



HRC-58: HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN

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Joint ID with the Special Rapporteur and the International Fact Finding Mission

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Joint ID with the Special Rapporteur on the Islamic Republic of Iran and Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran

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Item 4: Human Rights Situations that require the attention of the Council



By Lorenzo Bersellini / GICJ

Executive Summary

On 18 March 2025, the Human Rights Council convened during its 58th session to hold a joint interactive dialogue on the situation of human rights in Iran. One of the main themes that has been discussed was the increase in the use of the death penalty by Iranian authorities, which reached a new height last year. Moreover, reports of gender and sexual-based violence, including killings, arbitrary detention, and discrimination affecting women and girls as well as members of religious minorities were all brought forward by Ms. **Mai Sato**, the current **Special Rapporteur (SR)**, and by Ms. **Sara Hossain**, Ms. **Shaheen Sardar Ali**, and Ms. **Viviana Krsticevic**, members of the **Independent International Fact-Finding Mission (IFFM) in Iran**.

Ms. Sato presented her first report ([A/HRC/58/62](#)) since assuming the mandate in 2024, whereas the IFFM exposed the findings of their latest report ([A/HRC/58/63](#)) focusing on the human rights violations and crimes against humanity committed by the State in response to the widespread protests headed by the “Women, Life, Freedom” movement in Iran since 2022.

Both the SR and the IFFM denounced the increased recurrence of the death penalty. More than 900 executions in 2024 alone have been registered, making Iran the highest per capita user of the death penalty. Of all these cases, only 10% were officially communicated by state channels, showing the

lack of transparency signaled by the SR as a critical issue. The death penalty has been used as a way to silence dissent, including for children, and punish non-lethal crimes, including drug dealing.

The UN Human Rights Mechanisms also shed light on the systematic legal, economic, and political discrimination suffered by women and girls, as well as members of minority groups.. The unequal recognition of these categories of people in front of the law exposes them to further vulnerability.

During the debate, the Council was divided between delegates that applauded the SR and IFFM for their findings - calling on the Council to renew their mandate and to further investigate the human rights violations given the widespread report and alarming trends witnessed in the country - and those delegates that, instead, echoed Iran in denouncing the perceived politicization and instrumentalization of the Council by western states seeking to overthrow the current government.

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) welcomes the SR and IFFM for their reports that will serve as the basis for future accountability for the egregious crimes perpetrated by state authorities in Iran. GICJ is appalled by the widespread use of the death penalty, particularly when it comes to children. Furthermore, GICJ urges the government of Iran to grant full rights and protection to all its citizens, including women and girls and members of religious or ethnic minorities, unequivocally siding with the victims of the regime's violations.

Background

Respect for human rights in Iran has seen a sharp decline in the aftermath of the 2022 protests led by the “Women, Life, Freedom” movement in response to the killing of a young Kurdish woman, Jina Masha Amini, on 16 September 2022. She died while in the custody of the morality police, who had detained her for not wearing the hijab properly. The incident was seen as the epitome of Iran’s oppressive policies that discriminated against women and minorities, allowed police brutality, increased government corruption, and imposed extreme religious views. People therefore took to the streets across the country to express their grievances against the system imposed on them by the government. The reaction by security forces was brutal and a large-scale crackdown ensued. According to the UN, credible figures indicated over 550 deaths by 2024, including at least 49 women and 68 children, spread across 26 out of the 31 regions in the country.

The repression of the protests is to be understood amid a broad and deeply-rooted discriminatory system that infringes upon several human rights standards.

The right to life is endangered by the excessive use of the death penalty, including for crimes falling below the internationally recognized threshold for its lawful application. Arbitrary detention and arrests of national and foreign citizens - including human rights defenders, activists, teachers, and journalists - that criticise the government are common practices, often accompanied by the use of torture. According to Freedom House, Iran ranks as one of the least free countries in the world in terms of political rights and civil liberties.

Structural inequality against women affects them from multiple perspectives. Socially, the imposition of strict laws, including the yet-to-be-approved Chastity and Hijab Law, severely limits women's freedom. In terms of inequality, there is an 88% gap in terms of seats occupied by men and women in the Majles (or Parliament) and a 54% gap in terms of labor force participation (of people older than

15) according to the UNDP Gender Inequality Index of 2022. Legally, testimonies coming from women are worth half of those of men and there is no criminalisation of femicide in Iran's penal code.

