



SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN  
**THE RESOLUTION IN REAL TERMS**  
FOR THE 71ST SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2 NOVEMBER 2016

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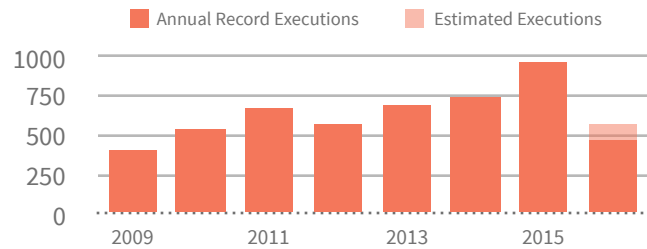
The annual United Nations General Assembly resolution on the *Situation of the Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran* has been one of the most effective means by which the international community has expressed concern for the rights of people in Iran. The resolution bolsters the work of Iranian human rights defenders. It also outlines for Iranian officials the exact set of human rights issues they should prioritize, encouraging them to take substantive steps to reform laws and practices in line with the country's obligations.

This guide provides factual support to the operative paragraphs of the 2016 version of the General Assembly resolution: A/C.3/71/L.25. The majority of events highlighted in this guide took place in 2016.

**IMPACT IRAN**

**PARAGRAPH 7:** Expresses serious concern at the alarmingly **high frequency of the imposition and carrying-out of the death penalty** by the Islamic Republic of Iran, in violation of its international obligations, including executions undertaken for crimes that do not qualify as the most serious crimes, on the basis of forced confessions, or against minors and persons who at the time of their offence were under the age of 18, in violation of both the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; expresses further concern at the continuing disregard of internationally recognized safeguards, including executions undertaken without notification to the prisoner’s family members or legal council; and calls upon the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to abolish, in law and in practice, public executions, which are contrary to the 2008 directive seeking to end this practice issued by the former head of the judiciary;

Iran has maintained the highest per capita execution rate in the world for several years, putting to death over 1000 people in 2015 and 469 so far in 2016. The majority of these executions are for offenses which do not constitute “most serious crimes” under international law, and included the execution of child offenders, public executions, and politically motivated executions.



**JANUARY 2015 - JUNE 2016:** According to the UN Secretary-General between January 2015 - June 2016 at least 20 foreign nationals, mainly from Afghanistan, were executed and over 1,200 remained on death row.<sup>1</sup>

**25 JANUARY 2016:** Authorities hanged Khaled Kordi on narcotics charges despite a strict prohibition on such executions under Iranian and international law. Kordi was reportedly 17 years old at the time of his arrest.<sup>2</sup>

**26 JANUARY 2016:** Amnesty International warned that Zeinab Sekaanvan Lokran was at imminent risk of execution for the murder of her husband. She was reportedly 17 years old at the time of the crime. The trial court refused to consider Zeinab’s claims that her husband abused her.<sup>3</sup>

**19 FEBRUARY 2016:** After a retrial, an appeals court affirmed the death sentence for Amanj Veisee who was reportedly 15 years old at the time of the offense.<sup>4</sup>

**2 MARCH 2016:** An appeals court affirmed the death sentence for Amir Amrollahi. Amrollahi was reportedly only 16 years old when he allegedly committed homicide.<sup>5</sup>

**24 MARCH 2016:** Officials warned juvenile offender Himan Uraminejad, an Iranian Kurd on death row, that he would soon be executed for an offence carried out when he was reportedly less than 18 years of age.<sup>6</sup>

**9 APRIL 2016:** Authorities reportedly executed Rashid Kouhi, and two others, for narcotics trafficking. Kouhi’s court-appointed attorney reportedly failed to inform him of his right to appeal under the new Criminal Procedure Code.<sup>7</sup>

**25 MAY 2016:** Authorities reportedly executed Mehdi Rajai, along with 11 other people, for a homicide he allegedly committed when he was 16 years old.<sup>8</sup>

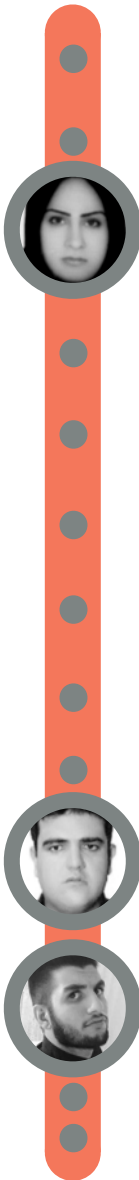
**19 JULY 2016:** Authorities reportedly hanged Hassan Afashar for the crime of forcible sodomy (rape) he allegedly committed when he was less than 18 years of age.<sup>9</sup>

