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**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for
Human Rights and reports of the Office of the
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran

Report of the Secretary-General*

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 76/178, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit an interim report on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Human Rights Council at its fiftieth session.

* The present report was submitted after the deadline in order to reflect the most recent developments.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 76/178, requesting the Secretary-General to submit an interim report on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Human Rights Council at its fiftieth session. The report covers the period between 11 June 2021 to 20 March 2022.

2. The report contains information from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, non-governmental and media organizations and individuals interviewed by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). It also draws on observations of United Nations human rights mechanisms. Unless indicated otherwise, the information is based on submissions and testimonies received by OHCHR. The Government continued to engage with OHCHR and the United Nations human rights mechanisms during the reporting period. The Secretary-General acknowledges the comments provided by the Government in response to this report. However, substantive engagement on the State's obligations under international human rights law remained limited and the level of implementation of recommendations from international human rights mechanisms remained low.

3. In the reporting period, important social, economic, and political challenges remained. Civic and democratic space continue to be restricted. Activists and human rights defenders operated in a highly volatile and unpredictable environment often facing harassment and arrest. Lack of tangible measures towards achieving accountability for past human rights violations, even with respect to recent events, also undermined trust and social cohesion. Iran hosts an estimated 800,000 Afghan refugees and additional 2.6 million undocumented Afghans.¹ Significant numbers of Afghan refugees continued to cross the border into Iran, particularly after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021. UNHCR estimated that over 500,000 Afghans arrived to Iran in 2021.² Iran closed its borders to Afghanistan on 16 August 2021, but subsequently re-opened them for Afghan passport-holders with valid visas for Iran. The majority of Afghans fleeing to Iran did so in an irregular manner through unofficial border crossings.³ There is a rise of deportations of Afghans from Iran into Afghanistan, despite UNHCR's non-return advisory.⁴ In 2021, IOM reported that around 1 million Afghans were deported from Iran and Pakistan to Afghanistan, with an estimated 2000 daily deportations from Iran.⁵

II. Overview of the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran

A. Death penalty and arbitrary deprivation of life

4. Numerous testimonies and reports by non-governmental organizations, individuals, victims and their families were received concerning potential violations of the right to life allegedly by the State, including arbitrary executions, use of deadly force by security forces against peaceful protesters and border couriers, as well as arbitrary deprivation of life in detention as a result of torture or denial of timely access to medical care. As stated by the Human Rights Committee, States Parties to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) must ensure that those found responsible for violations of certain rights are

¹ <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/irn>.

² <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/irn-:~:text=UNHCR%20facilitates%20voluntary%20repatriation%20for%20Afghan%20refugees%20who,nearly%201%20million%20refugees%20to%20return%20to%20Afghanistan>.

³ UNHCR Iran: New Arrivals from Afghanistan (29 January 2022) - Iran (Islamic Republic of) | ReliefWeb.

⁴ <https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2021/8/611b62584/unhcr-issues-non-return-advisory-afghanistan.html>.

⁵ https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/iom_afghanistan-return_of_undocumented_afghans_situation_report_03-09_sep_2021_psu_1.pdf.

brought to justice, and failure to do so could in and of itself give rise to a separate breach of the Covenant⁶.

Use of the death penalty

5. Non-governmental organisations reported that the number of executions in the Islamic Republic of Iran increased in 2021 compared to 2020, including an increase in drug-related executions which accounted for over 40 per cent of the cases.⁷ According to these reports, in 2021, at least 310 individuals were executed, including at least 14 women, compared to over 260 executed in 2020. The authorities announced 55 of the executions in 2021⁸. At least four executions followed death sentences based on *Qassameh* (sworn oath). Among those reportedly executed for drug-related offenses were Afghan migrants, including several Afghans in Khorasan Province in October 2021⁹. These reports indicate that in 2022, the number of executions continued to rise: between 1 January 2022 and 20 March 2022, at least 105 people were executed, and in March 2022, 52 prisoners convicted and sentenced to death on drug-related charges were transferred for execution to Shiraz Central Prison. By mid-March, at least 16 of them, including 1 Afghan national had been executed.¹⁰ The Secretary-General reiterates his concern at the high number of death penalty sentences and executions, the inclusion in Iranian law of the death penalty for a range of acts, the imposition of the death penalty in violation of fair trial standards and the lack of official data around executions.

6. Article 6, paragraph 2, of ICCPR states that “In countries which have not abolished the death penalty, sentence of death may be imposed only for the most serious crimes in accordance with the law in force at the time of the commission of the crime and not contrary to the provisions of the present Covenant and to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. This penalty can only be carried out pursuant to a final judgement rendered by a competent court.” The Human Rights Committee has noted that the term “the most serious crimes” must be read restrictively and appertain only to crimes of extreme gravity involving intentional killing.¹¹ In the reporting period, the death penalty was imposed for charges including: “spreading corruption on earth”; drug-related offences; adultery; same-sex relations; non-intentional murder; “baghy” (armed rebellion); rape; and “moharebeh” (taking up arms to take lives or property and to create fear in the public). In the reporting period, charges carrying the death penalty were brought against protesters.¹²

7. The Secretary-General is also concerned at the indication that the right to a fair trial, including in death penalty cases, has not been guaranteed. A reported example is the execution of Kurdish prisoner Heidar Ghorbani in December 2021. Ghorbani was arrested in 2016, in connection with the killing of three men affiliated to the Basij paramilitary forces reportedly by individuals associated with an armed opposition group. Mr. Ghorbani denied membership in the group and any involvement in the killing. A Revolution Court concluded that he was unarmed, yet sentenced him to death for “baghy” without investigations into allegations that he had been tortured. Ghorbani was executed without prior notice to his family and lawyer, and his execution was carried out while his request for re-trial was still under consideration at the Supreme Court.

Execution of child offenders

8. The Secretary-General has consistently called for a halt to the execution of child offenders. Under international human rights instruments, to which the Islamic Republic of Iran is a party, capital punishment shall not be imposed for offenses committed by persons below 18 years of age¹³. The Government noted in its comments that there is a significant

⁶ Human Rights Committee, CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.13, para. 18.

⁷ <https://www.hri.global/death-penalty-2021>.

⁸ [Annual_Report_on_the_Death_Penalty_in_Iran_2021_BwW7LPR.pdf](https://iranhr.net/en/articles/4917/?msclkid=ff449a45ab5711ec8f89ea9b3d706c67) (iranhr.net).

⁹ <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/4917/?msclkid=ff449a45ab5711ec8f89ea9b3d706c67>.

¹⁰ <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/5147/>.

¹¹ Human Rights Committee, CCPR/C/GC/36, para. 35 and paras. 5, 10, 16 and Part IV.

¹² <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/5048/>.