Minorities, including the Baha'i, Kurds, and Baluchis, face structural discrimination in terms of employment, access to education and public offices, and lack of adequate housing, with the result of being progressively isolated from the rest of the country. The UN also noted the disproportionate killings and injuries suffered by minorities in the context of the 2022 protests.

Report of the Special Rapporteur

Ms. **Mao Sato**, the **Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran**, presented the finding of her first report (A/HRC/58/62) as a mandate-holder, submitted under HRC Resolution 55/19.

The Special Rapporteur examined the situation in the country through a gendered lens, emphasising the harsh reality affecting women and girls in Iran. Moreover, she analysed the situation of women belonging to ethnic or religious minorities, who face cross-cutting discrimination due to their identity. Violence against women, including gender-related killings, jeopardises their right to life, equality, dignity, and freedom from torture, stemming from a complex web of violation of civil, political, social, cultural, and economic rights.

Throughout the report, the Rapporteur paid special attention to three underlying thematic issues: transparency, gender, and the right to life.

The Death Penalty and Deprivation of the Right to Life

As stated earlier, 2024 has been the year with the highest number of executions since 2015, reaching 900 according to data collected by NGOs and victims' families on the ground. This is only an estimate due to the lack of official publications of information related to capital executions. In total, only 10% of known executions have been announced publicly by the State either through statements or their websites. The Special Rapporteur also stated how the lack of available public information on the use of the death penalty keeps the population in the dark about the reasons behind the imposition of death sentences and it infringes upon fundamental rights such as access to timely and adequate legal defence, the guarantee of a fair trial, and the prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. The absence of reliable information also increases the doubt regarding the arbitrary nature of the death penalty's application.

The Special Rapporteur not only denounced the surge in capital punishment impositions - which makes Iran the highest per capita user of death penalty globally - but also its disproportionate application. There is a widespread belief that no state can impose lethal force on its citizens without breaching human rights obligations. Nevertheless, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights permits the use of the death penalty for the most serious crimes, including intentional killing. According to Ms. Sato, more than 50% of death penalties in Iran were carried out due to drug offenses, 43% for homicides (being treated as "qisas", or retribution in kind), 3% for national security offences (including political activism against the state) and 2% for sexual offences. Adultery and religious offences also are considered crimes punishable with death.

In 2024, between 29 to 31 women are believed to have been executed, the highest number in the last 10 years. Due to the small number of cases related to women compared to men in Iran and globally, the experience of women facing the death penalty has been greatly overlooked in research and advocacy. Similar to many other parts of the world, Iranian women sentenced to death are accused of homicide. Nevertheless, there is no mitigation in the law for the fact that their actions have often resulted from gender-based violence, including domestic violence, child marriages and self-defense against rape.

To underscore the harsh reality withstood by women in Iran, Ms. Sato stated that 179 cases of femicide were reported in 2024. They were categorised as “honour-related killings” perpetrated by fathers, husbands or ex-husbands, brothers, other male relatives, and boyfriends. According to Iranian law, perpetrators of honour-related killings can see their sentences reduced in some cases. For instance, husbands may be exempted from punishment in case of killing for adultery if certain conditions are met. Killers may also be excluded from qisas if the victim committed an act falling under hadd - Islamic crimes including that of adultery. In a separate section of her report, the Special Rapporteur reflected on the legal discrimination of women in the country, which further leaves them in a vulnerable position to defend themselves in court. There is no existing law that currently decriminalises domestic violence. Moreover, reports prove that women receive blame and shame by public authorities for disclosing private matters when bringing a case for domestic violence. Women's testimony is also considered to be worth half of that of a man, reducing the possibility of receiving justice for the violence committed against them.

Women and men belonging to minority groups, particularly the Baha’i, Balochi, and Kurds, suffer from the disproportionate application of the death penalty and arbitrary executions by state authorities. They are usually accused of posing a “threat to national security” and “propaganda against the state”.

Freedom of expression, association, and Peaceful Assembly

Labour organisers, teachers, cultural rights activists, human rights defenders, and journalists all faced threats due to their activities and underwent interrogation, arrest, detention, and sentencing. The most common charges pressed against them were those of “forming a group with the intention of acting against national security” and “propaganda against the state”. This not only contributed to silencing activists but also reduced civic space in the country.