**9 AUGUST 2016:** Authorities reportedly hanged Mohammad Abdollahi for his alleged membership in a Kurdish opposition group. Abdollahi claimed to not be active in the group and had only obtained a membership card.<sup>10</sup>

**14 SEPTEMBER 2016:** An appeals court reportedly upheld a death sentence against Sina Dehghan for the charge of “insulting the Prophet” and sentenced him to 16 months in prison for “insulting the Supreme Leader” on social media.<sup>11</sup>


**24 SEPTEMBER 2016:** The Central Prison of Tabriz reportedly executed Mehdi Molaei, Abdolkarim Bapiri, Salah Ghaderian and Ali Mahtabpour for narcotics-related crimes.<sup>12</sup>

**19 OCTOBER 2016:** Iranian authorities reportedly executed 11 inmates on drug-related charges.<sup>13</sup>




**PARAGRAPH 8:** *Calls upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to ensure, in law and in practice, that no one is subjected to **torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment**, which may include sexual violence, and punishments which are grossly disproportionate to the nature of the offense, in conformity with amendments to the Penal Code, the constitutional guarantees of the Islamic Republic of Iran and international obligations;*

Torture and other ill-treatment is still prevalent in Iran and detainees report being subjected to prolonged solitary confinement, beatings, burning, sexual abuse, stress positions, mock executions, threats of rape, threats to harm family and more. While Iran's Constitution and the Law on Respecting Legitimate Freedoms and Protecting Citizens' Rights together effectively ban torture, there is no clear legal definition of torture. Interrogators regularly use torture and other forms of ill-treatment to coerce confessions from suspects in detention. These confessions are often the sole evidence used in prosecutions of capital crimes and prisoners of conscience. Moreover, allegations of torture are rarely investigated and perpetrators are rarely held accountable. The Penal Code mandates certain forms of torture as punishments: flogging, stoning, and amputation. Thousands of floggings are still carried out annually.




**20 JANUARY 2016:** An Iranian criminal court reportedly sentenced Fariba Khalegi to execution by stoning for allegedly having a sexual relationship with her husband's purported murder.<sup>14</sup>

**26 MAY 2016:** Authorities reportedly sentenced 35 students, who held a co-ed graduation party, to ninety-nine lashes.<sup>15</sup>




**6 JUNE 2016:** Security forces detained Iranian-Canadian academic, Homa Hoodfar, for 112 days without charge. While in prison, interrogators reportedly subjected Hoodfar to cruel and inhumane treatment, such as death threats, and forced her to listen to music that was played at her husband's funeral.<sup>16</sup>



**7 JUNE 2016:** Authorities sentenced Arash Sadeghi to 15 years in prison for the peaceful exercise of his fundamental rights. They reportedly denied him a lawyer and subjected him to the severe beatings, twice dislocating his shoulder and breaking his teeth.<sup>17</sup>

**10 JUNE 2016:** A court reportedly sentenced Mohammed Reza Fathi, a blogger and writer, to 444 lashes for "spreading lies and disturbing public opinion."<sup>18</sup>

**11 OCTOBER 2016:** Security agents reportedly beat 31-year old Baloch Mohammad Gorgij during his arrest and detention leading to his death.<sup>19</sup>



**28 OCTOBER 2016:** Authorities reportedly ordered Reza Shahabi, a member of Tehran's bus drivers' union, to return to prison from medical leave he had been granted to deal with spinal injuries received from beatings during his detention.<sup>20</sup>

**PARAGRAPH 9:** Urges the Islamic Republic of Iran cease enforced disappearances and the *widespread and systematic use of arbitrary detention*, and to uphold, in law and in practice, *procedural guarantees to ensure fair trial standards*, including timely access to legal representation of one's choice from the time of arrest through all stages of trial and all appeals, the right to not be subjected to torture, cruel and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and consideration of bail and other reasonable terms for release from custody pending trial;

Iran continues to hold at least 900 political prisoners and prisoners of conscience. Most have been detained for exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association, assembly, and religion. These prisoners include journalists, lawyers, human rights defenders, artists, bloggers, aid workers, members of the political opposition, student activists, and ethnic and religious minority activists. Some political prisoners were unlawfully prosecuted. Trials, often conducted in closed revolutionary courts, regularly fail to meet international fair trial standards. Such failures often include, lack of access to lawyers or case files, being denied the right to make a defense, and trials lasting only minutes. Many detainees have reported being prosecuted solely on a confession they were forced to make under torture and ill-treatment.



