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Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mai Sato, submitted in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution S-39/1.

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Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mai Sato

Summary

The reporting period, February to August 2026, was shaped by two sources of harm borne by the same people. An international armed conflict between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States of America and Israel affected a population still living with the aftermath of the crackdown that followed the nationwide protests of December 2025 and January 2026. Each compounded the harms of the other, and the impact of both continues to accumulate in people's lives.

I. Introduction: two sources of harm, one population

1. The present report covers the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran from 1 February to 31 August 2026, building on the Rapporteur's most recent report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/61/59). Throughout the reporting period, the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran have been caught between external aggression and internal repression. Neither has displaced the other; each has compounded the harms of the other. The report is therefore organized around the impacts – on the killed and executed; the detained and missing; those who defend and document; livelihoods; and the environment – rather than by perpetrator or category of violation.

2. During the reporting period, the Rapporteur transmitted 23 communications,[1] received 6 responses and issued or joined 18 press releases,[2] in most cases jointly with other special procedure mandate holders.[3] Her engagement with the Iranian authorities has continued through the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva. She reiterates her readiness to conduct a country visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

3. The Rapporteur is grateful to those who submitted information. What is documented here is nonetheless a fraction of what has occurred. The telecommunications shutdown left no secure means of sending information out of the country. Some of those who came forward initially later withdrew their consent, having weighed up what it might cost them or their families. Nothing in this report should be read as the full measure of what has been done to the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

4. Space is also a constraint: the word limit for this report upon submission has fallen from 10,000 words in 2024 to 5,748 in 2026.

II. The killed and executed

5. During the reporting period, thousands of people in the Islamic Republic of Iran were killed, both by strikes carried out by the United States of America and Israel, and by their own authorities. The strikes did not interrupt domestic repression: arbitrary executions continued unabated, as did reported unlawful killings by security forces.

6. Figures in this section should be read with caution, and their absence with equal caution. The United States and Israel have published no civilian casualty figures. The Iranian authorities have, but only for deaths caused by those strikes, not for those caused by their own forces: no comprehensive official total exists for executions or killings by security forces, and independent tallies are contested. The Rapporteur sets out what is available but cautions against treating a disputed total as the threshold for action. Responsibility and obligation are engaged by the pattern of conduct and the policy behind it, not by an agreed number.

[1] Of these, two each were sent to the United States of America and Israel.

[2] Of these, 12 focused on the Islamic Republic of Iran.

[3] All communications mentioned in this report are available from https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/Tmsearch/TMDocuments. They are identified by codes beginning with IRN followed by a number and year (e.g. IRN 1/2026).

A. War casualties

7. On 28 February 2026, the United States and Israel launched an unlawful military operation against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Hostilities were paused by a ceasefire in April and a memorandum of understanding in June, before resuming in July. After several weeks without strikes, United States forces struck Larak Island on 30 August, reportedly killing and injuring Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps personnel and civilians. No formal ceasefire is currently in place.

8. More than 3,000 fatalities had been reported, as at 31 March, and the Iranian authorities indicate that 1,574 of those were civilians, including 236 children.[4] Millions were also internally displaced. Among the gravest and most widely reported incidents were the United States strikes on the Shajareh Tayyebeh primary school in Minab, Hormozgan Province.[5] The strikes killed at least 156 people, including some 120 schoolchildren, along with teachers, staff and parents, and injured at least 110.[6] The site had operated as a school since October 2015, and the Rapporteur is aware of no information indicating any military use.[7] Attacks on schools constitute a grave violation against children in armed conflict.[8] The Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran has found reasonable grounds to believe that, in striking the school recklessly given its civilian nature, the United States committed the war crime of launching an indiscriminate attack, and reached the same conclusion in respect of the strikes in Lamerd, Fars Province (see A/HRC/63/61). The Rapporteur sees no reason to depart from those findings. The United States has published no findings from its acknowledged investigation. The Rapporteur's treatment of this incident is accordingly brief, given her communication[9] on the matter and the Mission's work.

9. Less reported are the strikes in July in the southern part of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which killed at least 50 people and severed communities from access to food, medicine and livelihoods: a desalination plant was hit, leaving people without water, and strikes near a children's cancer hospital in Ahvaz forced patients to be evacuated.[10] Those killed included fishers and residents of informal settlements, and Baloch areas were among those struck – people who were already living on the margins and whose deaths must not go unacknowledged.[11]

10. Few strikes by the United States and Israel were preceded by warnings, and those given were often too vague to act on, or inconsistent between the two States. They were disseminated principally through social media and therefore inaccessible to most Iranians because of the Internet shutdown imposed by the Iranian authorities.[12] The two sources of harm converge here: one party issued warnings the population could not receive; the other had made them unreceivable.[13]

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[4] Submission by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Similar figures were reported by non-State actors, e.g., see https://www.hra-iran.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/US-Israeli-Military-Operations-in-Iran-EN.pdf.