The Special Rapporteur received multiple cases of arrests of activists advocating for women’s rights. Before being reduced in appeal, Jina Modares Gorji, a woman activist from the Kurdistan region, was sentenced to 21 years of prison under various charges. Wide-ranging reports of sexual violence used against advocates of women’s rights have been collected by Ms. Sato.

She also raised particular concern for the new law, pending approval to enter into force, on the “Promotion of the Culture of Chastity and Hijab”, which is meant to further criminalise hijab non-compliance for anyone over 12 years of age, both in physical spaces and online. Penalties for failure to respect the law could include the death penalty under the offence of “corruption on earth”. Furthermore, the law would contribute to creating an environment of distrust and suspicion among the population through the imposition of mandatory reporting by citizens, businesses and other entities, who would effectively be “enforcers” of the law.

Treatment of Detainees and Prisoners

Due process concerns for those arrested and subject to trial were repeatedly raised. Instances of physical and psychological violence amounting to torture during arrest and detention or denial of access to medical care for prisoners were all flagged as alarming signs of mistreatment.

Prison conditions were also depicted under very negative terms. Inadequate ventilation, contaminated waters, pest infestations, and severe overcrowding are some of the agonizing traits of Iranian prisons. This also affects women and children who live with their imprisoned mothers or are jailed for their crimes.

Other Areas

Other areas of concern highlighted by the Special Rapporteur were child marriage and unequal access to education and employment. These problems disproportionately affect women and members of religious or ethnic groups and are reinforced by societal stigma and legal discrimination. The Special Rapporteur noted the progress made in both areas by Iran, stressing the need, however, to further improve the situation. As per the last official statistic released by state authorities, 26,974 girls under the age of 15 (compared to 15 boys) and 138,151 women and girls between the ages of 16 and 19 (compared to 23,138 boys) were married. In terms of education and employment, despite women outnumbering men in universities, the Special Rapporteur reported that women's labor force participation remains below 14%, compared to 71% for men. Minorities have limited access to higher education. In particular, members of the Baha'i community face severe challenges, as universities are instructed to expel them upon identification, and university entrance exams limit participation to members of constitutionally recognized minorities.

Finally, the report focuses on sanctions imposed on Iran. The Special Rapporteur acknowledged the impact that these measures are causing on the civilian population, especially in humanitarian terms. She, therefore, urged states imposing sanctions to implement some exemptions to alleviate the impact on Iranian citizens. Nevertheless, she also pointed at structural issues, resource allocation, and government practices as other sources of economic instability that are independent of the sanctions and that further jeopardise the enjoyment of full economic and development rights for the Iranian population.

Recommendations

While encouraging further and more constructive collaboration between her office and the state, the Special Rapporteur appealed to Iran, among other mentions, to :

- improve data collection and transparency;
- establish a moratorium on the death penalty and to urgently abolish it for individuals below the age of 18;
- protect prisoners and detainees from all forms of torture and other cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment or punishment;
- ensure protection of human rights defenders, activists, journalists, lawyers, and their families from threats, intimidation, arbitrary arrest, detention, or other sanctions;
- release those detained for exercising their fundamental rights;
- ensure equal protection under the law and gender equality.

Report of Independent Fact-Finding Mission

The **Independent Fact-Finding Mission (IFFM) on the Islamic Republic of Iran** released a report, under resolution 55/19, on the human rights violations and crimes against humanity in the context of the crackdown by the state on those who participated or contributed to the 2022 protests, sparked by the assassination of Jina Masha Amini for not properly concealing her hair with the hijab. They collected more than 38,000 evidence items documenting the violations, in particular regarding women and children.

Their efforts were complicated by the minimal collaboration offered by the government of Iran, who answered only five appeals of the mission out of the 36 they sent.

Persecution of women and girls

Women and girls have been met with escalating repression and restriction of their liberties since the beginning of the 2022 protests. This includes stricter laws that regulate their lives - in particular for wearing the hijab - harsher penalties for non-compliance, and heightened surveillance.

Under the recently promoted “Noon” plan, 618 women were arrested for “promoting social anomalies by appearing without the hijab”. In cases investigated by the mission of those women and girls who were arrested, they were victims of physical violence during arrest and detention.

