

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 23/2025

(Please use this reference in your reply)

21 January 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 Mr. Reza Abdali, Mr. Farshad Etemadi-Far, Mr. Masoud Jamei and Mr. Alireza Mardasi who are at imminent risk of execution following judicial proceedings that raise serious concerns regarding torture, arbitrary detention, and violations of fair-trial guarantees.

According to the information received:

Mr. Reza Abdali, 35 years old, Ahwazi Arab He was arrested in February 2025 in Ahvaz by security forces.

Following his arrest, Mr. Abdali was taken to an intelligence detention centre where, for several weeks, he was subjected to repeated interrogations accompanied by physical and psychological torture and ill-treatment, aimed at extracting forced confessions. After this initial period of interrogation, Mr. Abdali was transferred to Sheyban Prison in Ahvaz, where he was placed in solitary confinement under harsh conditions.

In July 2025, Branch 1 of the Revolutionary Court of Ahvaz reportedly convicted Mr. Abdali of *moharebeh* ("enmity against God") and sentenced him to death, in addition to 15 years of imprisonment.

During the proceedings, Mr. Abdali was denied the right to be represented by a lawyer of his own choosing and was instead provided with a court-appointed lawyer who did not effectively challenge the prosecution's case. At the closed hearings, no evidence was presented of his involvement in, participation in, or incitement of any violent act. Rather, the conviction appears to have been based solely on his alleged association with a political organization and on his political beliefs and expression.

In November 2025, the Supreme Court confirmed Mr. Abdali's death sentence. He is currently held in Ward 8 of Sheyban Prison in Ahvaz.

We have also received information about a separate case, concerning three other political prisoners held in Sheyban Prison in Ahvaz, Farshad Etemadi-Far, Masoud Jamei (Bavi), an Ahwazi Arab and a former employee of Iranian

National Oil Company and a labour rights advocate, and Alireza Mardasi (Hamidavi), an Ahwazi Arab school teacher. Farshad Etemadi-Far was arrested in June 2023 by intelligence agents in the village of Pichab in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province. Masoud Jamei and Alireza Mardasi were arrested in August 2023 in Khuzestan Province. All detainees were reportedly subjected to severe physical and psychological torture during interrogation. They were held in solitary confinement and deprived of the right of choosing their own lawyers, including during trial proceedings.

The three men were charged with *efsad-fel-arz* (“corruption on earth”), *baghi* (“armed rebellion”), and “propaganda against the state.” Branch 1 of the Revolutionary Court of Ahvaz sentenced each of them to two death sentences and one year of imprisonment based on these charges. The death sentences imposed on the three men were upheld by the Supreme Court in November 2025, placing them at imminent risk of execution.

The three men are currently detained in Sheyban Prison in Ahvaz, where they reportedly face harsh and degrading conditions of detention and serious health concerns. Farshad Etemadi-Far suffers from severe gastrointestinal problems and breathing difficulties. Masoud Jamei has reportedly been diagnosed with colon cancer and suffers from neck problems resulting from torture. Alireza Mardasi reportedly suffers from respiratory illnesses and severe allergies. All three have been denied appropriate medical care.

While we do not wish to prejudge the accuracy of these allegations, we express grave concern 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.

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 State) and *efsad-fel-arz* (corruption on earth). These concerns have been highlighted in successive reports of the mandate holders (see, *inter alia*, A/79/371, A/HRC/58/62, A/HRC/55/62, A/HRC/49/75 and A/72/322).

We have also previously communicated with your Excellency’s Government concerning cases of six Ahwazi Arab political prisoners who were charged with vague and overbroad security-related offences, specifically *baghi* (see UA IRN 9/2023). In that communication, similar fundamental rights were reportedly violated, including the use of torture to extract coerced confessions, denial of the right to choose their own lawyers, and the use of solitary confinement. These men were later executed in October 2025, in Sepidar prison in Ahvaz, without prior notice to their families. We express grave concern for the above mentioned individuals who faces the death penalty for a

national security offence in the same region under similar allegations of serious procedural violations.

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 continuously noted (see, *inter alia*, A/HRC/19/66, A/HRC/37/68, A/HRC/55/62, A/HRC/58/62 and A/80/349).

We further refer your Excellency's Government to articles 12 and 2(2) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ratified by your Excellency's Government on 24 June 1975 and to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights' general comment No. 14 (para. 34), which establish the obligation to respect the right to health by, *inter alia*, refraining from denying or limiting equal access for all persons, including prisoners and detainees, to preventive, curative and palliative health services. We also recall the Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners (General Assembly resolution 45/111), according to which prisoners should have access to health services available in the country without discrimination on the grounds of their legal situation (principle 9). Additionally, we refer to the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (A/RES/70/175), which recognise the responsibility of States to provide health care for prisoners, free of charge and without discrimination (rule 24), paying special attention to those with special health-care needs (rule 25), and providing for transfer to specialised institutions or civil hospitals where required (rule 27).

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 of Abdali, Jamei, Etemadi-Far and Mardasi, respectively for *Moharebeh and efsad-fel-arz* do not appear to meet this threshold.

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 prohibits the use of statements obtained through such practices 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 wish to refer to the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, i.e., the Nelson Mandela Rules (A/RES/70/175), which set out minimum standards for the treatment of all prisoners, including requirements relating to accommodation and contact with the outside world. The Rules also strictly regulate the use of solitary confinement and prohibit its prolonged use (rule 43).

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 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.

We would also like to recall articles 19 and 22 of the ICCPR, which protect the rights to freedom of expression and association. Criminal prosecution, and especially the imposition of the death penalty, solely on the basis of alleged political affiliation is incompatible with these rights.

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. Abdali in compliance with the above-mentioned international standards

The full texts of the human rights instruments and standards recalled above are available on www.ohchr.org or can be provided upon request.

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. Reza Abdali, Mr. Jamei, Mr. Etemadi-Far and Mr. Mardasi including the acts alleged to constitute *moharebeh*, and *efsad-fel-arz* and explain how imposing 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 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 provide information on any investigations, medical examinations or judicial inquiries carried out into the allegations of torture or ill-treatment mentioned above. If such measures have been taken, please provide their results; if not, please explain how this is compatible with your Excellency's Government's obligations to investigate and remedy acts of torture.
4. Please indicate the current status of Mr. Abdali, Mr. Jamei, Mr. Etemadi-Far and Mr. Mardasi's cases following the confirmation of their sentences by the Supreme Court, and what legal or administrative remedies remain available to them, including avenues for review, retrial, commutation or pardon.
5. Please clarify the circumstances in which the above mentioned individuals were denied access to legal representation of their own choosing, 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.

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 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 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

Morris Tidball-Binz

Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions