

Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions

Ref.: UA IRN 8/2026

(Please use this reference in your reply)

28 May 2026

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 extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 58/21 and 53/4.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning Bitā Hemmati, Mohammadreza Majidi-Asl, Yousef Ahmadi, Raouf Sheikh-Maroufi, Mohammad Faraji, Mohsen Eslamkhah, and Ruhollah Korki who are at imminent risk of execution following judicial proceedings that raise serious concerns regarding alleged torture, arbitrary detention, and violations of fair-trial guarantees.

We are conscious of the extremely serious security and humanitarian situation currently affecting the Islamic Republic of Iran following the military aggression by Israel and the United States, resulting in the killing of at least 3,375 persons and the injury of at least 26,500 others, including 216 children killed and 1,767 injured. We express serious concern at the reported civilian casualties, including women and children, and at the broader risks to the protection of the civilian population. In this context, we reiterate the importance of ensuring full respect for international human rights law, including the protection of the right to life and the prohibition of arbitrary deprivation of life, in order to prevent further loss of life and suffering among the civilian population and to avoid compounding the serious violations and harm already resulting from the hostilities.

According to the information received:

On 9 January 2026, Ms. **Bitā Hemmati and her husband Mr. Mohammadreza Majidi-Asl**, a couple residing in Tehran, were arrested by the security forces in relation to January 2026 protests.

Ms. Hemmati and Mr. Majidi-Asl have reportedly been subjected to duress during interrogation, with the purpose of obtaining forced confessions. On 15 January 2026, the state media broadcasted the forced confessions of Ms. Hemmati, in which she “admitted” to throwing concrete blocks at a member of the security forces on her own, and to throwing additional blocks together with her husband and brother.

Both Ms. Hemmati and Mr. Majidi-Asl (along with the two other defendants in this case) have been charged with “operational action for the hostile government of the United States and hostile groups” and “assembly and collusion against

national security”. In April 2026, Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court sentenced Ms. Hemmati and Mr. Majidi-Asl to death for the charge of “operational action for the hostile government of the United States and hostile groups”, and five years of imprisonment and confiscation of all their assets for the charge of “assembly and collusion against national security”.

The alleged basis of this ruling against these individuals includes: “participation in protest gatherings on 8 and 9 January 2026,” “chanting protest slogans,” “throwing objects including bottles, concrete blocks, and incendiary materials from rooftops,” and “destruction of public property,” aimed at “disrupting national security” and in connection with “hostile groups”. The authorities have not provided any information regarding the defendants’ access to counsel of their choice, the details of the court session, the conditions of their detention, or a copy of the written judgment. Additionally, there has been no clarification on the attribution of each act to each defendant, raising concerns about the individualization of sentences.

On 22 May 2026, Iran’s Supreme Court overturned the death sentence issued for this couple and referred their case to a parallel court branch for retrial. Serious concerns reportedly persist regarding their ability to access legal counsel of their choice and fair trial guarantees. In the absence of effective measures to address these alleged due process shortcomings, there remains a foreseeable risk that the retrial may result in the reimposition of the same sentence.

On 27 April 2020, Mr. **Yousef Ahmadi**, an Iranian national of Kurdish origin, was arrested by the Ministry of Intelligence forces in Baneh, Kurdistan Province. He had been taken to the ministry’s detention facility in the city of Sanandaj. At the time of his arrest, Mr. Ahmadi was shot in the leg by security forces. He was denied medical care during his detention and was subjected to severe physical and psychological torture to extract forced confessions. According to information received, several of his vertebrae were injured as a result of torture, and he has repeatedly lost consciousness after being beaten with electrical cables. He has also been under pressure by threatening to harm his relatives. At the end of his interrogation, he was transferred to Sanandaj Central Prison.

On 27 August 2022, Mr. Ahmadi’s trial took place at Branch One of the Islamic Revolutionary Court in Sanandaj on charges of “armed insurrection” (*baghi*) for membership of a Kurdish opposition party and “involvement in murder”.

On 3 September 2023, he was informed in prison that he had been sentenced to death for *baghi* which was subsequently upheld by Branch 39 of the Supreme Court in February 2024. According to information received, he also faces charges in relation to his alleged involvement in two separate murder cases. He has reportedly secured the consent of only one of the two families to pay blood money; however, he remains at risk of a *qisas* sentence in the other case. Mr. Ahmadi is currently detained in Sanandaj Central Prison and is at risk of execution at any time.

Mr. **Rauf Sheikh-Maroufi** and Mr. **Mohammad Faraji**, who are from Bukan in West Azerbaijan Province and are Iranian nationals of Kurdish origin, were arrested during the “Woman, Life, Freedom” uprising in the city on 26 December 2022 and 22 February 2023, respectively. Mr. Sheikh-Maroufi was held for 170 days in the Ministry’s detention facility in Urmia, West Azerbaijan Province, while Mr. Faraji was detained there for three and a half months. During this period, both reportedly were subjected to severe physical and psychological torture aimed at extracting forced confessions. After the interrogations concluded, they were transferred to Bukan Prison, where they are held alongside Mr. Mohsen Eslamkhah, a third political prisoners facing execution in the same case file (below).