**12 JANUARY 2016:** A revolutionary court reportedly sentenced reformist journalist, Reyhaneh Tabatabaie, to one year in prison and banned her from political activities for two years based on her membership in a reformist group during the 2013 presidential elections.<sup>21</sup>

**3 FEBRUARY 2016:** Security agents in plainclothes reportedly detained Bahman DaroShafaei, a British-Iranian dual national and former BBC Persian journalist, in connection to his journalistic activities, particularly his social media activism in the area of human rights. He was released after three weeks.<sup>22</sup>

**12 MARCH 2016:** Nazak Afshar, a French-Iranian dual national and employee of France's Foreign Ministry, was reportedly arrested by authorities upon arriving in Iran. Afshar was released from Evin Prison on 25 March 2016 on bail and currently awaits an appeal against her six year prison sentence, issued by a revolutionary court on unspecified charges.<sup>23</sup>

**3 APRIL 2016:** Authorities arrested British-Iranian dual national Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliff. She works for the Thomson Reuters Foundation and was reportedly accused of being a foreign operative participating in the "the soft overthrow of the Islamic Republic." She received five years in prison on "secret" charges, undisclosed even to her, on September 9.<sup>24</sup>

**26 APRIL 2016:** A revolutionary court reportedly sentenced reformist newspaper editor Ehsan Mazandarani to seven years in prison for his media work on charges including "propaganda against the state."<sup>25</sup>



**9 MAY 2016:** The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found that the detention of Zeinab Jalalian, an activist and Iranian Kurd, was arbitrary and violated international law.<sup>26</sup>



**26 MAY 2016:** Mohammad Seddiq Kaboudvand, a Kurdish human rights defender, reportedly faced new charges as he serves the ninth year of a 10-year sentence in Evin Prison. He is suffering from various illnesses and has staged several hunger strikes increasing his risk of suffering a heart attack.<sup>27</sup>

**28 SEPTEMBER 2016:** A revolutionary court reportedly sentenced journalist, Issa Saharkhiz, to three years in prison on charges of "propaganda against the state."<sup>28</sup>

**3 OCTOBER 2016:** An appeals court reportedly sentenced Asu Rostami and Ali Nouri, human rights defenders, to two years in prison each for expressing their opposition to the mass execution of political prisoners in the 1980s.<sup>29</sup>

**11 OCTOBER 2016:** Authorities reportedly arrested lawyer, Mohammad Najafi, because he was wearing a t-shirt with an image related to the 2009 post-election protests.<sup>30</sup>



**18 OCTOBER 2016:** Several businesspersons specializing in trade with western markets—Siamak Namazi, Bagher Namazi, Kamran Ghaderi, and Nizar Zaka, each reportedly received 10 year sentences for cooperation with "an enemy state [the United States]." The verdicts were issued despite the Foreign Ministry's repeated announcements that no country except Israel is considered a "hostile" nation by the government.<sup>31</sup>

**25 OCTOBER 2016:** A revolutionary court reportedly sentenced American-Iranian dual national, Reza (Robin) Shahini, to 18 years in prison reportedly for posts he published on Facebook criticizing the government in 2009.<sup>32</sup>

**PARAGRAPH 10:** *Calls upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to address the poor conditions of prisons, to **eliminate the denial of access to adequate medical treatment** and the consequent risk of death faced by prisoners and to put an end to the continued and sustained house arrest of leading opposition figures from the 2009 presidential elections despite serious concerns about their health, as well as the pressure exerted upon their relatives and dependents, including through arrest;*

Iranian authorities routinely deny prisoners access to medical care in detention, putting many prisoners at risk of serious permanent health problems and even death. Indeed, in some cases lack of medical treatment has led to or contributed to the death of detainees. Rights groups have documented a pattern in which authorities use denial of adequate medical care as a form of torture, coercion, or punishment against prisoners of conscience and political prisoners.