¹³ ICCPR art. 6 (5).

reduction in the imposition of the death penalty on offenders below the age of 18. However, some of the reports received indicate that, between August 2021 and March 2022, at least two child offenders were executed, in one case without prior notice of the execution date to the family. Sajad Sanjari was executed on 2 August 2021, without prior notice to his family, for the killing of a man in 2010 when he was 15 years old. Another child offender, Arman Abdolali was executed on 24 November 2021 for a crime committed while he was under 18 years of age. Abdolali's execution was scheduled and postponed seven times raising concerns regarding respect of the right to a fair trial. The Government noted that the postponement of executions takes place due to the authorities' attempts to facilitate pardon negotiations between the victim's family and the perpetrator.¹⁴ As stated by the Human Rights Committee, procedures for the exercise of the right to seek pardon or commutation should be specified in domestic legislation and they should not afford the families of crime victims a preponderant role in determining whether the death sentence should be carried out.¹⁵ Such negotiations or any other reconciliation efforts are independent from a State's obligations under international human rights law, including to ensure that the death penalty shall not be imposed for crimes committed by persons below the age of 18 at the time of the offence.¹⁶

9. The Supreme Court's decision in February 2022 to revoke the death sentence against a child offender who was on death row for 18 years is a welcome step. The Court ruled, *inter alia* that, due to the passage of time, forensic medicine was unable to assess the maturity of the child offender at the time of the crime¹⁷. The Secretary -General reiterates his call for a revision of the Penal Code to prohibit the imposition of the death penalty on individuals who were under 18 years of age at the time of the alleged crime, as well as for the abolition of the death penalty.

Excessive use of force

10. The Secretary-General is concerned at the continued pattern of excessive use of force in the context of management of peaceful assemblies. On 15 July 2021, protests broke out in over 26 cities in Khuzestan Province over water shortages.¹⁸ Video and photo documentation showed heavy presence of security forces. On some occasions, the authorities reportedly used plainclothes agents to pose as armed or violent protesters, and subsequently blamed the deaths of protesters on them. Police and security forces' firing of live ammunition, including the use of automatic weapons and shotguns firing birdshots, and of other potentially lethal force led to the killing of at least nine individuals, including a minor, and to the injuring of many, including children. The authorities announced that one police official had been shot and killed.¹⁹ Many of those injured went into hiding and avoided going to hospitals to receive the needed care out of fear of being arrested. Security and intelligence agents reportedly also violently arrested injured protesters from a hospital.²⁰ While some officials attributed the protests to "dissident groups" or "terrorist groups", other officials called for the protesters' demands to be addressed.²¹ The authorities later confirmed the death of three "members of the public", but stated that these deaths were due to armed rioters.²² The Government noted that its principled policy is to manage assemblies with tolerance and restraint as long as they remain peaceful.

11. Information received by OHCHR indicates that, since 15 July 2021, the authorities arrested over 200 individuals in the context of peaceful demonstrations, including children.

¹⁴ A/76/268, para 8.

¹⁵ Human Rights Committee, CCPR/C/GC/36, para. 47.

¹⁶ ICCPR, article 6(5) and CRC, article 37.

¹⁷ <https://www.en-hrana.org/juvenile-offenders-death-sentence-revoked-after-18-years-in-prison/>.

¹⁸ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/07/iran-security-forces-use-live-ammunition-and-birdshot-to-crush-khuzestan-protests/>; <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/07/22/iran-deadly-response-water-protests>.

¹⁹ <https://www.isna.ir/news/1400043021902/>.

²⁰ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/07/iran-security-forces-use-live-ammunition-and-birdshot-to-crush-khuzestan-protests/>.

²¹ <https://www.isna.ir/news/1400042820561/>.

²² <http://fna.ir/2jb7z>; <https://web.archive.org/web/20210721073431/>; <http://www.magiran.com/article/4200515>; <http://fna.ir/2k69u>

Some protesters were also subject to enforced disappearances for a period of time, with several detained protesters initially held in detention facilities run by the Intelligence Ministry or by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC).

12. Other reports indicate that, in August 2021, security forces resorted to firing birdshots at peaceful protesters in Naqadeh in Western Azerbaijan Province, leaving dozens injured.²³ Many refrained from seeking hospital treatment for fear of arrest or torture. Mohammad Alizadeh died of his injuries after being shot by a person in civilian clothes. The Government noted that the perpetrator is being prosecuted.

13. The water shortage led to further protests erupting from 7 to 26 November 2021, in Isfahan, where thousands of farmers protested the Government's water policies.²⁴ On 11 November, the President met with representatives from the province and promised to resolve the impact of water shortages.²⁵ On 25 November at 4:00 am, security forces warned farmers who were holding a sit-down strike in the dry riverbed to evacuate. Subsequently, security forces reportedly set fire to the tents of farmers, fired tear gas at the tents and shot in the air. The prosecutor of Isfahan stated that it was "thugs" who set the farmers' tents on fire.²⁶ On 26 November, , according to information received by OHCHR, protests continued and security forces resorted to the use of batons, tear gas and pellet guns. Internet disruption in mobile data was reported at the time of crackdown.²⁷ The widespread use of pellet guns fired at close range at protesters and bystanders, including old farmers and women, caused serious eye and other injuries. Over 40 people were reported to have lost at least one eye after being shot by security forces.²⁸ The police commander in Isfahan stated that on 26 November, plainclothes security agents had detained 67 people.²⁹ Other sources estimate that over 300 people, including 13 children, were arrested and detained, several incommunicado. Reports indicate that injured protestors have been taken out of hospital and transferred to detention centres.

14. The use of force against border couriers, primarily of Kurdish and Baloch minorities,³⁰ continued, often justified by the authorities as being exercised in the context of anti-smuggling operations. In 2021, 53 couriers were reportedly killed as a result of direct shootings by border officials, and over 130, including minors, injured. Between 1 January and 20 March 2022, at least 18 border couriers were reportedly targeted by direct shooting from border officials. The Government stated that any illegal use of force by an official is subject to criminal liability.

15. The High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran submitted information to OHCHR of about 40 law enforcement agents killed between 21 March and 3 December 2021.

