

**ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN - COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION REPORT**  
**September 2022 – December 2022**  
**THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS RELATED TO THE PROTESTS**  
**FOLLOWING THE DEATH IN CUSTODY OF JINA MAHSA AMINI, ON 16**  
**SEPTEMBER 2022 “WOMEN LIFE FREEDOM”**

Proiect derulat de:



**Terre des hommes**  
Sprijin copiilor.



**This material was written by:**

**Editorial Team:**

*Jesuit Refugee Service Romania Foundation and Terre des Hommes Romania*

**Coordinators:**

Cătălin ALBU – General Manager

Ana Vlădescu – Project Manager

**Researchers:**

Florina Teodora DRĂGULIN – COI Researcher

**Date of publishing: January, 2023**

This material was produced with the financial support of the Active Citizens Fund Romania, programme funded by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA Grants 2014-2021. The content does not necessarily reflect the official position of the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021; for more information visit [www.eeagrants.org](http://www.eeagrants.org).

For more information about the project, please visit:

<https://www.tdh.ro/ro/promise-protectia-minorilor-straini-neinsotiti>

<https://www.jrsromania.org/promise>



**Jesuit Refugee Service Romania.** In its capacity as a humanitarian, non-governmental, independent, non-profit, apolitical, democratic association, JRS Romania aims to defend, support and promote fundamental human rights, especially those of refugees. At the same time, considering the defense, support, and promotion of fundamental human rights, as well as the continuous need to adapt to the dynamic changes within society, JRS Romania contributes to the prevention and relief of suffering in all forms.

**Terre des hommes Foundation** has been active in Romania continuously since 1992, contributing to the improvement of the child protection system and to the reform of social assistance. Tdh's mission is to improve the child protection system and the priority is to support the migrant children who are affected by migration, the prevention of unsafe migration of children and young foreigners and ensure access to fundamental rights for minors affected by migration.



## Note

The current Country of Origin Information Report has been compiled in accordance with EASO Country of Origin Information Report Methodology. All sources used are references sources collected from international reports, press articles and specific war crimes investigations reports.

The purpose of this report is to provide general information with regards to Human Rights, and Security Situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran, covering the period from September 2022 to December 2022. The information compiled in this report can be used by all practitioners within the asylum procedure in Romania. However, this report does not analyze the merits of granting a form of protection in Romania.

All information presented within the current report has been carefully analyzed and verified. This report does not claim to be an exhaustive one; therefore, if a significant event or situation has not been presented in the current work, this does not mean that the event or situation did not happen.

The way of presenting information within this report is citation, used in accordance with EASO COI Writing and Referencing Guide. The main outcome of the report is to organize large amounts of information in a focused, clear, well-sourced and fact-based report in order to support the rendering of asylum decisions.

The information presented in the current report do not necessarily reflect the official position of Jesuit Refugee Service Romania or of its project implementing partner, Terre des Hommes Romania

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Note

### 1. Introduction

1.1. System of Government

1.2. The General Situation of Minorities

### 2. Current Political Context

### 3. Human Rights Situation during the 2022 Nationwide Protests

3.1. The Situation of Women

3.2. Sexual and Gender Based Violence

3.3. Unlawful Killings and Detention of Children





Nasibe Samsaei, an Iranian woman living in Turkey, cuts her ponytail off during a protest outside the Iranian consulate in Istanbul on September 21, 2022, following the death of an Iranian woman after her arrest by the country's morality police in Tehran.

Source: Yasin AKGUL / AFP

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 System of Government

The Islamic Republic of Iran is an authoritarian theocratic republic with a hybrid system of government that combines theocratic elements of Shia Islam with a presidential system. Although Iran has a president and a parliament and holds elections regularly, the December 1979 constitution declares that the government is supervised by a supreme leader and by a Guardian Council, which is made up of Islamic clerics and jurists, appointed and unelected. The system of government in Iran falls short of democratic standards, scoring 14/100 in the latest 2022 Freedom House Index.<sup>1</sup> By comparison, Germany scores 94/100, Romania 83/100, North Korea 3/100 and Saudi Arabia 7/100.

