

**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 the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association and the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment**

Ref.: UA IRN 14/2026

(Please use this reference in your reply)

22 July 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; Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances; Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association and Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 58/21, 54/14, 53/4, 59/4 and 61/10.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning Mr. **Shervin Bagherian Jebeli** who is at imminent risk of execution following judicial proceedings that raise serious concerns regarding arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance and violations of fair-trial and due process guarantees.

According to the information received:

Mr. Shervin Bagherian Jebeli, aged 18, was arrested on 12 January 2026 in Isfahan in connection with his participation in the December 2025 – January 2026 protests. Mr. Bagherian was taken by security forces, who raided his home in Esfahan at night, beat him, and transferred him to an undisclosed location. There was no information about his fate or whereabouts for one week. Following his enforced disappearance for a week, a video was aired on State television in which he appeared to confess under interrogation. During the apparent interrogation he was accused of violence against, and involvement in the deaths of, four security officers, and was informed that he had been charged with *moharebeh* (enmity against God), a capital offence.

In the video Mr. Bagherian appears unaware of the nature of the accusations against him, seemingly not understanding the meaning of *moharebeh* (enmity against God) when the charge is presented to him. The recording was broadcast publicly on State television within a week of his arrest and before any trial had taken place. No information has been received indicating that he had access to legal counsel of his own choosing, or that other procedural safeguards were observed, at the time the confession was recorded, raising concerns that the broadcast statement might constitute a forced confession under duress.

The case of Mr. Bagherian forms part of a larger case concerning the events of 8 January 2026 in Alikhani Square in Isfahan, in which four security officers were reportedly killed. At least 59 individuals have been arrested in relation to

this case, and 12 individuals among them have reportedly been sentenced to death by Branch 1 of Isfahan Revolutionary Court. On 5 July 2026, the Supreme Court upheld the 12 death sentences, including Mr. Bagherian's, and the case was sent to the sentence enforcement branch of the Isfahan Revolutionary Court. Two of the 12 individuals were executed on 19 July 2026, raising fears that the other executions could also be carried out at any time. The charges of other individuals in this case remain unclear, same as to what degree of individual responsibility each of the 12 defendants is alleged to bear for the deaths of the four security officers, including whether each individual is accused of directly perpetrating a killing, or of acting as an accomplice or of being present at or participating in the protests during which the alleged deaths occurred.

While we do not wish to prejudge the accuracy of the information made available to us, we express grave concern about the fact that Mr. Bagherian is at imminent risk of execution. Moreover, we are seriously concerned by the reported confirmation of death sentences 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 other due process guarantees, and where the evidence presented appears insufficient to establish the elements of the offence. We are particularly concerned that sentencing and upholding the death sentence in these circumstances would amount to an arbitrary deprivation of life.

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, particularly the crimes of *moharebeh* (enmity against God), *baghi* (armed rebellion against the foundation of the Islamic Republic of Iran) and *efsad-fel-arz* (corruption on earth), and espionage under 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 Special Rapporteur the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran (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).

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 from use as evidence. Article 10 of the ICCPR further requires that all persons deprived of their 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 the arbitrary deprivation of life by law enforcement officials.

The Human Rights Committee has emphasized that States parties which have not yet abolished the death penalty must ensure that “death sentences are not 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 (general comment No. 36, paras. 5, 11 and 41). 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 ICCPR (para. 40). Further, the death penalty must not be imposed on the basis of vaguely defined legal provisions (para. 38).

We echo the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, who further noted that procedural safeguards are significantly weakened in cases involving security-related charges. In particular, article 48 of Iran’s Code of Criminal Procedure severely restricts defendants’ right 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, including under 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 imposition of the 12 death sentences in connection with the alleged killings of four security officers raises serious concerns that individual criminal responsibility has not been established for each defendant, and that the sentences may instead be based on collective responsibility, which is incompatible with international human rights law. Death penalty for the most serious crimes, interpreted as intentional killing, can only be applied where *individual* responsibility of the accused has been established. The absence of clarity as to the specific conduct attributed to Mr. Bagherian and to others, and the distinct roles they are alleged to have played, casts significant doubt on whether this requirement has been met in the case of Mr. Bagherian.

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. Any arrest or detention as punishment for the legitimate exercise of rights guaranteed by the ICCPR, including freedom of peaceful assembly and association, is arbitrary (general comment No. 35, para. 17). Additionally, 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 choosing, 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. As stated by the Human Rights Committee, 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 of the ICCPR (general comment No. 36, para. 41). 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 article 21 of the ICCPR enshrining the right to freedom of peaceful assembly. Article 21 of the ICCPR protects peaceful assemblies wherever they take place, and States not only have a negative obligation to abstain from unduly interfering with this right, but also have a positive obligation to facilitate and protect it in accordance with international human rights standards. This means ensuring that the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association are enjoyed by everyone, without discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Lastly, with regards to the enforced disappearance of Mr. Bagherian, if confirmed, would amount to a violation of the absolute and non-derogable prohibition of enforced disappearances, as well as 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 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.

We also draw your Excellency’s Government’s attention to the United Nations Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances, which establishes that no State shall practice, permit or tolerate enforced disappearances. The Declaration also proclaims that each State shall take effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent and terminate acts of enforced disappearance in any territory under its jurisdiction. We further recall that the Declaration sets out the necessary guarantees to be offered by the State. In particular, articles 9, 10, 11 and 12 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.

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.

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 Mr. Shervin Bagherian in compliance with the abovementioned international standards.

In addition, considering the increased number of individuals facing death sentences or charges that might lead to a death sentence based on the 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](#)), pending its abolition.

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 Mr. Shervin Bagherian, including the acts alleged to constitute security charges, and explain how the death penalty in this case is 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 prompt access to a lawyer, 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.
3. Please clarify whether Mr. Bagherian had access to legal representation of his own choosing, and whether counsel had access to the evidence against him, 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.
4. Please provide information on the legal basis for the recording and broadcast of a statement by Mr. Bagherian on state television prior to trial, including which authority authorised the broadcast. Please also indicate whether the broadcast statement was relied upon as evidence in the proceedings before the Isfahan Revolutionary Court.
5. Please clarify what measures have been taken to ensure that any confession was made freely and without coercion, duress, or other forms of undue pressure. Additionally, please indicate whether any independent and impartial investigation has been undertaken to assess the circumstances surrounding the confession broadcast on television.

6. Please indicate the current status of Mr. Bagherian's case, and clarify what legal or administrative remedies remain available to him, including avenues for review, retrial, commutation or pardon.
7. Please explain any steps taken or envisaged by your Excellency's Government to repeal or amend broad and vague security-related offences under Iran's Islamic Penal Code, including those carrying the death penalty such as *moharebeh*, to bring them in line with international law, including the requirement of legality under article 15 of the ICCPR.

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 stop the execution of all individuals sentenced to death on the basis of vague and overbroad security-related offences, including Mr. Bagherian, and prevent irreparable damage to his life, to protect the individuals' physical and psychological integrity, halt all alleged violations, prevent their re-occurrence and investigate them 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 to clarify the issues 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

Gina Romero

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

Alice Jill Edwards

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