



The Islamic Republic of Iran

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Submission by CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation,

NGO in General Consultative Status with ECOSOC

And

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 CIVICUS is a global alliance of civil society organisations (CSOs) and activists dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society around the world. Founded in 1993, CIVICUS has members in more than 180 countries throughout the world.
- 1.2 The Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR) is an independent, non-profit CSO founded in 2011. GCHR provides support and protection to human rights defenders (HRDs) in the Middle East and North Africa region to promote human rights, including the rights to freedom of association, expression and peaceful assembly.
- 1.3 In this submission, the authors examine the Islamic Republic of Iran's compliance with its international human rights obligations to create and maintain a safe and enabling environment for civil society. Specifically, we analyse Iran's fulfilment of the rights to freedoms of association, expression and peaceful assembly and unwarranted restrictions on human rights defenders (HRDs) since its previous UPR examination in November 2019. To this end, we assess Iran's implementation of recommendations received during the 3rd UPR cycle relating to these issues and provide follow-up recommendations.
- 1.4 During the 3rd UPR cycle, the Government of Iran received 67 recommendations on the space for civil society (civic space). It accepted 19 and noted 48. An evaluation of a range of legal sources and human rights documentation addressed in this submission demonstrates that Iran has partly implemented seven recommendations relating to civic space.
- 1.5 We are deeply concerned by the systematic misuse of the criminal justice system to punish and retaliate against HRDs, journalists and protesters, including through the use of the death penalty to punish and deter peaceful human rights work.
- 1.6 We are further alarmed by the criminalisation of advocacy for women's rights and gender equality, characterised by systematic targeting and imprisoning of women HRDs (WHRDs) in repeated cycles of criminal litigation, including through the continuous filing of additional charges against WHRDs already serving lengthy prison sentences in retaliation for their peaceful human rights activities.
- 1.7 As a result of these issues, civic space in Iran is currently classified as 'closed' by the CIVICUS Monitor, indicating the existence of the most severe level of civic space restrictions.¹

¹ CIVICUS Monitor: Iran, <https://monitor.civicus.org/country/iran>.

- Section 2 of this submission examines Iran's implementation of UPR recommendations and compliance with international human rights standards concerning freedom of association.
- Section 3 examines Iran's implementation of UPR recommendations and compliance with international human rights standards related to the protection of HRDs, civil society activists and journalists.
- Section 4 examines Iran's implementation of UPR recommendations and compliance with international human rights standards concerning freedom of expression, media freedom and access to information.
- Section 5 examines Iran's implementation of UPR recommendations and compliance with international human rights standards related to freedom of peaceful assembly.
- Section 6 contains recommendations to address the concerns raised and advance implementation of recommendations under the 3rd cycle.
- Section 7 is an annex on the implementation of 3rd cycle UPR recommendations related to civic space.

2. Freedom of association

- 2.1 During Iran's examination under the 3rd UPR cycle, the government received 10 recommendations on the right to freedom of association and creating an enabling environment for CSOs. Among other recommendations, the government committed to 'Fully guarantee the rights of freedom of expression and to peaceful assembly and association, by creating an enabling environment, especially for women human rights defenders and human rights lawyers. Of the recommendations received, the government accepted four and noted six. However, as evidenced below, the government has not implemented any of them.
- 2.2 Article 26 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran guarantees the right to freedom of association 'provided that no violation is involved to the principles of independence, freedom, national unity, Islamic Standards and the foundations of the Islamic Republic'. Article 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is a state party, also guarantees freedom of association. However, despite these commitments, Iranian civil society operates in a highly challenging and authoritarian environment dominated by the ideological tenets of political Islam. Some spheres of civil society, such as those that work on labour rights, students' and women's rights and teachers' issues, are kept under strict surveillance and face disproportionate difficulties.²
- 2.3 One of the biggest challenges to registration of CSOs is the requirement by the 2016 regulations on Government-Approved Civil Associations that all founding members of

² 'Civil Society in Iran and Its Future Prospects', Volunteer Activists, 2018, <https://volunteeractivists.nl/en/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Civil-Society-in-Iran-and-its-Future-Prospects-pdf.pdf>.

an association or CSO be accredited by relevant authorities, leaving room for government interference in the registration processes. CSOs are also required to obtain official approval of their statutes before they can receive a licence to operate,³ and relevant authorities may coercively dissolve associations and CSOs without a court verdict in the case of a violation.⁴ The Civil Association Bylaws give the authorities, through the auditors of the National Council of Development and Support for Foundations, the unlimited ability to access and review all data of any CSO.⁵ Further, Article 131 of the 2016 Labour Law, which touches on civic associations, requires founding members of CSO boards 'to pledge allegiance to the Islamic Republic of Iran's Constitution'. This deprives many Iranian citizens of the right to establish a CSO.⁶

2.4 CSOs that seek to address human rights violations are generally suppressed by the state, and their founders and members are prosecuted.⁷ The courts also ban people from membership of organisations. Prominent WHRD and Nobel Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi was sentenced to 16 years imprisonment in 2016 for establishing the now banned Step by Step to Stop the Death Penalty group (LEGAM). In 2019, WHRD and lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh was sentenced to a total of 38 years imprisonment and 148 lashes on eight different charges that included 'membership of an illegal group' in relation to her membership of LEGAM.⁸ While both WHRDs were released in October 2020 and July 2021 on the basis of commutation⁹ and medical furlough¹⁰ respectively, they have since been rearrested and prosecuted for different charges (see section 3). Mohammadi's latest sentence, issued in 2022 for attending the memorial of a protester killed during the November 2021 protests, includes a ban on membership of political and social organisations.¹¹

2.5 Although the constitution guarantees the right to form trade unions, Iranian authorities do not permit the creation of labour unions, allowing only state-sponsored labour councils. Labour rights groups continue to face escalating pressure, with

³ Ibid., pg. 36.

⁴ Ibid., pg. 38.

⁵ Ibid., pg. 37.

⁶ Ibid., pg. 39.

⁷ 'Freedom in the World 2024', Freedom House, February 2024, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/iran/freedom-world/2024>.

⁸ 'Nasrin Sotoudeh Released on Bail While Still Facing Charges on National Security', Front Line Defenders, November 2023, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/nasrin-sotoudeh-released-bail-while-still-facing-charges-national-security>.

⁹ 'Iran Facing Coordinated Diplomatic Efforts to End its Treatment of Political Prisoners and WHRDs', CIVICUS Monitor, 30 October 2020, <https://monitor.civicus.org/explore/iran-facing-coordinated-diplomatic-efforts-end-its-treatment-political-prisoners-and-whrds>.

¹⁰ 'Influential Iranian Women: Nasrin Sotoudeh (1963-)', Iran Wire, 16 January 2024, <https://iranwire.com/en/women/124370-influential-iranian-women-nasrin-sotoudeh-1963>.

