

Legal framework

Article 13 of Iran's constitution recognises Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Judaism, allowing these religious communities to practice their respective rights in personal matters.

Article 14 states that 'the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and all Muslims are duty-bound to treat non-Muslims in conformity with ethical norms and the principles of Islamic justice and equity, and to respect their human rights.'

Article 23 forbids 'the investigation of individuals' beliefs', adding that 'no one may be molested or taken to task simply for holding a certain belief.'

Furthermore, Article 38 prohibits 'any kind of torture used to extract an admission of guilt or to obtain information ... Any person infringing this principle is to be punished in accordance with the law.' Finally, Article 39 states that 'aspersion of the dignity of and respect due to any person who has been arrested or put in detention or imprisoned or exiled by command of the law is forbidden in any form, and is liable to punishment.'

Iran is also party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and other international legislation protecting the right to freedom of religion or belief (FoRB), including the right to adopt a religion or belief of one's choice. However, while apostasy has not been codified as a crime, it is effectively criminalised, as converts from Islam are frequently charged with crimes articulated in articles 498, 499, 500 and 513 of the amended Islamic Penal Code.¹

The Shi'a theocracy also relies on charges such as blasphemy, or on ill-defined crimes that can encompass anything deemed undesirable by the state such as mofsed-e-filarz ('spreading corruption on earth') or Moharebeh (waging war against God). With no set penalty for these wide-ranging crimes, punishments can range from a few months in prison to execution.

Religious minorities continue to be viewed with suspicion and treated as a threat by a theocratic system that imposes a strict interpretation of Shi'a Islam. Consequently, Iran's Baha'i, Christian, Sufi and Sunni religious communities can experience a variety of violations, including harassment, property seizure, desecration of burial sites, torture, imprisonment and even extrajudicial execution.

Recent political and social developments

Restrictions on religious and belief minorities intensified under Ebrahim Raisi, who became President on 18 June 2021 following an election marred by irregularities in which

moderates were barred from standing. Raisi was infamous for his role in a death commission which forcibly disappeared and extrajudicially executed in secret thousands of political dissidents in 1998. Unsurprisingly, his tenure coincided with a significant spike in the death penalty.

In September 2022 Iran witnessed extreme repression of the right to peaceful assembly when sustained protests erupted across the country, known as the 'Woman, Life, Freedom' movement, following the death in police custody of Zhina Mahsa Amini, a Sunni woman of Kurdish ethnicity who was assaulted after being deemed to have failed to adhere adequately to the dress code of the religious majority. Recorded violations included the use of live ammunition against unarmed protesters, the application of vaguely defined religious charges and perfunctory trials to pass death sentences on protestors, the torturing of detainees, and credible reports of sexual and gender-based violence by security personnel, particularly members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

On 20 September 2023 the Iranian parliament approved a bill to increase penalties for noncompliance with the mandatory dress code that will increase sentences for violations from two months to 10 years' imprisonment and increase the fine from 500,000 rials (USD 12) to up to 360 million rials (USD 8,600).² In April 2024 the government announced a domestic surveillance programme, with street cameras monitoring hijab compliance. Forty-five businesses were closed for catering to non-compliant customers. In June 2026 singer Parastoo Ahmadi and eight members of a production team were sentenced to 74 lashes for a December 2024 YouTube livestream in which the singer performed a patriotic song without wearing a hijab. The defendants were also sentenced to a two-year ban on leaving the country and a two-year ban on engaging in artistic activities.³

On 19 May 2024 Raisi was killed when his helicopter crashed in bad weather as he was returning from a visit to Azerbaijan. On 28 July Masoud Pezeshkian became Iran's first reformist president in almost two decades. During his campaign, Pezeshkian had promised to moderate Iran's conservative outlook and improve relations with the West. He criticised the morality police and called for negotiations over a renewal of the 2015 nuclear deal. However, analysts doubted his ability to enact meaningful changes within an establishment dominated by ultraconservatives.

