

Forum: Human Rights Council

Issue: *The issue of ensuring human rights and preventing further violations in regard to protests in Iran.*

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Introduction

The current humanitarian crisis in Iran has led to much discussion being led around the world, as the current rights for women decrease day by day. The Iranian humanitarian crisis was triggered by the death of Mahsa Amini as she was unjustly killed by the Iranian government, more specifically the Iranian morality police, on September 16th sparking the biggest protest in the Islamic nation since the inauguration of the Islamic revolution. Mahsa Amini was killed for alleged violations of the dress code that was implemented by the government. This unjust death by the Iranian government is just the tip of the iceberg of the humanitarian crisis in Iran. All information concerning the humanitarian problems will be provided in this research report as well as past information on the topic, the current position of it all, and possible solutions for the inquiry on how to stop future human rights violations in Iran.

Definition of Key Terms

Humanitarian crisis: a singular event or a series of events that are threatening in terms of the health, safety, or well-being of a community or large group of people.

Morality police: In the case of Iran it is a religious police and vice squad in the law enforcement command of Iran. The vigilante group acts to enforce a code of morality in Iran often using violence.

Islamic revolution: popular uprising in the Muslim majority in Iran during 1978-79 that resulted in the collapse of the authoritarian government led by the Shah of Iran

Mohammed Reza IN 1979.

Violation: the action against something, in this case, the law made by the government of Iran.

Background Information

Iran has been organized as an Islamic republic since 1979. It is headed not by the president but by the supreme religious leader - Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Iranian authorities severely restricted freedoms of assembly and expression. Over the past three years, security forces have responded to widespread protests stemming from economic rights issues with excessive and unlawful force, including lethal force, and arrested thousands of protestors. Additionally, public displays of affection, alcohol, and homosexuality are forbidden in Iran by strict laws. Things that are completely normal for us in the West are severely punished according to Islamic Sharia law, sometimes even with death. Moreover, women are subordinate to men by law. In 1979 the authoritarian monarchy was replaced by Islamic totalitarian rule, which in turn completely switched the way Iran operated, as now it is completely ruled by religion; this could be seen as the Shiite Muslims were now in control as they served as head of state and made up most of the important government roles. The Islamist rulers started making immediate changes in policies such as pro-western policies were replaced with so-called “neither east nor west” policies insinuating the fact that they would no longer cooperate with the east or west. These changes were soon followed by the mandatory veil (hijab) for women which to this day is seen as the fall of the first domino. During the first five years of the Islamic republic around 8000 political opponents of the Islamic government were executed, with thousands and thousands of prisoners also being executed; the revolutions against the government took higher tolls on those who participated rather than those in the government ultimately leading to these revolutions to cool down, This set Iran into a cycle of protest which led to the death of the protestors, and yet again protests. After the Shah government realized how the protest decreased significantly they finally decided to implement the morality police to take action against protestors who were told to fire on the spot during the first

years, whereas nowadays they are urged to arrest protestors first. The last major movement in response to women's rights happened during international women's day which ended up lasting 6 days and tragically resulted in the death of martyrs and many casualties. This does not mean that there were not any protests after 1979, as their human rights index decreased since and does not show any signs of stopping, in 2009 we saw the green movement take place after Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was re-elected into office in a disputed vote, the president started shutting down opposition offices and attacking them with tear gas and truncheons. This action was met with great disapproval as millions of citizens took to the street, the movement was called the green movement as most of the people wore green on the streets as they were representing the color that was associated with one of the president's oppositions, Mousavi. Then came multiple protests from 2017-2021 that were mainly economically motivated, these protests were mainly because Iran's economy has been reliant on the oil industry, as they have many reserves, but due to heavy US sanctions they can't be able to sell them to as many countries as they would like to; during one fatal night of the protest on November 2019 approximately 1500 protestors were sadly killed by the government. The executions have since significantly decreased, but the harsh, strict ways of the government have not decreased with the chairman of the parliament's committee once saying on 22, December 2018 "If two people are thoroughly flogged and if two people are executed... it will be a lesson for everyone else". As can be seen, the government was not viewed positively; now other than the fact that the government was hated for its strict rules, they were also hated for its forceful ways of forcing Islam on the population, now even though Iran is one of the only countries which imposes the hijab on their women, at the same time it has the lowest attendance rate for any Islamic country, with shocking statistics like approximately 70% of the population do not perform their daily prayers with less than 2% of the population attending the Friday prayer. The humanitarian crisis could be traced to the former head of the Iranian judiciary. Ebrahimi Raisi, rise to the presidency in June whereas the former head of the judiciary should have been prosecuted for crimes against humanity related to the disappearances and extrajudicial executions of 1988, already showing major signs of inhumanity done by the government. Now presidential elections were held in "repressive" environments with extremely low turnouts, as many women, minorities, and critics were not allowed into the elections.



