

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 56th SESSION

Presentation of the report of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and oral update on Nicaragua

20 June 2024

Ms Nada Al-Nashif, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, first presented the report of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights in **the Islamic Republic of Iran**.

The report, covering the period from 1 August 2023 to 31 March 2024, noted with serious concern the high number of executions. According to the information received, at least 834 individuals were executed last year, representing a 43% increase from the previous year. Especially troubling is the 84% increase in executions for drug related offenses in 2023, the highest figure in nearly a decade. Minorities continue to be disproportionately affected by executions, with 1% of all executions in 2023 affecting the Baloch minority. While noting an overall decline in the sentencing of children to death, the report deplored the execution of two child offenders in 2023 and urged the government to introduce an immediate moratorium on the death penalty as a first step towards its abolition.

Civic space online and offline continues to be severely restricted. The government tightly controls access to information including by blocking access to social media platforms. Journalists and writers continue to be targeted in connection to their work. Artists have also been targeted for exercising their freedom of opinion and expression including the artist later convicted and sentenced for corruption on earth which carries the death penalty. The report also described an environment of intimidation, coercion, and repression against lawyers, challenging judicial proceedings against human rights defenders and the families of protest victims.

The report expressed continued concern in relation to the bill to support the family by promoting the culture of chastity and hijab which seeks to reinforce mandatory public hijab requirements for women and girls and introduces severe penalties for noncompliance. Despite advances achieved by and for women and girls in Iran, in particular, in the education sector and towards ensuring participation in political and public life, women continue to face ongoing significant barriers to political representation as apparent in the March 2024 parliamentary elections. The report also raised attention to the significant findings of the UN Independent International Fact Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran and its recommendations.

Finally, the report highlighted the impact of the economic crisis exacerbated by the impact of unilateral coercive measures and economic mismanagement on living conditions and access to health, food, and water.

Ms Nada Al-Nashif, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, then presented an oral update on the situation of human rights in **Nicaragua**. She informed the Council that since the last update to the Human Rights Council in March 2024, the human rights situation in Nicaragua remains of grave concern. The government continues to expand undue restrictions on civic and democratic spaces while deepening its control over the judiciary and using it to implement a systemic campaign of oppression.

In an environment of sustained repression, detained political opponents, indigenous and religious leaders, academics, and intellectuals are all held in inhumane prison conditions adding to the suffering of victims and their families. Reports included cases of detainees placed in prolonged isolation without access to healthcare, medication, hygiene items, or family visits. The lack of access to adequate healthcare affects detainees differently with individuals with chronic health conditions being at particular risk and women detainees systematically being denied sexual and reproductive healthcare services.

In addition, she reported that Nicaraguan authorities have pursued their active persecution of members and leaders of religious sects attacking their institutions in contravention of the right to freedom of religion. Further, several Catholic celebrations were canceled during the holy week due to fear of reprisals.

Generally speaking, the deteriorating human rights situation in Nicaragua can still be reversed and respect for the rule of law restored. She called on the authorities to immediately release all those arbitrarily detained to allow communication and visits by lawyers and relatives to all persons in detention and to restore the rights of all those arbitrarily deprived of their nationality. Protecting civic and democratic space and rebuilding the rule of law institutions.

H.E. Mr. Ali Bahreini, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva, spoke as a concerned country. The Islamic Republic of Iran reiterated its principled opposition to selective approaches in the Human Rights Council that miserably coincided with falsified and inauthentic reports of mechanisms maligned by political docket. The pursuit of such prejudicial approaches either in the Human Rights Council or General Assembly has nothing to do with the promotion and protection of human rights, and even, are insidiously detrimental to the credibility of human rights values and structures.

The Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCMs) and illegal sanctions are adversely affecting the enjoyment of different kinds of human rights in Iran. During the past decades, Iranians were hugely deprived of their economic, social, and cultural rights due to the direct or indirect impacts of illegal sanctions. It is a matter of deep concern that human rights monitoring mechanisms that have been established in the name of human rights against Iran are meaningfully stifled and suffocated to deal with this important issue.

While the abolition of the death penalty is not supported by any global consensus, the Islamic Republic of Iran is implementing this punishment only for very serious crimes such as murder, major drug trafficking, and terrorist crimes that endanger the security of the community as a whole. In this regard, many efforts have been made to reduce the scope and number of executions with the implementation of different legal, social, and economic methodologies.

H.E. Ms Wendy Reyes-Rubina, General Prosecutor in Nicaragua, informed that the state of Nicaragua has been systematically implementing strategies and mechanisms aimed at securing the human rights of all citizens. The State focused on improving health, education, work, living conditions, and peace and security within the State, in spite of the ongoing aggression and sanctions at the hands of the world's imperialists. In this context, the constant oral updates on the situation in Nicaragua sought to feed division, disinformation and aggression against a country that was trying to forge ahead.

The inputs of these updates came from a group that was part of a defined agenda that sought to make invisible Nicaragua's human rights advances. She asked the UN system to provide an unequivocal

resounding expression of what the true role of safeguarding the human rights of people ought to be as well as international law and peace among communities in the world.

To watch the full meeting refer to the [UN WEB TV](#).