¹¹ 'WHRD Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe Returns Home after Years of Prolonged Arbitrary Detention', CIVICUS Monitor, 28 April 2022, <https://monitor.civicus.org/explore/whrd-nazanin-zaghari-ratcliffe-returns-home-after-years-prolonged-arbitrary-detention>.

prominent leaders and activists being imprisoned under national security charges. A stark example occurred in June 2023, when labour activist Davood Razavi received a five-year discretionary prison sentence for organising protests advocating for better wages and improved working conditions. Additionally, Razavi was banned for two years from participating in political parties, groups, or online activities.¹²

3. Harassment, intimidation and attacks against human rights defenders, civil society activists and journalists

- 3.1 Under Iran's previous UPR examination, the government received 21 recommendations on the protection of HRDs, civil society representatives and journalists. The government committed to several recommendations, including to 'Protect human rights defenders and media workers and fully guarantee the right to freedom of expression and association', and 'Implement fully the relevant laws to hold to account the perpetrators of intimidation and reprisals against human rights defenders and journalists.' It accepted five recommendations and noted 16. However, as evidenced below, the government has partly implemented only seven of the recommendations.
- 3.2 Article 12 of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders mandates states to take the necessary measures to ensure the protection of HRDs. The ICCPR further guarantees freedoms of association, expression and peaceful assembly. However, despite these protections, activists, HRDs, and journalists face systematic targeting through arbitrary detentions, judicial harassment, torture, travel bans and lengthy sentences, among other forms of reprisals described in this section.
- 3.3 HRDs continue to suffer in the Iranian justice system. The continued abuse of the criminal and judicial system, with the courts used as a weapon to systematically silence dissent through vexatious lawsuits and the abuse of broad and vague provisions of the Islamic Penal Code and national security offences, has resulted in a chilling effect on HRDs.
- 3.4 The status of WHRDs and women's rights activists remains a particular issue of concern as authorities continue to systematically sentence and imprison WHRDs, entrapping them in unending cycles of judicial harassment and intimidation, which repeatedly return them to and keep them in prison.¹³ WHRDs face disproportionate targeting for their human rights work¹⁴ and many face extremely long sentences.

¹² Freedom House, op. cit.

¹³ 'Feminist activists and WHRDs remain in limbo between misogynist state and international community inaction', GCHR, 3 June 2021, <https://www.gc4hr.org/feminist-activists-and-whrds-remain-in-limbo-between-misogynist-state-and-international-community-inaction>.

¹⁴ 'Concerns about Increased Use of Death Penalty and Judicial Harassment to Crack Down on Civic Space', CIVICUS Monitor, 31 August 2020, <https://monitor.civicus.org/explore/concerns-about-increasing-use-death-penalty-and-judicial-harassment-crack-down-civi>.

Many others continue to be sentenced for varying lengths of time, with cases of torture during detention being reported.¹⁵

- 3.5 This was seen on 2 July 2020, when just two days before she was due to be released from prison, WHRD Atena Daemi was sentenced to two additional years in jail and 74 lashes on charges of ‘propaganda against the state’ and ‘disrupting the prison order’ after being accused of chanting anti-government slogans on the anniversary of Iran’s 1979 revolution. Daemi was due for release after serving five years in prison for her work advocating against the death penalty and participating in protests, for which she had been charged with ‘acting against national security’.¹⁶ She was released from prison on 24 January 2022.¹⁷
- 3.6 Similarly, on 26 April 2021, WHRD and British-Iranian citizen Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe was sentenced to another year in prison and a one-year travel ban after being convicted of ‘propaganda against the regime’ in relation to a protest in London 12 years prior and an interview with the BBC Persian service.¹⁸ She had been released in March 2020 on house arrest after serving five years in prison over claims that she was training journalists in Iran.¹⁹ On 17 March 2022, she was finally released after serving lengthy and entirely arbitrary detentions.²⁰ She returned home to the UK where her family lives.
- 3.7 The punitive cycles of judicial harassment faced by WHRDs was further illustrated by the arbitrary rearrest and subsequent sentencing of Narges Mohammadi on 16 November 2021 while she was attending a memorial for Ebrahim Ketabdar, a protester killed by Iranian security forces during the November 2021 protests.²¹ Having only been released a year before, after her 16-year sentence for establishing LEGAM was commuted,²² Mohammadi was sentenced to eight years and two months in prison and 74 lashes and was banned from living in Tehran, holding membership of political and social organisations and using social media under the new charges. Most recently, on 18 June 2024, Mohammadi’s lawyer announced she had been

¹⁵ ‘CSOs Report New Wave of Oppression Against Human Rights Defenders and Civil Society’, CIVICUS Monitor, 8 August 2022, <https://monitor.civicus.org/explore/csos-report-new-wave-oppression-against-human-rights-defenders-and-civil-society>.

¹⁶ CIVICUS Monitor, 30 October 2020, op. cit.

¹⁷ CIVICUS Monitor, 28 April 2022, op. cit.

¹⁸ ‘Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe Sentenced to a Year in Iran Prison’, BBC, 26 April 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-56888938>.

¹⁹ ‘Shocking charges against jailed women’s rights activists, who must be released amid second COVID-19 peak’, GCHR, 22 June 2020, <https://www.gc4hr.org/shocking-charges-against-jailed-womens-rights-activists-who-must-be-released-amid-second-covid-19-peak>.

²⁰ CIVICUS Monitor, 28 April 2022, op. cit.

²¹ ‘Iran: Release arbitrarily detained rights activist at imminent risk of flogging’, Amnesty international, 18 November 2021, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/11/iran-release-narges-mohammadi>.

²² ‘WHRD Narges Mohammadi remains at risk of COVID-19 despite the authorities’ reports, and must be freed’, GCHR, 8 October 2020, <https://www.gc4hr.org/whrd-narges-mohammadi-remains-at-risk-of-covid-19-despite-the-authorities-reports-and-must-be-freed>.

sentenced to an additional year in prison by Branch 29 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court on charges of ‘propaganda activities against the state’. The evidence includes statements and voice messages she sent from prison, including her letter about boycotting parliamentary elections in Iran, and her communications with the Norwegian and Swedish parliaments.²³ Altogether, the authorities have arrested her at least 13 times, convicted her six times and sentenced her to a total of 32 years in prison and 154 lashes. She remains in prison in Iran along with other WHRDs.²⁴