In June 2025 a 12-day Israeli attack, which killed over 1,100 people, including women and children, injured over 5,600, and damaged homes, hospitals media buildings and even Evin Prison, precipitated an increase in repression, a surge in executions, and a rise in transnational repression (TNR),

1 Article 19, 'Iran: New Penal Code provisions as tools for further attacks on the rights to freedom of expression, religion, and belief', 6 July 2022 <https://www.article19.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Iran-Legal-analysis-Iran-New-Penal-Code-provisions-as-tools-for-further-attacks-on-the-rights-to-freedom-of-expression-religion-and-belief-06.07.22-1.pdf>

2 US Department of State, 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom: Iran <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-report-on-international-religious-freedom/iran/>

3 The Guardian, 'Iranian star Parastoo Ahmadi reportedly sentenced to 74 lashes for singing without hijab', 18 June 2026 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/jun/18/iran-parastoo-ahmadi-74-lashes-singing-without-hijab>

including increasingly serious threats directed at BBC Persian journalists and their families.⁴

On 3 July 2025, 11 UN Mandate Holders sent a communication to the Iranian authorities expressing concern at the arrests of 'social media users, journalists, human rights defenders, foreign nationals, in particular Afghans, and members of ethnic and religious minorities ... all of whom are facing intensified risk of being scapegoated at this time of heightened political pressure.' They also expressed alarm at 'the sharp increase in reported hate speech ... accusing whole minority communities of being traitors, using dehumanising language such as 'filthy rats', and implicating them in the hostilities'.⁵

On 28 December 2025 nationwide protests broke out, prompting the government to launch what the chair of the UN Fact-Finding Mission on Iran has since described as possibly the deadliest crackdown since the 1979 Revolution. Within the first 50 days of the protests, the Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA) confirmed the killings in 31 provinces of 7,007 individuals, including 236 children, 207 members of the armed forces, and 76 people who were not part of the protests, with the organisation looking into 11,744 more cases.⁶ The HRANA also documented 53,777 arrests during the same period, including 555 children, teenagers and school students, and 369 forced confessions. In January 2026, and from 28 February to late May 2026, the Iranian government imposed a digital blackout which has made continued verification of deaths and arrests particularly challenging.

On 28 February 2026 Israel and the United States (US) launched a military attack on Iran, killing Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khomeini and thousands of IRGC personnel, and starting a war which re-escalated, despite the signature of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding by the US and Iranian presidents on 17 June.

The war exacerbated an already dire human rights situation, with a marked increase in repression. In June Amnesty International reported that the Iranian authorities had arrested more than 6,000 people arbitrarily, 'including protesters, journalists, lawyers, human rights defenders, dissidents, and members of ethnic and religious minorities',

and carried out at least 39 political executions since the start of the war.⁷

Amnesty also documented extensive enforced disappearances, including that of Christian convert, journalist and human rights defender Mary Mohammadi, who lost contact with her family in late February after travelling to Tehran and is believed to have been held in a Ministry of Intelligence detention facility in Ahvaz before being transferred to an undisclosed location on 2 April.

The Baha'i community

The Baha'i community, Iran's largest non-Muslim religious minority, does not enjoy official recognition. A secret 1991 memorandum signed by Ayatollah Khomeini provided a blueprint to systematically deprive the community of fundamental rights. The community is also the constant target of hate speech.

Baha'is face a raft of discriminatory and repressive policies, including with regard to access to education and burial sites. In late 2020, two Iranian courts ruled that ancestral land belonging to Baha'i families in the village of Ivel in Mazandaran Province could be confiscated because of the community's 'perverse ideology', which nullified the 'legitimacy in their ownership' of any property.⁸ 'Desecrating grave sites has been a constant feature of the government's 45-year campaign of systematic persecution of the Baha'is'.⁹

In May 2026 the Baha'i International Community (BIC) reported that almost 80 Baha'is had faced detention, arrest and imprisonment since the outbreak of the conflict with Israel and the US in February, including a pregnant woman from Rafsanjan, and that more than 400 'recent cases of state-sponsored human rights abuses against Baha'is across Iran, including arrests and detentions, violent home raids, unlawful property seizures, and obstructions to justice by judicial authorities' had been reported.¹⁰