The current supreme leader of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, is the highest authority in the country, being the commander in chief of the armed forces and responsible for appointing the head of the judiciary, the heads of the state's broadcast media and 6 members of the Guardian Council (the other 6 are jurists nominated by the head of the judiciary and confirmed by the parliament). The institutions the supreme leader holds ultimate authority and control (the security forces and the judiciary) play a major role in the current suppression and restrictions of civil liberties and human rights. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, coordinated by the supreme leader, is the institution responsible for law enforcement and maintaining order in the country, while the *Basij*, a nationwide volunteer paramilitary group, acts as an auxiliary law enforcement unit subordinate to the Revolutionary Guard.<sup>2</sup>

The supreme leader is appointed by the Assembly of Experts, a group of hardline 86 clerics, elected by popular vote for a fixed 8-year term. Although the Assembly is supposed to monitor

---

<sup>1</sup> Iran Country Report 2022, Freedom House, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/iran/freedom-world/2022>, accessed on 20 December 2022.

<sup>2</sup> 2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Iran, United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/iran>, accessed on 21 December 2022.

and evaluate the work of the Ayatollah, its proceedings are lacking transparency, being kept confidential. The Guardian Council, whose role is to vet all the country's candidates for the

parliament, the presidency and the Assembly of Experts, typically rejects candidates who are not considered loyal to the clerical establishment and to the state's ideology or who are women or part of the religious or ethnic minorities. As a result, Iranian citizens' options in electing their representatives are ultimately depending on the country's unelected clerical establishment.

The president of Iran, Ebrahim Raisi, won the presidency elections in June 2021. Being the second-high official in Iran, the president of the country is elected by popular vote for up to 2 consecutive 4-year terms. The president's powers are limited by the supreme leader and by the unelected state's bodies. In the same way, the elected parliament's powers are limited by the supreme leader and the Guardian Council, which must approve any bill, before becoming a law.



## 1.2. The General Situation of Minorities

Iran is a multiethnic and multicultural country. The Islamic republic is inhabited by over 86 million people<sup>3</sup>, 90-95% identifying as Shia Muslim, 5-10% Sunni Muslim and 0,5% Zoroastrian, Christian, Baha'i and Jewish. The constitution recognizes only Christians, Zoroastrians and Jews as non-Muslim religious minorities. Unrecognized Baha'is are systematically persecuted, unlawfully detained and restricted from access to higher education. The ethnic composition of Iranian population is formed by 62% Persian, 16% Azeri, Kurds 10%, Lur 6%, Baloch 2%, Arab 2% and Turkmen 2%.<sup>4</sup> The country's different ethnic minorities are situated in different parts of the country: Kurds in the northwest (West Azerbaijan, Kermanshah and Kurdistan provinces), Baluch in the southeast (Sistan and Baluchistan), Azeris in the northwest (West Azerbaijan, East Azerbaijan, Ardabil and Zankan provinces), Lors in the west (Khuzestan, Chehar Mahal and Bakhtiyari, Kohkiloye and Boyer Ahmed and Elam provinces), Arabs in the west (Khuzestan province) and Turkmens in the north (Golestan and North Khorasan).

Members and activists of the country's various minority groups have been systematically subjected to marginalization, discrimination and violation of human rights by the state's authorities. The Iranian government has persecuted Baluchi journalists and human rights activists who have faced arbitrary arrest, executions, physical abuse, torture, forced confessions on public television and unfair trials.<sup>5</sup> Upon employment or access to higher education, regardless of their ethnic or religious identity, Iranian citizens are obliged to go through an Islamic screening session that tests the knowledge of the Muslim dogma and the loyalty to the Islamic Republic.<sup>6</sup>