16. The Secretary-General underlines that, as indicated by the Human Rights Committee, any use of force must comply with the fundamental principles of legality, necessity, proportionality, precaution and non-discrimination, and that domestic legal regimes on the use of force by law enforcement officials must be brought into line with the requirements enshrined under international law.³¹ The Secretary-General further recalls that States have an obligation to investigate effectively, impartially and in a timely manner any allegation or reasonable suspicion of unlawful use of force.³²

²³ [Iran: Security forces use ruthless force, mass arrests and torture to crush peaceful protests - Amnesty International.](#)

²⁴ [https://www.iranhumanrights.org/2021/11/isfahan-instead-of-crushing-protests-the-iranian-government-should-solve-its-water-crisis/.](https://www.iranhumanrights.org/2021/11/isfahan-instead-of-crushing-protests-the-iranian-government-should-solve-its-water-crisis/)

²⁵ [https://www.irma.ir/news/84537500/.](https://www.irma.ir/news/84537500/)

²⁶ [https://www.farsnews.ir/isfahan/news/14000904000459/.](https://www.farsnews.ir/isfahan/news/14000904000459/)

²⁷ [https://netblocks.org/reports/internet-disruption-registered-in-iran-amid-water-protests-RyjnQRyg.](https://netblocks.org/reports/internet-disruption-registered-in-iran-amid-water-protests-RyjnQRyg)

²⁸ [https://iranhr.net/en/articles/5000/?msckid=420880acab5b11ecae3981eb25648f89.](https://iranhr.net/en/articles/5000/?msckid=420880acab5b11ecae3981eb25648f89)

²⁹ [https://www.farsnews.ir/news/14000906000495/.](https://www.farsnews.ir/news/14000906000495/)

³⁰ [https://www.kmmk-ge.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2021-Interim-Annual-Report-KMMK-G-.pdf.](https://www.kmmk-ge.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2021-Interim-Annual-Report-KMMK-G-.pdf)

³¹ Human Rights Committee, CCPR/C/GC/37, para.78.

³² Human Rights Committee, CCPR/C/GC/36, paras. 13-14.

Torture and arbitrary deprivation of life in detention

17. OHCHR continued to receive reports of torture and ill-treatment in places of detention, resulting in death.³³ OHCHR is unaware of any credible investigation into these incidents. The Government rejected allegations of arbitrary deprivation of life and lack of access to medical care in detention.

18. The Secretary-General welcomes measures reflected in the Government's mid-term UPR report aimed at preventing the use of torture by sensitizing judges to pay attention to allegations of torture made by defendants during the investigation. However, the reported prevalence of torture and ill-treatment remains of great concern, together with the lack of adequate safeguards to prevent torture and deficiencies in the justice system to hold perpetrators accountable, particularly the lack of independent oversight bodies or thorough, independent and impartial investigations. In addition, the Penal Code continued to retain forms of punishment³⁴ that could be considered torture, cruel inhuman and degrading under international human rights law.³⁵ Flogging remained a widespread form of punishment during the reporting period³⁶. The Secretary-General recalls the Human Rights Committee's view that the prohibition of torture, or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in article 7 of the ICCPR extends to corporal punishment,³⁷ and calls on the State to revise such forms of punishment.

19. The reported deaths in unclear circumstances of Shahin Naseri and Amirhossein Hatami over one week in September 2021 in Great Tehran Penitentiary are emblematic examples of death in detention without subsequent independent investigation. Naseri gave multiple affidavits of witnessing the torture of fellow prisoner, Navid Afkari.³⁸ Naseri had previously received threats of reprisal from judicial authorities for his testimonies. On the anniversary of the execution of Navid Afkari in September 2021, Naseri was placed in solitary confinement, reportedly to prevent him from speaking with the media. He was found dead in prison on 21 September 2021. The judiciary announced that his death was caused by drug poisoning, without providing further details. On 22 September 2021, Amirhossein Hatami, died in the Great Tehran Penitentiary. Prior to his death, Hatami had stated that he had been severely beaten by prison guards.³⁹ On 2 November 2021, Khosro Jamalifar died in Sanandaj prison in Kurdistan Province, reportedly due to a head injury he sustained after being beaten by prison guards. State TV published video footage claiming that Jamalifar fell in his cell and later died in hospital.⁴⁰ The claim is contrary to the accounts of eyewitnesses, who testified that Jamalifar had died in prison, not in the hospital, after being beaten by prison guards.⁴¹ In November 2021, IRGC Intelligence in Naqadeh announced the death of Asad Ramin and Davood Rahimi in custody. The men had been arrested in September and reportedly subjected to torture prior to their death.⁴² The Government noted that investigations into the cause of their deaths were ongoing.

20. The Secretary-General is concerned by reports of death in prison due to denial of adequate and timely medical care. Poet and human rights defender, Baktash Abtin died on 10 January 2022, after not receiving timely medical care after contracting COVID-19 in prison.⁴³ Abtin had been sentenced to five years of imprisonment on national security charges

³³ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/4669/2021/en/>.

³⁴ The Penal Code includes the punishments of stoning (article 225); *qisas* (retaliation-in-kind) as the main punishment for intentional crimes against life, limbs and abilities, as well as for theft (articles 16, 278, 386-416).; and includes over 100 offences that carry the punishment of flogging.

³⁵ Human Rights Committee, CCPR/C/IRN/CO/3, paras. 12, 16.

³⁶ <https://www.iranrights.org/library/collection/141/flogging>;
<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/iran>.

³⁷ Human Rights Committee, CCPR/C/GC/20, para. 5.

³⁸ A/HRC/47/22, paras. 7 and 22.

³⁹ <https://kurdistanhumanrights.org/en/iran-prison-officers-beat-young-man-to-death/>.

⁴⁰ <https://www.iribnews.ir/fa/news/3271407/>.

⁴¹ <https://www.en-hrana.org/irib-denies-that-khosro-jamalifars-suspicious-death-in-sanadaj-prison-was-result-of-guard-brutality/>.

⁴² <https://hengaw.net/en/news/the-official-death-announcement-of-two-kurdish-civilians-who-were-killed-under-torture-by-the-iranian-revolutionary-guard-corps-to-their-families>.

⁴³ <https://rsf.org/en/news/rsf-asks-un-investigate-iranian-journalist-baktash-abtins-death>.

in connection with his advocacy for freedom of expression and opposing the censorship of literature. Despite calls by the Secretary-General⁴⁴ and the High Commissioner⁴⁵ for the release of human rights defenders, lawyers and others arbitrarily detained for exercising their right to freedom of expression, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, they remained disproportionately excluded from COVID-19 release schemes.

21. OHCHR received reports of cases which indicate a denial of adequate medical care to prisoners on hunger-strike, in some instances resulting in death. Adel Kianpour died in Sheyban prison in Khuzestan Province after a week of hunger strike.⁴⁶ After his arrest in 2020, and subsequent reports of his torture and ill-treatment, the Revolution Court sentenced him to three years of imprisonment. Kianpour twice underwent hunger strikes in prison to protest the denial of fair trial rights.

