



Justice for the Victims of the 1988 Massacre in Iran (JVMI)

## International Community Must Act to Prevent a Repeat of Iran's 1988 Massacre

23 July 2025

We call on the global community to urgently confront the escalating wave of political executions and entrenched impunity in Iran. The risk of another mass atrocity, reminiscent of the 1988 massacre, is alarmingly real.

On 7 July 2025, Fars News—linked to the Revolutionary Guards (IRGC)—published an editorial praising the 1988 executions of over 30,000 political prisoners as a ‘successful historical experience’. The editorial, entitled ‘*Why the 1988 Executions Should Be Repeated*’, openly advocated for similar measures against current detainees, framing political dissent as a threat to national security. This rhetoric reflects a dangerous effort to normalise state-sponsored killings.

On 12 July 2025, three opposition activists—Farshad Etemadi-Far, Masoud Jamei, and Alireza Mardasi—were sentenced to death by Branch 1 of the Ahvaz Revolutionary Court after two years of torture, accused of ‘waging war on God’ (moharebeh) over their support for the opposition PMOI (MEK). In July 2025, the Supreme Court rejected a fourth request for judicial review for political prisoners Behrouz Ehsani and Mehdi Hassani, leaving them at imminent risk on death row. There are currently dozens of political prisoners on death row on similar charges.

Since President Masoud Pezeshkian took office, executions have surged—with over 1,300 carried out, some 650 in 2025 alone.

These incitements and executions echo the horrors of 1988, when a fatwa from then-Supreme Leader Khomeini led to mass executions targeting PMOI members and other dissidents. The July 2024 report from the UN Special Rapporteur on Iran described those extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances as ongoing crimes against humanity and genocide.

Warning signs are mounting. On 4 July 2025, ten UN Special Procedures expressed alarm over the crackdown since hostilities began on 13 June 2025 and the subsequent ceasefire, noting that state-media rhetoric, including calls for ‘surveillance’ and ‘killings’, echoes the ‘1988 atrocities’. Political prisoner Saeed Masouri, a key figure in the ‘No To Executions Tuesdays’ campaign, recently smuggled out a letter from Qezel Hesar Prison after an attempt to forcibly transfer him. He warns that his removal is a prelude to executing others on death row and that, just as in 1988, ‘a crime is in progress’.

We must not repeat the silence of 1988.

We urge the UN Special Rapporteur on Iran, Dr Mai Sato, her colleagues in the Special Procedures, and the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Iran (FFMI) to condemn these incitements and executions. We call on UN High Commissioner Volker Türk to speak out unequivocally against Iran’s systematic human rights violations.

We further call on Canada and other co-sponsors of the UN General Assembly’s Third Committee resolution on Iran to include an explicit reference to the 1988 massacre in this year’s resolution.

The international community failed to act in 1988. It must not fail again. The responsibility to prevent these crimes against humanity from being repeated rests with the United Nations and its member states.

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66. **Achille Campagna** - (San Marino): Member of the List of Counsel for the International Criminal Court (ICC)
67. **Arbana Xharra** - (Kosovo): Recipient of US Secretary of State's International Women of Courage Award 2015

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221. **Prof. Mary Travis Bassett** - (United States): Executive Director, Francois-Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health
222. **Prof. Lucius Cafilisch** - (Liechtenstein): Former Judge, European Court of Human Rights

223. **Dr. Andrew Woolford** - (Canada): Former President, International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS); Professor of Sociology and Criminology, University of Manitoba
224. **Rabbi Abraham Cooper** - (United States): Chair, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (2023-2024)
225. **Professor, Sorbonne University** - (Iceland): France
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228. **Prof. Frederik Harhoff** - (Denmark): Judge, International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) (2007-2013)
229. **Eoin McGonigal** - (Ireland): Senior Counsel
230. **Gulnara Shahinian** - (Armenia): UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, Including Its Causes and Consequences (2008-2014)
231. **Prof. Sir Mark Vlasic** - (United States): Legal Officer, Office of the Prosecutor, UN International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) (2001-2003)
232. **Prof. Jan Pronk** - (The Netherlands): Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Sudan (2004-2006); Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations (1985-1986)
233. **Sir Gregory P. Winter** - (United Kingdom): 2018 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry
234. **Yasmin Sooka** - (South Africa): Chair of the UN Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan (2016-present); former Commissioner, South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission
235. **Prof. Eric Stover** - (United States): Co-Faculty Director, Human Rights Center, School of Law, University of California, Berkeley
236. **Dominique Rougeventre** - (France): Spokesperson, LE HAVRE Contre la peine de mort
237. **Dr. Sigríður Dúna Kristmundsdóttir** - (Iceland): Ambassador of Iceland to South Africa (2006-2008); Ambassador of Iceland to Norway (2008-2001); Member of Parliament (1983-1987)
238. **David J. Wineland** - (United States): 2012 Nobel Laureate in Physics
239. **Dr. Francisco Javier Zamora Cabot** - (Spain): Emeritus Professor of Private international law, Universitat Jaume I de Castellón, Spain
240. **Astrid Thors** - (Finland): Former Minister of Migration and European; Former OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities
241. **Janez Janša** - (Slovenia): Prime Minister of Slovenia (2020-2022, 2012-2013, 2004-2008)
242. **Dr. Steven McCulloch** - (United Kingdom): Senior Lecturer, University of Winchester
243. **Dr. Ana Brian Nougrères** - (Uruguay): UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Privacy (2021-present)