[5] For the forensic reconstruction of the strikes, see https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/airstrikes-on-minab.

[6] Submission by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran; see also A/HRC/63/61.

[7] See communication IRN 13/2026.

[8] International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Customary international humanitarian law, rule 135.

[9] See communication IRN 13/2026.

[10] Ibid.

[11] See https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/07/iran-un-experts-alarmed-renewed-escalation-hostilities-call-accountability.

[12] Submission by Human Rights Activists in Iran.

[13] ICRC, Customary international humanitarian law, rules 20–24.

11. Without functioning air raid sirens or other alert mechanisms, many fled cities; those leaving were at times impeded by their own authorities, with vehicle and phone searches conducted, which congested the major exit routes.[14] Beyond the question of whether the authorities took all feasible precautions to protect civilians from the effects of attacks,[15] the Rapporteur was disturbed by reports that parents were urged by Iranian authorities to send their children to checkpoints at night to join the "defenders of the homeland".[16] She received reports of children at checkpoints in multiple cities, including an 11-year-old boy reportedly killed on 11 March by a drone strike while volunteering at a Basij checkpoint in Tehran.[17]

B. Lethal force by security forces

12. The Rapporteur continues to receive reports on the use of excessive and lethal force by the security forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran during the nationwide protests of December 2025 and January 2026, which resulted in thousands of deaths, with figures contested between State and non-State sources (see A/HRC/61/59). The Independent International Fact-Finding Mission has found that many of these violations amount to the crimes against humanity of murder, imprisonment, torture and other inhumane acts, committed as part of a widespread and systematic attack directed against a civilian population (see A/HRC/63/61). She is aware of important work by civil society organizations,[18] with some examining individual responsibility including at command level,[19] and others the means and methods used to suppress the protesters.[20] They all build the record on which recognition and non-recurrence depend. The war has drawn attention away from that work without lessening the need for it.

13. For the families of those killed, the aftermath of the protests continues. They describe pressure from the authorities not to disclose that security forces killed their relatives, bans on public burials and funerals, and dismissal from public sector jobs once a relative's participation in the protests became known. They have been left to grieve under surveillance, and then under bombardment.

14. Reported use of unlawful lethal force by the country's security forces neither began nor ended with the protests, and continued throughout the reporting period. Kurdish-majority provinces have reportedly been heavily militarized, checkpoints multiplied at their entrances and border controls tightened.[21] Two brothers from the Yarsan minority – cultural activists – known for founding a community library, teaching Kurdish and organizing Nowruz celebrations were reportedly shot by Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps forces in late May after a period in hiding.[22] The reported extrajudicial killing of Kurdish *kolbar* (border couriers) and Baloch *sookhtbar* (fuel porters) remains of concern, following a pattern in which border forces opened fire

[14] See https://www.hra-iran.org/the-sound-of-explosions-did-not-stop-civilian-harm-in-iran-after-one-month-of-war/.

[15] ICRC, Customary international humanitarian law, rules 20–24.

[16] See https://farsnews.ir/Ali_Askari/1774444660117033260/آغاز-پویش-رزمندگان-مدافع-وطن-در-تهران (in Persian); and https://www.hra-iran.org/the-sound-of-explosions-did-not-stop-civilian-harm-in-iran-after-one-month-of-war/.

[17] Submission by Human Rights Activists in Iran.

[18] E.g. Abdorrahman Boroumand Centre for Human Rights in Iran, Amnesty International, Hengaw Organization for Human Rights, Human Rights Watch, Iran Human Rights and Iran Human Rights Documentation Center.

[19] Submission by Human Rights Activists in Iran.

[20] Submission by Justice, Investigation and Accountability.

[21] Submission by Kurdistan Human Rights Association – Geneva.

[22] Submission by Hengaw Organization for Human Rights.

from close range and without prior warning.[23] In one such case, the authorities informed the victim's family that he had fallen while crossing the mountainous border terrain, an account contradicted by forensic records showing that he had been shot in the head.

15. Each of these deaths engages the obligation to conduct a prompt, independent and impartial investigation.[24] The Rapporteur has been informed of no investigations in relation to these cases or to any of the cases reported to her since she took up her mandate.

C. Executions

16. Executions did not pause during the war.[25] At least 29 people have been executed in connection with their participation in the January protests, including at least 5 in public.[26] The Law on Strengthening the Penalty for Espionage and Cooperation with the Zionist Regime and Hostile States (referred to hereafter as espionage law) has become an instrument for several of these executions.[27] Its wartime provisions have been applied to domestic dissent so as to recast protesters as agents of the attacking States.