**27 MAY 2016:** Iranian Turkish prisoner Iraj Mohammadi, wrote an open letter to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights describing how authorities denied him treatment for injuries to his reproductive organs and epilepsy, conditions he believed were the result of alleged beatings from authorities he was subjected to while in prison.<sup>33</sup>

**6 JUNE 2016:** Authorities reportedly refused to allow Homa Hoodfar, a detained Iranian-Canadian dual national and professor, to receive her prescription medication for the rare neurological condition Myasthenia Gravis. She was later released.<sup>34</sup>

**18 JULY 2016:** Amnesty International published a detailed report on the denial of medical access by Iranian authorities. Highlighting over a dozen cases, the report uncovers a pattern in which authorities intentionally use denial of medical access as a form of punishment and torture, especially against prisoners of conscience.<sup>35</sup>

**1 AUGUST 2016:** An imprisoned Christian convert, Maryam Naghash Zargarani, who had been hospitalized due to the heart problem, was reportedly denied an extension of her medical furlough. She has been in prison since November 2013.<sup>36</sup>

**5 SEPTEMBER 2016:** Authorities reportedly refused to allow imprisoned journalist, Afarin Chitsaz, to go to the hospital for necessary knee surgery.<sup>37</sup>

**8 SEPTEMBER 2016:** Imprisoned music distributors, Mehdi and Hossein Rajabian, went on hunger strike to protest the denial of medical care. Authorities reportedly denied Mehdi doctor prescribed medication to delay the onset of multiple sclerosis. Hossein has various health problems, including a kidney condition, but has not been given adequate medical treatment.<sup>38</sup>

**28 SEPTEMBER 2016:** Authorities reportedly denied access to medical treatment to prisoner of conscience and human rights defender, Narges Mohammadi, for her worsening neurological condition.<sup>39</sup>

**2 OCTOBER 2016:** Journalist Issa Saharkhiz reportedly went on a hunger strike to protest his denial of conditional release on medical grounds.<sup>40</sup>

**18 OCTOBER 2016:** Authorities continue to deny Kurdish prisoner of conscience, Zeinab Jalalian, access to medical treatment that could prevent the loss of her eyesight, from injuries she received reportedly as a result of beatings she sustained during her interrogations.<sup>41</sup>

**24 OCTOBER 2016:** Authorities reportedly denied an eye operation to imprisoned civic activist, Kamal Foroughi, who was diagnosed with cataracts and is in need of an urgent operation to avoid the onset of permanent blindness.<sup>42</sup>



**PARAGRAPH 11:** Also calls upon the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the judicial and security branches, to create and maintain, in law and in practice, a safe and enabling environment in which an independent, **diverse and pluralistic civil society** can operate free from hindrance and insecurity; urges the Islamic Republic of Iran to end widespread and serious restrictions, in law and in practice, on the right to **freedom of expression, opinion, association and peaceful assembly**, both online and offline, including by ending harassment, intimidation and persecution of political opponents, human rights defenders, women's and minority rights activists, labour leaders, students' rights activists, academics, film-makers, journalists, bloggers, social media users, media workers, religious leaders, artists, lawyers, and persons belonging to recognized and unrecognized religious minorities and their families, and further calls upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to release persons arbitrarily detained for the legitimate exercise of these rights, to consider rescinding unduly harsh sentences, including the death penalty and long-term internal exile, for exercising such fundamental freedoms and to end reprisals against individuals, including for cooperating with the United Nations human rights mechanisms;

Iran places extensive restrictions and criminal sanctions on expression, association, and assembly. Censorship of speech, art, the internet, and media are common. Civil society groups, including human rights organizations and labour unions, are routinely shut down. Peaceful gatherings and protests are typically disrupted and met with force. Authorities make widespread use of arrests and detention to deter disfavored expression, association, and assembly.



**22 FEBRUARY 2016:** An appeals court upheld the six-year sentence and two-year ban on political and journalistic acts for Mohammed Hossein Rafiee Fanood, a 72-year-old retired professor, for posting online about socio-political issues.<sup>43</sup>

**7 MARCH 2016:** An appeals court reportedly upheld a 15-year prison sentence for cyber activist Arash Sadeghi for “collusion against national security,” “propaganda against the state,” “spreading lies in cyberspace” and “insulting the founder of the Islamic Republic in relation to his journalistic and social media activities.”<sup>44</sup>

**17 MAY 2016:** Authorities reportedly arrested at least eight Instagram users, most whom were fashion models, for “un-Islamic acts” and “promoting Western promiscuity.”<sup>45</sup>

**25 MAY 2016:** Prison officials reportedly flogged 17 miners for protesting against the dismissal of 350 workers from the Agh Dara gold mine in Western Azerbaijan Province.<sup>46</sup>



**20 JUNE 2016:** The *Ghanoon* newspaper announced its closure reportedly pursuant to an order by the Tehran Chief Prosecutor on grounds that the paper was “publishing falsehoods with the intent to cause public anxiety.”<sup>47</sup>