22. Reports of denial of timely medical treatment to detained human rights defenders is an increasing concern, particularly in the continuing context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Teacher and civil rights advocate, Abbas Vahedian Shahroudi, was reportedly transferred “half conscious” from Vakilabad Prison on 24 February 2022 to a hospital for a few hours and returned to prison without sufficient treatment.⁴⁷ In February 2022, civil rights activist Arsham Rezaee went on hunger strike for one month in protest of the rejection of his requests for medical furlough.⁴⁸ Sepideh Qolian contracted COVID-19 in prison in February 2022 and was denied any form of medical furlough.⁴⁹

B. Legislative developments

Youthful Population and Protection of the Family Law

23. The Secretary-General is concerned about the potential impacts that the “Youthful Population and Protection of the Family” law might have on men, women and girls’ rights to sexual and reproductive health.⁵⁰ The law was approved by the Guardian Council on 1 November 2021. It prohibits the free distribution of contraceptives in the public health care system, requires medical authorization for contraceptive pills (article 51), imposes a ban on voluntary sterilizations for men and women except in life-threatening cases (article 51), and enacts a policy of restricting access to information on family planning and abortion (articles 48, 53). The law imposes additional restrictions on abortion, which is already criminalized in the Penal Code. Under a 2005 legislation, abortion could be legally performed during the first four months of pregnancy if three specialist doctors determined fetal anomalies or threats to the life of the pregnant woman. The new law repeals the 2005 law, restricts the grounds for therapeutic abortion, and establishes a panel consisting of a judge, a medical doctor and a forensic doctor for authorizing therapeutic abortion (article 56). It mandates the Intelligence Ministry and other security agencies to identify and refer to judicial authorities cases of illegal abortion (article 59). Article 61 allows the imposition of the death penalty under the charge of “corruption on earth” on anyone who performs abortions on a “large scale”.

24. On 30 January 2022, food and drug authorities issued a directive banning free or subsidized distribution of contraceptive items and prohibiting contraceptive services in the public health care system or any encouragement to use contraception. Iran’s cyber police announced that 100 special units were established for identifying people who sell illegal drugs online including abortion drugs which, according to press reports, resulted in the arrest

⁴⁴ A/75/287, para 61(f); A/HRC/47/22 para 73(f); A/76/268, para.60(f).

⁴⁵ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2020/10/citing-covid-risk-bachelet-calls-iran-release-jailed-human-rights-defenders?LangID=E&NewsID=26345>.

⁴⁶ <https://www.iranhumanrights.org/2022/01/writer-in-coma-another-political-prisoner-dead-after-arbitrary-imprisonment-in-iran/>.

⁴⁷ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/MDE1352062022ENGLISH.pdf>.

⁴⁸ <https://iranhumanrights.org/2022/03/denial-of-medical-treatment-for-ailing-political-prisoners-in-iran-aimed-at-crushing-dissent/>.

⁴⁹ <https://iranhumanrights.org/2022/03/plea-to-un-to-demand-freedom-for-gravely-ill-sepideh-qolijan/>.

⁵⁰ A/76/268, para. 33;

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27817&LangID=E>.

of 25 people in January⁵¹ and 6 people in February⁵² 2022. The new law and implementing measures are the latest in a series of policies to reverse the previous family planning programme. Experts consider that the law may also potentially lead to an increase in sexually transmittable diseases, an area in which the Government has previously demonstrated positive achievements.

25. The Secretary-General is concerned about the possible impact of these policies, which the Government has stated are aimed at increasing population growth⁵³, on women and girls' rights. The Committee on Economic and Social Rights has stated that retrogressive measures –such as the imposition of barriers to information, goods and services relating to sexual and reproductive health and enacting laws criminalizing certain sexual and reproductive health conduct and decisions— should be avoided.⁵⁴ According to the Committee, sexual and reproductive health is an integral part of the right to health and is essential to the realization of the full range of women's human rights⁵⁵, and is linked to rights such as the rights to life, privacy and the right to be free from cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.⁵⁶ The Committee has also stated that laws and policies that create barriers in access to sexual and reproductive health services, such as third party authorization for abortion, access to sexual and reproductive services, medicines and information as well as criminalization of women undergoing abortions, have the potential of amounting to violations of the obligation to respect the right to sexual and reproductive health enshrined in article 12 of the ICESCR.⁵⁷ Sexual and reproductive health is also included as part of the Sustainable Development Goals, including in Target 3.7, calling on countries to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes by 2030.

26. Restrictions on the access to contraception items, services, and information as well as criminalization of abortion, raises concerns about the increase of unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions, especially for women belonging to disadvantaged and marginalized groups. According to press reports, the Ministry of Health estimates at least 300,000 illegally performed abortions each year.⁵⁸ Of 12,000 requests for therapeutic abortion received by the Legal Medicine Organization each year, 9,000 are approved.⁵⁹ According to the World Health Organization, restricting access to abortions does not reduce the number of abortions, but it affects whether abortions that women and girls attain are safe and dignified.⁶⁰ Medical officials in the country have voiced their concerns about the serious impact of this law on public health, including sexually transmitted infections.⁶¹

“Protection, Dignity and Security of Women against Violence” Bill

27. The Secretary-General notes by the apparent stall in the revision and adoption of the “Protection, Dignity and Security of Women against Violence” bill since it was presented to Parliament on 13 January 2021.⁶² The bill would introduce positive changes as the country's first special law criminalizing violence against women. Notwithstanding the positive provisions of the bill, the final draft does not address the shortcomings previously raised by the Secretary-General⁶³ and by Special Procedure mandate-holders.⁶⁴ Some provisions increase the risk of women's exposure to violence. For example, Article 77 requires three

⁵¹ <https://www.mehrnews.com/xWSsR>.

⁵² <https://www.entekhab.ir/fa/news/666511/>.

⁵³ <https://www.sharghdaily.com/Section-news-3/846573-leader-urges-for-population-growth-in-iran-as-necessity>.

⁵⁴ Committee on Economic and Social Rights, E/C.12/GC/22, para. 38; Human Rights Committee, CCPR/C/GC/36, para. 8.

⁵⁵ Ibid, para.25.

⁵⁶ Ibid, para. 10.

⁵⁷ Ibid, paras. 41, 54-58.

⁵⁸ <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1400/03/08/2511544/>.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/abortion>.

⁶¹ <https://www.isna.ir/news/1400090705278/>.

⁶² <http://women.gov.ir/fa/news/14159/>.

⁶³ A/HRC/47/22, para. 37, A/76/268, para. 32.

⁶⁴ <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=25651>.

finalized convictions of the husband for physical assault to be considered as grounds for divorce.⁶⁵ While introducing protection orders for survivors of violence is a positive step, conditioning such orders upon the victim's filing of a criminal complaint may deter survivors from seeking protection orders.⁶⁶ The compulsory mediation sessions under article 66 between victims of violence and their husband or father, remove cases from judicial scrutiny and presume an equality of bargaining power between both parties.⁶⁷ Furthermore, the bill fails to define domestic violence, to criminalize marital rape, or to repeal the existing discriminatory laws against women which make them more susceptible to violence.