---

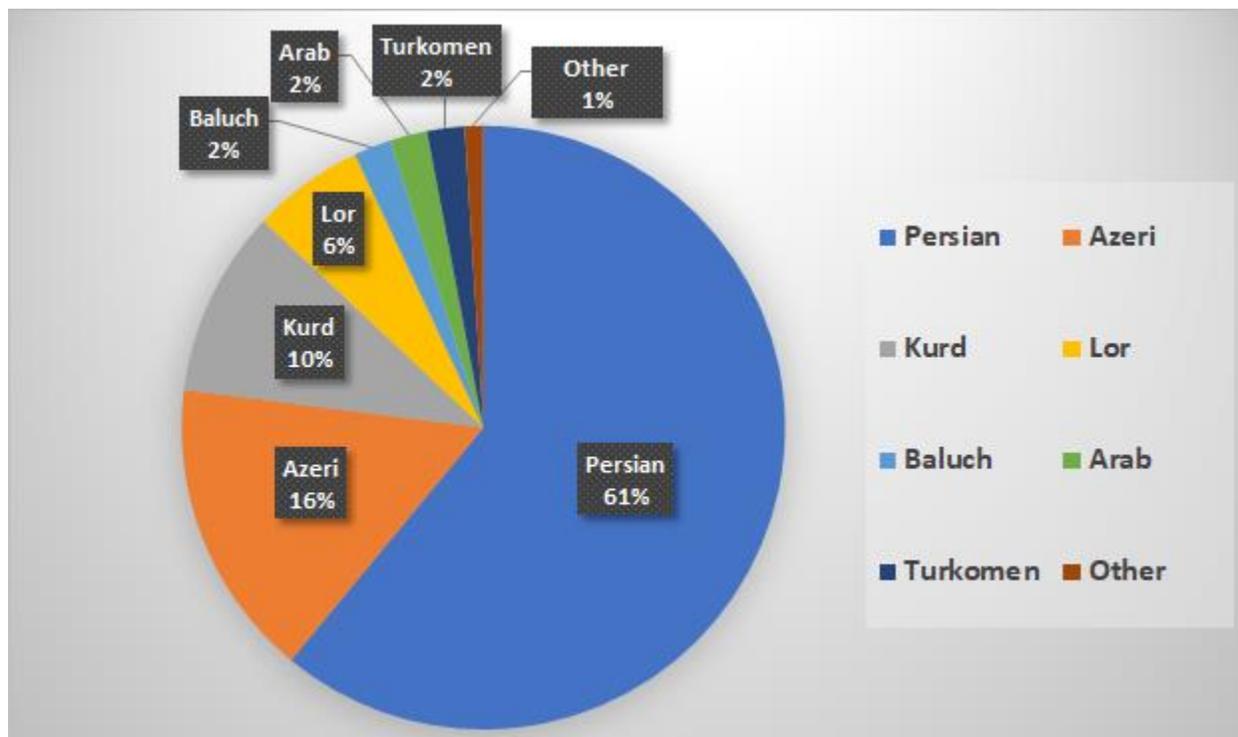
<sup>3</sup> Iran Population, Worldometer, December 2022, <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/iran-population/>, accessed on 20 December 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Minorities and Indigenous Peoples in Iran, World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, December 2017, <https://minorityrights.org/country/iran/>, accessed on 21 December 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Iran Minorities: Ethnic Diversity, United States Institute of Peace, December 2019, <https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2013/sep/03/iran-minorities-2-ethnic-diversity>, accessed on 21 December 2022.

<sup>6</sup> Minorities and Indigenous Peoples in Iran, World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, December 2017, <https://minorityrights.org/country/iran/>, accessed on 21 December 2022.

As a result, non-Muslims or even Muslims who fail to pass these screenings are excluded or restricted from labor market or higher education.



### Iran Ethnic Minorities

Source: CIA World Factbook (2016)

Credible reports have documented significant and systematic human rights abuses undertaken by the Revolutionary Guard and other government agencies: unlawful or arbitrary killings; forced disappearances; torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment; arbitrary arrest or detention; life-threatening prison conditions; political prisoners and detainees; unlawful interference with privacy; punishment of family members for offenses allegedly committed by an individual; severe restrictions on free expression and media, including violence, threats of violence, and unjustified arrests and prosecutions against journalists, censorship, and criminalization of libel and slander; serious restrictions on internet freedom; substantial interference with the freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association; severe restrictions on religious freedom; serious government restrictions on or harassment of domestic or international human rights

organizations; lack of meaningful investigation of and accountability for violence against women; trafficking in persons; violence against ethnic minorities; crimes involving violence or threats of violence targeting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex persons; criminalization of consensual same-sex sexual conduct; child labor.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