Punishments for non-compliance with hijab wearing include degrading and brutal acts such as lashing. For instance, the IFFM reports that Ms. Roshnak Alishah, a woman who posted a video online in which she appeared without the hijab as she confronted a man who had previously attacked her, was lashed 14 times for “disturbing public chastity”. Similarly, Mr. Mehdi Yarrahi, an Iranian singer, was lashed 74 times due to a song he composed for the protest. The Mission reiterated that such inhuman practices amount to state torture.

As mentioned by the Special Rapporteur, the future adoption of the “Chastity and Hijab” law would dangerously reduce women’s rights and freedoms. Access to health, education, employment, banking, and private business could be put at risk in case of non-compliance.

Excessive state surveillance of women and girls involved the use of aerial drones and mobile apps to monitor the use of the hijab.

In terms of women's activism, human rights defenders and activists were jailed across the country for their activities. Some of them have also been extended their prison term due to their continuous activism from the detention centers.

Repression against victims and their families

Victims of state repression and their families were harassed and intimidated by the state security forces. They were threatened into remaining silent about the violations they or their family members suffered. Charges such as “propaganda against the state” or “inciting riots” were pressed against them in response to their activism.

Those who expressed support for the protest were also victims of harassment, threats, intimidation, and arrests.

Acts of repression by the state transcended the physical borders of Iran and the digital domain, as activists abroad and online were also targeted by the state authorities. Indeed, transnational repression was tackled by the IFFM as a systematic tactic deployed by the state to silence journalists and activists outside the country and instill fear in them. For instance, the mission reported that since 2022, at least 15 attempts of murder or kidnapping were registered in the United Kingdom against outspoken critics of the government. In the digital space, Iran adopted measures such as banning VPNs, restricting the use of mobile applications, monitoring online activity, and targeting threats to silence dissent.

In total, 10 people were executed in relation to the protests, whereas 11 men and 3 women are at risk of capital punishment also for their involvement in the protests. Their death sentences, according to the IFFM, were laid down following fair trial violations, including confessions extrapolated through the use of torture. Additionally, torture was also reserved for those who were arrested to extract confessions.

The mission, moreover, documented unnecessary and disproportionate use of lethal force by security agents. This affected bystanders, including children, who showed systematic patterns of ocular injuries leading to blindness. Doctors also reported multiple cases of victims injured with pellets found in their bodies, sometimes impossible for surgeons to remove. One of the women affected by such an attack by security forces in Karaj, Alborz province, was found with 160 pellets shot into her face and body.

The mission established cases of sexual violence against women, children and men protesters, including rape, threats of rape and genital electrocution, including against female relatives, intrusive body searches and gender-specific verbal abuses.

Evidence was collected of six cases, of which three involved children, in which arbitrary executions by the state were disguised as “suicide”.

Ethnic and Religious Minorities

Minorities across the country were targeted as a result of the 2022 protests. The IFFM began the section dedicated to minorities by highlighting the devastating consequences of the “Bloody Friday” protests of 30 September 2022 in Zahedan, when 103 protesters are believed to have been killed in a single day, mainly belonging to the Baluch minority group.

Despite the crackdown, protests continued throughout 2023 after Friday midday prayers in the same area. In response to them, the state’s security agents regularly applied a high degree of violence against protesters, including by deploying machine guns and tear gas. They are also said to have arrested children as young as eight years old.

The IFFM acknowledged that “Bloody Friday” was one of the only instances in which the state attempted to investigate and hold its security forces accountable for the violent acts. Indeed, the government recognized the indiscriminate use of force by its agents who killed those who were not involved with the protest. Nevertheless, the lack of transparency surrounding this process raised suspicions as to whether investigations were conducted thoroughly and accountability was achieved.

In Kurdish-populated areas, the IFFM collected evidence on the deployment of military grade weapons and military equipment that were directed against civilians gathered for the protests,

resulting in injuries and killings. Lethal force was also applied against members of the Azerbaijani Turk minority.

Large-scale arbitrary detentions, arrests, and discriminatory practices were perpetrated against people, including children, residing in provinces with ethnic and religious minorities. Torture and other degrading and inhuman treatment were recurrent to extract confessions, including cases of waterboarding, sexual violence, forcible administration of unknown substances, and more.

Verbal abuses were also reported, as security agents referred to minorities with dehumanising language, calling some people “mountain goats” and “animals”. Such demeaning rhetoric has been particularly acute in the case of women, who are abused for their gender and ethnic identity. Indeed, gender identity was a source of discrimination, verbal and physical abuses, and killings perpetrated by the state across the whole country.

