



**JUBILEE CAMPAIGN
ECOSOC Special Consultative Status (2003)**

**United Nations Human Rights Council
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Submission to the 34th session of the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review Working Group

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Islamic Republic of Iran

Submission by
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**United Nations Human Rights Council
Universal Periodic Review of Member-State Iran**

I. Background

1. Jubilee Campaign USA, Inc., in special consultative status with ECOSOC, submits this analysis of religious freedom and human rights in Iran as a contribution to the Universal Periodic Review of UNHRC member-state Iran Submission to the 34th session of the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review Working Group.

II. Scope of international obligations and cooperation with international human rights mechanism and bodies.

2. Iran ratified the International Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights without reservation.
3. Iran is a party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
4. Iran has signed but not ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.
5. Iran signed, with reservations, the optional protocol of the Convention of the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children.
6. Iran has not ratified the Optional Protocols to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Recommendations

7. Iran should ratify the Optional Protocols to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
8. Iran should ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

III. Implementation of international human rights obligations, considering applicable international humanitarian law

A. Freedom of religions or belief.

9. The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran provides for religious freedom and protection of certain religious minorities, and while the structure of the government

allows for five out of 290 seats in the *Majlis* to be reserved for recognized religious minorities, there is in practice no guarantee of a freedom to practice and share one's religion and the state puts forth constant propaganda against the minority religions. Further, these religious minorities, both recognized and unrecognized are barred from seeking a high office in the government.

10. Jubilee Campaign commends Iran for accepting recommendations to take measures to fully respect the freedom of religion and belief of all of its citizens.¹ However, this gesture needs to be followed by changes on the ground to be effective.
11. Christians and Bahais' continue to be persecuted and threatened by the Iranian government.
12. Arbitrary detention continues to be widely practiced.
13. Christian leaders are charged with "unfounded national security-related crimes" for proselytizing outside their communities and rendering their services in Persian.
14. In May 2017, evangelical Christians were sentenced to 10 years in prison for house church activities and evangelism.
15. In 2018, a pastor's wife was charged with "acting against national security" and subsequently sentenced to five-years in prison for attending house church gatherings.
16. It is reported that Christians may not share their faith with non-Christians.
17. Conversion to Christianity can be a crime meriting a sentence of more than 10 years imprisonment. Tolerance is lent to those who are born into Christian homes, but those who convert from Islam to Christianity are in grave danger.
18. In December 2018, Iran arrested more than 100 Christians as part of a crackdown on Christians who converted from Islam to Christianity.
19. Open Doors' World Watch List ranks Iran ninth for the worst persecution of Christians.
20. Jubilee Campaign commends Iran for accepting recommendations to review its legislation and policy so as to ensure freedom of religion of persons belonging to religious minorities, including Bahai's, as well as protection of their other human rights without any discrimination.² Nonetheless, Jubilee Campaign notes that continual discrimination against the Bahai' community continues to be reported.

¹ Mid-term report of Iran, para. 138.219, UPR (2015-2016). Available at <https://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session20/IR/Iran2ndCycle.pdf> (last accessed 03/27/2019)

² Mid-term report of Iran, para. 138.131, UPR (2015-2016). Available at <https://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session20/IR/Iran2ndCycle.pdf> (last accessed 03/27/2019).

21. It is reported that the Baha'i community continues to be denied political, culture, and religious rights.
22. Propaganda against Bahai's continues to be aired on officials' channels.
23. In 2017, more than 90 Bahai's were held in prison solely because of their religious beliefs, and dozens of Bahis' owned shops were closed by the government for the observance of Bahai holidays.
24. Iran accepted recommendation 138.118 to guarantee the full enjoyment by all minorities of all their social, cultural, and political rights, especially their right to education.
25. In 2017, five students who wrote to the government protesting the denial of admission to a university were sentence to five years in prison.
26. Jubilee Campaign notes that Iran accepted recommendations to end discrimination and intimidation against persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities.³
27. Though the Jewish population has not received the international attention, or the depth of persecution suffered by other religious minorities, anti-Semitism is nonetheless on the rise. Jews can be accused of being spies or of aiding Israel.
28. Religious minorities in Iran are also subject to broader legal restrictions. They are prohibited from proselytizing, speaking against the government, and are greatly restricted from constructing and renovating their houses of worship. The government of Iran targets religious minorities for non-coercive proselytization.
29. In June 2018, the government of Iran arrested pastor Yousef Nadkarni along with three other members of his congregation for "assembly and collusion against national security, organizing home churches, and preaching 'Zionist Christianity.'"
30. Another technique of persecution is financial pressure. After the arrest of many Christians these are left without the means for supporting their families.
31. Iran continues to implement prolonged detention, torture, and executions based primarily or entirely upon the religion of the accused.
32. Jubilee Campaign notes that Iran accepted recommendations to allow religious minorities to participate of their group activities.⁴ However, significant increase in house raids, arbitrary arrests, and lengthy prison sentences continue to occur among religious minorities in Iran.