## 2. Current Political Context



Schoolgirls Removing their Headscarves in Support of the Protests

Source: Iran International, 27 December 2022

Starting with 16 September 2022, Iran has been engulfed with massive social unrest over the death in custody of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old woman who has been detained by the morality police<sup>8</sup> on 13 September 2022 for allegedly wearing her hijab ‘improperly’. The morality police – the country’s apparatus of enforcing strict dress codes and behaviors – denied the accusations of killing Mahsa Amini by repetitive beatings and head strikes, claiming that her death was due to preexisting medical condition.<sup>9</sup> The ongoing 3-months widespread protests following Mahsa Amini’s death have been brutally repressed by the Iran’s anti-riot police and militia’s force (*Basij*), with the use of teargas, pellets and live ammunition. The US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA) reported<sup>10</sup> on 7 December 2022 that since 16 September 2022

<sup>8</sup> the Guidance Patrol or *Gasht-e-Ershad*

<sup>9</sup> Joshua Askew, “Iran protests: What caused them? Are they different this time? Will the regime fall?”, Euronews, 11 December 2022, <https://www.euronews.com/2022/11/25/iran-protests-what-caused-them-who-is-generation-z-will-the-unrest-lead-to-revolution>, accessed on 18 December 2022.

<sup>10</sup> *A Comprehensive Report of the First 82 days of Nationwide Protests in Iran*, Human Rights Activists News Agency, 8 December 2022, <https://www.en-hrana.org/a-comprehensive-report-of-the-first-82-days-of-nationwide-protests-in-iran/m>, accessed on 18 December 2022.

at least 481 protesters have been killed, out of which 68 were minors<sup>11</sup> and at least 18,242 people have been unlawfully detained, out of which 129 were children<sup>12</sup>.

In response to growing protests in the Kurdish populated towns and cities in the western Iran, state security forces have displayed unprecedented levels of violence against civilians. Daily killings of protesters have led to the amplification of anti-government demonstrations during funerals in solidarity with the families of the victims.<sup>13</sup> The Kurdistan Human Rights Network reported that since the start of the nationwide protests in September 2022, the highest number of casualties have been registered in *Sistan* and *Baluchestan* Province, followed by the Kurdish regions of West Azerbaijan Province and Kurdistan Province.<sup>14</sup> Between 15 and 21 November alone, at least 42 civilians have been killed in the Kurdish areas (cities of Bukan, Javanpur, Mahabad and Piranshahr), according to the Hengaw Human Rights Organization.<sup>15</sup>

Since the start of the national uprisings, **at least 122 Kurdish civilians have been massacred by the state security forces and more than 8,000 were injured by the direct fire.**<sup>16</sup> Based on the same report published on 7 December 2022, out of a total of 122 Kurdish citizens killed in the recent protests, 106 have been killed by the direct shooting of war bullets from the Iranian government forces, 7 have been killed by torture, 7 have been killed by being beaten with a stick by the police forces, 1 has died by suffocation with tear gas, 1 has been stabbed to death.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, **more than 6,500 Kurdish citizens had been arrested and kidnapped by the**

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> *Iran Protests: Massacre in Kurdish Areas Feared as Security Forces Launch Lethal Crackdown*, Center for Human Rights in Iran, 21 November 2022, <https://iranhumanrights.org/2022/11/iran-protests-massacre-in-kurdish-areas-feared-as-security-forces-launch-lethal-crackdown/>, accessed on 19 December 2022.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Kurdistan protests—Hengaw’s report number 11 regarding the deaths of 122 and injuries of more than 8,000 citizens, Hengaw Organization for Human Rights, 7 December 2022, <https://hengaw.net/en/news/2022/12/kurdistan-protestshengaws-report-number-11-regarding-the-deaths-of-122-and-injuries-of-more-than-8000-citizens>, accessed on 19 December 2022.