Children

Killing and maiming, mass arrests and detention, disappearance, torture, and sexual violence. These were all practices documented by the IFFM in response to children's involvement in the protests. Their targeting is facilitated by the low threshold for criminal responsibility established by the Iranian Penal Code, which sets the “age of maturity” for girls at nine and boys at fifteen years old, in violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to which Iran is a party.

According to the mission, between 57 and 68 children were killed in the context of the protests, including children as young as seven years old. Some children were tracked down and killed by security forces once the protests had finished. It was the case for Kumar Daroftadeh, a 16-year-old boy who was assassinated on his way to a football game for his leading role in the protests.

Arbitrary arrests, torture (both physical and psychological), and ill-treatment were systematically used, scarring children on their bodies and in their minds forever.

According to the IFFM, the status of children did not contribute to lower sentences imposed on them. Furthermore, lawyers were not always guaranteed to children facing trial.

Accountability

The government of Iran provided the mission with information on the creation of a “Special Committee on the 2022 unrest” and a “Permanent Commission of Redress” to compensate damages for “security-related” incidents and to investigate more than 600 cases against government officials. However, the IFFM argued that no significant detail - including the number of convictions or acquittals, compensation paid to victims, or the human rights violations adjudicated - was shared with the mission, casting doubt on the truthfulness and appropriateness of the mechanisms established by the State.

Victims pursuing legal actions encountered multiple obstacles on their path to justice, such as the delay or the dismissal of their complaints or the harassment directed at them or their lawyers.

Two officials were sentenced to death through retribution in kind. However, there is no publicly available information on the proceedings that can be assessed to judge the veracity of these cases.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The IFFM concluded by affirming that their evidence points at “gross human rights violations in the context of the protests, many of which amount to the crimes against humanity of murder, imprisonment, torture, rape and other forms of sexual violence, persecution, enforced disappearance and other inhumane acts, committed as part of a widespread and systematic attack directed against the civilian population”.

The mission characterized human rights concerns in Iran as multifaceted and profound, requiring urgent attention from the international community.

The mission members, therefore, reiterated the recommendations provided in their previous report and called on the Human Rights Council to set up an independent body to continue the mission’s work in Iran

Interactive Dialogue

Presentation of Reports

The interactive Dialogue began with the presentation of both reports submitted to the Council by the **Special Rapporteur** and by the **Independent Fact-Finding Mission (IFFM)**.



Ms. **Mai Sato** summarised her report along four main themes: the use of the death penalty, discrimination and persecution affecting diverse communities, lack of transparency, and the silencing of dissent. She exposed the findings and the data collected in her report, drawing special attention to the condition of women in the country.

In one of the concluding lines of her statement, the Special Rapporteur stated that in her view, “dissent does not equal threat”. In light of this, she urged the Islamic Republic of Iran to uphold fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of expression and assembly, end all forms of harassment and discrimination, and recognise the important role played by Iranian civil society.



Ms. **Sara Hossain** took the floor next, speaking on behalf of the IFFM. She also focused on the most relevant areas of the mission’s report, underscoring three key takeaways.

The first one is that although protests have decreased in intensity, repression has intensified both online and offline. Its manifestations are harassment, intimidation, threats, and long sentences - including the death penalty - against those who are directly or indirectly involved with the protests.

The second point is that national-level attempts to provide reparation to victims and survivors remain inadequate, referring to the Special Committee on the 2022 unrests and the Permanent Commission of Redress.

The final takeaway is the acknowledgment that human rights violations in Iran far exceed the mandate of the mission in temporal and material scope. She argued that the issues raised by the mission are of a systematic and structural nature that goes beyond the mere repression of the 2022 protests.

Based on this, Ms. Hossain recommended that the Council introduce a follow-up body investigating serious human rights concerns and ensuring future accountability.

Concerned Country



The **Delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran** described the session on his country's human rights as an "abominable staging" in the Human Rights Council. He accused the states supporting the resolution, in particular the United Kingdom and Germany, of diverting the attention from serious crimes to which they are complicit, starting from those happening in Palestine.

The Delegate moved to openly accuse the UK and Germany of sowing dissent in the Council and to be hypocritical in their dealing with human rights. He also accused them of being among the main violators of human rights in Iran, as they side with the United States' unilateral and coercive measures impacting the enjoyment of social, economic, cultural, and development rights of Iranians.