28. Recent reported instances of violence against women illustrate the urgency of expediting legislation with a holistic approach to addressing and preventing violence against women. In February 2022, a 17-year-old girl was decapitated by her husband. Her husband, who had previously threatened to kill her, was arrested later by police.⁶⁸ Since 2020, at least 60 women were killed in Khuzestan Province for reasons of perceived "honour".⁶⁹ These cases illustrate the significant gap in legislation to ensure access to justice and support services for victims of domestic violence. Under the current framework, law enforcement is reluctant to intervene in cases of domestic violence as such cases are construed as "private matters".⁷⁰ The number of shelters across the country (28 shelters across 31 provinces) is inadequate to meet the demands. International standards recommend the establishment of one shelter for every 10,000 inhabitants, safe emergency accommodation, qualified counselling and assistance in finding long-term accommodation.⁷¹

29. The abovementioned case of femicide is illustrative of the consequences of child marriage and the extreme vulnerability to domestic violence of minors forced into marriage. In that case, the girl was married at age 12, with the authorization of her father and a judge in line with article 1041 of the Civil Code. Growing benefits and incentives provided by the Government to encourage marriage contributes to the early marriage of girls as a source of income for families from marginalized groups.⁷² The "Youthful Population and Protection of the Family" law mentioned above provides benefits and incentives that would increase early marriage, and does not set a minimum age for marriage in line with international human rights standards.⁷³ The Government highlighted in its comments various State measures directed at preventing forced or early marriages.

"User Protection" Bill and legislative developments in the digital sphere

30. The Secretary-General is concerned about further legislative measures aimed at restricting the digital space. While internet penetration rate in the country is high with heavy investment in IT infrastructure, the authorities retain broad control over Internet users and the digital space.

31. On 22 February 2022, the Parliament ratified the general section of the "Regulatory System for Online Services" Bill, commonly referred to as the "User Protection Bill", despite calls by civil society and Special Procedure mandate holders to reconsider the Bill.⁷⁴ The Bill, which is expected to be adopted in its entirety this year, would grant the Government and army extensive control over infrastructure that connects Iran to the global internet. It would delegate control over international gateways to the Supreme Regulatory Commission, which

⁶⁵ <https://tn.ai/2098195>.

⁶⁶ *Handbook for Legislation on Violence against Women* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.10.IV.2), p. 46.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ <https://iranhumanrights.org/2022/02/decapitated-child-bride-highlights-irans-lack-of-protections-for-girls-and-women/>.

⁶⁹ <https://observers.france24.com/en/asia-pacific/20220216-femicide-iran-honour-killing-beheading>.

⁷⁰ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/12/04/iran-adopt-draft-law-protect-women>.

⁷¹ *Handbook for Legislation on Violence against Women* (United Nations publication), p. 29.

⁷² <https://www.hamshahrionline.ir/x7d7h>.

⁷³ For instance, articles 10, 11, 13, 68, and 69 of the "Youthful Population and Protection of the Family" Law, https://rc.majlis.ir/fa/legal_draft/show/1630697.

⁷⁴ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/03/un-human-rights-experts-urge-iran-abandon-restrictive-internet-bill>;

<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=26736>.

is part of the Supreme Council of Cyberspace, consisting of 18 members of whom 12 are appointed by the Supreme Leader while five are representatives of the security agencies and armed forces. Among other issues, the Bill would require social media platforms to cooperate with the Government in surveillance and censorship. It would enable the blocking of any remaining websites and platforms run by foreign companies still operating in Iran, would require people to use IDs to access the internet and would criminalize the distribution and sale of Virtual Private Networks (VPNs). The Bill would establish a multi-tier system of accessing content, providing different levels of Internet access based on the users age and profession.

32. The Bill was considered in line with the procedure prescribed in article 85 of the Constitution, allowing it to be adopted by a small group of parliamentarians, without a meaningful consultation with relevant stakeholders. While its adoption was subsequently halted due to a technicality, civil society and business owners expressed their objection to it, including through an online petition gathering over one million signatures calling on the Government “not to create new barriers” to the internet.⁷⁵ Human rights defender and blogger Hossein Ronaghi was detained on 23 February 2022 after having issued a post on Twitter criticizing it.⁷⁶ The family was reportedly informed about his whereabouts only several days later.⁷⁷ He was released on 3 March.⁷⁸

33. The Secretary-General is concerned that the Bill, if adopted, would add to the already restricted information environment, establishing additional limitations to the already unduly restricted rights to freedom of expression, and further limit engagement with the UN, including with human rights mechanisms. There are further concerns that the Bill would also hamper business operations and sectors reliant on information technology, including science, education and medicine.

34. In March 2022, a proposal was motioned to amend the “Satellite TV Prohibition Laws” to include a provision that would criminalize production and distribution of online content on “illegal internet platforms and satellite channels”.⁷⁹ Violations of the law carry punishment of up to five years’ imprisonment. There are concerns that currently blocked platforms such as Twitter and YouTube will be placed on the list. Under the amendment, advertising any Iranian goods, services and works of art through unauthorized networks, media, and platforms would be prohibited.

Confiscation of property

35. Article 49 of the Constitution provides the legal basis for the State to confiscate “illegitimate wealth resulting from usury, usurpation, bribery, embezzlement, theft, gamble, misuse of Islamic government, endowments, misuse of government contracts and transactions, uncultivated lands and others belonging to the public, houses of ill repute, and other illegitimate sources.” The Secretary General is concerned about the overly broad formulation of the provision as well as about the manner in which this authority is being exercised to confiscate wealth and property of minorities, particularly the Baha’i religious minority, as well as of political dissidents and their families.

36. A series of court decisions since 2019 have ruled that properties belonging to members of the Baha’i community could be confiscated. During the reporting period, properties, farms and farmland owned or cultivated by members of the Baha’i community were ordered confiscated, including in Mazandaran Province and Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad. These confiscations follow the series of confiscations in 2020 and 2021 in Ivel village in Mazandaran Province and in Semnan.

⁷⁵ <https://cpj.org/2021/11/iran-parliament-bill-restrict-internet/>.

⁷⁶ <https://iranhr.net/fa/articles/5112/>.

⁷⁷ <https://www.article19.org/resources/iran-drop-charges-against-human-rights-activist-hossein-ronaghi/>.

⁷⁸ <https://apnews.com/article/technology-iran-media-hunger-strikes-social-media-0dbc92dd2b6ca10b07db80a1d715a7ee>.

⁷⁹ <https://www.zoomit.ir/tech-iran/379992-new-plan-of-the-parliament/>.