17. Protest-related executions, however, are a small part of the whole. The number of known executions remains extremely high, and the telecommunications shutdown deepened an opacity that long preceded it.[28] Over 80% were for those sentenced to *qisas* (retribution in kind) or for drug-related offences.[29] The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights restricts capital punishment to crimes involving intentional killing,[30] and the Rapporteur recalls her earlier finding that *qisas* is itself incompatible with the Covenant (A/HRC/58/62, paras. 14–18). In one such case, an 18-year-old was sentenced to *qisas*, and executed for a murder allegedly committed when he was 14,[31] in breach of the absolute prohibition on capital punishment for minors.[32] Members of the Kurdish[33] and Baloch minorities[34] continue to be executed out of proportion to their population estimates: Kurds for security-related offences, and Baloch for drug-related offences. Afghans and Iraqis were also among those executed.[35]

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[23] See communication IRN 19/2026; and submissions by Kurdistan Human Rights Network; Balochistan Human Rights Group; Hengaw Organization for Human Rights; Shiwar Women Human Rights Organization.

[24] Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death.

[25] See communications IRN 7/2026; IRN 8/2026; IRN 11/2026; IRN 14/2026; IRN 15/2026; and IRN 17/2026.

[26] Submission by Iran Human Rights.

[27] See communication IRN 16/2026; A/80/349; A/HRC/61/59; and submission by Balochistan Human Rights Group.

[28] Iran Human Rights (444 executions, January–July); Kurdistan Human Rights Association – Geneva (728, January–May); Human Rights Activists in Iran (854, January–July); Abdorrahman Boroumand Centre for Human Rights in Iran (950, January–August).

[29] Submission from Iran Human Rights.

[30] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 6 (2); and Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 36 (2018) on the right to life, para. 35.

[31] Submission by Balochistan Human Rights Group.

[32] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 6 (5).

[33] At least 56 executions (January-early August; Hengaw Organization for Human Rights).

[34] At least 41 executions (January-early August; Hengaw Organization for Human Rights).

[35] Submissions by Iran Human Rights, Association for the Human Rights of the Azerbaijani People in Iran (AHRAZ).

18. People sought to stop the public executions, for which they were reportedly arrested.[36] Resistance has also continued inside the prisons: a 16-day strike at Ghezel Hesar prison led to the reported suspension of drug-related executions there, and the weekly “No death penalty Tuesdays” campaign persists.

III. Detained and missing

A. Mass arrests and enforced disappearances

19. The mass arrests that followed the protests continued throughout the war. Iranian authorities brought national security charges against the exercise of freedom of expression, with allegations of collusion against the State and collaboration with the United States and Israel. Between 28 February and 9 May 2026, over 4,000 arrests on such charges have been reported.[37] Those held included protesters, perceived dissidents, human rights defenders, lawyers, journalists, teachers, artists and members of ethnic and religious minorities, among them children.[38] They reportedly included significant number of Azerbaijani Turk children and youths, including students,[39] many still of whom are still detained, facing heavy sentences.[40] As during the 12-day war of 2025 (see A/HRC/61/59), Baha'is were again accused of links to Israel; Christian converts were arrested under labels such as “Mossad mercenaries”;[41] and Afghans framed as spies for Israel.

20. Reports continue of individuals detained in unofficial or undisclosed facilities, many held incommunicado, without being told the reasons for their arrest or given access to counsel, and with their families unaware of their fate and whereabouts.[42] The war has made the situation worse: United States and Israeli strikes reportedly destroyed some buildings belonging to the Ministry of Intelligence and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, raising concerns about the fate of those held in their undisclosed facilities.[43] The continuing secrecy exposes detainees to heightened risks of torture, death in custody and secret or summary execution.[44] The Rapporteur warns that the reported pattern of refusal to acknowledge detention or disclose detainees’ whereabouts amounts to enforced disappearances.[45]

B. Due process failures

21. Fair trial and due process guarantees have long been a concern.[46] Restrictions on access to counsel of one’s own choosing, particularly in national security cases

[36] Submission by Campaign to Free Political Prisoners in Iran.
[37] Submission by Human Rights Activists in Iran.
[38] Submissions by Kurdistan Human Rights Network; Article 18; and Hana Human Rights Organization.
[39] See communication IRN 7/2026.
[40] Submission by Association for the Human Rights of the Azerbaijani People in Iran (AHRAZ).
[41] Alongside such arrests, Christian residents of the St. Peter’s Evangelical Church compound in Tehran were evicted and the compound confiscated (see communication IRN 10/2026), while Baha'is faced raids on their homes, the closure of their businesses and the confiscation of property.
[42] See communications IRN 4/2026; IRN 5/2026; IRN 7/2026; IRN 11/2026; IRN 12/2026; IRN 14/2026; and IRN 17/2026. See also, submissions by Kurdistan Human Rights Network; and Association for the Human Rights of Azerbaijanis in Iran (ArcDH).
[43] Submission by Kurdistan Human Rights Network.
[44] Ibid.
[45] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, arts. 9 and 14; International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, art. 2; and CED/C/11.
[46] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 14.

and under the note to article 48 of the Code of Criminal Procedure have been repeatedly noted by the Rapporteur as undermining the independence of the legal profession.[47] Other concerns include the denial of access to case files and of adequate time and facilities to prepare a defence; Revolutionary Court proceedings held behind closed doors, with judgments unpublished; and a reliance on confessions obtained through torture or ill-treatment, which must be excluded.[48]

