



HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
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Excellency,

I have been following the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Islamic Republic of Iran and welcome the constructive engagement of your Government during the 34th session of the UPR Working Group in November 2019.

As the final outcome report on the review of the Islamic Republic of Iran has been recently adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 43rd session, I would like to take this opportunity to follow up on a number of areas raised in the two reports that my Office had prepared for the review of the Islamic Republic of Iran – the Compilation of United Nations information and the Summary of Stakeholders' submissions – which I consider in need of particular attention over the next four and a half years, until the next cycle of the UPR. In identifying those areas, I have considered the statements and/or recommendations made by 111 delegations and the presentation made and responses provided by the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I have also considered the actions taken by the Government to implement 130 recommendations supported during the second cycle of the UPR. The aforementioned areas cover a range of issues, which appear in the annex to this letter.

I am deeply concerned about the consequences of economic sanctions on the enjoyment of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, as they appear to be affecting all sectors of society, with a disproportionate impact on women, children and those who are most vulnerable, including low-income families, victims of natural disasters, migrants and refugees.

I welcome the adoption of the bill amending the act on determining the nationality status of children born to Iranian mothers and foreign fathers, the introduction of the Bill on the Protection of Children and Juveniles, as well as other important enforced measures, which constitute a significant step towards the protection of children. I also note with appreciation the clear declaration of your Government's determination to continue its efforts to strengthen the protection of women's rights both in law and in practice, both of which were highlighted by your delegation during the adoption of the UPR outcome.

His Excellency
Mr. Mohammad Javad Zarif
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Islamic Republic of Iran

I deplore, however, the continued application of the death penalty, including for child offenders. I remain concerned with lengthy prison sentences imposed on individuals who express dissent and reports of torture and arbitrary detention as well as discrimination against minorities.

I therefore encourage the Islamic Republic of Iran to develop a comprehensive national human rights action plan in order to achieve concrete results in the areas highlighted in the annex to this letter and to facilitate the preparations for the Islamic Republic of Iran's fourth cycle of the UPR. My advice to all Member States is to develop and implement national action plans in close consultation and cooperation with all stakeholders, in particular national human rights institutions and all civil society organizations and, where necessary, with the support of international organizations, including my Office and other United Nations entities, under the leadership of the United Nations Resident Coordinator.

I also encourage the Islamic Republic of Iran to make further efforts to strengthen the High Council for Human Rights for comprehensive reporting and follow-up on recommendations received from all international and regional human rights mechanisms and on treaty obligations, while linking these to the Sustainable Development Goals. I strongly recommend the use of the OHCHR practical guide on this topic, which is available at:

http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR_PUB_16_1_NMRF_PracticalGuide.pdf.

Kindly note that I am sharing my advice with all Member States as they go through the third cycle of the UPR with a view to assisting them with the implementation of the recommendations, following the review. An important measure that can positively contribute to follow-up action is voluntary mid-term reporting. Therefore, I strongly encourage all Member States to submit a voluntary mid-term report two years after the adoption of the UPR outcome report. In this regard, I welcome the practice of the Islamic Republic of Iran to submit a mid-term report and encourage the Government to do so again on follow-up to the third cycle of the review, by 2022.

As stated by the Secretary-General in his 2017 report on the work of the Organization (A/72/1, paragraph 98): *"The Human Rights Council's universal periodic review process is now entering a new cycle, with every Member State scheduled for a third round of scrutiny. We will work to strengthen the relevance, precision and impact of the Council's recommendations, including by providing better support to Member States in implementation, stronger collaboration with United Nations country teams and the establishment of national mechanisms for human rights reporting and follow-up to link the universal periodic review to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals."*



Finally, allow me to use this opportunity to express my Office's profound solidarity with your country and all Member States in connection with the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I hope that despite unprecedented challenges it will soon be over in all countries worldwide, including through implementation of human rights based approaches to our collective response to the pandemic. I look forward to discussing with you ways in which my Office may assist the Islamic Republic of Iran in relation to the areas identified in this letter and its annex.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'U. Bachelet', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michelle Bachelet
High Commissioner for Human Rights

cc: His Excellency
Mr. Ali Bagheri Kani
Secretary of the High Council for Human Rights
Islamic Republic of Iran

Ms. Ugochi Daniels
United Nations Resident Coordinator
Islamic Republic of Iran



Annex

Scope of international obligations and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies

- Ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and its Optional Protocol; and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
- Considering the possibility of ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

National human rights framework

- Continuing ongoing efforts on the establishment of a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles.
- Continuing measures to adopt laws and programmes in the field of human rights education.

Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

A. Cross-cutting issues

Equality and non-discrimination

- Taking steps to identify and remedy all laws that have a discriminatory impact on women and girls.

Development, the environment, and business and human rights.