- 3.8 Similarly, on 29 October 2023, Nasrin Sotoudeh, who has been imprisoned multiple times since 2010 as a result of her human rights work, was arrested together with 23 other women, including civil society personnel and journalists, while attending the funeral of Armita Garavand. Garavand, a 16-year-old girl, died following her arrest by the infamous Morality Police on the Tehran metro, just a year after the death of Mahsa Amini²⁵ under similar circumstances.²⁶ Sotoudeh was released after 17 days of arbitrary detention and still faces national security charges and charges for disregarding mandatory veiling laws.²⁷ In two other trials in 2018 and 2019, Sotoudeh was sentenced to 38 years in prison and 148 lashes, after being convicted of eight different offences including ‘espionage’ and ‘encouraging corruption and prostitution’ for criticising the judiciary, providing legal representation to women charged for removing their hijabs in public²⁸ and ‘membership of an illegal group’ over her membership of LEGAM.²⁹ She had only been released from jail in July 2021 on medical furlough before her rearrest in 2023.
- 3.9 On 1 June 2020, WHRD Saba Kord Afshari, who was already serving a nine-year sentence for her role in the White Wednesday protest movement against the mandatory veiling of women,³⁰ was sentenced to a further 15 years in prison, after a previous acquittal on some of her charges was overturned by the appeals court. Afshari was charged with ‘promoting corruption and prostitution through appearing

²³ ‘Free Narges Coalition Strongly Condemns Additional Sentence for Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Narges Mohammadi’, Reporters Without Borders, 18 June 2024, <https://rsf.org/en/free-narges-coalition-strongly-condemns-additional-sentence-nobel-peace-prize-laureate-narges>.

²⁴ ‘Iran Cracks Down on Dissent on First Anniversary of Mahsa Amini’s Death in Custody’, CIVICUS Monitor, 26 September 2023, <https://monitor.civicus.org/explore/iran-cracks-down-on-dissent-on-first-anniversary-of-mahsa-aminis-death-in-custody>.

²⁵ Mahsa Amini was an Iranian Kurdish woman who died in police custody on 16 September 2022 after being arrested by Iran’s morality police for breach of the country’s strict dress code, sparking large-scale nationwide protests in Iran and global outrage.

²⁶ ‘Joint Letter: Urgent Request for Intervention in Favour of Mrs Nasrin Sotoudeh’, Lawyers for Lawyers, 1 November 2023, <https://lawyersforlawyers.org/en/joint-letter-urgent-request-for-intervention-in-favour-of-mrs-nasrin-sotoudeh>.

²⁷ Front Line Defenders, November 2023, op. cit.

²⁸ ‘Prominent HRD’s Lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh Sentenced to 38 Years Imprisonment’, CIVICUS Monitor, 13 March 2019, <https://monitor.civicus.org/explore/prominent-hrds-lawyer-nasrin-sotoudeh-sentenced-38-years-imprisonment>.

²⁹ Front Line Defenders, November 2023, op. cit.

³⁰ CIVICUS Monitor, 31 August 2020, op. cit.

without a headscarf in public'. She was released in February 2023 as part of a general amnesty announced by the Iranian judiciary to mark the 44th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution in Iran.³¹

- 3.10 Journalists who report on the rights of women also find themselves thrown into this vicious cycle of recurring litigation and imprisonment. This was seen when women journalists Niloofar Hamedi and Elahe Mohammadi, sentenced for reporting on Mahsa Amini's death, faced new charges for not wearing a hijab³² (see paragraph 4.6).
- 3.11 Authorities also target family members of WHRDs to retaliate against peaceful human rights work. On 17 August 2020, Nasrin Sotoudeh's 20-year-old daughter Mehraveh Khandan was arrested at her home in Tehran and taken into custody, reportedly to try to force her mother to end her hunger strike, which she had started to demand the release of prisoners of opinion who were at risk of contracting COVID-19.³³
- 3.12 In a similar vein, Ali Alinejad, brother of Masih Alinejad, a leader of the White Wednesdays campaign who lives abroad, was arrested in September 2019.³⁴ In July 2020, he was sentenced to eight years in prison on charges including 'insulting the Supreme Leader' and 'propaganda against the state'. The charges against him were upheld on appeal.³⁵
- 3.13 As well as targeting people advocating for the rights of women and their families, authorities also punish those who criticise other government actions. On 19 June 2022, five prominent HRDs were sentenced to prison for attempting to file a legal complaint against government agencies and officials for mismanagement of the COVID-19 crisis.³⁶ Mehdi Mahmoudian and Mostafa Nili were sentenced to four years in prison and a two-year ban from media appearances. The other three, Arash Keykhosravi, Mohammadreza Faghihi and Maryam Afrafaraz, were sentenced to two years, one year and 95 days in prison respectively. A two-year ban on practising law was imposed on Nili and a one-year legal practice ban was imposed on Keykhosravi.³⁷

³¹ 'Saba Kord Afshari was Released from Prison', Front Line Defenders, February 2023, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/saba-kord-afshari-was-released-evin-prison>.

³² 'Iranian journalists celebrating release from jail charged for not wearing hijab', The Guardian, 15 January 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2024/jan/15/niloofar-hamedi-elaheh-mohammadi-iran-hijab-mahsa-amini-bail-release>.

³³ CIVICUS Monitor, 30 October 2020, op. cit.

³⁴ 'Iran Arrests Activist Masih Alinejad's Brother Amid Crusade to Silence Citizens Based Abroad', Centre for Human Rights in Iran, 25 September 2019, <https://iranhumanrights.org/2019/09/iran-arrests-activist-masih-alinejads-brother-amid-crusade-to-silence-citizens-based-abroad>.

³⁵ 'Iranian Appeals Court Upholds Ali Alinejad's Prison Sentence', National Iranian American Council, 19 October 2020, https://www.niacouncil.org/human_rights_tracker/iranian-appeals-court-upholds-ali-alinejads-prison-sentence.

³⁶ 'Iran: Rights Defenders Sentenced for Questioning Covid Policies', Human Rights Watch, 29 June 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/06/29/iran-rights-defenders-sentenced-questioning-covid-policies>.

³⁷ CIVICUS Monitor, 8 August 2022, op. cit.