**21 JUNE 2016:** Authorities reportedly arrested Hashem Rostami, a Kurdish labour right activist, and Mozaffar Selehinia, of the Free Workers Union of Iran. As of July 2016, they remained in prison without formal charges or access to a lawyer.<sup>48</sup>

**16 JULY 2016:** Authorities reportedly arrested eight environmental activists and followers of the Baha'i faith. As of September 15, 2016, five of them remain in solitary confinement.<sup>49</sup>

**16 AUGUST 2016:** The Rouhani administration introduced two bills to Parliament that would further curtail press freedom in Iran. One bill, on the formation of a “Media Affairs Commission,” would bring all media outlets and reporters under the control of a government panel that would include members of intelligence agencies.<sup>50</sup>

**17 SEPTEMBER 2016:** Authorities reportedly arrested editor-in-chief of *Memari News* Yashar Soltani on charges including “spreading lies” after his website published a story about illegal land sales by the municipality of Tehran.<sup>51</sup>



**3 OCTOBER 2016:** Officials reportedly sentenced Atena Deami and Omid Alishenas each to seven years in prison for their human rights activism, including engaging in campaigns against the death penalty, and social media activities.<sup>52</sup>

**4 OCTOBER 2016:** Authorities reportedly sentenced Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee, human rights activist, to six years in prison on charges including “insulting Islamic sanctities,” “opposing retribution laws,” and “signing petitions against the death penalty.” Her sentence steamed in part from an unpublished story she reportedly authored on the use of stoning in Iran.<sup>53</sup>

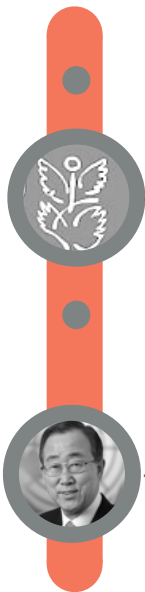


**15 OCTOBER 2016:** An Iranian court reportedly sentenced worker's rights activists Jafar Azimzadeh and Shapour Ehsani Rad to 11 years in prison each for the participation in labour unions.<sup>54</sup>

**18 OCTOBER 2016:** An appeals court reportedly upheld a six-year prison sentence for teacher and union leader, Esmail Abdi for his leadership of the Iranian Teacher's Union.<sup>55</sup>

**PARAGRAPH 12:** Strongly urges the Islamic Republic of Iran to eliminate, in law and in practice, all forms of **discrimination and other human rights violations against women and girls**, including with respect to the right to freedom of movement, the right to enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and the right to work, to take measures to ensure protection for women and girls against violence, and their equal protection and access to justice, to address the concerning incidence of child, early and forced marriage, as recommended by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, to promote, support and enable women's participation in leadership and decision-making processes and, while recognizing the high enrollment of women in all levels of education in the Islamic Republic of Iran, to lift restrictions on women's equal access to all aspects of education and women's equal participation in the labour market and in all aspects of economic, cultural, social and political life;

Despite minor improvements under President Rouhani's administration, such as the lifting of some gender-based quotas in universities, women in Iran remain subject to widespread and systematic discrimination in law and practice. Women, for instance, cannot work, attend university, or obtain a passport without the permission of a male guardian or husband. While women occupy about half of all university student slots, their economic participation in Iran is only 12.8%, five times lower than men, according to government figures. Personal status laws that accord women subordinate status to men in matters such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance remain in force. Iranian authorities have imposed a ban on female sports fans from attending public athletic events.