Regarding the Special Rapporteur and the IFFM, the Delegate expressed Iran's total rejection and opposition to their work due to their alleged lack of legitimacy. He called the Special Rapporteur on desisting from following the "destructive path" undertaken by her predecessor, whom the Delegate accused of selfishness and fame-seeking. He then accused the IFFM of echoing the lies and

accusations spread by “Anti-Iranian terrorist activists” and “their western supporters”. Iran, as the Delegate stated, is not willing to cooperate with the mission, and they reject its mandate and creation.

He concluded by insisting that Iran is a country that upholds multilateralism and respects human rights, as they learn from their “religion, history, and culture”

Group of Countries



The **Delegate of Estonia**, speaking on behalf of the **Nordic-Baltic States**, expressed its group's alarm for the growing use of the death penalty, as it reached 900 reported executions in 2024 alone, and the surge in extra-judicial killings of over 250 border couriers. The group called out Iran for its repression and suppression of legitimate demands of the population, especially women and girls. Finally, they noted the IFFM proposal to follow up its work through an investigative body.



The **Delegate of the European Union** stated that both reports demonstrated without doubt the structural human rights violations in Iran, affecting in particular women and girls. Attention was

drawn to the restrictions of the right of freedom of opinion and expression, the use of torture, arrests, and arbitrary detentions, including of foreign citizens and dual nationals. The EU also strongly denounced the use of the death penalty and called for the introduction of a moratorium to abolish capital punishment. Finally, the Delegate expressed the Union's full support to the extension of both the mandate of the Special Rapporteur and that of the IFFM.



The **Delegate of Venezuela** addressed the Council on behalf of the **Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations** (a group of 17 states). The group sided with Iran in accusing the Human Rights Council of selectively engaging with the concerned country based on politically motivated mandates. Furthermore, they perceived the duplication of the mandates on Iran as an instrument of international pressure on the independent foreign policy of a fellow state. Moreover, the coalition accused some Member States (MS) of imposing sanctions, harming the civilian population, and infringing on their human rights. Finally, the Delegate congratulated Iran for its commitment to UN Human Rights Mechanisms (including the constructive engagement in the 48th cycle of the UPR) and for its national efforts to uphold human rights.



The **Delegate of Costa Rica**, delivering a statement on behalf of **Human Rights in Iran** (a group of over 25 states), accused Iran of persecuting and targeting human rights defenders, lawyers, activists, teachers, and more as terrorists for simply expressing their views. Women, girls, and minority groups still face systematic discrimination in multiple domains, whereas families of victims are harassed by state authorities. According to the Delegate, this creates a climate of fear and restriction of the civic space. He then called on the Council to renew the mandate of the IFFM and on Iran to collaborate with it.

Individual Countries



The **Delegate of Germany** deplored the multiple violations happening in the country, particularly against women and girls. The Delegate deplored the systematic restrictions of human rights imposed by the government, including freedom of information, religion, and belief. She further condemned the use of the death penalty and called for its abolition. For all these reasons and to ensure accountability and protection to the victims, Germany called for the extension of the Special Rapporteur and IFFM's mandates.

The **Delegate of Switzerland** joined the countries advocating for the restriction in the use of the death penalty, applicable only for the gravest crimes. The Delegate also insisted on the respect of the rights of activists and lawyers as well as on the protection of women and girls. In particular, she noted the suspension of the Chastity and Hijab Law in Iran and urged the country to continue to follow this path and collaborate further with existing human rights mechanisms.

The **Delegate of Australia** was concerned by Iran's prosecution of women and girls and by the use of violence for non-compliance with hijab rules. She also highlighted several other human rights issues, including the death penalty, confessions extracted by force, and the unacceptable treatment of children.



The **Delegate of Chile** defended her country's feminist foreign policy, from which she called for gender equality measures to be implemented in the country. Despite condemning violations of human rights, the Delegate welcomed the visit of the Office of the High Commissioner in February 2024 as a sign of significant improvement in dialogue between the UN and Iranian authorities.

The **Delegate of Ghana** expressed his reluctance towards mandates that had not been welcomed by the concerned state, as in this case. He, therefore, insisted on the importance of dialogue and trust-building with all stakeholders - including the concerned state - as a more effective way to address human rights concerns. Finally, the Delegate acknowledged the efforts by Iran's authorities and encouraged them to expand social, political, and economic inclusion in the country to all its citizens.