³ Mid-term report of Iran, para. 138.127, UPR (2015-2016). Available at <https://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session20/IR/Iran2ndCycle.pdf> (last accessed 03/27/2019).

⁴ Mid-term report of Iran, para. 138.219, UPR (2015-2016). Available at <https://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session20/IR/Iran2ndCycle.pdf> (last accessed 03/27/2019)

33. The government continues to engage in systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom, including prolonged detention, torture, and executions based primarily or entirely upon the religion of the accused.

Recommendations

34. Iran must take active steps to rid the political and legal system of discriminatory practices and inhumane treatment against individuals of minority religions.
35. Iran must reduce government official's discretionary power and ensure that they are bound by an interpretation of the law consistent with international freedom norms such as the UDHR and the ICCPR.
36. Iran must halt the arrest and detainment of those who share their faith in a non-violent and non-coercive manner.
37. Iran must provide minority religious groups property rights for the establishment of churches, temples, or mosques.

Freedom of Expression and Assembly: Political Oppression

A. No tolerance for activism

38. Iran reports accepting recommendations to ensure its citizens fully enjoy the rights right to freedom of expression, the right to political activities, and the right to assemble.⁵ However, Iran needs to take practical steps in ensuring these rights.
39. It is reported that the Iranian government continues to target its citizens for peaceful civic activities and the exercise of freedom of expression and belief.
40. The Iranian regime continues to crack down on activism of all kinds.
41. In 2018, Women's rights activists who protested compulsory use of hijab faced arbitrary arrests and detentions, and the court issued harsh and excessive sentences of up to 20 years.
42. The regime targets trade union activities and environmental activists.
43. In 2018, several reports indicated Iranians are being arrested for demanding unpaid wages.
44. Iran has more than 800 prisoners of conscience.

⁵ Mid-term report of Iran, para. 138.235, UPR (2015-2016). Available at <https://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session20/IR/Iran2ndCycle.pdf> (last accessed 03/27/2019).

45. Iran agreed to enhance freedom of the media, establish effective protection mechanism for journalists against attack and intimidations, and grant its people free access to electronic media.⁶ However, reports indicate Iran continues to target journalist and restrict online access.
46. In July 2018, about 20 journalists and nine internet activists remained in prison for expressing their views online.

Recommendations

47. Jubilee Campaign asserts that physical attacks and illegal detainment of political dissidents are unacceptable, and the government of Iran must allow for the free expression of political opinion.
48. Iran must take further action to ensure freedom of expression.
49. Iran must advance internet freedom and allow for non-violent activism.
50. Iran must accept international intervention and supervision in the reformation of its political and security system in order to comply with international standards and prevent future acts of violence against its citizens.

IV. Equality and non-discrimination

A. Women's Rights: Discrimination in Legislation and in Practice

51. Jubilee Campaign notes Iran agreed to accept recommendations to restore women's rights, however, in practice, women are denied equal opportunity and equal protection of the law.⁷
52. Women were barred from running in the most recent presidential election.
53. According to Iranian blood money laws, a man's life continues to be worth twice that of a woman.
54. Women are denied rights to their land when their husband dies.
55. While education programs for women have developed, women continue to be discriminated against in employment.

⁶ Mid-term report of Iran, para. 138.229, UPR (2015-2016). Available at <https://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session20/IR/Iran2ndCycle.pdf> (last accessed 03/27/2019).

