

48th Session of the UPR Working Group

Review of the Fourth National Report of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Statement by

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Geneva, January 24, 2025

(Opening Remarks)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Mr. President,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to express my pleasure at attending the 48th session of the UPR Working Group.

The national report of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which is now before you, outlines the range of measures and initiatives undertaken by Iran to promote human rights across all dimensions—civil, political, economic, social, and cultural—since the third cycle of the UPR. During this period, particular attention has been paid to the protection of vulnerable groups (such as persons with disabilities, children, and women). Significant measures have also been adopted to develop rural and nomadic areas,

mitigate the impacts of climate change and natural hazards on people's lives, and provide support to refugees and migrants.

Given that human rights education strengthens and consolidates the foundations of respect for and the guarantee of fundamental rights and freedoms, the Islamic Republic of Iran remains firmly committed to advancing this cause across all sectors for the benefit of its citizens, judges, lawyers, law enforcement officers, prison officials, and government employees. The Ministry of Education has incorporated human rights topics into students' curricula and educational programs. At the university level, human rights has been established as a specialized field of study, offered as a master's degree. During the very same period, over 800 human and citizens rights training courses, amounting to 280,000 participant-hours, were conducted for judges, law enforcement personnel, and prison staff. Furthermore, more than 186 human rights-related books were published between 2022 and 2023. To raise public awareness, over 6,300 educational messages were also broadcast via radio and television networks during this period.

Mr. President,

I would like to once again underscore the Islamic Republic of Iran's commitment to its international human rights obligations and its substantive engagement with the human rights mechanisms of the United

Nations. Allow me to briefly highlight some of the key aspects of this engagement as follows:

- Submission of the Fourth Periodic Report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its review in October 2023;
- Submission of the 20th to 27th Periodic Reports on the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and their review in August 2024;
- Submission of the Fifth and Sixth Periodic Reports on the Convention on the Rights of the Child to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in November 2023;
- Visit of the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights to Tehran from February 3 to 5, 2024, including discussions and meetings with senior Iranian officials and representatives of civil society;
- Conclusion of a memorandum of understanding with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in September 2024, with the first phase of its implementation carried out in December 2024 in Geneva. This phase focused on capital punishment and the concept of “most serious crimes,” with the participation of expert delegations from both sides;

- Visit of the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights to the Islamic Republic of Iran from May 7 to 18, 2022;
- Responses to 233 communications from Special Procedures Mandate-Holders between 2020 and the end of 2023.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

According to the Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme, Iran, despite oppressive and inhumane sanctions, remains categorized as a “high human development country.” I must emphasize that since the implementation of the third cycle of UPR recommendations, substantial intellectual, human, and financial investments have been made to improve the lives of the Iranian people, yielding significant progress. Allow me to outline some of these achievements as follows:

- Complete elimination of the gender gap in education at the primary and secondary levels. Currently, the ratio of female to male students stands at 49%;
- Coverage of 93% of rural and 98% of urban areas under the national health network;
- Reduction of hospitalization costs borne by the public from 37% to 3% for rural residents and 6% for urban dwellers;

- Free provision of certain medical treatments for patients with special diseases covered under the Social Security Organization;
- Launch of 34 specialized hospitals dedicated to supporting mothers and children;
- Increased access to safe drinking water, now exceeding 86% in rural and 99% in urban areas;
- Full electrification of urban areas and connection of over 99% of rural villages to the national electricity grid;
- Internet and telephone network coverage for 95% of the rural population;
- Construction and reinforcement of 350,000 rural housing units, alongside loans provided for the renovation and improvement of nearly 550,000 rural homes;
- Revitalization of 8,400 dormant production units under the law supporting sustainable development and employment creation in rural and nomadic regions;
- Delivery of skill-enhancement training to over 2 million individuals which 51% of these programs were conducted for women and girls;
- Allocation of 3% of revenues from crude oil and natural gas exports to the development of less-privileged areas as per the national development plan law. Furthermore, a significant portion of the annual budget has been dedicated to provincial poverty alleviation programs;