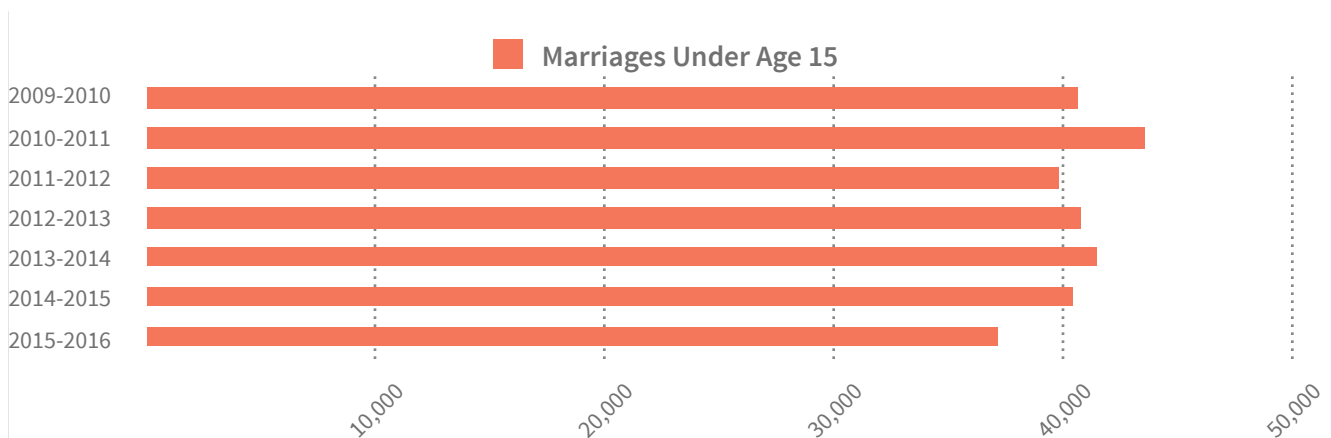


**1 May 2016:** A nine year-old girl was reportedly sexually assaulted by her teacher. The teacher was arrested but authorities later released him because allegedly because there were questions regarding whether the relations involved rape or voluntary illicit relations.<sup>56</sup>

**4 June 2016:** The spokesperson for a Tehran-based organization, The *Society to Protect the Rights of Children*, announced that 17 percent of all marriages involve children, namely girls, and that between 2015-2016 there were over 37,000 marriages registered with individuals under 15 years of age, the majority of whom were girls.<sup>57</sup>

**31 July 2016:** The Rouhani administration issued an executive order freezing the civil service exam and all hires of new government employees until such time that the country's laws and procedures guarantee equal opportunities for women and men in employment.<sup>58</sup>

**6 September 2016:** According to UN Secretary-General's 2016 report, 60% of women in Iran experience domestic violence. According to the Global Gender Gap Report of 2015, 21% of females ages 15 to 19 years old were married. Only 17% of women between the ages of 15 and 64 are active in the labour market.<sup>59</sup>

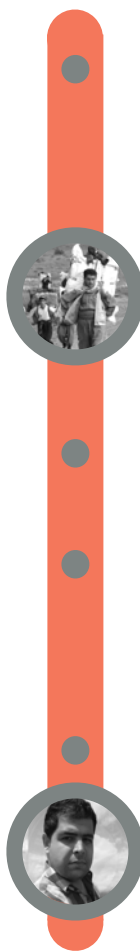


Source: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran. (30 Sep. 2016) p. 20.



**PARAGRAPH 13:** Calls upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to eliminate, in law and in practice, all forms of **discrimination and other human rights violations against persons belonging to ethnic, linguistic or other minorities**, including but not limited to Arabs, Azeris, Balochis, Kurds and their defenders;

Despite constitutional guarantees of equality, members of ethnic minorities—including Arabs, Baloch, Kurds, and Azeri Turks—continue to face a range of discriminatory laws and practices, affecting their access to basic services such as housing, clean water and sanitation, employment, and education. Authorities routinely detain activists, human rights defenders, and journalists from ethnic minority communities that challenge discriminatory practices.



**27 August 2014:** In its concluding observations on the second periodic report of Iran, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights expressed its concern for the application of the *gozinesh* process, detailed in Iran's 1995 Selection Law, which requires prospective state officials and employees to demonstrate allegiance to the Islamic Republic of Iran and the state religion, which leads to barriers in employment and political participation for ethnic minority communities. The Committee also expressed concern that ethnic minorities "do not fully enjoy their right to take part in cultural life, including as a consequence of closures of publications and newspapers in minority languages."<sup>60</sup>

**January-December 2015:** Government forces conduct indiscriminate killings of 36-44 *kulbaran* (border couriers), in violation of Iran's domestic laws and international obligations. These reportedly unarmed couriers from the Kurdish dominated provinces of Kermanshah, Kurdistan and West Azerbaijan appear to engage in smuggling items such as tea and tobacco due to inadequate employment opportunities in the country. High incidences of police shootings against unarmed civilians in the border areas of Sistan-Baluchistan province have also been reported.<sup>61</sup>

**15 February 2015:** The Press Supervisory Board reportedly rejected the license application for three bilingual Balochi-Persian publications. Authorities also deny the application of Parviz Bahadorzahi, a cultural activist, retired teacher and former head of the Zehdan city council, for a license to run a bilingual periodical.<sup>62</sup>

