



Commons Debate – ‘Political situation and treatment of protesters in Iran’
(12 January 2023)

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS TO THE UK GOVERNMENT

1. **Supporting women human rights defenders** – The UK has committed to putting women and girls at the centre of UK foreign policy and development policy. How is the UK supporting the courageous work of women HRDs in Iran? Will the FCDO commit to meeting with and supporting Iranian women in particular to speak out in defence of their rights?
2. **Death penalty** - Have UK officials in Iran, including the Ambassador, attended trials and visited prisons to try to ensure that some measure of due process is being followed?
3. **UN fact finding mission** – What progressed has been made in the operationalization of the recently established UN Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) to investigate human rights violations in Iran? What support has the UK already given to the FFM to collect? What progress has been made on urging access to Iran the FFM to take place?

WOMAN, LIFE, FREEDOM

The Iranian authorities’ deadly repression of the ongoing popular uprising in Iran, which erupted after the [death in custody](#) of Mahsa (Zhin) Amini on 16 September 2022, is the latest in [the cycle of violent attacks](#) waged by the authorities against people expressing their legitimate grievances since at least December 2017. Nationwide protests led by women and girls under the rallying call ‘Woman, Life, Freedom’, quickly mushroomed to include broader grievances against a government steeped in decades of impunity and human rights violations. Women in Iran faced institutionalised discrimination in law and practice, including in relation to marriage, divorce, employment, inheritance and political office.

Iran’s discriminatory compulsory veiling laws have violated women’s rights for decades, leading to daily harassment, arbitrary detention, torture and other ill-treatment of women and in the case of Mahsa (Zhin) Amini, her death. Amnesty International has called on Iranian authorities to end their persecution of women who speak out about [compulsory veiling](#), and abolish the discriminatory and humiliating practice. Iranian authorities must immediately repeal Article 638 of the Islamic Penal Code (any act that is deemed “offensive” to public decencies is punished with an imprisonment term of 10 days to two months, or 74 lashes), and abolish discriminatory bans on women’s appearance in public without out a headscarf.

LETHAL FORCE AND THE DEATH PENALTY AS TOOLS OF REPRESSION

As outlined in further detail in [our broader briefing](#), Iran’s security forces have responded to the popular uprising with violence. Hundreds have been killed with impunity, including at least 44 children. Most of these children were killed due to security forces unlawfully firing live ammunition at their head, heart or other vital organs.

In a new phase of this crackdown, Iranian authorities are not only continuing to carry out mass killings, arrests, enforced disappearances and torture of dissidents, but are now using the death penalty as a tool of political repression. So far, 4 young people have been subjected to arbitrary executions, following their **sentencing during sham trials** in connection with the protests. **Majidreza Rahnavard** was publicly executed less than 2 weeks after his only rubber-stamp court hearing, and **Mohsen Shekari** was executed

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL UK ADVOCACY OFFICE

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3 weeks after Iranian authorities convicted and sentenced him to death. Tragically on 7 January it was reported that **Mohammad Mehdi Karami** and **Seyed Mohammad Hosseini** were also executed.

From publicly available materials and other sources, Amnesty International has identified [25 individuals](#) that remain at serious risk of execution.

According to recent reports, two of the named individuals, **Mohammad Boroughani** and **Mohammad Ghobadlou** have recently been moved to solitary confinement raising fears that they may face imminent execution.

The cases of these 25 individuals fall under four categories:

1. Individuals who have been sentenced to death: **Mohammad Boroughani; Mohammad Ghobadlou; Manouchehr Mehman Navaz; Hamid Ghare Hasanlou; Seyed Mohammad Hosseini; Hossein Mohammadi**; and an unnamed individual in Alborz province.
2. Individuals who have undergone trial on capital charges and who are either at risk of being sentenced to death or may have already been sentenced to death. As of 15 December, there was no publicly available information on the status of their cases: **Saeed Shirazi; Abolfazl Mehri Hossein Hajilou; and Mohsen Rezazadeh Gharegholou.**
3. Individuals who have been charged with capital offences and may be either awaiting or undergoing trial: **Akbar Ghafari; Toomaj Salehi; Ebarhim Rigi; Amir Nasr Azadani; Saleh Mirhashemi; Saeed Yaghoubi; Farzad (Farzin) Tahazadeh; Farhad Tahazadeh; Karvan Shahparvaneh; Reza Eslamdoost; Hajar Hamidi and Shahram Marouf-Moula.**
4. Individuals who have had their requests for judicial review accepted, their cases are to be remanded to the lower court for retrial and as such they may be re-sentenced to death: **Sahand Nourmohammad-Zadeh, Saman Seydi (Yasin), Mahan Sadrat (Sedarat) Madani (suspended sentence).**

Amnesty International **fears that many others are at risk of facing the death penalty**, given the thousands of people arrested and number of indictments issued by the authorities.

Amnesty International has consistently documented crimes under international law and other serious human rights violations committed by the Iranian authorities in the context of protests, including:

- [unlawful killings](#) following unwarranted use of lethal force,
- [mass arbitrary arrests and detentions](#),
- [enforced disappearances](#),
- [torture and other ill-treatment](#),
- the sentencing of individuals to lengthy prison terms or [death](#) following grossly unfair trials

Whilst the landmark UN fact-finding mission marks a long-awaited turning point in tackling the systematic impunity in Iran, states must now ensure that the mandate is made operational and sufficiently resourced without delay.

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RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE UK GOVERNMENT

Amnesty International is calling on the UK government to help end the crisis of systemic impunity, and show support for women and girls in Iran by:

1. **Calling on Iranian authorities to (i) immediately quash all death sentences against protesters, (ii) ensure that any of those charged with a recognizable criminal offence is tried in proceedings meeting international fair trial standards without recourse to the death penalty, (iii) that the principles of juvenile justice are observed for child defendants.** It should be recognised that Iranian authorities are resorting to the use of the death penalty against those detained for exercising their rights of freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly as a tool of political repression and revenge against those standing up for human rights in Iran.
2. **Ensuring the swift operationalization of the recently established UN Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) to investigate human rights violations in Iran** related to the protests that began on 16 September 2022, especially with respect to woman and girls. The UK should ensure that its mandate is sufficiently resourced and urge the Iranian authorities to fully cooperate with the FFM and allow unhindered access to the country. The UK should also support FFM in its mandate to collect, consolidate and preserve crucial evidence for future prosecutions by sharing information and witness testimony from those persons who may be within their jurisdiction.
3. **Exercising extraterritorial jurisdiction, including universal jurisdiction, to conduct independent and effective investigations and prosecutions** whenever anyone reasonably suspected of criminal responsibility for crimes under international law or other serious human rights violations finds themselves within the jurisdiction of the UK. If there is sufficient admissible evidence, the relevant national authorities should issue arrest warrants and seek to prosecute all those suspected of criminal responsibility before national courts, in proceedings that meet international standards or extradite a suspect to a jurisdiction that will do so.
4. **Undertaking diplomatic initiatives to monitor trials, particularly before Revolutionary Courts.** The UK should urgently seek to ensure that high level observers are able to attend all **ongoing trials where defendants are at risk of being sentenced to death** in connection with the protests as well as those of human rights defenders and other prisoners of conscience.
5. **Undertaking diplomatic initiatives to visit prisons:** The UK should seek to visit prisons where human rights defenders and others are being arbitrarily detained for peacefully exercising their human rights, including in relation to their participation in protests.

For more updates on the human rights situation in Iran: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/issues/iran>

For our resource page, for constituents and MPs: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/resources/stop-execution-iranian-protesters-now>

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