37. Article 49 has also been applied to expropriate properties belonging to individuals deemed to be affiliated with the pre-1979 Government and political dissidents. Under article 11 of the regulation adopted in May 2000 for the implementation of article 49 of the Constitution, properties of Iranian expatriates with proven ties to “anti-state” groups are considered illegitimate and are subject to confiscation.

C. Civic space

38. Democratic space remained highly restricted, with authorities controlling the media and civil society. Among charges brought against civil society actors, including minority rights defenders, were: “propaganda against the state”; “assembly and collusion with the intention of disturbing national security”; “spreading corruption on earth”; “moharebeh” “spreading false news” and “disruption of public order”. Dissenting or critical voices, including minority rights activists, were subjected to harassment. OHCHR received consistent reports of violent arrests and intimidation by various state agents while the widespread impunity for these actions continued.

39. In addition, extensive surveillance, monitoring of individuals, threats and interrogations took place. Testimonies were also received about surveillance and threats of Iranians abroad, including activists, human rights defenders and students, including through extensive questioning at airports. Journalists, including journalists abroad working for foreign media outlets, continued to be intimidated. Such acts included coercion by proxy through threats against family members inside the country, economic pressure, travel bans and interrogations.

Lawyers and human rights defenders

40. On 14 August 2022, five lawyers and two human rights defenders were arrested for reportedly preparing to file a lawsuit against state officials for their mismanagement of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to reports by non-governmental organizations, Arash Keykhosravi, Mostafa Nili and Mehdi Mahmoudian from the arrested group remained in solitary confinement for one month and were subjected to pressure to refrain from filing the complaint.⁸⁰ Nili and Keykhosravi were released on bail in December. Mahmoudian remains in prison in relation to a previous four-year prison sentence for calling for commemoration of victims of downed Ukraine International flight PS752.

41. In September 2021, Ahvaz Revolution Court sentenced Farzaneh Zilabi, lawyer of Syndicate of Workers of Haft Tappeh Cane Sugar Company to one year imprisonment for “propaganda activities against the state”.⁸¹ The seven-year prison sentence for university law professor Reza Eslami for “cooperating with an enemy state through his participation in a law training course in the Czech Republic” was confirmed in October 2021.⁸² He was temporarily released in March 2022. Human rights lawyer, Mohammad Najafi remains in prison since 2018.⁸³ The report of torture and ill-treatment of lawyer Payam Derafshan while he was in detention in October 2021 is a worrying example of reports of forced injection of unknown substances and forced transfer of prisoners to psychiatric hospitals.⁸⁴

42. The release of woman human rights defender, Atena Daemi on 24 January 2022 is a welcome step.⁸⁵ However, convictions on new charges against other human rights defenders

⁸⁰ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/12/09/joint-statement-free-arbitrarily-detained-right-health-defenders-iran>.

⁸¹ <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/whrd-farzaneh-zilabi-sentenced-one-year-prison-and-two-year-travel-ban>.

⁸² <https://www.fidh.org/en/issues/human-rights-defenders/iran-arbitrary-detention-of-human-rights-defender-reza-eslami>.

⁸³ <https://iranhumanrights.org/2022/03/joint-statement-free-imprisoned-human-rights-lawyer-mohammad-najafi-in-iran/>.

⁸⁴ <https://www.iranhumanrights.org/2021/10/detained-lawyer-of-iranian-instagram-star-tortured-bit-off-tongue-after-unidentified-injection/>.

⁸⁵ <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/woman-human-rights-defender-aten-daemi-released-lakan-prison>.

continued. Narges Mohammadi, was arrested again on 16 November 2021 while attending a ceremony in commemoration of a victim of the November 2019 protests and remained in solitary confinement for 54 days. In February 2022, a Revolution Court sentenced her to eight additional years in prison. She was summoned to return to prison in March 2022 despite her health condition.⁸⁶ Farhad Meysami, convicted on charges related to his gender equality campaigning, has been detained since July 2018 without leave. He was summoned to the Revolution Court in February 2022 for new charges.⁸⁷

Reprisals for seeking accountability

43. A series of actions that could constitute violations to human rights occurred in the context of accountability efforts by civil society and the pressure exerted by intelligence bodies against family members to prevent them from advocating on their cases was observed. Acts of pressure included promises to release the individual if the family refrained from advocating on their case with interlocutors and media abroad. In cases where families continued their advocacy, they were often subjected to threats and intimidation. Among the reported case was the violent arrest in November 2021 of Gohar Eshghi and Sahar Beheshti, the mother and sister of blogger Sattar Beheshti who was killed under torture in custody in 2021.

44. No steps have thus far been taken to establish accountability for the violations over nationwide protests in November 2019. During the reporting period, individuals calling for accountability, including families of victims, were subject to intimidation, threats, violence and imprisonment. In the absence of efforts by the State to hold an independent investigation into the events, civil society established a people's tribunal ("the Iran Atrocities (Aban) Tribunal)" in November 2021. In February 2022, security agents in Kermanshah searched the house and interrogated the family of Sohbatalah Omidi, a witness at the Aban Tribunal.⁸⁸ Reported cases of targeting of family members, include the family of Farzad Ansarifar, a protester killed during the protests. His sister, Farzaneh Ansarifar was sentenced to four years and six months imprisonment for pursuing accountability for her brother's killing, and his brother and father were arrested by security forces in February 2022. The same month, security agents raided the home of Shanhaz Akmali, mother of Mostafa Karim Beigi, a protester killed in the 2009 protests. The security forces summoned her daughter, Maryam Karim Beigi, to Evin Prosecutor's Office. Afshin Hossein Panahi was summoned to court in November 2021,⁸⁹ following his call for accountability for the death of his brother, Ashraf Hossein Panahi. In February 2022, Gozal Hajizadeh, the 70-year old mother of Kurdish political prisoner Zeynab Jalalian,⁹⁰ was deprived of her liberty for several hours at her home in West Azerbaijan Province. Ministry of Intelligence agents interrogated and threatened her over her call to the international community.⁹¹

Labour rights defenders

45. The summoning, arrest and detention of labour rights defenders amidst growing protests by teachers, retirees and other groups demanding labour and social security rights intensified. In January 2022, Osman Esmaili and Mahmoud Salehi, in Saqqez, Kurdistan province, were tried on the charge of "propaganda against the system". In February 2022, Alieh Eghdamdoust, a labour rights defender and dismissed teacher, was arrested for "propaganda against the system". In January 2022, Shaban Mohammadi, a retired teacher and member of the Iran Teachers' Trade Association, was arrested for "membership in organizations that aim to disrupt national security". The location of his arrest remained unknown until 24 February when he was released on bail. His arrest took place in the context

⁸⁶ <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/5126/>; <https://www.iranhumanrights.org/2022/01/five-minute-trial-resulted-in-narges-mohammadis-eight-year-prison-sentence-iran/>.