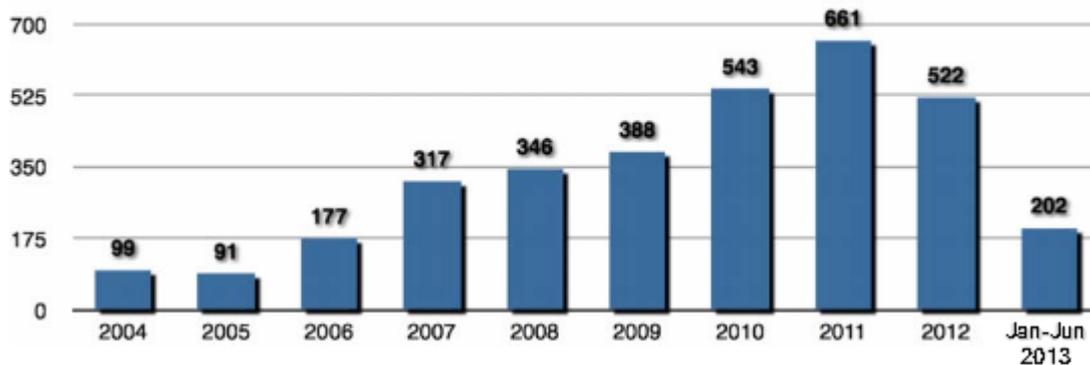
Causes

In mid-September, local media initially reported that 22-year-old Mahsa Amini was in a coma in the Iranian capital of Tehran, having previously been arrested by the country's morality police. According to authorities, she had developed heart problems at the police station and had been taken to the hospital. She had first fainted and then slipped into a coma. Social networks circulated already at this time different reports - with heavy reproaches against the moral police. For example, 22-year-old Mahsa Amini had been arrested because she had not worn her headscarf per the dress code in the Islamic Republic of Iran: Individual strands of hair had been visible. Because she protested against her arrest, police officers hit her on the head. As a result, she suffered a brain hemorrhage and eventually fell into a coma. The authorities repeatedly denied this account. Shortly afterward, a relative announced Mahsa Amini's death. This caused heavy protests leading to violence against the protesters and arrests. After the death of Mahsa Amini protesters has reportedly started going out in the streets to revolt in over 150 cities, and 140 universities in all 31 provinces of Iran. What can be noted is that during these protests there have been people from all genders, ages, and ethnicities that have taken part up until now, but who will and should rightfully take full credit for these protests are the omen of Iran, but men soon followed and are now protesting shoulder to shoulder together. Now the protestors have up till now taken up a peaceful, non-violent form of protest, with people often dancing in large demonstrations in Iran's major cities, these protests have seen some major symbolic actions being taken such as women burning their hijabs, which could also be seen outside of Iran as the Iranian football team did not partake in the national anthem during the Qatar FIFA world cup 2022. The government in turn has reacted very violently to the protest, especially where ethnic minorities live such as Kurds. The police have even taken it as far as shooting people that honk their cars in support of the protests. There have already been cases of multiple celebrities, athletes, and lawyers for civil society figures that have been put behind bars. As of January, at least 522 people (70 children) have been murdered by the government with a hundred casualties and a shocking number of 20,000 people being detained; it should be noted that these figures are much higher since much goes unreported by the government, in response to these

deaths the government has then claimed that 60 members of the security forces have been killed by protestors during protests. The cause of recent protests is in response to the death of Mahsa Amiri, but all in all the main cause of these protests that date back to 1979 is the Islamic revolution, also known as the Iranian revolution, this revolution, in turn, resulted in suppression of political freedom, as the government executed many people that were seen as a threat to the government. economic hardship, which increased in recent years due to strict US sanctions. international isolation, as the Islamic government did not want to have good connections either east or west. Religious intolerance, ironically imposing multiple strict religious laws only made people drift away from the religion as the attendance rate for prayers at the mosque decreased and the number of people that prayed any prayer whatsoever decreased. Last but not least, most notably the obvious human rights abuse: the new laws limited multiple rights most notably for women as they had a lot of their rights taken away most notably marriage right eg a man may now marry another woman without the consent of his wife without having to divorce his wife, divorce laws also became much more strict.