As of 11 June 2026, 63 Baha'is were detained or imprisoned in Iran, 'solely for their beliefs', with more than 15 others serving sentences outside prison with electronic ankle monitors.¹¹ According to the BIC, women constitute the majority of detainees, as is consistent with their increased targeting following the 'Women, Life, Freedom' movement.¹²

4 BBC, 'Iran carries out wave of arrests and executions in wake of Israel conflict', 26 June 2025 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ce8zv8j563po>

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

6 HRANA, The Crimson Winter: A 50 Day Record of Iran's 2025-2026 Nationwide Protests, 23 February 2026 <https://www.en-hrana.org/the-crimson-winter-a-50-day-record-of-irans-2025-2026-nationwide-protests/>

7 Amnesty International, 'Iran: Mass arbitrary arrests and political executions mark intensifying repression', 28 May 2026 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2026/05/iran-mass-arbitrary-arrests-and-political-executions-mark-intensifying-repression/>

8 Baha'i International Community, 'Overview of Persecution of Iranian Baha'is', July 2021 https://www.bic.org/sites/default/files/pdf/iran/use_this_iran_overview_of_persecutions_july_2021_final.pdf

9 Baha'i International Community, 'Unprecedented and inhumane: More than 30 Baha'i new graves razed by Iranian authorities', 5 March 2024 <https://www.bic.org/news/unprecedented-and-inhumane-more-30-bahai-new-graves-razed-iranian-authorities>

10 Baha'i International Community, 'Iran jails Bahá'ís, pregnant woman included, amid scapegoating', 22 May 2026 <https://www.bic.org/news/iran-jails-bahais-pregnant-woman-included-amid-scapegoating>

11 Baha'i International Community, 'Iran News Bulletin#19-2026', 12 June 2026 <https://iranbahaipersecution.bic.org/archive/bahai-international-community-iran-news-bulletin-19-2026>

12 Baha'i International Community, 'Persecution of the Baha'is in Iran', August 2025 https://www.bic.org/sites/default/files/images/2025-08_infographic_on_the_persecution_of_the_bahais_in_iran_1.png

The Christian community

Violations and abuses targeting members of the Christian community are part of a sustained campaign of repression that has been ongoing with varying degrees of intensity since the 1979 revolution, when Anglican pastor Arastoo Sayyah was murdered in his church office in Shiraz eight days after the theocracy came into being.

Christians are regularly charged with unsubstantiated national security-related crimes which, along with the targeting of Muslim converts to Christianity in particular, has been escalating since 2009, and is often accompanied by anti-Christian rhetoric from senior officials. Any gathering of Christians, including social gatherings such as birthday or engagement parties or even a picnic, is viewed as potential house church activity. Penalties meted out for taking wine during communion, or gathering for prayer or Christmas celebrations, effectively criminalise normal Christian practice and social activities, while restricting freedom of association and the right to manifest one's religion or belief even in private.

Many Christians are currently serving lengthy sentences on unfounded and excessive charges related to 'national security,' 'extremism' and 'propaganda.' Legal processes are often presided over by judges notorious for miscarriages of justice and are marred by repeated delays to trials. Lawyers seeking to assist them are regularly prevented from accessing their clients and are often harassed and jailed themselves.

In January 2022 a disturbing precedent of double jeopardy was set. In a gross violation of Article 14.7 of the ICCPR, Pastor Matthias (Abdulreza Ali) Haghnejad, who had been released on 30 December 2021 after a Supreme Court judge ruled that attending house churches and promoting Christianity should not have been considered 'actions against national security' and ordered a review of his six-year sentence, was re-arrested on charges for which he had been acquitted on appeal in December 2014 by the Supreme Court.