22. Each of these aspects worsened markedly during the reporting period. Senior judicial officials publicly called for expedited proceedings and severe punishment of those alleged to have cooperated with hostile States.[49] The courts obliged: there is a pattern of hearings held online and lasting minutes, proceedings concluded within days, and confessions, widely regarded as forced, broadcast on State media, again within days of arrest. Such broadcasts publicly prejudge guilt, which is incompatible with the presumption of innocence.[50] One protester was sentenced to death less than three weeks after being arrested;[51] another, arrested after the outbreak of war, was executed less than 50 days later.[52]

23. Collective proceedings in capital cases present a further deterioration in fair trial and due process guarantees.[53] In the Alikhani Square case in Isfahan, 12 out of 34 adult defendants were sentenced to death[54] and 5 were executed, 2 of them Afghans. The authorities confirm that 47 people were prosecuted in the case, among them children referred to the Juvenile and Children's Court, and that hearings for the 34 adults lasted five days in total (9 a.m.–8 p.m. each day).[55] That is, at most, a few hours per defendant on capital charges. The authorities also confirm that counsel of each defendant's own choosing was appointed only after the case was referred to court; during the investigation stage, when statements were taken, only court-appointed counsel was present, as the provisions of the note to article 48 of the Code of Criminal Procedure were applied. Similarly, on 31 August, in the Shohada Square case, 10 of 16 defendants were sentenced to death.[56] Criminal responsibility is individual, and differentiated sentences do not of themselves demonstrate that responsibility was established. Such compressed proceedings cannot establish what each defendant had done, and their practice in capital cases renders the sentences arbitrary.

[47] See communications IRN 8/2026; and IRN 11/2025.

[48] Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, art. 15.

[49] See https://www.hamshahrionline.ir/news/1030132/%D8%A7%DA%98%D9%87-%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D9%85%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%DB%8C%D9%85-%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%AA%D8%B4%D8%AF%DB%8C%D8%AF-%D9%85%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B3%DB%8C-%D8%A8%D8%A7-%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%B7%D8%B9%DB%8C%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%B1%D8%A7 (in Persian).

[50] Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 32 (2007) on the right to equality before courts and tribunals and to a fair trial, para. 30.

[51] See communication IRN 17/2026 (regarding the case of Benjamin Naghdi).

[52] See https://www.mizanonline.ir/fa/news/4899262/%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%A8%D8%AA-%D9%85%D8%AC%D8%AA%D8%A8%DB%8C-%DA%A9%DB%8C%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%86-%D8%A8%D9%87-%D9%88%D8%B7%D9%86 (in Persian).

[53] See https://iranhumanrights.org/2026/08/irans-new-weapon-group-prosecutions-of-protesters-send-dozens-toward-the-gallows/.

[54] See communication IRN 17/2026.

[55] Submission by High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

[56] See https://www.hra-news.org/2026/hranews/a-27559646/ (in Persian).

C. Detention conditions during war

24. Prisons in the Islamic Republic of Iran are rarely open to scrutiny. Telephone access had already been cut after the protests, and the Internet shutdown closed what means of communication remained between prisoners, their families and the outside world. The accounts of prison conditions set out below are therefore incomplete. The war began at a time when the prison population was swollen by detained protesters, on top of chronic overcrowding. At Khorramabad prison, in Lorestan Province, where most of those held are serving sentences for ordinary criminal offences, wards with a bed capacity of around 360 held some 500 people, leading to prisoners sleeping on floors or in prayer halls.[57]

25. As the United States-Israeli strikes began, prisoners detained across the country appear to have been left without means of evacuation to a safe area.[58] At Greater Tehran Central Penitentiary, prison officers reportedly welded iron bars and fitted additional locking rings to ward doors. Detaining people in places exposed to the dangers of war, without protection or means of evacuation, is prohibited under international law.[59] There are reports of severe food deprivation, a lack of access to safe drinking water, inadequate sanitation, outbreaks of bedbugs and scabies, and a lack of essential medication and medical treatment.[60] Prisoners who protested their conditions of detention were reportedly met with violence. At Chabahar prison, in Sistan and Baluchestan Province, security forces opened fire on Baloch prisoners protesting the stoppage of food provision, injuring dozens and reportedly killing some.[61] Air strikes near Mahabad prison, in Azarbayjan-e Gharbi Province, prompted prisoners to protest their custody under dangerous conditions; the protest was suppressed through the intervention of special forces.[62]

IV. Those who defend, document and mobilize

26. Civic space in the Islamic Republic of Iran continued to deteriorate during the reporting period. Human rights defenders, environmental activists, writers, artists and journalists continued to face reprisals: arrests, enforced disappearances, prosecutions and severe sentences, including death sentences.[63] Teachers and teachers' union activists faced heightened repression,[64] with at least 60 reportedly arbitrarily detained in 2026 in connection with their participation in the protests or for peaceful civic activism.[65]

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[57] Submission by Human Rights Activists in Iran.