244. **Richard C. Dieter** - (United States): Former Executive Director, Death Penalty Information Center; Adjunct Professor of Law, Catholic University of America
245. **R. Bruce McColm** - (United States): President, Institute for Democratic Strategies; former Executive Director, Freedom House
246. **Prof. Irwin Cotler** - (Canada): Former Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
247. **Prof. Gerard Quinn** - (Ireland): UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2020-2023)
248. **Prof. Heiner Bielefeldt** - (Germany): UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief (2010-2016); former Director, German Institute for Human Rights (DIMR)
249. **Melissa Parke** - (Australia): Member, UN Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen (2017–2021); Former Federal Labor Member for Fremantle; Former Minister for International Development (AusAID)
250. **Prof. Gill H. Boehringer** - (Australia): Dean (ret.), Macquarie University Law School, Sydney
251. **Prof. Timothy J. Christian KC** - (Canada): Chief Federal Negotiator of the Government of Canada (1996–2010); Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Alberta (1985-1995)
252. **Amb. Hans Corell** - (Sweden): Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and the Legal Counsel of the United Nations (1994-2004)
253. **Dr. Stephanie Wolfe** - (United States): Professor, Department of Political Science and Philosophy, Weber State University (WSU)
254. **Jean Flamme** - (Belgium): Member, Defence Committee of the International Criminal Court Bar Association (ICCBA)
255. **Amb. Amanda Ellis** - (New Zealand): Ambassador and Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations in Geneva (2013-2016)
256. **Dr. Felicity Gerry KC** - (United Kingdom): International barrister, Crockett Chambers, Melbourne and Libertas Chambers, London
257. **Christian Roth** - (France): Lawyer; Founder and Honorary President, European Lawyers' Union (Union des Avocats Européens - UAE)
258. **Param Kumaraswamy** - (Malaysia): Former UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers (1994-2003)
259. **Rupert Skilbeck** - (United Kingdom): Director, REDRESS
260. **Emilie Palamy Pradichit** - (Thailand): Founder & Executive Director, Manushya Foundation
261. **Patrick Baudouin** - (France): Honorary President, International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH); Honorary President, Ligue des Droits de l'Homme (LDH)
262. **Gilbert Mitterrand** - (France): President, France Libertés - Fondation Danielle Mitterrand
263. **Dr. Rahib Salih** - (Switzerland): Director, Al-Rafidain International Center for Justice and Human Rights – Geneva