- Targeted cash and non-cash subsidies, and implementation of an electronic voucher system to provide essential goods to people in vulnerable situations to mitigate the negative impacts of unilateral sanctions;
- Allocation of approximately 6% of the public resources budget to compensate for damages from major natural disasters and to reconstruct areas affected by flood and earthquake;
- Approval of the general framework of the draft bill on the prevention of harm to women and enhancement of their security against abuse;
- Operation of 145 political parties;
- Operation of more than 14,000 labor and employer organizations across the country;
- Free operation of approximately 300 churches in Iran;
- Activities of 57 associations and organizations related to religious minorities;
- Over 1,900 Sunni managers serving in various administrative capacities;
- Operation of more than 39 judicial support offices for children and women across the nation's justice administrations;
- Access to fixed and mobile internet services for over 116 million users;
- Activities of over 23,500 female authors, along with 1,051 female publishers and 806 women serving as media managers;
- Presence of more than 130,000 attorneys practicing law in Iran;

- Establishment of 31 employment units for inmates;
- Implementation of vocational training programs for a significant number of prisoners;
- Women comprising 33% of university faculty members;
- Reduction of maternal mortality rates to 20 per 100,000 live births;
- Appointment of five women as Vice Presidents, Ministers, or Government Spokespersons, and the election of 14 women to Parliament in the most recent elections;
- Participation of more than 1,006 female judges in the judicial system;
- Hosting up to 8 million refugees and undocumented migrants;
- Free education for over 700,000 Afghan students in Iranian schools.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Islamic Republic of Iran has pursued the implementation of the third cycle recommendations while confronting significant and impactful restrictions and challenges. During the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, my country mobilized all its resources and capacities to combat this deadly disease. Thanks to the advancements achieved within the framework of the “Health System Transformation Plan,” coupled with the support and cooperation of the public, as well as the selfless dedication of our medical, therapeutic, and caregiving personnel, Iran successfully managed this difficult period.

Unfortunately, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the most severe regime of unilateral sanctions against Iran persisted. Despite calls by the UN Secretary-General and the Special Rapporteur on UCMs for sanction-imposing states to cease such actions, the United States continued its illegal behavior in violation of the order issued by the International Court of Justice on October 3, 2018, which obligated the U.S. to implement humanitarian exemptions. As a result, many governments and businesses, fearing penalties, refrained from engaging in international transactions, even for humanitarian purposes.

At this point, I feel it is necessary to express gratitude to those countries that, adopting a humanitarian approach and disregarding the consequences of sanctions in violation of international law, chose to cooperate with Iran.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In this forum, I would like to draw the attention of awakened and conscientious minds to the necessity of protecting the dignity of every human being under all circumstances of vulnerability. The people of my country are victims of aggression stemming from an economic assault. The continued imposition of unilateral coercive measures and secondary (extraterritorial) sanctions has created profound restrictions in areas such as business operations, access to financial resources, foreign investment, trade, technology transfer, reconstruction, and the procurement of medical supplies and pharmaceuticals—particularly for patients with complex or

life-threatening illnesses. It has also adversely impacted services like air transportation. Consequently, these actions have gravely violated the fundamental rights of our people, especially their right to life and well-being.

These arbitrary measures are in blatant violation of international law—including the principles of non-intervention, sovereign equality of states, the right to self-determination, the prohibition of discrimination, and the obligation to respect fundamental human rights.

Iran's official policy is to mitigate the impacts of unilateral and arbitrary coercive measures. In response to the far-reaching unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States against its people, Iran has devoted special attention to the devastating effects of such actions in all processes related to the formulation of laws, regulations, policies, and executive measures. Various empowerment and support programs have been implemented to safeguard different segments of society, particularly people in vulnerable situations, and to alleviate the impact of sanctions on the lives of its people.

Nonetheless, these efforts do not absolve the architects and enforcers of sanctions from responsibility. They must be held accountable for what constitutes crimes against humanity and war crimes. Let us not forget that economic sanctions function as weapons—indeed, weapons more devastating than conventional arms, for they disrupt and endanger the lives of entire populations.

Another significant challenge facing Iran is the threat of terrorism. Terrorism poses a grave danger to peace and stability, not only within nations but also to the global community as a whole. Over the past four decades, terrorists have claimed the lives of more than 23,000 innocent people in Iran. Among these, the terrorist group Monafeqin (MKO), which now enjoys safe haven in certain Western countries, has assassinated 17,000 individuals. Ironically, the same terrorist group audaciously portrays itself as a defender of human rights!

In the most recent terrorist act, on Saturday, two prominent judges, who had made extensive professional contributions to the administration of justice, were assassinated.

In this forum convened to support human rights, I call upon all governments and United Nations entities to adopt a firm, apolitical, and non-selective approach in combating terrorism and to cooperate in the legal prosecution of those responsible for terrorist acts.

Thank you for your attention.