[58] See https://cfppi.org/2026/07/04/die-in-prison-or-die-by-execution-the-islamic-regime-in-iran-left-political-prisoners-with-no-escape-during-war-february-april-2026/.

[59] Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, arts. 27, 28 and 49; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, arts. 7 and 10; and United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), rules 13, 21 and 42.

[60] Submissions by Kurdistan Human Rights Network; and Association for the Human Rights of Azerbaijanis in Iran (ArcDH).

[61] See https://cfppi.org/2026/07/04/die-in-prison-or-die-by-execution-the-islamic-regime-in-iran-left-political-prisoners-with-no-escape-during-war-february-april-2026/.

[62] Submissions by Kurdistan Human Rights Network; and Femena.

[63] See communication IRN 12/2026; and submission by PEN America.

[64] Submission by Volunteer Activists.

[65] See https://iranhumanrights.org/2026/07/iran-intensifies-nationwide-crackdown-on-teachers-and-union-activists/.

27. Lawyers representing protesters were summoned by security forces and warned against taking such cases, under threat of arrest and prosecution or loss of licence.[66] At least 32 lawyers have reportedly been detained, prosecuted, convicted or imprisoned by judicial authorities since the protests.[67] Those who continued to provide legal representation faced restrictions on access to case files, on confidential communication with clients and on effectively participating in court proceedings, in violation of fair trial standards.

28. The espionage law, discussed in section II, significantly broadened the scope of conduct treated as espionage, criminalizing engagement with foreign media, the dissemination of information and the use of satellite communication devices, and imposing severe penalties, including the death penalty. The characterization of peaceful expression as a security offence has had a chilling effect on civic activism and public participation. A pending bill on countering foreign infiltration would go further, criminalizing unapproved contact with foreign persons and entities, with sentences of up to 30 years.[68]

29. Asset confiscation has become a further instrument of transnational repression, and the espionage law expands the grounds on which it may be imposed. Using the espionage law as a basis, judicial authorities initiated measures to identify, freeze and confiscate the assets of at least 400 individuals, including Iranians abroad, among them journalists, media workers, cultural figures and political activists.[69] Furthermore, Iranian authorities published a list of 37 Kurdish leaders and human rights defenders abroad, including Taimoor Aliassi, who were subject to sentences delivered in absentia and extradition requests.[70]

30. The tactics used against individuals vary – their professional standing may be put at risk, their financial security may be removed, criminal punishment may be threatened, their movement may be restricted – but they are all directed towards the same objective: to make defending, documenting and mobilizing too costly to continue.

V. Livelihoods

31. Livelihoods were already deteriorating before the reporting period began, due to the currency collapse, the price rises that triggered the protests and the reimposition

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[66] See communication IRN 2/2026; submission by Abdorrahman Boroumand Centre for Human Rights in Iran; and https://femena.net/2026/02/17/criminalizing-defense-the-arrest-of-lawyers-amid-irans-nationwide-crackdown/.

[67] Submission by Abdorrahman Boroumand Centre for Human Rights in Iran; and https://iranhumanrights.org/2026/06/iran-intensifies-assault-on-independent-lawyers-amid-expanding-post-war-crackdown/.

[68] See https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/09/iran-un-fact-finding-mission-urges-withdrawal-bill-criminalizing-contact.

[69] Submission by Association for the Human Rights of the Azerbaijani People in Iran (AHRAZ); and https://www.mehrnews.com/news/6904853/%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%82%DB%8C%D9%81-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C%DB%8C-%D9%87%D8%A7-%D8%AA%D8%A7-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B2%DA%AF%D8%B1%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%86-%D9%85%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%B9-%D8%A8%D9%87-%D8% (in Persian).

[70] See https://farsnews.ir/kamran_shirazi/1782812621273098752/%DA%AF%D9%81%D8%AA-%D9%88%DA%AF%D9%88-%D8%AC%D8%B2%D8%A6%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%B5%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86-%D9%82%D8%B1%D9%85%D8%B2-%D8%A7%DB%8C%D9%86%D8%AA%D8%B1%D9%BE%D9%84-%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D8%B3%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%DA%AF%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%87-%D9%87%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D8%AA%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B1%DB%8C%D8%B3%D8%AA%DB%8C-%DA%A9%D8%B1%D8%AF%DB%8C (in Persian).

of Security Council sanctions in September 2025 (A/HRC/61/59, paras. 61–63). The war deepened the damage: preliminary estimates put losses from the United States and Israeli strikes at more than $270 billion, equivalent to around 90% of Iran's gross domestic product (GDP). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) projected in March 2026 that between 3.5 million and 4.1 million more people could fall below the $8.30 a day poverty line, which would push the poverty rate towards 41%.[71] The authorities attribute the hardship to external factors – the strikes and unilateral sanctions[72] – but here too the external and internal sources of harm converge. The Internet shutdowns, emergency powers and crackdown were the authorities' own decisions, and years of policy choices had left households fragile before the first strike was launched.[73]

32. Impacts were heaviest on those with the least protection. Informal and contract workers (around 39% of the workforce) and uninsured small workshops[74] were not covered by wartime measures providing for suspension rather than termination of employment contracts and relaxed unemployment insurance rules. In reported cases, even insurance claims approved in March and April remained unpaid by June.[75] Layoffs spread from the petrochemicals industry in Mahshahr and Asaluyeh to fisheries on the southern coast, where daily wage workers depend on each day's catch.

