

# Justice Iran for عدالت برای ایران

Our submission focuses on the extrajudicial killings of protesters and unlawful deaths in custody in relation to the events of late December 2017-early 2018 as well as the continued denial of the rights to truth and justice of families of forcibly disappeared persons by deliberate attempts, such as destruction of mass graves from the 1988 massacre of political prisoners. These are only a few examples of serious human rights violations which have occurred over the past four years as showcases to demonstrate that the IRI has no intention of fulfilling its duty to investigate these abuses and punish the perpetrators, fostering a culture of impunity.

### ► Extrajudicial Killing of Protesters, Deaths in Custody and Forced Confessions

In December 2017 and January 2018, Iran witnessed nationwide protests which started in the city of Mashhad and quickly spread across the country. According to various reports, it is estimated that over 4,000 people, including protesters, student activists were detained. Many of them were subsequently charged with national security-related offences and sentenced to imprisonment. The authorities confirmed the killing of at least eight protesters, while the actual number is much higher, according to other sources. There are at least three cases of the protesters' deaths in detention. In two cases, the authorities announced that the deaths were the result of suicide while in the third case, they denied that the deceased was a protester, at all—claims which family members strongly disputed. There were other cases of death in custody related to other developments in early 2018 which are detailed in our submission. To date, no independent and transparent investigation has been conducted into these cases, which amount to extrajudicial killing and unlawful deaths in custody.

The pattern emerging from all these cases shows that Iran's judicial and security authorities routinely threaten the bereaved families to refrain from registering a legal complaint and speaking to the media and human rights groups, in a bid to silence their pleas for truth and justice. They also engage in what can be described as orchestrated campaigns to cover up any evidence of torture, ill-treatment and unlawful deaths while publicly defaming the deceased.

The authorities also continue exercising the practice of using torture and ill-treatment to obtain forced confessions from political prisoners and their families, and broadcast them through state media outlets in violation of multiple human rights.

### ► Suggested Recommendations:

- **Conduct** impartial, transparent and independent investigations concerning the events of late December 2017-early 2018, in particular for the extrajudicial killings of the protesters and unlawful deaths in custody.
- **Outlaw** and put an end to the practices of using torture and ill-treatment in order to obtain forced confessions and broadcasting them as defamatory videos.
- **End** intimidation, harassment and prosecution of the relatives of the victims of enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings and other grave human rights violations.

### ► Examples of Recommendations from Previous Cycles

1

**Chile:** Ensure that competent bodies investigate allegations of torture, enforced disappearance and secret detention, that those responsible are punished and that programmes providing reparation for victims are established.

2

**Canada:** Investigate and prosecute all those, including Government officials and paramilitary members, suspected of having mistreated, tortured or killed anyone, including demonstrators, political activists, human rights defenders and journalists.

3

**Netherlands:** Take measures to ensure that Government and security officials implicated in human rights abuses relating to extrajudicial and arbitrary detention and the possible use of torture are investigated, prosecuted and punished.

4

**Argentina:** Take the necessary measures to enhance international legal cooperation in cases of serious violations of human rights and ensure the right to truth and justice.

### ► Recommendations to Iran on duty to investigate abuses

Total	16
Supported	8
Implemented	0

## Enforced Disappearances and Mass Graves

The failure of the duty to investigate has a long history in Iran. The families of those forcefully disappeared in the 1980 have been still denied their right to truth and justice. JFI submits that those who seek truth and justice for recent or past human rights violations face intimidation, harassment and prosecution.

Most significantly, over the course of two months in the summer of 1988, more than 5,000 political prisoners were forcibly disappeared, summarily executed in secret and buried in unmarked and mass graves across the country—a massacre that has been described as a crime against humanity by international lawyers and NGOs.

The UNSR on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran has called on the IRI to “undertake thorough and independent investigation into the 1988 massacres,” Not only have the Islamic Republic’s authorities refused to do so, those involved in extrajudicial killings in the 1980s are now holding the highest positions in government, including the current and former Ministers of Justice, as well as the newly appointed Head of the Judiciary, among others.

Moreover, JFI and Amnesty International obtained and analysed evidence including satellite imagery, photos and videos of dozens suspected or confirmed mass grave sites across Iran associated with the 1988 massacre, which showed that in recent years, the IRI’s authorities have been deliberately destroying such sites in spite of the UNSR on Iran urging the government to “ensure that locations believed to be the site of mass graves are preserved and protected.”

### ► Suggested Recommendations:

- **Provide** society and the relatives of the victims of enforced disappearance, extrajudicial killings and unlawful deaths with the truth about the details of the events surrounding their fates, and bring those who were responsible to justice.
- **Remove** from their positions and put on trial the perpetrators of the 1988 massacre, including the current and previous Ministers of Justice and the Head of the Judiciary.
- **Immediately cease** all ongoing destruction operations on the sites of the mass graves of the 1988 massacres’ political prisoners and ensure the locations believed to be the sites of mass graves are preserved and protected.



- 📍 Justice for Iran has located **70** mass graves
- 📍 Investigation into a further **50** sites continues
- 📍 Between 2016 to 2018 Iranian authorities destroyed at least **5** sites in Ahwaz, Kurdistan, Rudsar, Tabriz & Mashhad

Full submission is available at: <https://justice4iran.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/IRAN-Maximum-Impunity-34th-Session-UPR-Submission-Justice4Iran-Public.pdf>

**Justice for Iran (JFI)** is a London-based human rights NGO which seeks freedom from impunity.

JFI aims to hold the perpetrators of serious human rights violations, including but not limited to crimes against humanity, torture, enforced disappearances, war crime and genocide which have been committed in Iran or by the Iranian officials, accountable.

JFI focuses on the right to truth for individual victims and the whole society, and pursues right to justice for those who belong to the most marginalised groups.

JFI conducts fact-findings, initiates judicial and semi-judicial actions and carries out campaign and advocacy at national, regional and international levels.

JFI is a member of the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH).

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