

## Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran A/HRC/37/68 para 85

### Full Recommendation:

*The Special Rapporteur reiterates her call upon the Government to undertake thorough and independent investigation into the 1988 massacres, and further ensure that locations believed to be the site of mass graves are persevered and protected to this end.*

### *Assessment using Impact Iran human rights indicators<sup>1</sup>*

The massacre of political dissidents in 1988 - in which thousands of prisoners, many of whom were serving prison sentences and had never charged with a capital crime, were arbitrarily executed<sup>2</sup> - has not been officially acknowledged by the Iranian authorities, although from time to time former and current officials justify or express approval of the state's conduct in the incident.<sup>3</sup> The massacre has never been investigated by any institution in Iran, nor has any state authority made available information pertaining to it.. Officials involved in the 1988 killings have enjoyed total impunity and ascended to the highest levels of state power: Ebrahim Raisi, for instance, a member of a 1988 “death panel,” has served as the head of Iran’s judiciary since March 2019. Amnesty International has termed this chronic, systematic denial of the right to truth for families and loved ones of victims of the massacre an “ongoing crime against humanity.”<sup>4</sup> Human rights organizations have been demanding reparations for the 1988 massacres, yet none have been issued.<sup>5</sup>

Human rights groups have documented the destruction of graves of 1988 massacre victims by the government of Iran, including by way of concealing mass graves beneath new burial plots; constructing concrete slabs, buildings or roads over grave sites; and converting such sites into waste dumps.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CCPR.7.1.S.1; CCPR.14.1.S.2; CCPR.9.3.S.2; CCPR.9.1.S.3; CCPR.9.1.S.1;CCPR.9.1.S.2; CCPR.9.2.S.1; CCPR.7.1.P.2;CCPR.14.1.P.3CCPR.9.5.P.2;CCPR.9.1.P.1;CCPR.9.1.P.2;CCPR.9.1.P.5;CCPR.9.1.P.6;CCPR.9.2.P.1;CCPR.9.3.P.1;CCPR.7.1.O.2; \_\_CCPR.7.1.O.3;CCPR.14.1.O.5; CCPR.14.1.O.6;CCPR.14.1.O.8; CCPR.9.2.O.4; CCPR.9.1.O.1; CCPR.9.2.O.1; CCPR.9.2.O.4; CCPR.9.1.O.1.

<sup>2</sup> See Abdorrahman Boroumand Center, 2011, “The Massacre of Political Prisoners in Iran, 1988, Report Of An Inquiry,” <https://www.iranrights.org/library/document/1380/the-massacre-of-political-prisoners-in-iran-1988-report-of-an-inquiry>; Amnesty International,

<sup>3</sup> Mostafa Pormohammadi, who previously served as Iran’s Minister of the Interior and Minister of Justice, defended his own role in the 1988 killings in a fall 2019 interview, stating that “Whoever is in line with the enemy, is an enemy... We had to deal with each and every one of the [members of the Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization]” . Radio Zamaneh, September 25, 2019, [https://www.radiofarda.com/a/mostafa\\_pourmohammadi\\_news\\_statement\\_execution\\_67/30075445.html](https://www.radiofarda.com/a/mostafa_pourmohammadi_news_statement_execution_67/30075445.html)

<sup>4</sup> Amnesty International, 2018, “BLOOD-SOAKED SECRETS: WHY IRAN'S 1988 PRISON MASSACRES ARE ONGOING CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY”, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/9421/2018/en/>

<sup>5</sup> Human Rights Activists in Iran, March 8, 2017,<http://www.hra-iran.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Joint-Statement-8March2017.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Amnesty International, April 30, 2018, “CRIMINAL COVER-UP: IRAN DESTROYING MASS GRAVES OF VICTIMS OF 1988 KILLINGS” , <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/8259/2018/en/>

In September 2020, a group of UN human rights experts including the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions and the chairperson of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention addressed a letter to the government of Iran asking for information regarding the massacres to be made available, including official death registers for the time period and information pertaining to steps taken to safeguard victim's graves.<sup>7</sup>

On 3 May 2021, more than 150 former United Nations officials, international human rights and legal experts, and more than 24 NGOs wrote to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, calling for an international Commission of Inquiry into the 1988 massacre.<sup>8</sup>

Recommendation Status:

This recommendation has **NOT** been implemented.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=25503>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/europe/former-un-officials-call-for-inquiry-into-1988-iran-prison-massacres-1.1217164>