4. Freedom of expression, media freedom and access to information

- 4.1 Under the 3rd UPR cycle, the government received 18 recommendations on freedom of expression, media freedom and access to information. For example, the government pledged to ‘Take steps to encourage freedom of expression, ensuring that human rights defenders, lawyers and journalists are not subjected to intimidation or arbitrary arrest in connection with their work’, and ‘Continue to enact and fully implement legislation that seeks to promote and protect the rights to freedom of the media, speech and religion’. Of the recommendations received, the government accepted four and noted 14. However, as evidenced below, it has not implemented any of the recommendations.
- 4.2 Article 19 of the ICCPR guarantees the right to freedoms of expression and opinion. Article 24 of Iran’s constitution guarantees the right of the press to discuss ideas providing they do not harm the principles of Islam or the rights of the public, as determined by law. Article 175 of the constitution provides that the head of the mass media of the Islamic Republic of Iran shall be appointed and removed by the leader.³⁸
- 4.3 The government maintains a firm grip on domestic media content and exerts considerable control over access to regional media. State television, a primary news source for many Iranians, is tightly censored and highly influenced by the security apparatus. Persian-language broadcasts from outside Iran are regularly jammed and satellite dishes are prohibited, cutting off alternative channels of information. Access to international websites, including news outlets and social media platforms, is tightly filtered. Newspapers and magazines operate under stringent censorship, severely limiting the subjects they can address.³⁹
- 4.4 Iran was ranked as the world’s worst jailer of journalists in the Committee to Protect Journalists’ (CPJ) 2022 prison census,⁴⁰ which documented numbers behind bars as of 1 December 2022, after authorities detained at least 95 journalists in the wake of the nationwide protests following Mahsa Amini’s death.⁴¹ In CPJ’s 2023 prison census, Iran ranked as the sixth worst jailer of journalists with at least 17 journalists remaining behind bars as of 1 December 2023.⁴²

³⁸ The Constitution of the Republic of Iran,

<https://ecnl.org/sites/default/files/files/2021/IranConstitution.pdf>.

³⁹ Freedom House, op. cit.

⁴⁰ ‘Number of jailed journalists spikes to new global record’, Committee to Protect Journalists, 14 December 2022, <https://cpj.org/reports/2022/12/number-of-jailed-journalists-spikes-to-new-global-record>.

⁴¹ ‘Iranian journalists Niloofar Hamed and Elahe Mohammadi sentenced’, Committee to Protect Journalists, 22 October 2023, <https://cpj.org/2023/10/iranian-journalists-niloofar-hamed-and-elahe-mohammadi-sentenced>.

⁴² ‘2023 prison census: Jailed journalist numbers near record high; Israel imprisonments spike’, Committee to Protect Journalists, January 2024, <https://cpj.org/reports/2024/01/2023-prison-census-jailed-journalist-numbers-near-record-high-israel-imprisonments-spike/#worst-jailers-of-journalists>.

- 4.5 On 12 December 2020, journalist Ruhollah Zam, editor of the AmadNews website and Telegram channel, was executed after being convicted on 13 charges including the crime of ‘corruption on earth’⁴³ in connection with the website’s reporting on anti-government protests in 2017 and 2018.⁴⁴
- 4.6 In October 2023, women journalists Niloofar Hamedi and Elahe Mohammadi were sentenced to 13 and 12 years in prison respectively for reporting on the death of Mahsa Amini. The two were charged with ‘propaganda against the system’ and ‘conspiracy to act against national security’.⁴⁵ They were freed on bail in January 2024 pending their appeal.⁴⁶ Upon their release, Hamedi and Mohammadi faced new charges for not wearing a hijab after photos of them embracing and celebrating their release were widely circulated on social media.⁴⁷
- 4.7 Several other violations of the freedom of expression followed the Mahsa Amini protests. Two Iranian musicians were sentenced over songs they created during the protests, with one facing a death sentence. On 24 April 2024, Iranian authorities convicted rapper Toomaj Salehi for a song he wrote and sentenced him to death on a charge of ‘corruption on earth’.⁴⁸ Salehi is known for using his music to criticise the Iranian authorities and highlight issues such as corruption, poverty and state executions.⁴⁹
- 4.8 Singer-songwriter Shervin Hajipour was sentenced to over three years in prison on 1 March 2024, over allegations of creating a protest anthem for Mahsa Amini that authorities deemed as ‘inciting people to riot’. Amid the 2022 protests, Hajipour debuted a song, ‘Baraye’, which became an anthem of the protests.⁵⁰ For this track, he earned the Special Merit Award for Best Song for Social Change at the 2023 Grammys.⁵¹

⁴³ ‘Iran executes dissident journalist Rouhollah Zam’, CNN, 12 December 2020, <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/12/12/middleeast/iran-execution-journalist-rouhollah-zam-intl/index.html>.

⁴⁴ ‘More Journalists Arrested for Reporting on Iran Regime, Internet Shutdown’, CIVICUS Monitor, 3 May 2021, <https://monitor.civicus.org/explore/more-journalists-arrested-reporting-iran-regime-internet-shutdown>.

⁴⁵ ‘Journalists Sentenced for Reporting on Mahsa Amini’s Death’, CIVICUS Monitor, 20 December 2023, <https://monitor.civicus.org/explore/journalists-sentenced-for-reporting-on-mahsa-aminis-death>.

⁴⁶ ‘Violations on Expression and Peaceful Assembly Remain a Concern Against the Backdrop of Protests’, CIVICUS Monitor, 31 May 2024, <https://monitor.civicus.org/explore/violations-on-expression-and-peaceful-assembly-remain-a-concern-against-the-backdrop-of-protests>.

⁴⁷ The Guardian, op. cit.

⁴⁸ ‘The silencing of musicians advocating for women’s rights’, GHCR, 23 May 2024, <https://www.gc4hr.org/the-silencing-of-musicians-advocating-for-womens-rights>.

⁴⁹ CIVICUS Monitor, 31 May 2024, op. cit.

⁵⁰ GHCR, 23 May 2024, op. cit.

⁵¹ CIVICUS Monitor, 31 May 2024, op. cit.

- 4.9 Authorities also imposed severe restrictions on the dissemination of information during the 2022 protests. This included concealing details about the number, condition and treatment of detained protesters and other political prisoners.⁵²
- 4.10 During the 2022 protests, internet and mobile disruptions, and restrictions on mobile applications, were reported by users, with some fearing the government could track their activities through their smartphones.⁵³
- 4.11 On 5 December 2022, Human Rights Watch reported that two of its staff members had been targeted by hackers backed by the Iranian government. The two experienced phishing attempts after they received suspicious messages on WhatsApp with malicious links that directed them to a fake login page that took the user's email password and authentication code when clicked. At least 18 other high-profile academics, activists, diplomats, journalists, researchers and politicians were also targeted with attempts to access sensitive information. Fifteen of them confirmed they had received the suspicious WhatsApp message from the same contacts as the Human Rights Watch staff. For at least three, the attackers gained access to their emails, cloud storage drives, calendars and contacts.⁵⁴

5. Freedom of peaceful assembly

- 5.1 During Iran's examination under the 3rd UPR cycle, the government received 11 recommendations on the right to freedom of peaceful assembly. Among other recommendations, the government committed to ensuring that it would 'Fully guarantee the rights of freedom of expression and to peaceful assembly and association, by creating an enabling environment, especially for women human rights defenders and human rights lawyers'. It accepted one recommendation and noted 10. However, as evidenced below, the government has not implemented any of the recommendations.
- 5.2 Article 27 of the constitution guarantees the right to freedom of peaceful assembly, as long as the participants do not violate the fundamental principles of Islam. Article 21 of the ICCPR also guarantees this right. However, in practice, freedom of assembly is routinely restricted as security forces often use brutal and lethal violence to disperse peaceful protests and exploit broad and ambiguous criminal laws to target them.