After three years of imprisonment, Mr. Sheikh-Maroufi was sentenced to death on charges of “enmity against God” (moharebeh) and Mr. Faraji for “spreading corruption on earth” (efsad-e fel-arz) in two separate proceedings at Branch One of the Islamic Revolutionary Court of Mahabad. Both political prisoners were officially notified of their death sentences in Bukan Prison on 24 February 2026.

Mr. **Mohsen Eslamkhah**, an Iranian national of Kurdish origin, was arrested in connection with the “Women, Life, Freedom” uprising in Bukan. He was sentenced to death on charges of “enmity against God” (moharebeh) by Branch One of the Islamic Revolutionary Court in Mahabad. Mr. Eslamkhah was identified by security forces in 2022 due to his participation in the “Women, Life, Freedom” protests in Bukan, at the time he was minor, 16 years old. His family home was raided several times by these forces in an attempt to arrest him. Due to pressure from security forces and fear of arrest, he was forced to leave Iran and lived in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq until 2025.

Upon his return to Iran on 1 August 2025, Mr. Eslamkhah was arrested the following day after presenting himself to the Ministry of Intelligence office in Bukan. He was then transferred to the Ministry’s detention facility in Urmia, where he was held for approximately two months and subjected to torture aimed at extracting forced confessions regarding alleged involvement in the killing of a Basij member. Mr. Eslamkhah was subsequently transferred to Bukan Prison and was temporarily released on bail. However, his case was later referred to Branch One of the Mahabad Revolutionary Court (along with Rauf Sheikh-Maroufi) on charges of enmity against God and spreading corruption on earth, and was sentenced to death on 17 February 2026. He has been detained in Bukan Prison since 22 February 2026.

He also has a separate case at Criminal Court of Miandoab on charges of premeditated murder. The death sentence has been issued against Mr. Eslamkhah despite the fact that he was 16 years old at the time of the alleged offences, and that under the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Islamic Penal Code, Revolutionary Courts do not have jurisdiction to hear cases involving individuals under the age of 18.

Mr. Ruhollah Korki was arrested in August 2025, and for three months was subjected to physical and psychological torture, aiming to extract forced confessions. During this time he was held in an unofficial detention facility, and

had no contact with his family. His wife and child were also arrested to add pressure on him. Mr. Korki has been charged with Corruption on Earth (Efsad-fil-arz) and Enmity against God (Moharebeh) under article 6 of the Law on Security, based on his alleged accusation of intelligence collaboration with Israel and contact with People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (MEK).

On 24 May 2026, Mr. Korki, held in Ahvaz Sheiban Prison, was informed that he had been sentenced to death by the Ahvaz Revolutionary Court. Mr. Korki was denied access to legal counsel until the day of the trial, which was held around ten days before he was sentenced.

Mr. Korki's family has been under judicial harassment, and he is the fourth member of the family to be detained. His brother, Amin Korki was arrested by the security forces in Dezful, Khuzestan, during December 2017 – January 2018 protests. He was released on bail mid-March 2018; however his body was discovered on 30 March under highly suspicious circumstances.

While we do not wish to prejudge the accuracy of information made available to us, we express grave concern about the fact that Ms. Hemmati, Mr. Majidi-Asl, Mr. Ahmadi, Mr. Sheikh-Maroufi, Mr. Faraji, Mr. Eslamkhah and Mr. Korki are at imminent risk of execution. Moreover, we are seriously concerned at the reported confirmation of a death sentence by the Supreme Court in a case where there are serious allegations of torture, coerced confession, denial of access to a lawyer of choice, and where the evidence presented appears insufficient to establish the elements of the offence. We are particularly concerned that imposing and upholding the death penalty in these circumstances would amount to an arbitrary deprivation of life, specifically in cases involving a minor.

We also wish to recall that the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly raised concerns regarding the broad and vague formulation of security-related offences under Iran's Islamic Penal Code (IPC), including those carrying the death penalty, specifically the "Law on Intensifying the Punishment for Espionage and Cooperation with the Zionist Regime and Hostile States against National Security and Interests" enacted in 2025. These concerns have been highlighted in successive reports of the mandate holders (see, *inter alia*, A/80/349, A/79/371, A/HRC/58/62, A/HRC/55/62, A/HRC/49/75 and A/72/322).

The mandate has further noted that procedural safeguards are significantly weakened in cases involving security-related charges. As outlined in the most recent report of the Special Rapporteur, the note to article 48 of Iran's Code of Criminal Procedure severely restricts defendants' ability to choose legal counsel freely, leading to serious violations of fair-trial standards (see A/80/349). The use of confessions obtained under torture has also been consistently reported (see, *inter alia*, A/HRC/19/66, A/HRC/37/68, A/HRC/55/62, A/HRC/58/62 and A/80/349).