33. Households are struggling to meet basic needs: food and beverage prices rose 134% in the year to June 2026;[76] prices rose for some 80% of medicines; and out-of-pocket payments reached 55% of health expenditure.[77] A household basket cost 70 million tomans (one toman = 10 rials) a month, a multiple of the average wage. Of 56 households surveyed, mostly in Kurdistan, nearly 4 in 5 had postponed treatment or the purchase of medicines, 3 in 4 had taken on debt and almost none had received State assistance.[78] What assistance exists is meagre: a food scheme of some $6.80 per person per month, which UNDP assesses as modest in the context of food inflation.[79] The Iranian authorities' own measures compounded the damage. Telecommunications connectivity was severed for 21 days after the protests began and a further 88 days after the strikes began, falling to between 1 and 4% of ordinary levels.[80] By the Minister of Communications and Information Technology's own account, 10 million people, 11% of the population, depend on stable Internet for their livelihoods.[81] The shutdown ran through the pre-Nowruz weeks on which the year's trade depends; foreign employers stopped hiring remotely from the Islamic Republic of Iran;[82] disruption to the Shetab interbank network interrupted income flows, including for many home-based enterprises run by women.[83]

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[71] See https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2026-03/undp-rbap-military-escalation-impact-iran-report-iran-updated-as-of-31_0.pdf.

[72] Submission by the Islamic Republic of Iran; and A/HRC/61/59, para. 63.

[73] Submission by Association for the Human Rights of Azerbaijanis in Iran (ArcDH).

[74] Submission by Human Rights Activists in Iran; and https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2026-03/undp-rbap-military-escalation-impact-iran-report-iran-updated-as-of-31_0.pdf.

[75] Submission by Volunteer Activists. See also International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, art. 9; and Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, general comment No. 19 (2007) on the right to social security.

[76] Submission by Volunteer Activists.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Submission by Hengaw Organization for Human Rights.

[79] See https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2026-03/undp-rbap-military-escalation-impact-iran-report-iran-updated-as-of-31_0.pdf.

[80] Submissions by Mnemonic; and Volunteer Activists.

[81] Submission by Mnemonic.

[82] Submissions by Mnemonic; and Abdorrahman Boroumand Centre for Human Rights in Iran.

[83] Ibid.

34. Access was not simply withdrawn: it was rationed. The number of "White SIM cards" exempt from filtering rose from under 3,000 to around 50,000, a paid "Internet Pro" tier was introduced in April for selected occupations, and everyone else depended on costly, unstable virtual private networks.[84] The authorities describe the restrictions as temporary and necessary, under article 4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.[85] Their implementation suggests otherwise: shutdowns were the State's first response to both the protests and the war, continued during the ceasefire, and access was granted selectively to users and platforms promoting official narratives.[86] Connectivity was treated not as a security matter but as a privilege and a tool for controlling the public narrative. Restrictions of this selectivity and duration cannot satisfy the principles of legality, necessity and proportionality.[87] By disabling the communications infrastructure, the Iranian authorities breached their obligation to respect the rights to work and to an adequate standard of living. The restrictions were unlawful in their imposition and discriminatory in their operation.

35. Women absorbed a disproportionate share of these impacts. They head some 23% of households and are concentrated in home-based, informal work without contracts or insurance.[88] The Vice-President for Women and Family Affairs indicated that women made up 70% of applicants for home-based business licences, yet that category reportedly remained outside the tiered restoration arrangements.[89] For women, and for LGBT persons who are unsafe in formal workplaces, online work had been a means of independence; its loss forced them to return to households they had left.[90] Afghan migrants dependent on daily wages and remittances, and persons with disabilities who could no longer pay for care, were similarly exposed.[91] Reports of femicide and domestic violence rose: lost income and rising rents removed the means for women to leave violent households; prolonged insecurities heightened tensions at home; and the shutdown severed contact with shelters and with the online spaces that were, for many LGBT persons, their only safe sources of community and counselling.[92]

36. Mandatory hijab enforcement persisted during the reporting period. Cafés, restaurants and shops were closed for staff or customers appearing without hijab, with arrests reported in some cases. The law prescribing these measures, the Law on Protecting the Family through the Promotion of the Culture of Chastity and Hijab, has been formally suspended since December 2024 (A/HRC/58/62, para. 40), yet enforcement appears to have continued.