⁵² Freedom House, op. cit.

⁵³ 'Hacked Documents, How Iran Can Track and Control Protesters Phones', The Intercept, 28 October 2022, <https://theintercept.com/2022/10/28/iran-protests-phone-surveillance>.

⁵⁴ 'Iran: State-Backed Hacking of Activists, Journalists, Politicians', Human Rights Watch, 5 December 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/12/05/iran-state-backed-hacking-activists-journalists-politician>.

- 5.3 Iran's judiciary regularly uses vaguely defined national security charges to prosecute peaceful dissent and subjects detainees to mistreatment, torture and unfair trials.⁵⁵ Authorities often rely on broad offences under the Islamic Penal Code and national security offences such as 'encouraging people to corruption and prostitution', 'assembly and collusion against national security' and 'propaganda against the state' to prosecute and retaliate against peaceful protesters, particularly those advocating for the rights of women. This was seen in 2019 when three WHRDs, Mojgan Keshavarz, Monireh Arabshahi and her daughter Yasaman Ariyani, were sentenced to 23.6 years, and 16 years each respectively under all these charges for protesting against the mandatory veiling of women during International Women's Day in March 2019, as part of the White Wednesday campaign.⁵⁶ Keshavarz was also found guilty of 'insulting the sacred'.⁵⁷
- 5.4 The massive wave of protests that began in September 2022 against compulsory hijab laws following Mahsa Amini's death, which quickly expanded to articulate broader grievances and demands for fundamental political and social change, was met with a ruthless crackdown characterised by the use of brutal and lethal force. The authorities used live ammunition against numerous peaceful protesters, killing hundreds and injuring many others.⁵⁸ Over 20,000 people were arrested during the protests, including dozens of WHRDs and journalists.⁵⁹
- 5.5 The crackdown on protesters after the Mahsa Amini protests was also characterised by suspicious deaths of detainees shortly after their release, which Iranian authorities have labelled suicides despite significant evidence indicating otherwise. In many of these cases, family members of the deceased challenged the cause of death, terming them staged suicides. Investigations by human rights organisations and journalists also revealed that some of the alleged suicides were cover-ups of murder by state security forces. Strong evidence of torture during detention also raised questions

⁵⁵ 'Iran: Crackdown on Dervish Minority', Human Rights Watch, 15 March 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/03/15/iran-crackdown-dervish-minority>.

⁵⁶ 'Three Women Issued Lengthy Prison Sentences for Peacefully Protesting Iran's Mandatory Hijab Law', Centre for Human Rights in Iran, 8 August 2019, <https://iranhumanrights.org/2019/08/three-women-issued-lengthy-prison-sentences-for-peacefully-protesting-irans-mandatory-hijab-law>.

⁵⁷ 'CSOs Express Concern at Thousands of Imprisoned HRDs at Risk of Corona Virus Infection', CIVICUS Monitor, 24 March 2020, <https://monitor.civicus.org/explore/csos-express-concern-thousands-imprisoned-hrds-risk-corona-virus-infection>.

⁵⁸ 'Repression Continues with New Wave of Protests', CIVICUS Monitor, 15 December 2022, <https://monitor.civicus.org/explore/repression-continues-new-wave-protests>.

⁵⁹ 'GCHR condemns continued crackdown on WHRDs as anniversary of Mahsa Amini's death approaches', Gulf Center for Human Rights, 30 August 2023, <https://www.gc4hr.org/gchr-condemns-continued-crackdown-on-whrds-as-anniversary-of-mahsa-aminis-death-approaches>.

about events preceding people's deaths, possibly indicating extreme emotional distress for some victims.⁶⁰

- 5.6 Like the clampdown on gender equality protests, demonstrations addressing other socio-economic issues such as corruption, the rising cost of living and unemployment also face severe repression. Authorities cracked down viciously against widescale protests that began after a 50 per cent fuel hike on 15 November 2019. During these protests, where people also called for an end to corruption, economic hardship, inequality and unemployment,⁶¹ authorities used excessive force against people, including the use of live ammunition. At least 300 people were killed in the first three days, while Amnesty International reported that over 7,000 protesters were arrested in the first 12 days.⁶²
- 5.7 In July 2020, CSOs raised concerns about the increased use of the death penalty, highlighting its intensified use to invoke fear and deter people involved in the wave of protests that began in November 2019.⁶³ They also noted a tendency for death sentence trials to be compromised by due process violations and to be based on vaguely defined national security charges such as 'corruption on earth', 'armed rebellion' and 'enmity against God'.⁶⁴ In July 2020, the Supreme Court upheld death sentences for Amirhossein Moradi, Mohammad Rajabi and Saeed Tamjidi, imposed in connection with the November 2019 protests.⁶⁵ The death sentences followed grossly unfair trials that were founded on confessions allegedly extracted through torture and ill-treatment.⁶⁶
- 5.8 On 11 August 2020, Mostafa Salehi, a protester convicted of shooting security officer Sajjad Shahsanaei during protests in Kahrizsang, Isfahan from December 2017 to January 2018, was executed. Five other protesters who were arrested for allegedly destroying public property in Isfahan during the protests were also on death row at that time, despite what CSOs noted to be due process flaws and the absence of investigations into allegations of excessive force.⁶⁷

⁶⁰ 'Suspicious Deaths of Released Protesters in Iran Should be Investigated by UN', Centre for Human Rights in Iran, 19 January 2023, <https://iranhumanrights.org/2023/01/suicides-suspicious-deaths-of-released-protesters-in-iran-should-be-investigated-by-un>.

⁶¹ CIVICUS Monitor, 24 March 2020, op. cit.

⁶² 'Iran: thousands arrested after protests', Amnesty International UK, 16 December 2019, <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/iran-thousands-arrested-after-protests>.

⁶³ 'Iran: Two Kurds executed amid increasing use of death penalty as weapon of repression', Amnesty International, 15 July 2020, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/07/iran-two-kurds-executed-amid-increasing-use-of-death-penalty-as-weapon-of-repression>

⁶⁴ 'Iran: Death Penalty for Protest-Related Charges', Human Rights Watch, 10 July 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/07/10/iran-death-penalty-protest-related-charges>

⁶⁵ Amnesty International, 15 July 2020, op. cit.

⁶⁶ CIVICUS Monitor, 31 August 2020, op. cit.

⁶⁷ 'Iran: Protester Accused of Killing Soldier Executed', Human Rights Watch, 11 August 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/08/11/iran-protester-accused-killing-soldier-executed>.