⁸⁷ <https://www.hra-news.org/2022/hranews/a-33773/>.

⁸⁸ <https://kurdistanhumanrights.org/fa/?p=17812>.

⁸⁹ <https://hana-hr.org/content/20211122-kurdish-civil-activist-afshin-hossein-panahi-summoned-to-sanandaj-public-and-revolutionary-prosecutor-s-office>.

⁹⁰ A/76/268, para. 15.

⁹¹ <https://kurdistanhumanrights.org/en/iran-threatens-mother-of-kurdish-political-prisoner-zeynab-jalalian/>.

of new nationwide protests, sit-ins and strikes by teachers, which resumed in December 2021 and culminated in teachers' rallies in over 80 cities on 13 December. On 19 February 2022, teachers rallied in over 100 cities. It was reported that several teachers were beaten by security forces, and that over 15 teachers were arrested.

Dual and foreign citizens

46. An estimated 69 foreign and dual nationals have been detained in Iran since 2003. The return of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and Anoosheh Ashouri to the United Kingdom in March 2022, is a welcome step. In March 2022, 83-year-old Australian-Iranian Shokrollah Jebelli died in detention. Despite his health condition, he was denied medical leave and was only transferred to hospital one day prior to his death. In February 2022, Jamshid Sharmahd, a German-Iranian, reportedly kidnapped in 2020 while in Dubai and brought to Iran, appeared before a Tehran Revolution Court, charged with "spreading corruption on earth", an offence carrying the death penalty. Among other dual and foreign citizens whose arbitrary detention continued are Ahmadrza Djalali, Kamran Ghaderi, Massud Mossaheb, Mehran Raof, Morad Tahbaz, Nahid Taghavi, Emad Shargi, and Siamak Namazi.

D. Right to an adequate standard of living and health

Right to water

47. According to the Center for Strategic Studies of the Parliament, Iran has experienced one of the most severe periods of water shortage in recent years.⁹² Its report stresses that water shortage is among the main causes of protests in Abadan, Khorramshahr, Borazjan, Kazerun, Bushehr and cities in Isfahan Province. Approximately nine million people, primarily in rural areas, face water shortage, according to the Ministry of Energy.⁹³ In addition, mounting climate change challenges and drought, deforestation, under-investment in preserving water resources and short-term agricultural policies have resulted in water shortages and soil degradation across the country, with dire consequences for agricultural production and food security. While the authorities adopted temporary measures, including electricity supply rationing and a four-month ban on the mining of crypto-currencies, more long-term sustainable measures are needed.

48. In February 2022, Parliament authorized the start of construction work on a water transfer project from the Sea of Oman to Sistan-Baluchestan Province.⁹⁴ The project comes amid renewed efforts to obtain water rights from the Helmand River in Afghanistan.⁹⁵

Economic situation, sanctions and poverty

49. Despite limited accessible foreign exchange reserves, including as a result of ongoing sectoral sanctions, the economy returned to some growth following years of recession.⁹⁶ The economic rebound did not result in an increase in jobs. As it was coupled with high inflation, this translated into declining household welfare among the majority of the population. The COVID-19 pandemic also severely affected jobs and incomes, including in the informal sector.

50. In the second quarter of 2021/2022⁹⁷, the employment rate remained 1.3 million below the pre-pandemic level, with the agriculture sector particularly affected. Existing labour

⁹² <https://cdn.isna.ir/d/2021/09/28/0/62043415.pdf>.

⁹³ <https://www.khabaronline.ir/news/1585394/%DB%B9-%D9%85%DB%8C%D9%84%DB%8C%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%86%D9%81%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%B9%DB%8C%D8%AA-%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7%DB%8C%DB%8C-%DA%A9%D8%B4%D9%88%D8%B1-%D8%AF%DA%86%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B4-%D8%A2%D8%A8%DB%8C-%D9%87%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%AF>.

⁹⁴ <https://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2022/02/28/677729/Iran-water-transfer-project-Oman-Sea>.

⁹⁵ <https://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2022/04/20/680690/Iran-water-rights-Afghanistan-Helmand-Mokhber>.

⁹⁶ <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/36785>.

⁹⁷ Per Iranian calendar year, beginning 20 March.

market inequalities widened during the reporting period, with women being impacted to a greater extent. In the second quarter of 2021/2022, women's labor participation declined by 21 per cent compared to pre-pandemic levels, and the unemployment rate for women was twice as large as for men, highlighting obstacles facing women jobseekers. The unemployment rate gender gap is wider among the youth and educated. For example, in the third quarter of 2021/2022, 22.6 per cent of women with university degrees were unemployed, while this number was 10.1 per cent for men.⁹⁸

51. Low growth, high inflation and widespread unemployment has caused widening income inequality. The budget provided a 10 per cent increase for public wages and salaries in average, far below the expected inflation rate during the budget period.

52. Economic disparities increased during the reporting period. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of high net worth individuals in the Islamic Republic of Iran grew by 21.6%, compared to a global average of 6.3%.⁹⁹ There are an estimated 250,000 millionaires in Iran.¹⁰⁰ At the same time, an estimated 60% of the population lives in poverty, according to the Islamic Labour Council.¹⁰¹ According to the Social Security Research Center, 31.8% of people in urban areas and 50% of people in rural areas fall below the absolute poverty line.¹⁰² The Ministry of Health further reported food insecurity in eight provinces and an increased number of children under the age of five who suffer from malnutrition.¹⁰³

COVID-19 Vaccination programme

53. OHCHR received numerous reports about the limited vaccine coverage in mid-2021 amidst high numbers of deaths due to COVID-19, with the pandemic's fifth wave causing the most severe surge of infections and deaths since the start of the pandemic. Public broadcasting reported on 9 August 2021 that every two minutes one person was dying from COVID-19 in the country¹⁰⁴, with over 709 deaths in 24 hours on 25 August 2021, the highest number since the start of the pandemic.¹⁰⁵ On 19 August 2021, the World Health Organization expressed concern over the COVID-19 outbreak in Iran while the level of vaccination coverage was low, and its impact on the lives, well-being, and livelihoods of the Iranians.¹⁰⁶ At the time, 5,2 million people had been fully vaccinated.¹⁰⁷ According to health experts, the Supreme Leader's decision to ban the importation of certain vaccines¹⁰⁸ as well as the Government's decision to prioritize the development of domestic vaccines instead of importing available vaccines contributed significantly to the limited supplies of vaccines and the following health crisis.¹⁰⁹ The criticism was reportedly echoed by health officials, noting the lack of adequate budgetary allocation for purchasing vaccines since the beginning of the pandemic.¹¹⁰ The pace of COVID-19 vaccine importation and rollouts increased significantly

⁹⁸ <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/36785>.