**6 October 2015:** Researchers have reported on the poor academic performance and retention rates of bilingual students whose mother language is not Persian in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Iran's official report indicated that areas with largely Persian populations, such as Tehran, Semnan and Yazd, had the highest literacy rates, but areas largely populated with ethnic minorities had the lowest literacy rates, including Sistan and Baluchistan, Kurdistan, West Azerbaijan, and Northern Khorasan provinces.<sup>63</sup>

**12 June 2016:** An appeal court reportedly upheld the one-year sentence for Rasoul Razavi, an Azerbaijani Turkish activist, who was accused of "separatism" allegedly because of his support for cultural rights for Azerbaijani Turks and for raising awareness on environmental issues.<sup>64</sup>

**11 August 2016:** Authorities reportedly detained Behzad Qanbari, an Azerbaijani Turkish civil activist, relating to his activism against racist insults published in the *Tarhe No Newspaper*.<sup>65</sup>



**PARAGRAPH 14:** Expresses serious concern about ongoing severe limitations and *restrictions on the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief*, restrictions on the establishment of places of worship, attacks against places of worship and burial, and other human rights violations, including but not limited to harassment, persecution, arbitrary arrests and detention, denial of access to education, and incitement to hatred that lead to violence against persons belonging to recognized and unrecognized religious minorities, including Christians, Jews, Sufi Muslims, Sunni Muslims, Yarsanis, Zoroastrians and members of the Baha'i faith and their defenders, and calls upon the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to release all religious practitioners imprisoned for their membership in or activities on behalf of a recognized or unrecognized minority religious group, including the seven Baha'i leaders declared by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention of the Human Rights Council to have been arbitrarily detained since 2008 and to eliminate, in law and in practice, all forms of discrimination, including economic restrictions, such as the closure or confiscation of businesses and properties, the cancellation of licenses, and denial of employment in certain public and private sectors, including government or military positions and elected office, and other human rights violations against persons belonging to recognized and unrecognized religious minorities;

Religious minorities continue to face violations of their rights, both in law and policy. In particular, members of the Baha'i Faith, Muslim minorities groups, Christian converts and Yarsan Religion are systematically deprived of a range of rights including access to a university education, state employment, and business licenses. They are prevented from holding religious gatherings. Active members of these groups face imprisonment and other forms of harassment.

**27 January 2016:** A revolutionary court sentenced two dozen Baha'is to six to eleven years in prison reportedly for practicing their faith.<sup>66</sup>

**29 January 2016:** The Azad University of Kerman expelled three Baha'i students, Ali Kholghi, Farhang Rouhi, and Nabil Zeinali, reportedly because of their faith.<sup>67</sup>

**8 March 2016:** Rouhie Safajoo, a Baha'i who was repeatedly banned from attending university allegedly because of her faith, was reportedly arrested for acting against national security on cyberspace after protesting her ban on Facebook.<sup>68</sup>

**10 May 2016:** A Tehran court reportedly denied Fariba Kamalabadi, one of seven Baha'i leaders serving 20 years in prison, for the peaceful exercise of her right to freedom of religion, an extension of her 5-day furlough.<sup>69</sup>

**20 May 2016:** One of Iran's most senior clerics, Ayatollah Emam- Kashani, reportedly referred to the Baha'i religion as a "polluted sect" and "the enemy."<sup>70</sup>

**8 June 2016:** Authorities reportedly detained at least 72 Baha'is for peacefully exercising their faith.<sup>71</sup>

**15 June 2016:** During the first half of June, authorities reportedly shut down at least 25 businesses owned by Baha'is in Urmia. Some of the businesses had reportedly been closed in observance of Baha'i holidays, likely causing the authorities to shutter them.<sup>72</sup>

**5 July 2016:** Eighteen members of parliament sent a letter to the Interior Ministry expressing concerns over the authorities' closure of a Sunni prayer hall in town of Islamshahr (Sistan-Baluchistan province) and the prevention of worshippers from gathering to perform Eid al-Fitr prayer.<sup>73</sup>

**14 July 2016:** Authorities reportedly destroyed a Baha'i cemetery in Qorveh, Kurdistan Province.<sup>74</sup>

**2 August 2016:** Authorities reportedly executed 20 Sunni and Kurdish political prisoners, most of who were allegedly convicted on the basis of torture-induced confessions under unfair trials.<sup>75</sup>

**1 October 2016:** At least 129 Baha'i students who satisfactorily completed their university entrance exam were reportedly excluded from admission under the guise of because "incomplete files."<sup>76</sup>

