



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

**Joint written statement\* submitted by Association  
Internationale pour l'égalité des femmes, Edmund Rice  
International Limited, France Libertés : Fondation Danielle  
Mitterrand, Human Rights Research League, WomenNC-NC  
Committee for CSW/CEDAW, Women's Human Rights  
International Association, non-governmental organizations in  
special consultative status, Association of World Citizens,  
non-governmental organizations on the roster**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[27 May 2024]

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\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



## **Ongoing Human Rights Violations in the Islamic Republic of Iran**

The alarming wave of recent executions in the Islamic Republic of Iran requires immediate action by the international community.

According to Amnesty International on 4 April 2024, the Islamic Republic of Iran conducted 853 known executions, representing an eight-year high in the number of executions. It said: “Robust international action is urgently needed to halt a horrifying surge in executions that saw Iran’s prisons transformed into sites of mass killings in 2023.” (1)

At least 1,845 executions have been carried out by the authorities since Ebrahim Raisi took office in August 2021.

Based on the registered statistics at the Center for Statistics and Documentation of Iran Human Rights Monitor (Iran HRM) (2), and through extensive research conducted in this field, the organisation said the judiciary of the Islamic Republic of Iran executed 72 individuals in April 2024 alone. During the first ten days of May 2024, the Iranian judiciary carried out the execution sentences of 40 prisoners in Iranian prisons. One person has been executed every six hours.

On 8 March 2024, the international fact-finding mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran released a report (3) that concluded: “The violent repression of peaceful protests and pervasive institutional discrimination against women and girls has led to serious human rights violations by the Government of Iran, many amounting to crimes against humanity”.

It added: “The Fact-Finding Mission found, in the cases investigated, that security forces used unnecessary and disproportionate force which resulted in the unlawful killing and injuries of protestors. A pattern of extensive injuries to protestors’ eyes caused the blinding of scores of women, men and children, branding them for life. The Mission also found evidence of extrajudicial killings.”

“The Mission found cases of women and girls subjected to rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence, including gang rape, rape with an object, electrocution of genitalia, forced nudity and groping.”

The situation of political prisoners in the Islamic Republic of Iran remains dire. In March 2024, 11 political prisoners were convicted to long prison sentences. Ten of them are women. According to government media reports, the prisoners were sentenced to between 6 and 9.5 years in prison by Branch 3 of the Revolutionary Court in Rasht. They were arrested on 16 August 2023 in the cities of Rasht, Lahijan, Anzali, and Fooman.

In its recent report, the UN Fact-Finding Mission determined that Iranian public officials had intentionally inflicted acts of torture for purposes such as extracting a confession, obtaining information, punishment, intimidation, humiliation, coercion or for reasons based on discrimination, and preventing participation in protests. The mission found several cases of deaths in custody as a result of torture. Injured survivors were denied medical care or did not report the torture when they were released, owing to a fear of reprisals. (A/HRC/55/67)

### **Ongoing Impunity for the 1988 Massacre**

Recent crimes committed by Iranian authorities are indicative of the fact that officials continue to feel a sense of impunity, particularly because the international community has yet to hold them accountable for past crimes, most notably the 1988 massacre.

In February 2024, at a conference held in Geneva by Justice for the Victims of the 1988 Massacre in Iran (JVMI), the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Chair-Rapporteur of the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances joined international experts and survivors of the 1988 massacre and victims’ families in calling for an independent international inquiry into the mass extra-judicial executions and enforced disappearances of thousands of political prisoners in the Islamic Republic of Iran (4).

Special Rapporteur Javaid Rehman has said: “In 1988, thousands of these prisoners were extra-judicially executed, pursuant to a fatwa issued by the then Supreme Leader of Iran and implemented across prisons in the country. There are extreme concerns, and indeed, overwhelming evidence, as we are hearing, that serious crimes under international human rights law and international humanitarian law have been committed. These crimes include the crimes against humanity of torture, of persecution, of murder, of extermination, of enforced disappearances, as well as the crime of genocide.”