⁹⁹ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/oliverwilliams1/2021/06/28/iran-sees-millionaire-boom-amid-sanctions-covid-19-and-an-election/?sh=5b7b0ce0a93b>.

¹⁰⁰ <https://worldwealthreport.com/resources/world-wealth-report-2021/>.

¹⁰¹ <https://www.ft.com/content/520b54e4-c793-4e7d-84f5-03f71587532d>.

¹⁰² <https://www.isna.ir/news/1400082317565/%D8%AA%D8%B5%D9%88%DB%8C%D8%B1%DB%8C-%D9%87%D9%88%D9%84%D9%86%D8%A7%DA%A9-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D8%B3%D9%88%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%85%DB%8C-%D8%A2%D8%B3%DB%8C%D8%A8-%D9%87%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B9%DB%8C-%D8%A8%D8%A7-%D8%B4%DB%8C%D9%88%D8%B9-%DA%A9%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86%D8%A7-%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%B3>.

¹⁰³ <https://www.radiozamaneh.com/689590>.

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iran-says-one-person-dying-covid-19-every-two-minutes-2021-08-09/>.

¹⁰⁵ <https://covid19.who.int/region/emro/country/ir>.

¹⁰⁶ <http://www.emro.who.int/iran/news/statement-on-covid-19-vaccination-in-islamic-republic-of-iran-by-who-representative-dr-jaffar-hussain.html>.

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.imna.ir/news/515632/>.

¹⁰⁸ <https://iranhumanrights.org/2021/01/iranian-rights-groups-call-on-khamenei-to-allow-purchase-of-u-s-and-uk-covid-19-vaccines/>.

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.dw.com/en/irans-patriotic-vaccination-policy-is-making-some-people-rich/a-59342029>; <https://iranhumanrights.org/2021/08/iran-should-lift-deadly-ban-on-foreign-covid-vaccines/>.

¹¹⁰ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/08/19/iran-government-mismanagement-compounds-covid-19-crisis>.

over the months of September and October 2021. By 20 March 2022, over 56 million people had received two doses of the vaccine.¹¹¹ The Government stressed the impact of sanctions across all sectors, particularly the health sector.

54. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights requires States to devote their maximum available resources to the full realization of all economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to health.¹¹² As highlighted by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress imply that everyone has a right to have access to a COVID-19 vaccine that is safe, effective and based on the application of the best scientific developments.¹¹³

III. Cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

A. Human rights treaty bodies

55. The Government has reiterated its commitment to engaging with international human rights mechanisms and to submitting its outstanding periodic reports. The State submitted its report under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in July 2021, and under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in January 2022, overdue since 2013, and 2018, respectively.

B. Special Procedures

56. In March 2022, by its resolution of 49/24, the Human Rights Council renewed the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Secretary-General encourages the Government to pursue constructive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur and to invite him to visit the country. In March 2022, the Government agreed to a visit by the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, planned for May 2022.

57. Between 18 June 2021 and 20 March 2022, Special Procedures issued 21 communications regarding the situation of human rights in Iran. The Government replied to 14 communications. Ten public statements were issued in the same period.

C. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

58. The Secretary-General welcomes the dialogue between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and OHCHR and encourages the Government to continue and enhance its engagement with OHCHR in substantive technical cooperation. The Executive Office of the Secretary-General and OHCHR raised concerns on several occasions with the Government about the situation of child offenders at imminent risk of execution, arbitrary executions and excessive use of force.

IV. Recommendations

59. **The Secretary-General:**

¹¹¹ <http://www.imna.ir/news/562938/>.

¹¹² ICESCR, article 2(1) ; Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, E/C.12/2020/1, para.14.

¹¹³ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, E/C.12/2020/2.

(a) Urges the Government to abolish the death penalty and introduce an immediate moratorium on its use and to prohibit the execution of child offenders in all circumstances and commute their sentences;

(b) Urges the Government to undertake reforms to strengthen the right to fair trial in line with international standards, amongst others by ensuring that all defendants, including those accused of crimes against national security, have effective access to meaningful legal representation, including by counsel of their choosing during the preliminary investigative stage and all subsequent stages of the judicial process;

(c) Urges the Government to release immediately all persons detained arbitrarily for legitimately exercising their freedoms of opinion and expression, association and peaceful assembly, and ensure that security measures in relation to protests are undertaken in line with international standards, including the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials;

(d) Urges the Government to ensure prompt, transparent and effective investigations by an independent and impartial body into the use of excessive and lethal force, including during protests, as well as into deaths in custody and allegations of torture or other ill-treatment, and prosecute and hold accountable public officials, including law enforcement officials, found responsible for issuing or carrying out the relevant orders;

(e) Urges the Government to guarantee the right to freedom of opinion and expression, reconsider the User Protection Bill and to ensure that any limitation to those rights offline and online is in line with the established criteria for permissible restrictions under international human rights law;

(f) Urges the Government to ensure that human rights defenders, lawyers, journalists, writers, labour rights activists, artists and environmentalists can engage in their respective activities safely and freely, without fear of reprisals, harassment, arrest, detention or prosecution, and extend the categories of prisoners eligible for temporary release; It is imperative that concrete measures for achieving accountability are undertaken and concrete steps taken to protect, but also provide space for those peacefully calling for change and the fulfilment of their basic rights.

(g) Urges the Government to take further steps to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls, and implement effective measures to protect them from other human rights violations, in accordance with international standards and advance their equal participation in public life; prioritize revision and parliamentary adoption of the bill on Violence against Women and ensure that the adopted law is in compliance with international standards; and expand support services for survivors of domestic violence, including by providing legal advice, medical support and increasing the number of shelters, their capacity and accessibility;

(h) Urges the Government to revise the Youthful Population Law to bring it in line with international standards, and strengthen rights to sexual and reproductive health, particularly of women and girls;

(i) Urges the Government to protect the rights of all persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities, and address all forms of discrimination against them without delay;

(j) Calls upon the Government to join the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; and the fundamental International Labour Organization conventions;

(k) Noting the economic and financial challenges experienced by the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Secretary-General reiterates his call on States that have imposed

sanctions on it to take appropriate steps to ensure that measures such as humanitarian exemptions are given prompt, broad and practical effects in order to minimize their adverse consequences;

(l) Encourages the Government to submit outstanding periodic reports to UN human rights treaty bodies, implement the recommendations of the treaty bodies and special procedure mandate holders and cooperate with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, including by accepting a country visit by the mandate;

(m) Encourages the Government to continue to engage with OHCHR in following up on all recommendations made in the reports of the Secretary-General and those of international human rights mechanisms.