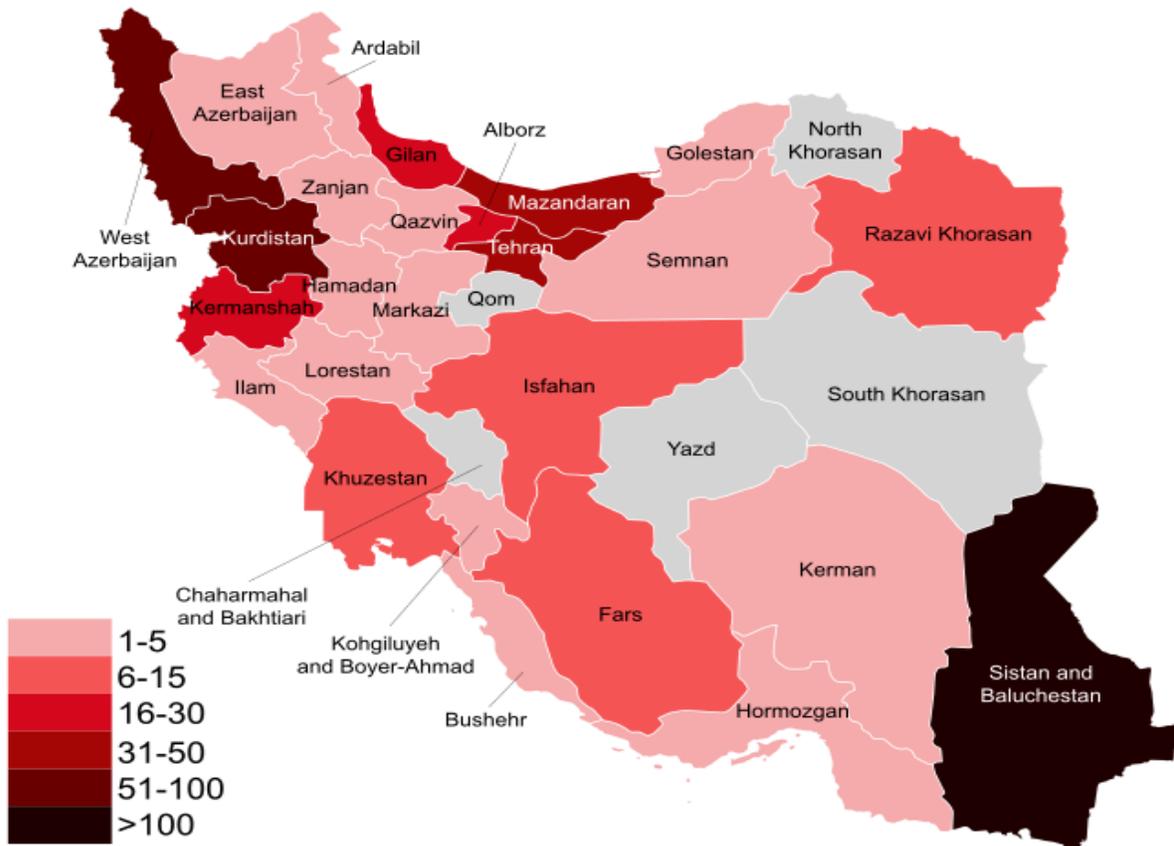
<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

security forces, in 50 days of protests. In the investigation carried out by Hengaw Human Rights Organization, the identities of 1,510 people have been verified, **171 women and 138**

**children out of 1,510 people reportedly having been already subjected to physical and mental torture and 7 citizens from Urmia, Tehran and Saqqez having been already killed under torture.**<sup>18</sup>

**2022 Iranian protests by province**  
 Number of deaths (protesters)



2022 Iranian Protests by Province. Number of Deaths (Protesters)

Source: Wikimedia Commons, 12 December 2022 (458 killed)

The Iran’s forces lethal violence against its own civilians marks the second time in three years that the country’s authorities respond with wide scale massacre, after November 2019-January