- 5.9 The death penalty was also used as a reprisal tactic by authorities during the Mahsa Amini protests. In December 2022, following grossly unfair trials, authorities executed Majid Reza Rahnavard and Mohsen Shekari, both 23 years old, based on charges of alleged killing and injuring security force members, in connection with the protests.⁶⁸ Authorities sought the death penalty for at least 21 people in sham trials designed to intimidate those participating in the popular uprising and deter others from joining the movement.⁶⁹
- 5.10 The heavy-handed response to protests was also seen following protests on 15 July 2021 that erupted in Eastern Azerbaijan, Isfahan, Karaj, Khuzestan, Lorestan and Tehran over poor water management and inadequate response to climate crisis-induced drought and flooding. As of 28 July 2021, at least nine people had died from injuries during the protests.⁷⁰ In response to the protests, authorities imposed internet disruptions and shutdowns.⁷¹

6. Recommendations to the Government of Iran

CIVICUS and GCHR call on the Government of Iran to create and maintain, in law and in practice, an enabling environment for civil society, in accordance with the rights enshrined in the ICCPR, the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and Human Rights Council resolutions 22/6, 27/5 and 27/31.

At a minimum, the following conditions should be guaranteed: freedoms of association, expression and peaceful assembly, the right to operate free from unwarranted state interference, the right to communicate and cooperate, the right to seek and secure funding and the state's duty to protect. In the light of this, the following specific recommendations are made.

6.1 Freedom of association

- Take measures to foster a safe, respectful and enabling environment for civil society, including by removing legal and policy measures that unwarrantedly limit freedom of association.

⁶⁸ 'Iran: Death Sentences Against Protesters', Human Rights Watch, 13 December 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/12/13/iran-death-sentences-against-protesters>.

⁶⁹ 'Iran: Chilling use of the death penalty to further brutally quell popular uprising', Amnesty International, 16 November 2022, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/11/iran-chilling-use-of-the-death-penalty-to-further-brutally-quell-popular-uprising>.

⁷⁰ 'Iran: Deadly Repression of Khuzestan Protests', Human Rights Watch, 29 July 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/07/29/iran-deadly-repression-khuzestan-protests>.

⁷¹ 'Crackdown on Protests, Activists Systematically Detained and Sentenced on Spurious Charges', CIVICUS Monitor, 30 September 2021, <https://monitor.civicus.org/explore/crack-down-protests-activists-systematically-detained-sentenced-spurious-charges>.

- Abolish criminal responsibility for organising and participating in the activities of non-registered organisations and lift the ban on the activities of non-registered organisations.
- Immediately reinstate any CSOs that have been arbitrarily and unduly sanctioned or disbanded, including LEGAM.
- Immediately drop all charges and sentences for HRDs and cease the prosecution and banning of people from membership of associations, including WHRD Narges Mohammadi and labour activist Davood Razavi.
- Legalise the existence of labour unions and create an enabling environment for them to be able to raise issues affecting their members without fear of intimidation or arrest.
- Refrain from acts leading to the closure of CSOs or the suspension of their peaceful activities, and instead promote a meaningful political dialogue that allows and embraces diverging views, including those of CSOs, HRDs, journalists, political activists and others.
- Amend the 2016 regulations on government-approved civil society associations to remove undue restrictions on the registration of associations, including the requirement that all founding members of an association or CSO be accredited by relevant authorities.
- Amend the 2016 Labour Law, which requires founding members of CSO boards 'to pledge allegiance to the Islamic Republic of Iran's Constitution'.

6.2 Protection of human rights defenders

- Provide civil society members, HRDs and journalists with a safe and secure environment in which to carry out their work and conduct impartial, thorough and effective investigations into all cases of attacks, harassment and intimidation against them and bring the perpetrators of such offences to justice.
- Ensure that HRDs can carry out their legitimate activities without fear or undue hindrance, obstruction, or legal and administrative harassment.
- Amend the legal definition of offences and terms such as 'national security', 'propaganda against the state', 'encouraging and providing for moral corruption and prostitution' and 'corruption on earth' to ensure that they do not lead to the prosecution of HRDs, WHRDs, political dissenters and other people merely for exercising their human rights.
- Immediately and unconditionally release all HRDs, including journalists, detained for exercising their fundamental rights to freedoms of association,

expression and peaceful assembly, and review their cases to prevent further harassment.

- Stop the practice of targeting family members of HRDs and human rights lawyers who are in jail and ensure those detained have access to legal representation at all times.
- Ensure that HRDs who are accused of any wrongdoing and their lawyers are provided with information about the offences they are accused of committing in a timely manner, and stop the practice of informing HRDs about sentences handed to them months after they have been detained.
- Adopt a framework for the protection of journalists and HRDs from persecution, intimidation and harassment.
- Publicly condemn, at the highest levels of government, instances of harassment and intimidation of CSOs and activists.
- Systematically apply legal provisions that promote and protect human rights and establish mechanisms that protect HRDs, including by adopting a specific law on the protection of HRDs.

6.3 Freedom of expression, media freedom and access to information

- Ensure that journalists and writers may work freely and without fear of retribution for expressing critical opinions or covering topics that the government may deem sensitive.
- Take steps to lift restrictions on freedom of expression and adopt a framework for the protection of journalists from persecution, intimidation and harassment.
- Guarantee unfettered access for all people in Iran to independent domestic and foreign media information, offline and online.
- Develop an action plan to ensure that internet laws comply with the government's commitment to guarantee freedom of expression, media freedom and access to information, including by ensuring free access to electronic media, ceasing censorship and surveillance, liberalising electronic media ownership rules and enabling journalists, bloggers and other internet users to play a full and active role in promoting and protecting human rights.
- Refrain from adopting any laws providing for censorship or undue control over social and conventional media content.

- Refrain from censoring social and conventional media and ensure that freedom of expression is safeguarded in all arenas, including in the arts.

6.4 Freedom of peaceful assembly

- Promulgate a law granting people the right to peaceful assembly.
- Adopt best practices on freedom of peaceful assembly, as put forward by the 2012 report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, which calls for simple processes for the notification of assemblies being held rather than permission being required, and by General Comment No. 37 on the right to peaceful assembly adopted by the UN Human Rights Committee in 2020.
- Unconditionally and immediately release all protesters, HRDs and journalists detained for exercising their right to freedom of peaceful assembly and review their cases to prevent further harassment.
- Review and, if necessary, update existing human rights training for police and security forces, with the assistance of independent CSOs, to foster the more consistent application of international human rights standards, including the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms.
- Provide recourse to judicial review and effective remedy, including compensation, in cases of unlawful denial of the right to the freedom of peaceful assembly by state authorities.

6.5 Access to UN Special Procedures mandate holders

- Extend a standing invitation to all UN Special Procedure mandate holders and prioritise official visits by the: 1) Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; 2) Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression; 3) Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association; 4) Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers; 5) Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions; 6) Special Rapporteur on the Right to Privacy; and 7) Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.