Despite the notable releases in 2023 of nine unjustly detained Christians as part of a general amnesty, members of the religious community, and particularly converts who form the majority of adherents, continue to experience discrimination, harassment, arbitrary and often cyclical arrest and detention, lack of due process, lengthy imprisonment, excessive fines, denial of education or employment, psychological and physical torture, flogging, and confiscation of property, among other violations.

Among those released in the 2023 amnesty was Pastor Yousef Nadarkhani, who the authorities target repeatedly. In 2012 he was acquitted of apostasy, escaping a death sentence following an international outcry. Following his release in 2013, he was assaulted and arrested again along with three other members of the Church of Iran denomination during a series of raids by security agents on Christian homes in Rasht in May 2016, and sentenced to six years' imprisonment. In 2021 the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention concluded that his detention was arbitrary. Pastor Nadarkhani was granted a temporary leave in April 2022, before being released on 26 February 2023.

The sustained campaign of repression has forced many Christians to flee the country. However, they then face a different set of potential challenges, including dangerous journeys, legal uncertainties, exploitation, restrictive asylum processes, the threat of rejection, restricted access to public services and healthcare, transnational surveillance and repression by Iranian security services, the bullying of their children in schools and in neighbourhoods by other children, teachers and adults, and the constant fear of refoulement.¹³

After concerns were raised by UN experts regarding Iran's 'continued systematic persecution' of Christians, the government claimed that it had taken legal action against members of 'enemy groups' and 'private churches' that belong to a 'Zionist Christian cult' with 'anti-security purposes'.¹⁴

The period following the Israeli attacks saw a rise in scapegoating, hate speech and arrests. For example, two days after the ceasefire on 25 June, a post on the Rahpouyan-e Hedayat website stated 'it should not be forgotten that the most active enemies of Iran at this critical moment were elements affiliated with the evangelical Christian movement, who were happy about the attack on Iran and prayed for the victory of the Zionist terrorists on virtual platforms and satellite networks.'

Moreover, the Iranian NGO Article 18 documented 54 arrests between 24 June and 24 July, compared to 40 between 1 January and 24 June.¹⁵ Then in August the Ministry of Intelligence admitted it had arrested over 50 Christians, who it described as 'Mossad mercenaries', 'under the guise of the Zionist Christian evangelisation movement' who had allegedly been trained abroad by churches in the Israel and the US.¹⁶ In addition, a joint agency report found that nearly twice as many Christians were arrested on charges related to their religious beliefs or activities in 2025 as in 2024: 254 compared to 139.¹⁷

13 Article 18, 'What are the primary challenges facing Iranian Christian refugees in Turkey?', 31 October 2023 <https://articleeighteen.com/news/13980/>; Article 18, 'The Plight of Iranian Christians Seeking International Protection in Georgia', December 2024 <https://articleeighteen.com/reports/15395/>; Article 18, 'The Plight of Iranian Christians Claiming International Protection in Türkiye', June 2023 <https://articleeighteen.com/reports/13404/>

14 The High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 'Comment concerning the allegation of prosecution of a number of people due to their religious belief', 12 January 2021 <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadFile?gld=35896>

15 Article 18, 'Increase in arrests and hate speech against Christians since war with Israel', 24 July 2025 <https://articleeighteen.com/news/16264/>

16 Article 18, 'Ministry of Intelligence admits arresting over 50 Christians', 12 August 2025 <https://articleeighteen.com/news/16285/>

17 Article 18, 'Scapegoats' – 2026 annual report, February 2026 <https://articleeighteen.com/reports/23548/>

Church-owned property is increasingly subject to arbitrary seizure. On 4 June 2026 a Presbyterian church in Mashhad was demolished. Officials claimed it was abandoned, when in reality the congregation had been forced to close the building.¹⁸ Then on 12 July, St Peter's Evangelical Church in Tehran, a heritage site founded in the 1800s, was seized and 27 members of the constitutionally recognised Armenian and Assyrian Christian minorities who lived in subsidised housing in its grounds were expelled.¹⁹

The Sufi community

Members of the Gonabadi Sufi order also face arrest and imprisonment on dubious national security-related or broadly worded charges.

