

Open Letter

To the Permanent Representatives of Member and Observer States of the UN Human Rights Council

2 April 2024

Excellencies,

Re: Extension of the mandates of the UN Special Rapporteur on Iran and the FFMI

We, the undersigned current and former United Nations special procedure mandate-holders and commissioners and experts of UN-mandated investigative bodies, strongly support the renewal of the mandates of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFMI).

We are deeply concerned at the ongoing executions and spike in death penalty sentences observed in Iran in the past year. At least 834 people were executed in 2023, a 43 percent increase compared to 2022, according to the Special Rapporteur on Iran. Those executed included at least 22 women and at least one child. Since the start of nationwide protests in September 2022, the Iranian authorities have executed at least nine men for their involvement in the protests.

Impunity and the absence of accountability for serious human rights violations remain a significant and recurrent feature of Iran's political landscape. We believe this impunity stems in part from the failure to hold Iranian officials accountable for their involvement in the 1988 massacre of political prisoners.

As reiterated by the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran at a [civil society hearing](#) organised by Justice for the Victims of the 1988 Massacre in Iran (JVMI) in Geneva on 15 February 2024, the 1988 extra-judicial executions and enforced disappearances constitute ongoing crimes against humanity.

We support the call by the Special Rapporteur on Iran for the establishment of international accountability mechanisms with respect to long-standing emblematic events that have been met with persistent impunity, including the enforced disappearances and summary and arbitrary executions which took place in 1981 and 1988 and the protests of November 2019.

The mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Iran has been a platform for highlighting and reporting serious human rights violations and abuses conducted by governmental authorities. It must continue to be the voice of millions of Iranians, who are targeted, victimised, and abused and whose fundamental rights are violated persistently and with impunity.

In its first report to the Human Rights Council made public in March 2024, the FFMI stated that violent repression of peaceful protests and pervasive institutional discrimination against women and girls has led to serious human rights violations by the Government of Iran, many amounting to crimes against humanity.

The FFMI report said violations and crimes under international law committed in the context of the protests that began in 2022 include extra-judicial and unlawful killings and murder, unnecessary and disproportionate use of force, arbitrary deprivation of liberty, torture, rape, enforced disappearances, and gender persecution. Authorities are now doubling down on their repression of families of victims, journalists, human rights defenders, lawyers, medical doctors, and many others simply for expressing their views, supporting the protesters, or seeking truth and justice for victims.

State authorities at the highest levels have encouraged, sanctioned, and endorsed human rights violations through statements justifying the acts and conduct of the security forces. They engaged in a disinformation campaign depicting protesters as “rioters”, “foreign agents” and or “separatist” groups, according to the FFMI. The FFMI has also received testimonies that detainees were offered reduced punishment if they stated that their injuries were caused by opposition groups.

The authorities in Iran have prevented and obstructed efforts of victims and their families to obtain a remedy and reparation. Victims face a justice system lacking independence, transparency and accountability, the Fact-Finding Mission found.

It is time to challenge the ongoing atrocities in Iran. Owing to the critical work of both the Special Rapporteur on Iran and the FFMI, we urge Member States of the Human Rights Council to vote in favour of resolution [A/HRC/55/L.6](#), extending both mandates for a period of one year.

Sincerely,

SIGNED:

Prof. Fabián Salvioli - (Argentina)

UN Special Rapporteur on Truth, Justice and Reparation (2018-present)

Clément Nyaletsossi Voule - (Togo)

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Chair of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea (2014-2016); Chair of the UN Commission on Human Rights (2004); Assistant Secretary-General of the UN in New York and Executive Director of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (2007-2013)

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