6.6 State engagement with civil society

- Implement transparent and inclusive mechanisms of public consultations with CSOs on all issues mentioned above and enable the more effective involvement of civil society in the preparation of law and policy.
- Include CSOs in the UPR process before finalising and submitting the national report.

- Systematically consult with civil society on the implementation of UPR recommendations, including by holding periodic comprehensive consultations with a diverse range of civil society.
- Incorporate the results of this UPR into action plans for the promotion and protection of all human rights, taking into account the proposals of civil society, and present a midterm evaluation report to the Human Rights Council on the implementation of the recommendations of this session.

7. Annex: Assessment of implementation of civic space recommendations under the 3rd cycle

Recommendation	Position	Assessment/Comments on level of implementation
<p>26.142 Ensure freedom from torture while in detention (Canada);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.11</p>	Supported	<p>Status: Not Implemented</p> <p>Source: HRDs: Section 3 – para 3.4 Peaceful Assembly: Section 5 – para 5.5, 5.7</p>
<p>26.170 Guarantee the right to a fair trial, including the right to choose one’s lawyer, including for those accused of offences related to national security (Switzerland);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.11</p>	Supported	<p>Status: Not Implemented</p> <p>Source: Peaceful Assembly: Section 5 – para 5.3, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9</p>
<p>26.172 Take all necessary measures and procedures to ensure compliance with fair trial standards (Bahrain);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.11</p>	Supported	<p>Status: Not Implemented</p> <p>Source: Peaceful Assembly: Section 5 – para 5.3, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9</p>
<p>26.178 Ensure the independence of the judicial system, the rules of fair trial, the right to defence and access to a freely chosen lawyer (Germany);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.11</p>	Supported	<p>Status: Not Implemented</p> <p>Source: HRDs: Section 3 – para 3.3 Peaceful Assembly: Section 5 – para 5.3, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9</p>
<p>26.324 Implement fully the relevant laws to hold to account the perpetrators of intimidation and reprisals against human rights defenders and journalists (Republic of Korea);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.11</p>	Supported	<p>Status: Not Implemented</p> <p>Source: HRDs/journalists: Section 3 – para 3.2 – 3.13</p>
<p>26.162 Continue to enact and fully implement legislation that seeks to promote and protect the rights to freedom of the media, speech and religion (Ghana);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.11</p>	Supported	<p>Status: Not Implemented</p> <p>Source: Expression: Expression: Section 4 – para 4.2, 4.3, 4.4</p>
<p>26.167. Take steps to encourage freedom of expression, ensuring that human rights defenders, lawyers and journalists are not subjected to intimidation or arbitrary arrest in connection with their work (New Zealand);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.11</p>	Supported	<p>Status: Not Implemented</p> <p>Source: HRDs/journalists: Section 3 – para 3.2 – 3.13 Expression: Section 4 – para 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9</p>

<p>26.325 Fully guarantee the rights of freedom of expression and to peaceful assembly and association, by creating an enabling environment, especially for women human rights defenders and human rights lawyers (Belgium);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.11</p>	Supported	<p>Status: Not Implemented</p> <p>Source:</p> <p>Association: Section 2 – para 2.2 – 2.4</p> <p>HRDs/journalists: Section 3 – para 3.2 – 3.13</p> <p>Expression: Section 4 – para 4.2 – 4.12</p> <p>Peaceful Assembly: 5 - para 5.2 – 5.10</p>
<p>26.326 Protect human rights defenders and media workers and fully guarantee the right to freedom of expression and association (Slovenia);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.11</p>	Supported	<p>Status: Not Implemented</p> <p>Source:</p> <p>Association: Section 2 – para 2.2 – 2.4</p> <p>HRDs/journalists: Section 3 – para 3.2 – 3.13</p> <p>Expression: Section 4 – para 4.2 – 4.6</p>
<p>26.329 Create a safe and enabling environment for civil society and human rights defenders, especially women human rights defenders (Norway).</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.11</p>	Supported	<p>Status: Not Implemented</p> <p>Source:</p> <p>Association: Section 2 – para 2.2 – 2.4</p> <p>HRDs: Section 3 – para 3.2 – 3.13</p> <p>Expression: Section 4 – para 4-7 – 4.12</p>
<p>26.79 Continue its efforts to ensure an effective presence for civil society organizations and NGOs in the local and international human rights arena (Kyrgyzstan);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.11</p>	Supported	<p>Status: Not Implemented</p> <p>Source:</p> <p>Association: Section 2 – para 2.2 – 2.4</p>
<p>26.284 Take steps to ensure that all criminal trials, including trials involving juvenile offenders, are fairly conducted in a manner that meets international standards (Ghana);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.11</p>	Supported	<p>Status: Not Implemented</p> <p>Source:</p> <p>HRDs: Section 3 – para 3.3</p> <p>Peaceful Assembly: Section 5 – para 5.3, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9</p>
<p>26.140 Immediately investigate all allegations involving the torture and other ill-treatment of those arrested or detained during the demonstrations in December 2017, and hold those responsible to account (Australia);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.6, 14</p>	Noted	<p>Status: Not Implemented</p> <p>Source:</p> <p>Peaceful Assembly: Section 5 – para 5.8</p>
<p>26.171 Establish an independent judiciary, including significant reforms to the revolutionary courts, and</p>	Noted	<p>Status: Not Implemented</p>

implement fair trial guarantees (United States of America); Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.19		Source: HRDs: Section 3 – para 3.3 Peaceful Assembly: Section 5 – para 5.3, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9
26.173 Promptly allow an impartial trial process that weighs evidence and ensures defendants, and lawyers of their choosing, can have timely access to the charges and evidence (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland); Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.19	Noted	Status: Not Implemented Source: HRDs: Section 3 – para 3.3 Peaceful Assembly: Section 5 – para 5.3, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9
26.179 Align laws and practices on the right to a fair trial and on the rights to freedoms of opinion and expression, of peaceful assembly and association, and of religion and belief with international obligations and commitments, by removing restrictions against human rights defenders, lawyers, journalists, and ethnic and religious minorities, including the Baha' i community (Lithuania); Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.19	Noted	Status: Not Implemented Association: Section 2 – para 2.2 – 2.4 HRDs/journalists: Section 3 – para 3.2 – 3.13 Expression: Section 4 – para 4.2 – 4.12 Peaceful Assembly: 5 - para 5.2 – 5.10
26.156 Guarantee freedom of expression, particularly of men and women human rights defenders and journalists, and repeal legal provisions that affect these rights (Argentina); Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.10, 14	Noted	Status: Not Implemented Source: HRDs/journalists: Section 3 - para 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.10 Expression: Section 4 - para 4.2 – 4.12
26.157 Guarantee the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly, and release political prisoners, including women's rights activists, labour rights activists, environmentalists, scholars, lawyers and journalists, detained for exercising these rights (Australia); Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.14	Noted	Status: Partially Implemented Source: Association: Section 2 - para 2.2 – 2.4 HRDs/journalists: Section 3 - para 3.2 – 3.13 Expression: Section 4 - para 4.2 – 4.12 Peaceful Assembly: Section 5 – para 5.2 – 5.10
26.158 End restrictions on the right to freedom of expression and opinion, in accordance with the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Chile); Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.10, 19	Noted	Status: Not Implemented Source: HRDs/journalists: Section 3 – para 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.10 Expression: Section 4 – para 4.2 – 4.12
26.159 Abolish provisions of the Penal Code that excessively restrict the rights to freedom of expression, association	Noted	Status: Not Implemented