In June 2024 Mazaher Heydari, who advocated for women's rights, was arrested and sentenced in absentia by Branch 1 of the Revolutionary Court of Shahr-e Kord to a total of 40 months in prison for 'disturbing public opinion,' 'propaganda against the regime,' and 'assembly and collusion against national security.' Held in Shahr-e Kord Prison, Mr Heydari was denied access to his family, has been on hunger strikes, and was even hospitalised when his health deteriorated significantly.²⁰

On 18 November 2024 student activist Leila Hosseinzadeh was sentenced in absentia to one year of imprisonment by Branch 26 of Tehran's Revolutionary Court, presided over by Judge Iman Afshari, for 'propaganda against the State' and 'being present without shari'a abiding hijab in public avenues'. Earlier, she had appeared unveiled to defend her thesis at the University of Tehran. This was her latest of several convictions for peaceful dissent.²¹

Also in 2024 Farzaneh Ghareh-Hassanlou, an activist held in Vakilabad Prison in Mashhad, was reported to be on hunger strike over denial of medical care and mistreatment. She and her husband Dr Hamid Ghareh-Hassanlou, a radiologist, were arrested in November 2022 after attending the 40th day memorial of Hadis Najafi,²² a young woman who was shot dead during protests following the death of Zhina Mahsa Amini. Her original 25-year sentence was reduced to five years, and reports indicated she has been denied family contact and timely urgently needed medical care.

Upon arrest, she and her husband were assaulted severely by security agents. Dr Ghareh-Hassanlou reportedly suffered

broken ribs due to the severity of the assault, and was eventually hospitalised with a bleeding lung that required surgical intervention. On 6 November 2022 state media broadcast forced confessions made by the couple in which both reportedly showed signs of having been tortured. Dr Ghareh-Hassanlou was accused of involvement in the killing of a Basij member, and was initially sentenced to death for 'spreading corruption on earth through committing crimes against national security'.²³ During the trial he was denied the lawyer of his choice and was forced to accept a public defender who reportedly attempted to convince him to confess to the crime, while the presiding judge allegedly pressured him to confess to being the protest leader, despite a lack of corroborating evidence. In 2023 his death sentence was reduced to 15 years' imprisonment, amid ongoing concerns regarding his health and continued detention in Karaj Central Penitentiary.

The Sunni Community

Sunni Muslims, particularly Baluch and Kurdish people, continue to face discrimination, arrests, unfair trials, harsh sentences and executions on broadly worded charges.

In 2023 reports emerged of Sunni clerics being arrested, imprisoned and defrocked in Sistan and Baluchistan province and in Kurdish areas for speaking out against the killings of 'Woman, Life, Freedom' protesters, the disproportionate use of the death penalty against ethnic minorities, and indiscriminate shootings by border guards in Baluch and Kurdish areas of couriers selling goods across borders.²⁴

On 15 May 2024 Khosro Besharat, a Kurdish Sunni prisoner, was executed in Ghezelhesar Prison after more than 14 years in custody following his conviction on drug-related offences that reportedly relied on torture, forced confessions and false accusations.²⁵ He was the sixth defendant in the case to be executed, as concerns persisted that another co-defendant, Kamran Sheikheh, remained at imminent risk of execution.

In August 2024 Sunni cleric Mamusta Saber Khodamoradi, a religious activist and the Friday prayer leader of Qavaq District in Saqqez County, was sentenced by the Special Clerical Court in Hamedan to 15 months in prison for 'propaganda against the state.' Then on 23 April 2025 the

18 Article 18, 'Persian-speaking Evangelical church demolished in Mashhad', 8 June 2026 <https://articleeighteen.com/news/24376/>

19 OHCHR, 'Iran: UN experts urge reversal of Tehran church compound seizure and return of its Christian residents', 15 July 2026 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/07/iran-un-experts-urge-reversal-tehran-church-compound-seizure-and-return-its>