In light of these persistent concerns, we wish to reiterate the relevant obligations of your Excellency's Government under international human rights law. We would like to remind your Excellency's Government of the International Covenant on Civil and

Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified by Iran on 24 June 1975. Article 6(1) of the ICCPR protects the right to life and prohibits the arbitrary deprivation of life. Article 6(2) provides that in countries that have not abolished the death penalty, it may be imposed only for the “most serious crimes” and subject to strict conditions. In general comment No. 36 (para. 35), the Human Rights Committee has clarified that ‘most serious crimes’ must be read restrictively to mean crimes of extreme gravity involving intentional killing, consistent with the United Nations Safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty (ECOSOC resolution 1984/50). The death sentences outlined here do not appear to meet this threshold.

Article 6(5) also prohibits imposing death sentence for crimes committed by persons below eighteen years of age, which has been the case for Mr. Eslamkhah. The Islamic Penal Code (2013), Articles 89-95 also provide corrective measures and alternative punishments for juveniles, except for the offences constituting Hudud or Qisas. Holding of this sentence is also in violation of International Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Article 37(a), which Islamic Republic of Iran has ratified on 13 July 1994. The Committee has further clarified (general comment No. 36, para. 41) that where a death sentence is imposed following proceedings that do not comply with article 14 of the ICCPR, such a sentence is arbitrary and contrary to article 6. This includes, inter alia, the use of confessions extracted under torture or ill-treatment, lack of access to effective legal representation, restrictions on the ability to prepare a defence and closed or summary proceedings.

We also recall that the prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment is absolute and non-derogable under international law. This prohibition is enshrined in article 7 of the ICCPR, which forbids torture and ill-treatment and requires the exclusion of statements obtained through such practices and their use as evidence. Article 10 of the ICCPR further requires that all persons deprived of liberty be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person.

We remind that the right not to be arbitrarily deprived of life and the prohibition of torture are *jus cogens* norms, also enshrined in international customary law, from which no derogation is permitted, regardless of contexts of internal political instability or any other public emergency (Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 36, para. 2). The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a State party to the ICCPR, is required to undertake all necessary measures to prevent arbitrary deprivation of life by law enforcement officials.

According to general comment No. 36 on article 6 of the ICCPR, the Human Rights Committee emphasized that, “[i]n States parties which have not yet abolished the death penalty, it must not be applied except for the most serious crimes, and then only in the most exceptional cases and under the strictest limits,” and in full compliance with legal and procedural safeguards guaranteeing a fair trial. The Committee further clarified that violations of article 7 of the ICCPR, prohibiting torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, in the context of the imposition or implementation of the death penalty, may render an execution arbitrary and therefore contrary to article 6(1) of the Covenant.

We further recall that article 9 of the ICCPR protects the right to liberty and security of person, including protection from arbitrary arrest and detention, and article 14 guarantees the right to a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal established by law. These provisions require, among other elements, that defendants have prompt and regular access to legal counsel of their choice, sufficient time and facilities to prepare their defence, the right to be present at trial, and the right to examine or have examined the witnesses against them.

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 Ms. Hemmati, Mr. Majidi-Asl, Mr. Ahmadi, Mr. Sheikh-Maroufi, Mr. Faraji, Mr. Eslamkhah and Mr. Korki in compliance with the abovementioned international standards.

In addition, considering the increased number of individuals facing death sentences or charges that might lead to death sentence based on Islamic Penal Code following repeated reporting on the imposition of the death penalty, we once again call on Iran to reconsider its longstanding position on the death penalty and urge your Excellency's Government to impose a moratorium on all death sentences (see inter alia: UA IRN 1/2024).

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 also be grateful for your observations on the following matters:

1. Please provide information on the legal and factual basis for the arrest, detention, prosecution, conviction and sentencing of Ms. Bitah Hemmati, Mr. Mohammadreza Majidi-Asl, Mr. Yousef Ahmadi, Mr. Raouf Sheikh-Maroufi, Mr. Mohammad Faraji, Mr. Mohsen Eslamkhah and Mr. Korki including the acts alleged to constitute operational action for the hostile government of the United States and hostile groups on an individual basis, and explain how imposing the death penalties in these cases are compatible with article 6 of the ICCPR and the requirement that capital punishment be limited to the "most serious crimes."
2. Please explain what steps were taken to ensure respect for due process and fair-trial guarantees, including adequate time and facilities to prepare a defence, the right to a public hearing, and the exclusion of any statements or "confessions" obtained under torture or coercion, specifically in the two cases currently referred for retrial.
3. Please indicate the current status of Ms. Hemmati, Mr. Majidi-Asl, Mr. Ahmadi, Mr. Sheikh-Maroufi, Mr. Faraji, Mr. Eslamkhah and Mr. Korki cases following the current status of each case and what legal or administrative remedies remain available to them, including avenues for review, retrial, commutation or pardon.

4. Please clarify the circumstances in which the above-mentioned individuals were denied access to legal representation of their own choose, and how this aligns with fair-trial obligations. In addition, please provide an update on the legislative process concerning the proposed removal of the note to article 48 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, and indicate what provisions are foreseen for individuals adversely affected by this restriction, including those currently on death row.
5. Please provide specific information regarding Mr. Eslamkhah case, as he was a minor at the time of alleged criminal acts, and provisions of the juvenile alternative punishments to the death penalty.

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 executions 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

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Morris Tidball-Binz

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