VI. The environment

37. The environment also suffers harm resulting from both internal policies and external aggression. Decades of internal policy failures have led to years of intense

[84] Submission by Mnemonic.
[85] Submission by the Islamic Republic of Iran.
[86] See https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2026/03/iran-wields-wartime-internet-access-as-a-political-tool.
[87] Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 29 (2001) on derogations from provisions of the Covenant during a state of emergency.
[88] Submission by Volunteer Activists.
[89] Submission by Mnemonic.
[90] Submission by Femena.
[91] Submission by Human Rights Activists in Iran; and Mnemonic.
[92] Submissions by Mnemonic; Femena; Association for the Human Rights of the Azerbaijani People in Iran (AHRAZ); and 6Rang (Iranian Lesbian and Transgender Network). See also https://iranwire.com/en/features/153779-iranian-women-and-war-soaring-violence-turning-houses-into-battlegrounds/.

air pollution, water scarcity and recurring power cuts.[93] Groundwater reserves have been decreasing since 2002, and between 2002 and 2017, more than 12,000 villages were abandoned because of drought.[94] Strikes during the war on critical infrastructure, including power plants, water desalination facilities and fuel storage sites, have deepened those vulnerabilities, threatening access to water, energy and food and compounding the pressures on public health, livelihoods and land.[95]

38. During the war, including the resumption of strikes in June and July 2026, attacks affected critical water, energy, fuel and petrochemical infrastructure, particularly in Khuzestan and Bushehr Provinces. Damage has been documented at the Khomein water reservoir, a desalination facility near the Nikshahr junction, Tis town on the Oman Sea Coast, and the Haftkel city water reservoir in Khuzestan Province,[96] disrupting access to fresh water for tens of thousands of people.

39. On 7 March, four fuel-storage facilities on the margins of Tehran were struck within roughly an hour and burned for more than 36 hours. The fire generated an atmospheric cloud of pollutants over 30 km long and 50 km wide.[97] Rainfall the following morning brought soot and particulate matter to the ground across the city and onto agricultural land to its south, raising concerns about soil and groundwater contamination and about respiratory effects on children, older persons, pregnant women and people with pre-existing conditions.

40. Strikes on major petrochemical facilities in Asaluyeh and Mahshahr caused fires, prolonged air pollution, power and water disruptions, and the shutdown of industrial operations, affecting both surrounding communities and workers.[98] The longer-term risks to soil, water, food security and agricultural productivity fall on communities already facing environmental pressure.

41. Impacts extend to the sea. Possible damage to oil tanks on vessels and subsequent leakage has been associated with areas of pollution caused by oil spills in the waters around the Strait of Hormuz, including off Qeshm island and south-east of Hengam island, an important dolphin habitat.[99] Tides, winds and changing weather conditions could spread the contamination, affecting marine ecosystems and reducing the catches on which coastal communities depend for income and food.

42. The burden is not evenly distributed. Rural and ethnic minority communities, poorer households, workers in damaged industrial zones and residents of water-stressed provinces – among them Khuzestan, Sistan and Baluchestan, and Hormozgan – were already living with the effects of environmental neglect, and the damage has deepened that inequality. Moreover, they are not in a position to readily establish the risks to health to which they are exposed.

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[93] Submission by Association for the Human Rights of Azerbaijanis in Iran (ArcDH). See also A/HRC/61/59 and A/80/349.

[94] Submission by Human Rights Activists in Iran.

[95] See communications IRN 9/2026; ISR 9/2026; and USA 18/2026.

[96] Submission by Human Rights Activists in Iran.

[97] Submission by Forensic Architecture.

[98] See https://www.hra-iran.org/the-sound-of-explosions-did-not-stop-civilian-harm-in-iran-after-one-month-of-war/.

[99] See https://www.sharghdaily.com/%D8%A8%D8%AE%D8%B4-%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%87-220/1104130-%DA%86%D8%B1%D8%A7-%D8%A8%D8%AF%D9%86-%D8%AF%D9%84%D9%81%DB%8C%D9%86-%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%86%D9%87%D9%86%DA%AF-%D9%87%D8%A7-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%AA%D9%86%DA%AF%D9%87-%D9%87 (in Persian).

VII. Conclusion

43. **The reporting period was defined by violence emanating from different sources simultaneously: from the air, on the streets, at the borders and at the gallows. Thousands were killed and millions displaced, while executions proceeded at pace and mass arrests continued.**

44. **The war has not loosened the Iranian authorities' repression of its own population; it has tightened it. Wartime powers have been turned inwards: protests have been framed as orchestrated by the United States and Israel; protesters have been recast as agents of the attacking States; espionage charges have been brought against peaceful expression; and a three-month telecommunications shutdown was imposed that severed livelihoods and concealed the executions and disappearances over those same weeks.**