20 HRANA, Tag: Mazaher Heydari, accessed 10 September 2026 <https://www.en-hrana.org/tag/mazaher-heydari/>

21 HRANA, Tag: Gonabadi Dervish, accessed 10 September 2026 <https://www.en-hrana.org/tag/gonabadi-dervish/>

22 Radio Zamaneh, 'Hadis Najafi: The 22 Year Old Shot in the Iran Protests', 27 September 2022 <https://en.radiozamaneh.com/32659/>

23 NPR, 'A doctor in Iran is sentenced to death for participating in an antigovernment protest', 22 December 2022 <https://www.npr.org/2022/12/22/1144942132/a-doctor-in-iran-is-sentenced-to-death-for-participating-in-an-antigovernment-pr>

24 Iran Human Rights, Special Report: Sunni Clerics in the Crosshairs of Islamic Republic Repression, 15 August 2023 <https://iranhumanrights.org/2023/08/special-report-sunni-clerics-in-the-crosshairs-of-islamic-republic-repression/>; USCIRF, Country Update: Iran, September 2023 <https://www.uscifr.gov/sites/default/files/2023-09/2023%20Iran%20Country%20Update.pdf>

25 Iran Human Rights, 'Kurdish-Sunni Political Prisoner Khosro Besharat Executed; 103+ Executed in 28 Days', 15 May 2024 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/6709/>

same court sentenced him to 22 months in prison.²⁶ The sentences followed several earlier summonses and a prior sentence of imprisonment and flogging linked to peaceable expressions of support for the ‘Woman, Life, Freedom’ protests.

Executions

Iran remains one of the few countries to execute minors, homosexuals and women claiming self-defence against rapists. Most victims are hanged, often in public. A large proportion of those executed are members of minority religious or ethnic groups, particularly Arabs, Kurds and Sunni Muslims. Political opponents are often accused of being foreign agents or spies, while many from minority ethnic and religious communities regularly face execution following conviction on drug-related charges. There has also been an increase in executions of protesters demanding reform in the wake of the death of Zhina Mahsa Amini, and of those who participated in the December 2025-January 2026 protests. Many are executed following legal proceedings that fall short of international fair trial standards.

In September 2025, five UN Experts expressed dismay at Iran’s ‘execution spree’ and concern at the introduction of a new espionage bill, titled ‘Countering Foreign Infiltration’, ‘that significantly expands the scope of conduct considered espionage to include activities linked to dissemination of information and media work, such as contact with foreign and diaspora media outlets.’²⁷ In September 2026 the International Independent UN Fact-Finding Mission on Iran warned that ‘the broadly framed measure constitutes a dangerous escalation in suppressing fundamental freedoms and isolating Iranians from the international community’, adding that if enacted they could potentially impact ‘media outlets, academic institutions, human rights defenders and civil society groups’, including religious and belief communities,²⁸ amounting to ‘blanket criminalisation for any contact with the outside world.’²⁹

The war with Israel and the US has served as a pretext for further executions following perfunctory national security-related proceedings. In his September 2026 update to the Human Rights Council, the High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk stated that 59 people had been executed on national security-related charges since March 2026 – more than the total executed on the same charges during 2025.³⁰

Recommendations

To the government of Iran:

- Protect and fulfil the right to FoRB for all citizens, in line with Article 18 of the ICCPR to which Iran is party.
- Amend Article 13 of the constitution to ensure that all religious minorities are recognised, and that Article 18 of the ICCPR is not contravened in national laws or by practices that penalise apostasy or the right to change one’s religion or belief.
- Bring domestic laws and practices into conformity with international obligations, enact the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, prohibit the use of torture and sexual violence against detainees, and of fast-tracked and revolutionary courts, which lack due process and issue excessive sentences.
- Immediately and unconditionally release all individuals detained on account of their religion or belief or in relation to the defence of human rights, including those detained on charges of blasphemy, apostasy, or on vague national security charges related to their exercising of the right to FoRB.
- Ensure due process is observed in cases involving religious minorities, and that judges found responsible for violations of human rights do not preside over trials, and are brought to justice accordingly.
- Return places of worship, properties, land and materials seized from religious minority communities under national security-related or faulty judicial rulings.
- Guarantee the right to counsel for all individuals charged with national security-related crimes and the right to select a lawyer of their choice, ensuring legal professionals are not harassed or imprisoned for performing their professional duty.
- Initiate a moratorium on executions as a matter of urgency, and move toward the abolition of the death penalty.
- End the practice of transnational repression, and withdraw the vaguely worded and overly expansive ‘Countering Foreign Infiltration’ bill.