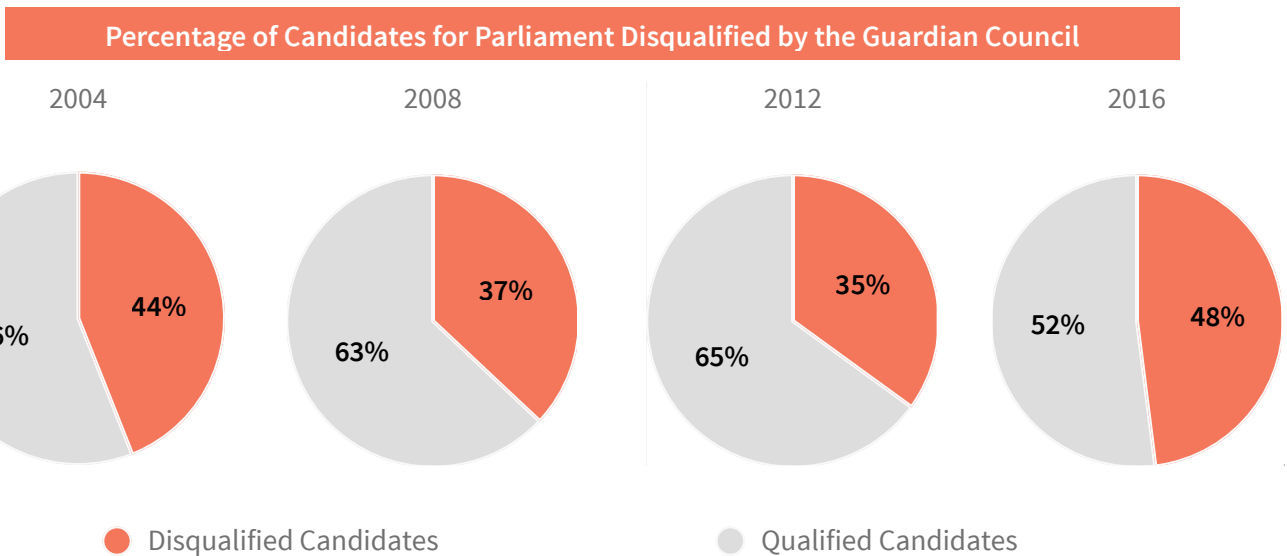
**27 September 2016:** Nineteen-year-old, Faraz Karin-Kani Sisan, a Baha'i, was expelled from Ghiyaseddin Jamshid Kashani Institute for Higher Education reportedly because of his faith.<sup>77</sup>

**28 September 2016:** Fourteen Baha'is were reportedly arrested because of their faith in the southern city of Shiraz. Some have since been released.<sup>78</sup>



**PARAGRAPH 16:** Call upon the Islamic Republic of Iran to ensure credible, *transparent and inclusive presidential elections in 2017 and to allow all candidates to stand* in a manner consistent with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in order to guarantee the free expression of the will of the Iranian people, and to that end calls upon the Government to allow independent national and international observations.

Iranian elections are not free or fair. The Guardian Council, a body appointed directly and indirectly by Iran’s Supreme Leader, is charged with vetting candidates. The Council has disqualified thousands of presidential, parliamentary, and local election candidates on purely religious and political grounds. Moreover, during election periods, authorities typically heighten internet and media censorship and arrest influential journalists, political figures, and activists.



Source: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran. (10 Mar. 2016). p. 14-15.

**17 January 2016:** The Council of Guardians, the body in Iran charged with vetting presidential and parliamentary candidates, disqualified nearly 6000 candidates—out of which 3000 were reformists—leaving only 30% reformist candidates eligible to run. This was one of the highest rates of disqualification of candidates in any parliamentary election in the Islamic Republic.<sup>79</sup>



**3 April 2016:** An elected Member of the Iranian Parliament, Minoor Khaleghi, was barred from taking office for shaking hands with a man.<sup>80</sup>



**19 October 2016:** Iranian authorities upheld the five-year house arrest for three opposition leaders, including Mir Hossein Mousavi, Mehdi Karroubi, and Zahra Rahnava, without formal charges or trial. On August 29, 2012, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention determined that their house arrest was arbitrary and resulted from the exercise of rights guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.<sup>81</sup>

## Sources:

- <sup>1</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, Report of the Special Rapporteur on Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, (19 Aug. 2016) A/71/150. p. 3
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