- Consolidating the progress made towards reaching the Sustainable Development Goals and improving the human development indicators.
- Considering conducting a periodic review and assessment of its disaster risk reduction management and climate change adaptation efforts with due consideration for the protection of the most vulnerable sectors of society.
- Continuing its legal and administrative efforts regarding anti-corruption measures.

B. Civil and political rights

Right to life, liberty and security of person

- Ensuring freedom from torture while in detention.

- Ensuring that prison conditions comply with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), in particular by providing adequate health care.

Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law

- Taking all necessary measures and procedures to ensure compliance with fair trial standards, as well as ensuring the independence of the judicial system, the rules of fair trial, the right to defence and access to a freely chosen lawyer.
- Continuing strengthening the judicial system, especially in relation to the rights of women and children.
- Guaranteeing the right to a fair trial, including the right to choose one's lawyer, including for those accused of offences related to national security.
- Taking steps to ensure that all criminal trials, including trials involving juvenile offenders, are fairly conducted in a manner that meets international standards.

Fundamental freedoms

- Continuing to enact and fully implement legislation that seeks to promote and protect the rights to freedom of the media, speech and religion.
- Taking steps to encourage freedom of expression and ensuring that human rights defenders, lawyers and journalists are not subjected to intimidation or arbitrary arrest in connection with their work.
- Implementing fully the relevant laws to hold to account the perpetrators of intimidation and reprisals against human rights defenders and journalists.
- Creating a safe and enabling environment for civil society and human rights defenders, especially women human rights defenders.

Prohibition of all forms of slavery

- Continuing to strengthen efforts to combat trafficking in women, young girls and children with regular monitoring.

C. Economic, social and cultural rights

Right to social security

- Continuing to take measures in the field of health and social security to enhance access to health, particularly of vulnerable groups.

Right to an adequate standard of living

- Continuing to promote economic and social development in order to provide a solid foundation for the enjoyment of all the human rights of its people.

- Strengthening its ongoing approach for poverty reduction and development in the rural areas, in accordance with the 20-year Vision Plan.
- Continuing to implement the provisions of the Comprehensive Housing Plan 2017–2026 in order to guarantee the right to adequate housing for all.
- Continuing to promote and protect the right to safe water and sanitation.

Right to health

- Continuing to expand its health insurance coverage to all citizens, including those in rural areas.
- Providing information and education for young people on reproductive health in schools, in line with international standards.

Right to education

- Continuing to make progress in the transformation of the education system, by ensuring the schooling of boys and girls throughout the country, and incorporating human rights education.
- Continuing to give special attention to the education of vulnerable groups of less developed rural areas and nomadic populations.
- Continuing its policy and efforts to provide free education to nearly half a million refugee children.

D. Rights of specific persons or groups

Women

- Continuing to adopt legislative measures promoting the protection and promotion of women's rights.
- Continuing its efforts in protecting the rights of women, inter alia, by finalizing the Bill on the Protection of Women against Violence, as well as making all possible efforts to provide comprehensive frameworks for the non-discrimination of women and the protection of women and children from violence, including domestic violence.
- Further promoting women's rights, strengthening policies and measures to combat violence against them, and facilitating their participation in political, social and professional spheres.
- Taking measures in increasing the economic participation rate of women in different sectors of employment, including taking effective measures to implement the decisions of the Supreme Administrative Council, which require the Government to allocate 30 per cent of its managerial positions to women, as

well as the selection and appointment of professional directors on the basis of the requisite general and specialized competencies regardless of gender.

- Removing legal restrictions and social barriers to women's equal participation in the workforce, access to education and participation in the conduct of public affairs.
- Continuing to take additional steps to increase women's participation in higher education.

Children

- Continuing efforts to strengthen child protection mechanisms and speed up the process of adopting a Bill on the Protection of Children and Juveniles.
- Continuing to comprehensively assess the resources needed to exercise the rights of children, in particular from the budget for social policies.
- Strengthening educational and cultural programmes, especially in cases of early marriage, and paying further attention to children left behind or deprived of education.
- Accelerating efforts towards eliminating child abuse and child labour, and ensuring that legal action is taken against perpetrators.

Persons with disabilities

- Adopting a strategy to prevent and combat all forms of exploitation, violence and abuse against persons with disabilities.
- Giving special attention to improving the social security system for persons with disabilities.
- Making additional efforts to provide health insurance for persons with disabilities.
- Redoubling efforts to provide education facilities for children with disabilities.
- Continuing efforts with regard to education and adopting policies to enhance inclusion for girls, children with disabilities and children from rural areas.

Minorities

- Taking measures to protect religious and ethnic minorities and ensure their full and equal participation in public and private life.
- Ensuring the freedom of religion and belief for minorities, such as the Baha'is and Christian converts, by adopting concrete measures to eliminate discrimination and enhance protection.

Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers

- Continuing measures to protect and promote the rights of migrant workers in line with the relevant international instruments.
 - Continuing to ensure that all refugees within the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran enjoy their basic human rights and are protected from arbitrary arrest, humiliation and enforced expulsion.
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