264. **Prof. Maria Neus Torbisco-Casals** - (Switzerland): Adjunct Professor; Senior Research Fellow, Albert Hirschman Centre on Democracy, Geneva Graduate Institute
265. **Dr. Katerina Hatzikidi** - (United Kingdom): Postdoctoral Researcher, Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen (Germany)
266. **Prof. Tom Shakespeare** - (United Kingdom): Professor, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
267. **Prof. Terry Coonan** - (United States): Executive Director, Florida State University Center for the Advancement of Human Rights
268. **António Carmona Rodrigues** - (Portugal): Mayor of Lisbon (2005-2007)
269. **Pierre Bercis** - (France): President, Nouveaux Droits de l'Homme (NDH)
270. **Prof. Jean Ziegler** - (Switzerland): UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food (2000-2008); former Vice-President of the UN Human Rights Council Advisory Committee
271. **Hon. Michael Kirby** - (Australia): Former Chair of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights Violations in North Korea (DPRK); UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Cambodia (1993-1996); former Justice of the High Court of Australia
272. **Prof. Kip S. Thorne** - (United States): 2017 Nobel Laureate in Physics
273. **Vania Costa Ramos** - (Portugal): Chair, European Criminal Bar Association
274. **Audronius Ažubalis** - (Lithuania): Foreign Minister of Lithuania (2010-2012)
275. **Alice Benhamou Panetta** - (France): President, Vivent Les Femmes (VLF); Chevalier de Legion d'Honneur
276. **Alexis Anagnostakis** - (Greece): Barrister, ECBA Human Rights Officer
277. **Ellen Samyn** - (Belgium): Member of Parliament
278. **Daniele Vecchi** - (Italy): Partner, Gianni & Origoni
279. **James Joseph** - (United Kingdom): Director, The Duty Legacy
280. **Gari Duran Vadell** - (Spain): Former Senator; Vice President, INCO Human Rights
281. **Gwendolyn Albert** - (Czech Republic): Human rights activist
282. **Ingrid Betancourt** - (Colombia): Former Senator and Presidential candidate
283. **Maria Elena Elverdin** - (Argentina): Honorary President of FIFCJ (Federation Internationale des Femmes des Carrieres Juridiques)
284. **Ana Paula Barros** - (Portugal): Lawyer; former Member of Parliament
285. **Dr. Paulo Ilich Bacca** - (Colombia): Deputy Director, Center for the Study of Law, Justice and Society (Dejusticia)
286. **Rev. Susan Lee** - (United States): Former President, US Women's Caucus; Former Master Lecturer in Social Sciences, Boston University
287. **Miguel Ángel Rodríguez Echeverría** - (Costa Rica): President of Costa Rica (1998-2002)

288. **Rosalía Arteaga Serrano** - (Ecuador): President of Ecuador (1997)
289. **Dr. Maude Barlow** - (Canada): Former Senior Advisor on Water to the President of the United Nations General Assembly; Former Chairperson of the Council of Canadians
290. **Prof. Joseph A. Cannataci** - (Malta): UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Privacy (2015-2021)
291. **Prof. Margaret Greenfields** - (United Kingdom): Professor of Social Policy
292. **Helena Carreiras** - (Portugal): Minister of National Defence of Portugal (2022-2024)
293. **Dominique Pradelle** - (France): Professor, Sorbonne University
294. **Peter Murphy** - (Australia): Co-Secretary, Australian Supporters of Democracy in Iran
295. **Justice for the Victims of the 1988 Massacre in Iran (JVMI)** - (United Kingdom)
296. **Iran Human Rights Monitor (IranHRM)** - (Sweden)
297. **CIVICUS** - (South Africa)
298. **German Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (GCADP)** - (Germany)
299. **Italian Federation for Human Rights - Federazione Italiana Diritti Umani (FIDU)** - (Italy)
300. **Hands Off Cain** - (Italy)
301. **Center for the Study of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Crimes Against Humanity, The Graduate Center—City University of New York (CUNY)** - (United States)
302. **Global Justice Intelligence Eyes (GJIE)** - (United States)
303. **Intersection Association for Rights and Freedoms** - (Tunisia)
304. **Ligue Marocaine de la citoyenneté et des droits de l'homme (LMCDH)** - (Morocco)
305. **Skyline International for Human Rights (SIHR)** - (Sweden)
306. **LE HAVRE Contre la peine de mort** - (France)
307. **Buenos Aires Chapter of the Society for Orphaned Armenian Relief (SOAR)** - (Argentina)
308. **Manushya Foundation** - (Thailand)
309. **Le Comité de soutien aux droits de l'homme en Iran (CSDHI)** - (France)
310. **Women's Human Rights International Association (WHRIA)** - (France)
311. **L'chaim: Jews Against the Death Penalty** - (United States)
312. **Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law (KIBHR)** - (Kazakhstan)
313. **NGO Little People of Kosova** - (Kosovo)
314. **West African Human Rights Defenders Network / Réseau Ouest Africain des Défenseurs des Droits Humains (WAHRDN/ROADDH)** - (Togo)
315. **World Without Genocide** - (United States)
316. **Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia** - (Serbia)

317. **Commission for International Justice and Accountability (CIJA)** - (United States)
318. **Nouveaux Droits de l'Homme (NDH)** - (France)
319. **Vivent Les Femmes (VLF)** - (France)
320. **The Duty Legacy** - (United Kingdom)
321. **The Alliance for the Prevention of Atrocity Crimes** - (United Kingdom)
322. **International Council of Human Rights, Freedom and Democracy (INCO Human Rights)** - (Spain)