Numerous credible international NGOs have previously documented the enforced disappearance and extrajudicial killing of thousands of prisoners by Iranian authorities between late July and September 1988 for their political opinions and religious beliefs (5).

### **The 1988 Massacre**

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini issued a fatwa (6) in July 1988 ordering the execution of imprisoned opponents, including those who had already been tried and were serving their prison terms. The text of the fatwa was later published in the memoirs of Ayatollah Hossein-Ali Montazeri, who in 1988 was Khomeini’s heir-apparent. The decree called for the execution of all political prisoners affiliated to the People’s Mojahedin Organisation of Iran (PMOI or MEK), who remained steadfast in their beliefs. Members of other leftist groups were later also executed.

In his decree, Khomeini ordered the formation of three-member panels nationwide, known among prisoners as “Death Commissions”, to implement his order. These Commissions were formed on 19 July 1988, one day after the Islamic Republic of Iran accepted a ceasefire in its eight-year war with Iraq.

The Islamic Republic of Iran’s current President Ebrahim Raisi was previously a member of the Tehran Death Commission.

In 2017, JVMI published a list (7) of 59 mass graves where the bodies of the victims were allegedly buried in secret. In 2018, Amnesty International and Justice for Iran published a joint report (8) alleging that the Iranian authorities were destroying or damaging mass grave sites across the Islamic Republic of Iran that were believed to contain the remains of the victims.

Survivors of the 1988 massacre, along with some former officials, have provided varying estimates of the staggering number of political prisoners who fell victim to extrajudicial executions or enforced disappearances. As many as 30,000 are estimated to have been executed.

### **Time to End Impunity in the Islamic Republic of Iran**

Lack of accountability for the perpetrators of the 1988 massacre has emboldened the Iranian authorities to commit further atrocities against dissident protesters and political prisoners, as was witnessed during the deadly crackdown on the nationwide protests of 2022.

It is high time that the UN Member States urgently establish an inquiry into the 1988 mass executions and enforced disappearances in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Human Rights Council should also support the pursuit of accountability for Iranian officials who have committed major crimes that violate international law, such as the 1988 massacre and the brutal crackdowns on previous and current protests.

Hands off Cain, Nouveaux Droits de l'Homme (France), Italian Federation for Human Rights (FIDU), Justice for Victims of 1988 Massacre in Iran (JVMI), Association des femmes Iraniennes en France (AFIF), Comité de Soutien aux Droits de l'Homme en Iran (CSDHI), Association delle Donne Democratiche Iraniane in Italia, Association of Anglo-Iranian Women in the UK, Iran Libero e Democratico (Italia), Association de Réfugiés politiques pour les droits de l'homme – France, Associazione Medici e Farmacisti Democratici Iranian in Italia, Association des jeunes Iraniens pour la démocratie et la liberté-Luxembourg, Association IranRef (Belgique), Iranska Kvinnosamfundet i Sverige (Sweden), Anglo-Iranian Professionals Association of Iranian Political Prisoners-UK, Associazione Italiana per i Diritti Umani in Iran, Association to Defend Freedom & Human Rights in Iran - Australia, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.

1 - <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/04/iran-executes-853-people-in-eight-year-high-amid-relentless-repression-and-renewed-war-on-drugs>

2 - <https://iran-hrm.com/2024/05/01/april-2024-monthly-report-iran-human-rights-monitor-iran-hrm/>

3 - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/03/iran-institutional-discrimination-against-women-and-girls-enabled-human>

4 - <https://iran1988.org/un-experts-join-survivors-of-the-1988-massacre-in-urging-accountability-for-ongoing-crimes-against-humanity-in-iran/>

6 - <https://iran1988.org/khomeini-decrees-execution-of-steadfast-monafeqin-mojahedin-in-prisons/>

7 - <https://iran1988.org/new-report-published-1988massacre-iran-evidence-crime-humanity/>

8 - <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/8259/2018/en/>