To the government of the United States:

- In the context of the ongoing conflict with Iran, prioritise the safety of civilians and adherence to international humanitarian law at all times.
- The Department of Homeland Security must exercise all due diligence to ensure non-refoulement in cases involving individuals originally from Iran with well-

26 Kurdistan Press Agency, ‘Hamedan: Mamosta Saber Khodamoradi Sentenced to 22 Months in Prison’, 24 April 2025 <https://kurdpa.net/en/news/2025-04-24-57099>

27 UN OHCHR, ‘UN experts appalled by unprecedented execution spree in Iran with over 1000 killed in nine months’, 29 September 2025 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/09/un-experts-appalled-unprecedented-execution-spre-iran-over-1000-killed-nine>

28 Several Christian media sites were recently added to an updated list of hostile entities, available at: <https://tinyurl.com/52z7phb5>

29 OHCHR, ‘Iran - UN Fact-Finding Mission urges withdrawal of bill criminalizing contact with foreign entities’, 3 September 2026 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/09/iran-un-fact-finding-mission-urges-withdrawal-bill-criminalizing-contact>

30 OHCHR, ‘High Commissioner Türk updates Human Rights Council: Human rights are carriers of hope’, 7 September 2026 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2026/09/high-commissioner-turk-updates-human-rights-council-human-rights>

founded fears of facing persecution if returned to Iran, including those from religious or belief communities, from targeted ethnic minorities, or who peacefully disagree with the regime.

- The State Department should continue to closely monitor FoRB in Iran and maintain the nation as a Country of Particular Concern, as recommended by the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF).
- The Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, once nominated and confirmed, and USCIRF commissioners should request an invitation to visit Iran with unhindered access to all parts of the country.
- Use the Magnitsky Act to impose targeted sanctions on identified perpetrators of transnational repression, and offer timely assistance to victims.
- Urge the government of Iran, at every appropriate opportunity, to implement the recommendations highlighted in the section above 'To the government of Iran'.
- Urge all relevant UN mechanisms, including the Special Procedures and Treaty Bodies, to include the situation of FoRB in their reporting on Iran, addressing the vulnerabilities and violations faced by religious or belief communities and those seeking to defend them.
- Monitor reports of arbitrary detention of religious, belief or ethnic minorities, and wherever possible, follow court proceedings to ensure detainees are afforded a fair trial in accordance with international standards.
- Urge the government of Iran, at every appropriate opportunity, to implement the recommendations highlighted in the section above 'To the government of Iran'.

To the United Nations and Member States:

- Call on Iran to immediately cease all targeting of religious or belief minorities, including during interactive dialogues with the Special Rapporteur on Iran and Fact-Finding Mission on Iran at the UN Human Rights Council and at the UN General Assembly, and highlight individuals who have been detained arbitrarily on account of their religion or belief in oral interventions.
- Continue to support the work of the Special Rapporteur on Iran and the UN Fact-Finding Mission on Iran, ensuring their mandates are fully resourced.
- Urge Iran to initiate a moratorium on the use of capital punishment and to take steps to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aiming to the abolition of the death penalty.
- Call on Iran to ratify the International Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
- Call on Iran to release journalists, lawyers and human rights defenders and all who are currently held on excessive charges in connection with their right to peaceful protest, and to ensure those responsible for extrajudicial killing, torture sexual and gender-based violence, and other mistreatment are brought to justice.

**CSW everyone
free to believe**