The **Delegate of Eritrea** struggled to understand the need for a double mandate on Iran, which demonstrated, in his view, an inherent form of political discrimination and an attempt of isolation of the country. Such an approach, he mentioned, set a dangerous precedent at a time when the Council's credibility is at stake.

The **Delegate of Russia** also rejected any attempt to politicise human rights. She opposed the instrumentalization of the Council by Western states seeking to destabilise other countries and whose human rights record is also stained. She then accused Western governments of harming human rights in Iran through the imposition of unilateral sanctions.



The **Delegate of China** took note of the presented reports but denounced the interference in Iran's internal affairs. She expressed her government's disapproval of the country-specific mandate adopted without the consent of the concerned party. She then commended Iran for its national efforts, condemned the imposition of unilateral sanctions, and reminded delegates present that in her country's view, human rights cannot be dissociated from the cultural, political, and historical trajectory of each state.

Other countries, namely **Laos, Venezuela, Cuba, Niger, Sri Lanka, Mali, Cambodia, Burundi, Ethiopia, and Sudan**, have all voiced similar positions as the ones recently stated, calling for the respect of countries' internal affairs and dialogue and mutual understanding as opposed to externally imposed UN mechanisms. They also commended Iran for its collaboration with the UN, in particular for the UPR, and its adopted domestic measures.

Nevertheless, many other delegates joined those that condemned Iran's violations as presented in both the Special Rapporteur and the IFFM's reports. Aside from the ones that have already been listed, **Canada, Ireland, the UK, Ukraine, New Zealand, France, Italy, Ukraine, Albania, Austria and more** have all denounced Iran's human rights performance, with particular emphasis on the frequent use of the death penalty, the discrimination against women and girls, the attacks on children and the

restriction of the civic space. To ensure accountability and monitoring of Iran's conduct, many of these countries called for the renewal of both mandates.

NGOs and Civil Society

Members of NGOs and Civil Society took the floor after the Delegates. Even in this case, speakers were divided between those who more openly accused Iran and those that offered views that aligned with the concerned country. Starting from the former, multiple NGOs condemned Iran's poor human rights performance, emphasising the use of the death penalty, the commission of crimes against humanity - particularly motivated by gender and minority identification - and the complete impunity enjoyed by state authorities as systematic and deeply rooted issues. Some NGOs focused concretely on the abuses suffered by the Baha'i community, while others extended their criticism to all those that remain silent in front of such a horrifying situation in Iran. On the other hand, some of the speakers used their statements to blame countries imposing sanctions on Iran for destabilising the countries, whereas others invited delegates to look at human, and particularly women and minority rights, through the lenses of Iranian culture, religion, and history. Finally, a speaker tried to debunk the SR findings on women's little labor participation, hinting at alleged inconsistency and conflict with the data presented.

Concluding Remarks

At the end of the interactive dialogue, both the **Special Rapporteur** and a member of the **IFFM** delivered their concluding remarks, in which they reiterated their findings and addressed some of the questions and concerns raised during the dialogue.

Starting from the Special Rapporteur, Ms. **Mai Sato** started by objecting to Iran's accusations on her working methods, stating that she applied her mandate in line with her obligations, including disclosing her sources in case it did not pose a threat to them and basing her findings on investigations. On the contrary, she invited Iran to further collaborate and engage with her mandate and grant her access as requested.

She then addressed the issue of sanctions on Iran. Despite their humanitarian impact that imposing states should mitigate, the Special Rapporteur reminded that the human rights issues at stake depend on domestic political and economic decisions that are unrelated to the sanction regime in place against Iran.

Ms. Sato then answered the question of what states can do to help improve the human rights situation. She responded by reminding delegates the importance of external funds for NGOs and human rights defenders on the ground, on which their work completely relies. She thus invited states not to withdraw such precious funds. Moreover, she encouraged states to seek accountability through their national, regional, or international existing mechanisms to ensure cross-border justice.

Furthermore, the Special Rapporteur addressed the concern raised by an NGO speaker who believed that she had reported data disproving her own statement that women are largely excluded from labor and economic development in Iran. Ms. Sato then reflected once more on what she had presented in her report, stating that although Iran scores high on the human development index, it ranks low in the gender inequality index. This means that the benefits of development are not equally distributed between men and women in the country, leaving the latter at a disadvantaged position.