<p>and peaceful assembly, and release all prisoners of conscience (Czechia);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.19</p>		<p>Source: Association: Section 2 – para 2.3 HRDs/journalists: Section 3 – para 3.3 Expression: Section 4 – para 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 Peaceful Assembly: Section 5 para 5.3, 5.7</p>
<p>26.160 Adopt measures to guarantee the unrestricted exercise of freedoms of expression, association and assembly by the Iranian population (Spain);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.19</p>	Noted	<p>Status: Not Implemented</p> <p>Source: Association: Section 2 – para 2.2 -2.4 HRDs/journalists: Section 3 – para 3.2 – 3.13 Expression: Section 4 – para 4.2 – 4.12 Peaceful Assembly: Section 5 para 5.2 – 5.10</p>
<p>26.161 Implement its international obligations to ensure the protection of human rights defenders, lawyers and others exercising their rights to freedom of opinion and expression, assembly and association in compliance with international human rights law, and to ensure that all investigations, prosecutions and trials against human rights defenders meet international standards (Finland);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.14</p>	Noted	<p>Status: Not Implemented</p> <p>Source: Association: Section 2 – para 2.2 -2.4 HRDs/journalists: Section 3 – para 3.2 – 3.13 Expression: Section 4 – para 4.2 – 4.12 Peaceful Assembly: Section 5 para 5.2 – 5.10</p>
<p>26.163 Release all detainees who have been imprisoned for exercising their rights of freedom of expression and peaceful assembly as guaranteed under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Ireland);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.19</p>	Noted	<p>Status: Partially Implemented</p> <p>Source: HRDs/journalists: Section 3 – para 3.5, 3.6, 3.9 Expression: 4.5, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 Peaceful assembly: Section 5 – para 5.4, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9</p>
<p>26.164 End the practice of filtering online content and restricting access to the Internet (Israel);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.19</p>	Noted	<p>Status: Not Implemented</p> <p>Source: Expression: Section 4 – para 4.3</p>
<p>26.165 Guarantee freedom of opinion, expression and assembly and cease arresting human rights defenders peacefully exercising these rights (Italy);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.14</p>	Noted	<p>Status: Not Implemented</p> <p>Source: HRDs/journalists: Section 3 – para 3.2 – 3.13 Expression: Section 4 – para 4.2 – 4.12 Peaceful Assembly: Section 5 para 5.2 – 5.10</p>

<p>26.166 Repeal or amend articles 186, 498, 610, 638 and 639 of the Islamic Penal Code, which criminalize rights regarding freedom of expression and the broad and vague definitions of which are arbitrarily misused to silence human rights defenders, including through imprisonment and corporal punishment (Netherlands);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.19</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>Status: Not Implemented</p> <p>Source:</p> <p>Association: Section 2 – para 2.3</p> <p>HRDs/journalists: Section 3 – para 3.3</p> <p>Expression: Section 4 – para 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9</p> <p>Peaceful Assembly: Section 5 para 5.3, 5.7</p>
<p>26.168 Cease the censorship of the media, as well as the arbitrary detention and intimidation of journalists (Norway);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.19</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>Status: Not Implemented</p> <p>Source:</p> <p>Expression: Section 4 – para 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6</p>
<p>26.169 Guarantee freedom of peaceful assembly, expression and the press, by removing the restrictions to access local and international news sites, and by releasing persons detained for having exercised or defended these rights (France);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.14</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>Status: Partially Implemented</p> <p>Source:</p> <p>Expression: Section 4 – para 4.3</p> <p>HRDs: Section 3 – para 3.5, 3.6, 3.9</p>
<p>26.327 End all forms of harassment, including judicial harassment, against human rights defenders, including human rights lawyers and journalists (Greece);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.19</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>Status: Not Implemented</p> <p>Source:</p> <p>Association: Section 2 – para 2.2 -2.4</p> <p>HRDs: Section 3 – para 3.2 – 3.13</p> <p>Expression: Section 4 – para 4.2 – 4.12</p> <p>Peaceful Assembly: Section 5 para 5.2 – 5.10</p>
<p>26.328 Take urgent action to improve the protection of human rights defenders, including those defending women ' s and girls ' full enjoyment of human rights (Sweden);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.2, 27</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>Status: Not Implemented</p> <p>Source:</p> <p>HRDs: Section 3 – para 3.2 – 3.13</p>
<p>26.149 Immediately release all Iranian prisoners of conscience, including Narges Mohammadi, Nasrin Sotoudeh, Youcef Nadarkhani and Esmail Bakhshi, and others unjustly detained, including Xiyue Wang, Bob Levinson and Siamak Namazi, who are citizens of the United States (United States of America);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.19</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>Status: Partially Implemented</p> <p>Source:</p> <p>HRDs: Section 3 – para 3.5, 3.6, 3.9</p>

<p>26.150 Release women human rights defenders imprisoned for executing their fundamental rights (Austria);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.19</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>Status: Partially Implemented</p> <p>Source: HRDs: Section 3 – para 3.5, 3.6, 3.9</p>
<p>26.152 Immediately release dual and foreign nationals, including journalists, who are detained arbitrarily (Israel);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.19</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>Status: Partially Implemented</p> <p>Source: HRDs: Section 3 – para 3.5, 3.6, 3.9</p>
<p>26.155 Release all persons detained for exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, and repeal or amend laws and other provisions criminalizing or restricting the exercise of those rights (Switzerland);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.10, 19</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>Status: Partially Implemented</p> <p>Source: HRDs: Section 3 – para 3.3, 3.5, 3.6, 3.9 Expression: Section 4 – para 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 Peaceful Assembly: Section 5 para 5.3, 5.7</p>
<p>26.240 Abolish laws requiring women to wear hijabs in public, end legal prohibitions on women’s full participation in society, and stop criminalizing women’s calls for reform (United States of America);</p> <p>Source of Position: A/HRC/43/12/Add.1 - Para.19</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>Status: Not Implemented</p> <p>Source: HRDs: Section 3 – para 3.4 – 3.11</p>