Figure IV
Executions in the Islamic Republic of Iran, 2004-2013



Major Countries and Organizations Involved

When looking at such a problem, one has to assess the countries in support of Iran and those against Iran. As of right now, Iran has good connections with India and China as these countries face the same challenges in the global economy, Iran also maintains a good connection with Russia and former Soviet republics. Iran is mainly hated by its neighboring countries ever since the 1980s as the first supreme leader publicly claimed that “The concept of monarchy contradicts Islam”, and since all Gulf countries are monarchies this naturally created tension between these countries and Iran. This tension increased during the Iran-Iraq war as everyone around both countries sided with Iraq except for Syria making the tension official between all Gulf countries and Iran. Later when

the US invaded Iraq this resulted in Iran finally decided to expand its influence in the Arab region as they would then make Syria, Lebanon Kuwait... allies, but that made Arab superpowers like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE hate them even more as they would naturally have to side with the USA as it is their major trading partner. Later on, in 2016 Saudi Arabia and Bahrain officially severed diplomatic ties with Iran due to Iran's "blatant and dangerous interference" with multiple Arab countries. Focusing on Masha Amini there have since been many world leaders who have commented on the current situation in Iran e.g. Joe Biden told the UN General assembly on September 21 "We stand with the brave citizens and the brave women of Iran who right now are demonstrating to secure their basic rights". One day later the USA sanctioned the morality police of Iran and seven senior security officials for the death of Masha Amini. Later on, on the 23 of September the treasury department of the United States authorized American companies to expand the range of internet service to ordinary Iranians, so the people could get through the government's censorship. At least two world leaders have since raised human rights issues with the president of Iran, while the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres called for a so-called "...Effective investigation by an independent competent authority". Emmanuel Macron made it clear that France is supportive of human rights, especially women's rights.

Relevant UN treaties and events

The UN is currently looking to set up an investigation commission in Iran. There have been events since though, such as the meeting in Geneva, on the 20, of September 2022 as the acting UN high commissioner for human rights Nada Al-Nashif expressed worry at the death of Mahsa Amini by the morality police in Iran. Al-Nashif stated that the compulsory veiling laws are still a concern in Iran due to there being multiple protests within the country about the subject, Al-Nashif said called for the authorities to stop targeting, harassing, and detaining women who do not abide by the hijab rules, as these regulations strip women of their basic rights and forces clothing on them, Al-nashif called for all discriminatory laws to be imposed of. Al-nashif then brought the reported unnecessary use of force against protestors into light, while also calling on Iran- as a state party to the international covenant on civil and political rights- to respect the right to peacefully

exercise the rights of expression, assembly, and association. This is not even the first time Iran's human rights situation has been discussed in the UN at a meeting has happened before in Geneva, on 13, December 2013 as Ahmed Shaheed was given the task to gather information about the past and present experiences of victims of reported human rights violation in Iran. The UN has since then called for Iran to take accountability for the death of Mahsa Amini, while also pleading for the end of violence towards women.

It should also be noted that the investigation that is being done by the UN is currently ongoing, but is of course hard to get done with because the internet has been shut down multiple times by the Iranian government as they look to censor outside news for their population, as it may lead to even stronger protests, and the shutting down of internet is a technique used by most governments during protests as it could help with messing up the planning of the protests.

Possible Solutions

Now, what solutions could be implemented? Firstly, there could be a new law implemented that lightens the religious laws, allowing more freedom in many aspects of Iran; such as no more mandatory hijabs, and lighter divorce laws making it not nearly as impossible as it is to get divorced like now. This would, in turn, decrease the protests as the current protests are based on the lack of women's rights in Iran right now and with these laws implemented women would now be satisfied in Iran. These laws shall be implemented and regulated by the UN, but for this to come true the Iranian government would have to give the UN a lot of political control over the country which would most probably get rejected by the government. Another solution is for other countries to allow Iranian people to immigrate to them, this would also have to be approved by the Iranian government and could be rejected as a lot of people would choose to leave. Next is violent enforcement of human rights through the use of UN troops, thus could either result in Iran being freed from the current government, but it could also lead to even more chaos as Iran could fight back against the UN troops and then most probably against other countries. The most plausible solution would be the enforcement of human rights through sanctions. Iran is already

under heavy sanctions by the USA, but as we can see Iran is still not in a catastrophic state. What would be best is if all countries partially impose sanctions against Iran leaving them with no trading partner and forcing the current president to come to a deal with the UN and the Iranian government.

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