosecuted.

Moreover, with regard to Ms. Balouch's human rights activities and the allegations that Mr. Dadafarin's social media posts were threatened as potential justifications for his execution, 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) ICCPR, 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.

Considering the alleged surveillance that Mr. Dadafarin has faced since his initial arrest in 2023, as well as the attempts to coerce him and his family members into divulging information about his mother or to coerce her into potentially compromising situations, we would also like to remind your excellency's government of their obligation under international law to uphold article 17 of the ICCPR which prohibits arbitrary and unlawful interference with one's privacy.

Finally, given the allegations that Mr. Dadafarin is being barred from exiting the country we would like to remind your Excellency's Government of article 12 of the ICCPR which guarantees the right of liberty of movement, providing that "[e]veryone lawfully within the territory of a State shall, within that territory, have the right to liberty of movement" and that any restriction on this right must be provided by law, be necessary to protect national security, public order], public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others, and be consistent with the other rights recognized in the ICCPR.

In connection with the above alleged facts and concerns, please refer to the **Annex on Reference to international human rights law** attached to this letter which cites international human rights instruments and standards relevant to these allegations.

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/or comment(s) you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.
2. Please provide information on how the alleged detention and arrest of Mohammad Amer Dadafarin in 2023 and 2026, which appear to have been linked to his mother's human rights activities abroad, were compatible with international human rights law.
3. Please provide information on the alleged torture of Mr. Dadafarin, the threats of coerced confession against him in 2026, the coerced confessions obtained from Mr. Dadafarin and his uncle in 2023, and the inhuman treatment of Mr. Dadafarin on both occasions.
4. Please provide information on the grounds that would justify the alleged surveillance of Mr. Dadafarin since his arrest in 2023, including the reported attempts to coerce him and his mother's family members into divulging information about her, and/or coerce her into a potentially compromising situation.
5. Please provide information on the grounds that would justify Mr. Dadafarin being barred from exiting the country.
6. Please provide information on measures adopted by your Excellency's Government to ensure a safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders in and outside the Islamic Republic of Iran, to carry out their legitimate and peaceful human rights activities.

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 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(s) responsible for 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

Irene Khan

Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression

Gina Romero

Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association

Andrea Bolaños Vargas

Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders

Ana Brian Nougrères

Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy

Annex

Reference to international human rights law

In connection with the above alleged facts and concerns, we would like to draw the attention of your Excellency's Government to relevant international norms and standards, as well as authoritative guidance on their interpretation.

Prohibition on torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

Article 7 of the ICCPR absolutely prohibits torture and/or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Attached to the prohibition on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment 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 (A/HRC/52/30).¹ Victims must be protected from reprisals or intimidation during investigations, and have an enforceable right to fair and adequate compensation, including the means for as full rehabilitation as possible.

Right to liberty and security of the person

Article 9(1) of the ICCPR guarantees the right to freedom from arbitrary detention and establishes that no one shall be deprived of their liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedure as established by law. Any detention due to the peaceful exercise of rights, including the rights to freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and freedom of association, is arbitrary.² In addition, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has found that an arrest or detention solely based on the individual's family ties may be arbitrary in so far as it lacks any legal basis and discriminates on the basis of birth and family ties.

Freedom of expression and opinion

Article 19 of the ICCPR guarantees the right to freedom of opinion and expression. This right entails that "everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference" and that "everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice." This right includes not only the exchange of information that is favorable, but also that which may shock or offend. The right to freedom of expression may be restricted only if the restriction is provided by law and necessary and proportionate to protect a legitimate objective, as established under article 19(3) of the ICCPR.

In general comment No. 34, the Human Rights Committee stated that under no

¹ For a full explanation on the absolute prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and the related States' obligations to criminalize, investigate and prosecute crimes of torture and other ill-treatment, see A/77/502 and A/HRC/52/30.

² CCPR/C/G/35, para. 17.

circumstance can an attack on a person because of the exercise of the person's freedom of opinion or expression be compatible with article 19. The Committee noted 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. Furthermore, it stated that as journalists are frequently subjected to threats, intimidation and attacks because of their activities, all such attacks should be vigorously investigated in a timely fashion, and the perpetrators prosecuted (CCPR/C/GC/34). As underlined by the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, an attack against journalists is not only a violation of their right to impart information, but also undermines the right of individuals and society at large to seek and receive information under article 19 of the ICCPR. An attack against a journalist is therefore an attack against the principles of transparency and accountability, as well as the right to hold opinions and to participate in public debates, which are essential for democracy (A/HRC/20/17).

Also relevant are paragraphs 75(a) to (i) of the report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism (A/HRC/40/52) on the impact of terrorism measures on civic spaces and human rights defenders.

Freedom of peaceful assembly and association

Article 21 of the ICCPR guarantees the right to freedom of peaceful assembly: "The right of peaceful assembly shall be recognized. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those imposed in conformity with the law, and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order (*ordre public*), the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others."

Article 22 of the ICCPR protects the right to freedom of association with others. States not only have a negative obligation to abstain from unduly interfering with the rights of peaceful assembly and of association but also have a positive obligation to facilitate and protect these rights in accordance with international human rights standards (A/HRC/17/27, para. 66 and A/HRC/29/25/Add.1). Freedom of association is closely linked to the rights to freedom of expression and to peaceful assembly and is of fundamental importance to the functioning of democratic societies. These rights can only be restricted in very specific circumstances, where the restrictions serve a legitimate public purpose as recognized by international standards and are necessary and proportionate for achieving that purpose.

We wish to highlight that the criminalization, stigmatization and mistreatment of human rights defenders and/or their family members exerts a wider chilling effect on the exercise of the rights of freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, and is therefore not in compliance with States' obligations under these provisions.

Right to privacy

Article 17 of the ICCPR provides that "1) No one shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with [their] privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on [their] honour and reputation and 2) Everyone has the right to the

protection of the law against such interference or attacks.” Article 17 of the ICCPR also includes the right to the protection of personal data. In general comment No. 16, the Human Rights Committee noted that ordinarily “[s]urveillance, whether electronic or otherwise, interceptions of telephonic, telegraphic and other forms of communication, wire-tapping and recording of conversations should be prohibited” (para. 8). In addition, the Human Rights Committee emphasized the duty of States “not to engage in interferences inconsistent with article 17 of the Covenant and to provide the legislative framework prohibiting such acts by natural or legal persons” (para. 9). Any interference with the right protected under article 17 must be strictly necessary and proportionate in pursuit of a legitimate aim.

Freedom of movement

Article 12 of the ICCPR guarantees the right to freedom of movement. article 12(1) guarantees the right of everyone lawfully within the territory of a State to liberty of movement and freedom to choose their residence within that territory. Article 12(4) provides that no one can be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter their own country. The Human Rights Committee has affirmed that “[l]iberty of movement is an indispensable condition for the free development of a person” (general comment No. 27, para. 1).