⁷ Mid-term report of Iran, para. 138.217, UPR (2015-2016). Available at <https://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session20/IR/Iran2ndCycle.pdf> (last accessed 03/27/2019).

56. The value of a woman's testimony is considered half of the value of a man's testimony. Clearly, women are not respected by the government or the people as equal to men. With this perspective, women cannot realize the rights that Article 21 suggests they are given.
57. Regardless of religious affiliations, women are forced to be covered from "head to toe while in public or face imprisonment and fines" If women do not comply, they are subject to prison or fines. In some communities' women are sent to Islamic teaching camps.
58. Jubilee Campaign notes that Iran agreed to accept only in part recommendations to adopt legislation criminalizing domestic violence, including sexual violence, together with effective implementation measures.⁸

Recommendations

59. Iran must ensure women are treated equally to man before the law.
60. Iran must allow women to participate of economic and political spheres.
61. Iran must establish measures not to discriminate against women in employment.
62. Iran must stop forcing women to be covered from hear to toe while in public.
63. Iran must accept without reservations, recommendation to criminalize domestic violence, including sexual violence, together with effective implementation measures.

B. Rights of Children

64. Iran continues to sentence children under the age 18 to death.

Recommendations

65. Iran must stop the practice of executing children under the age of 18.

V. Right to life, liberty, and security of persons.

A. Torture and Sexual Exploitation of Prisoners

66. Iran agreed to accept recommendations to ensure prisoners are freed from torture while in dentition.⁹

⁸ Mid-term report of Iran, para. 138.195, UPR (2015-2016). Available at <https://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session20/IR/Iran2ndCycle.pdf> (last accessed 03/27/2019).

⁹ Mid-term report of Iran, para. 138.183, UPR (2015-2016). Available at <https://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session20/IR/Iran2ndCycle.pdf> (last accessed 03/27/2019).

67. In 2018, reports show that prisoners continue to be subject to hostile interrogation-style questions including torture.
68. While Iranian officials report that pursuant to recommendation 138.185, they have ensured decent conditions of detention, reports from detainees do not verify these testimonies.¹⁰
69. In 2018, it was reported that prisoners continue to live in inhumane conditions without access to their lawyers.
70. In 2018, it was reported that of 20,000 member of Tehran's Bar association, only 20 lawyers were selected to represent people accused of national security crimes. If the name of an attorney is not on the list, other attorneys may not represent accused prisoners of collusion against national security.
71. Deaths in custody are reported to occur under suspicious circumstances.

Recommendations

72. Iran must accept intervention or supervision in the reformation of the prison system.
73. Iran must guarantee persons accused of crimes must have access to a lawyer of their choice.
74. Iran must establish concrete systems or measure to investigate torture, abuse, and sexual exploitation in prisons.

B. Mass Surveillance

75. The country has significantly engaged in mass surveillance of protesters and dissident by deploying social media spyware and other sophisticated cyber techniques to preserve theocracy. Iranian authorities have infiltrated and shutdown social media channels and other internet sources.

Recommendations

76. Iran must stop the mass surveillance of its citizens.

Summary of Recommendations

77. Iran must stop all persecution, harassment, discrimination, and arrest of religious groups expressing their faith in peaceful manners.

¹⁰ Mid-term report of Iran, para. 138.185, UPR (2015-2016). Available at <https://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session20/IR/Iran2ndCycle.pdf> (last accessed 03/27/2019).

78. Iran must release all prisoners of conscience and take active steps to rid the system of discriminatory practices and inhumane treatment against individuals of minority religions.
79. Iran must act to protect political dissidents from the violent backlash of officials.
80. Iran must comply with the accepted recommendations to protect freedom of expression.
81. Iran must reform its employment laws and property laws to demand more rights for women and individuals of minority groups.
82. Iran must abolish the practice of executing children under the age of 18 and reform the juvenile legal system.
83. Iran must accept international intervention and supervision in the reformation of the prison system to ensure compliance with international standards of treatment of prisoners.
84. Iran must stop conducting mass surveillance of its citizens in violation of their right to life and privacy.