



General Assembly

Distr.: General
21 August 2025

English and French only

Human Rights Council

Sixtieth session

8 September–3 October 2025

Agenda item 2

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

**Joint written statement submitted by International
Federation of Business and Professional Women, a non-
governmental organization in general consultative status,
Women's Human Rights International Association,
Association Internationale pour l'égalité des femmes, Human
Rights Research League, Les femmes, la force du
changement, WomenNC-NC Committee for CSW/CEDAW,
Women's Network for Change, World Without Genocide,
non-governmental organizations in special consultative
status, Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié entre les
peuples, a non-governmental organization on the roster***

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[4 August 2025]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



International Community Must Act to Prevent a Repeat of the 1988 Massacre in the Islamic Republic of Iran

We call on the Member and Observer States of the United Nations Human Rights Council to urgently confront the escalating wave of political executions and entrenched impunity in the Islamic Republic of 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 (1) 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. (2)

On 27 July 2025, political prisoners Behrouz Ehsani (70) and Mehdi Hassani (48) were executed (3) in Qezel Hesar Prison without prior notice to them or their families, who were also denied a final visit. They were arrested in late 2022, subjected to torture and ill-treatment to extract forced confessions, and tried in grossly unfair proceedings before the Tehran Revolutionary Court in August 2024. On 7 January 2025, the authorities notified their lawyers that their convictions and death sentences, issued on 15 September 2024, had been upheld by the Supreme Court for the charges of “armed rebellion against the state” (baghi), “waging war on God” (moharebeh) and “corruption on earth” (efsad-e fel-arz) in relation to their alleged membership in the political opposition group PMOI (MEK).

There are currently dozens of other political prisoners on death row, including 14 facing charges similar to Ehsani and Hassani. They are considered to be in imminent danger.

Political prisoner Yaqub Derakhshan (50) was sentenced to death on 24 July 2025 by the Rasht Revolutionary Court after a sham trial on the charge of “rebellion” (baghi) over his alleged membership in the PMOI. He was denied legal counsel, tried via videoconference, and sentenced without evidence—all gross violations of due process.

On 12 July 2025, three opposition activists—Farshad Etemadi-Far (30), Masoud Jamei (47), and Alireza Mardasi (52)—were sentenced to death by the Ahvaz Revolutionary Court after two years of torture, accused of ‘waging war on God’ (moharebeh) over their support for the opposition PMOI.

Since President Masoud Pezeshkian took office, executions have surged—with over 1,400 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 landmark report (4) on the Islamic Republic of Iran’s Atrocity Crimes by the then-UN Special Rapporteur on the Islamic Republic of 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 (5) over the crackdown in the Islamic Republic of Iran since hostilities with Israel began on 13 June 2025 and the subsequent ceasefire, noting that state-media rhetoric, including calls for ‘surveillance’ and ‘killings’, echoes the ‘1988 atrocities’. Days before he was forcibly exiled to a prison in Zahedan, south-east of the Islamic Republic of Iran, at the end of July 2025, political prisoner Saeed Masouri, a key figure in the ‘No to Executions Tuesdays’ campaign, smuggled out a letter from Qezel Hesar Prison. He warned that his removal is a prelude to executing others on death row and that, just as in 1988, ‘a crime is in progress’. (6)

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.

Recommendations

We urge the United Nations Human Rights Council and its Member States to take immediate and decisive action to address the dire human rights situation in Islamic Republic of Iran. Specifically, we call for:

1. **Investigation and Condemnation of Incitement to Atrocity Crimes:** The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the 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) should urgently investigate the Fars News Agency's editorial as incitement to commit atrocity crimes and issue a public condemnation. This rhetoric violates international human rights law, including the prohibition on incitement to violence and mass murder.
2. **Strengthening Accountability Mechanisms:** Building on the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on Islamic Republic of Iran's 2024 landmark report, the UN Human Rights Council must establish an international investigative and accountability mechanism to preserve evidence, document ongoing violations, and pursue justice for the 1988 massacre and related crimes. The Fars News editorial underscores the urgency of such a mechanism to counter the authorities' impunity.
3. **Urgent Measures to Prevent Further Executions:** The international community must take urgent measures to prevent Islamic Republic of Iran from executing political prisoners on death row. This includes strong public condemnations, diplomatic pressure, and targeted sanctions against individuals and entities responsible for these violations.
4. **Protection for Victims, Survivors, and Human Rights Defenders:** The UN must take concrete steps to protect survivors, families of victims, and human rights defenders in Islamic Republic of Iran and the diaspora, who face harassment, intimidation, and reprisals for seeking truth and justice. The editorial's call for renewed executions places these individuals at heightened risk.
5. **Inclusion in UN Resolutions:** We echo the call for the UN General Assembly's Third Committee to include specific references to the 1988 massacre and ongoing threats, such as those expressed by Fars News, in its 2025 resolution on the Islamic Republic of Iran. This would signal a commitment to ending the culture of impunity that enables such dangerous rhetoric.
6. **Addressing Enforced Disappearances:** The Special Rapporteur's upcoming report on the Islamic Republic of Iran should continue to document and challenge the impunity stemming from the 1988 mass extra-legal executions and enforced disappearances, which constitute ongoing crimes against humanity.

The victims of the 1988 massacre and the Iranian people deserve nothing less than truth, justice, and accountability. The responsibility to prevent these crimes against humanity from being repeated rests with the United Nations and its Member States. We must not repeat the silence of 1988.

Hands off Cain, Italian Federation for Human Rights - FIDU, Magistrats européens pour la démocratie et les libertés - MEDEL, Women's UN Report Network – WUNRN, Iran Human Rights Monitor, Justice for the Victims of the 1988 Massacre in Iran (JVMI), Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, The Duty Legacy, The Alliance for the Prevention of Atrocity Crimes, Synergy for Justice, Commission for International Justice and Accountability (CIJA), Intersection Association for Rights and Freedoms, Nouveaux Droits de l'Homme (France), Association des

Femmes Iraniennes en France – AFIF, Associazione delle Donne Democratiche Iraniane in Italia, Iranska Kvinnosamfundet i Sverige (Sweden), The Rev Bill Crews Foundation, Associazione Italiana per i Diritti Umani in Iran, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.

1 - Fars News, 7 July 2025, “Why the 1988 Executions Should Be Repeated” -

<https://farsnews.ir/Sadra1404/1751898735918094535>

2 – JVMI, 9 July 2025, “Iran’s State Media Calls for Repetition of 1988 Massacre, JVMI Urges UN Action” - <https://iran1988.org/irans-state-media-calls-for-repetition-of-1988-massacre-jvmi-urges-un-action/>

3 – Amnesty International, 28 July 2025, Iran: “Horrible secret executions amid mounting political repression” - <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/07/iran-horrifying-secret-executions-amid-mounting-political-repression/>

4 – OHCHR, 17 July 2024, ““Atrocity Crimes” and grave violations of human rights committed by the Islamic Republic of Iran (1981–1982 and 1988): Detailed findings of Mr. Javaid Rehman, the Special Rapporteur on situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran”

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/iran/20240717-SR-Iran-Findings.pdf>

5- OHCHR, 4 July 2025, “UN experts urge Iran to choose protection over repression after ceasefire” - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/07/un-experts-urge-iran-choose-protection-over-repression-after-ceasefire>

6 - Open Letter by political prisoner Saeed Masouri, 17 July 2025, “Saeed Masouri’s Letter from Qezel Hesar Prison: A Crime in Progress” - <https://iran-hrm.com/2025/07/17/saeed-masouris-letter-from-qezel-hesar-prison-a-crime-in-progress/>