Lastly, Ms. Sato showed solidarity with the victims of the state crimes against humanity and announced that she will continue to closely follow the situation in the country and encourage reforms in the country.

The last remarks were delivered by the three members of the **IFFM**.

First to speak was **Ms. Sara Hossain**, who rebutted Iran's claim that the IFFM had ignored government responses. She instead answered by recalling the multiple instances (36) in which the IFFM had solicited Iran through a letter, receiving only five responses from the government containing information that could not be verified. Moreover, she reminded the Delegate of the occasions in which the mission had met with Iranian authorities when given the chance to do so. Ms. Hossain then refuted the accusation that the mission had not acted independently, stating that they remained impartial and applied UN methodology at all times. Finally, she concluded by reiterating the deep respect that the mission nurtures for Iran's diversity and for the courage and resilience of its people. She, therefore, noted the accusations of double standards moved against the mission but reminded Iran of the universality of human rights.



Ms. Shaheen Sardar Ali insisted that the mission had only scratched the surface of human rights violations in Iran, calling for a new body capable of addressing its root causes to be settled. In the meantime, she argued in favor of providing support to victims from abroad by providing asylum, humanitarian visas, and other forms of support. She also called on the state to encourage Iran to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) with no reservations and to raise the issue of racial discrimination in their bilateral conversations. She finally thanked the victims, the survivors, and their families for their trust and valuable authentic data.



Finally, **Ms. Viviana Krsticevic** expanded on the SR answer on potential avenues for states to protect truth and justice in Iran. She reiterated that, although the government of Iran has primary responsibility for providing truth and reparation, the IFFM had established a roadmap that emphasises the need to secure justice for victims. That included pursuing accountability internationally, facilitating truth telling, and adequately protecting victims.

GICJ position

Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ) welcomes the SR and IFFM for their reports that will serve as the basis for future accountability for the egregious crimes perpetrated by state authorities in Iran.

GICJ is appalled by the widespread use of the death penalty, particularly when it comes to children. We first call on the government to restrict the use of the death penalty only for the most serious crimes and then to suspend its use as it infringes upon the human rights of victims. There can be no justice when people are arbitrarily detained, subject to torture to extract confessions, and then indiscriminately handed death sentences.

Furthermore, GICJ calls on the Council to urge the government of Iran to grant full rights and protection to all its citizens, including women and girls and members of religious or ethnic minorities, unequivocally siding with the victims of the regime's violations. To this end, GICJ strongly encourages Iran to sign and ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) with no reservations.

Iran is indeed a multicultural nation, with a rich variety of costumes and practices. This is why the government has the responsibility to ensure that people can express their diversity without risking harassment and persecution. There can be no justice without mutual respect and equal rights for everyone in the country.

Crucially, children must be spared from the regime's oppression, and they need to be protected at all times. Iran, as a ratifier of the Convention on the Right of the Child and one of its protocols, has the legal obligation to "ensure children rights... without discrimination of any kind" (Art. 2). The Convention grants children, regardless of their sex, religion, ethnicity, social origin and more, the rights to education and the freedom of peaceful association and assembly. At the same time, it prohibits any form of torture or ill treatment against them, banning capital punishment. No child shall be deprived of their liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily. We thus call on Iran to abide by the Convention and implement these and other protective measures for the well-being of every child living in the country.

Geneva International Centre for Justice

Independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation

GICJ is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation dedicated to the promotion and reinforcement of commitments to the principles and norms of human rights. GICJ is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, and is governed by the Swiss Civil Code and its statutes. Basing its work on the rules and principles of International Law, International Humanitarian Law, and International Human Rights Law, GICJ observes and documents human rights violations and seeks justice for their victims through all legal means available.

Mission

GICJ's mission is to improve lives by tackling violations and all forms of violence and degrading or inhumane treatment through the strengthening of respect for human rights; Reinforcing the independence of lawyers and judiciaries; consolidating the principles of equity and non-discrimination; ensuring rule of law is upheld; promoting a culture of awareness on human rights; and combating impunity.

Work with NGOs

GICJ maintains a partnership with various NGOs, lawyers, and a vast civil society network around the Globe. Through these channels, GICJ receives documentation and evidence of human rights violations and abuses as they occur there. GICJ continues to bring this information to the attention of the relevant UN bodies to gain justice for all victims.