45. **The Rapporteur does not know of any investigation conducted by the Iranian authorities into alleged extrajudicial killings by security forces, arbitrary executions, preventable deaths in custody or enforced disappearances. The United States has published no findings on its strikes, including those on a school; nor has Israel. Where the use of lethal force by State agents remains unexamined, impunity becomes the norm. The documentation compiled by survivors, families and civil society, often at great risk, is the record on which accountability will one day depend.**

46. **The reporting period closed with a renewed exchange of strikes on 30 August and no ceasefire in place. Whatever this war was said to achieve, it has delivered nothing to the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who continue to bear the bombardment and the repression at the same time – and for whom no end is yet in sight.**

VIII. Recommendations

47. **The Rapporteur appeals to the Islamic Republic of Iran to:**

(a) **Conduct prompt, independent and impartial investigations, consistent with the Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death, into every death caused by its forces – at protests, at borders, in custody – and publish the findings; and prosecute those responsible;**

(b) **Publish accurate, disaggregated data on all persons killed, executed, arrested and detained; return the remains of those killed or executed without preconditions; and end all pressure on bereaved families, including prohibitions on funerals and coerced silence;**

(c) **Establish a moratorium on executions with a view to total abolition, extend nationwide the reported suspension of drug-related executions at Ghezel Hesar prison, and review capital laws and practice for compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and immediately cease public executions;**

(d) **Take all feasible precautions to protect civilians from the effects of attacks, including through the provision of functioning warning systems and unimpeded evacuation, and immediately end the presence and use of children at checkpoints;**

(e) **Immediately and unconditionally release all persons detained for the peaceful exercise of their rights – including protesters, lawyers, journalists,**

teachers, artists, human rights defenders and members of ethnic and religious minorities – and quash convictions based solely on the peaceful exercise of human rights;

(f) **Disclose the fate and whereabouts of all persons subjected to enforced disappearance; end incommunicado and undisclosed detention; and provide all detainees with prompt access to their families, counsel of their own choosing and medical care;**

(g) **Guarantee fair trial rights, including by ending collective proceedings and expedited capital trials, excluding coerced statements, ceasing the recording and broadcasting of confessions, removing the note to article 48 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and reviewing convictions arising from proceedings that fell short of international standards;**

(h) **Ensure that no one is detained in places exposed to the dangers of war; bring detention conditions into compliance with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules); release children arbitrarily detained and ensure that any detention of children is a measure of last resort, in age-appropriate conditions;**

(i) **Guarantee the freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association in law and in practice, and recognize dissent, protest and independent civic activity as legitimate expressions of a healthy society rather than threats to be suppressed;**

(j) **Repeal the Law on Strengthening the Penalty for Espionage and Cooperation with the Zionist Regime and Hostile States and other legislation that unduly restricts civic space; cease reprisals against lawyers representing protesters; and end all forms of transnational repression, including asset freezes and confiscations, in absentia proceedings and reprisals against relatives;**

(k) **Cease all measures facilitating the confiscation, demolition or repurposing of places of worship; end the harassment of religious minorities, including the Protestant, Baha'i and Yarsan communities;**

(l) **Permanently end telecommunications shutdowns; restore full, non-discriminatory connectivity and dismantle tiered, paid and identity-linked access arrangements;**

(m) **Ensure that social protection reaches informal workers, women-headed households and others excluded from wartime measures, including the payment of outstanding unemployment claims;**

(n) **Protect the population from the environmental and public health consequences of the conflict, and ensure non-discriminatory access to healthcare, safe water and food;**

(o) **Cooperate fully with international mechanisms, including by granting access to the country.**

48. **The Rapporteur appeals to the United States of America and Israel to:**

(a) **Cease all military strikes against the Islamic Republic of Iran, refrain from any use of force in violation of the Charter of the United Nations, and ensure that any ceasefire or final agreement incorporates human rights, including accountability, redress and reparation for victims;**[100]

[100] See https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/06/iran-peace-deal-must-not-come-cost-human-rights-warn-un-experts.

(b) **Effectively investigate the legality, targeting, proportionality and precautions of the strikes – including those on the Shajareh Tayyebeh primary school – publish the findings in full, and ensure accountability and reparation where violations are established;**

(c) **Assess and publish the full impacts of the strikes, including casualty figures and consequences for the environment, public health and food security, and on water, health and energy infrastructure.**

49. **The Rapporteur invites all States to:**

(a) **Support the documentation and preservation of evidence of violations by all parties, including by funding civil society organizations, and ensure that international mechanisms examining the situation are adequately resourced;**

(b) **Pursue accountability for violations by all parties, including by preserving and sharing evidence with accountability mechanisms and exercising jurisdiction over international crimes where their national law permits;**

(c) **Provide protection, including emergency visas, to those at risk of punitive measures for having defended defending human rights or documented violations, and cooperate with one another in preventing and responding to transnational repression in their territories;**

(d) **Ensure that sanctions carry effective and broadly applied humanitarian exemptions covering medicines, medical equipment and essential goods;**

(e) **Support avenues for redress and reparation for victims of the armed conflict.**