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

2020 protests when the security forces violently crushed and killed more than 1,500 people.<sup>19</sup> However, although the brutality of state forces is similar over time, the recent protests have

unique characteristics that differentiate them from the protests from the last decade in Iran. For example, at the core of the demands of protestors stand substantial progressive values such as women's rights, democracy and human rights. Likewise, the protests have been marked by visibly **increased participation of school children and university students** defying the hardline and abusive theocratic establishment and fight for Iran's transition to a system respecting human rights.<sup>20</sup> The trigger of the recent protests has been the death of a Kurdish, Sunni, young woman. Being a female, Sunni and Kurdish in Iran are all grounds of discrimination, gender-based, religious or ethnic. However, the Iranian people showed an unprecedented level of unity and solidarity, unifying their demands along safeguarding the rights of all people, regardless of their gender, age, ethnic or religious affiliation, political preference, sexual identity of belonging to a specific social group.<sup>21</sup>

A striking characteristic of the current widespread protests in Iran is therefore the call for the end of violence against women. It was women who took the streets, courageously burning their hijabs and cutting their hair in an unprecedented attempt to regain ownership of their own bodies for so long claimed by the hardline state clerics. It was women who chanted the slogan "Women, Life, Freedom", in its original Kurdish (Jin, Jiyan, Azadi) on the streets of Tehran, endangering their lives and their physical safety. It was women and girls who paid for their courage with indiscriminate arrests, sexual violence and rapes in prisons used as a means of punishment by the security forces.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> *Gunning Them Down. State Violence Against Protestors in Iran*, Center for Human Rights in Iran, May 2020, <https://iranhumanrights.org/2020/05/they-aimed-at-my-sons-head-report-reveals-carnage-in-crushed-iran-protests/>, accessed on 18 December 2022.

<sup>20</sup> "Iran. Killings of Children during Youthful Anti-Establishment Protests", Amnesty International, 9 December 2022, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/6104/2022/en/>, accessed on 6 January 2023.

<sup>21</sup> *A Comprehensive Report of the First 82 days of Nationwide Protests in Iran*, Human Rights Activists News Agency, 8 December 2022, <https://www.en-hrana.org/a-comprehensive-report-of-the-first-82-days-of-nationwide-protests-in-iran/m>, accessed on 18 December 2022.

<sup>22</sup> "How Iran's security forces use rape to quell protests. Covert testimonies reveal sexual assaults on male and female activists as a women-led uprising spreads", CNN, 21 November 2022,

### 3. Human Rights Situation during the 2022 Nationwide Protests

#### 3.1 The Situation of Women

“After the Islamic Republic of Iran came to power in 1979, the authorities rolled back the progress made by legislation enacted in 1976 promoting gender equality, particularly in family law, and returned to these earlier legal provisions while also enforcing a dress code as a prerequisite for appearing in public life.”<sup>23</sup> In the past three decades, authorities have punished women’s rights activists for their efforts to promote gender equality in law and practice, including with arrests, imprisonment, torture and executions. The government’s prosecution of women’s rights activists and peaceful protesters during the latest September-December 2022 protests related to Mahsa Amini’s arrest and death in custody also illustrates that the battle for women’s social and economic freedoms cannot be disentangled from the broader struggle for political and civic rights in Iran.

Women in Iran have been facing a wide array of legal and social barriers contributing to systematic marginalization and discrimination by the state authorities. Under Iran’s Civil Code, the husband can prevent his wife of accessing workforce, since the official requirement of employing women is to provide the written consent of her husband or fiancée.<sup>24</sup> Likewise, women need their husbands’ permission in order to be allowed to request a passport or to travel outside the country. In line with general state’s view towards increasing the growth of population, the Civil Code provides that girls can marry as early as age 13, while boys at age 15. However, with the authorization of a judge, the age limit can go even lower than 13 in the case of girls. The systematic government’s relegation of women and girls to “idealized roles” as mothers and wives is driving women outside the public sphere, in poverty, highly dependent on marriage for survival.

---

<https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2022/11/middleeast/iran-protests-sexual-assault/index.html>, accessed on 4 January 2023.

<sup>23</sup> “It’s a Men’s Club” *Discrimination Against Women in Iran’s Job Market*, Human Rights Watch, 25 May 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/05/25/its-mens-club/discrimination-against-women-irans-job-market>, accessed on 23 December 2022.

<sup>24</sup> Iranian Women’s Demands for Freedom Must Be Heard, Human Rights Watch, 16 November 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/11/16/iranian-womens-demands-freedom-must-be-heard>, accessed on 23 December 2022.

Women of Iran have been fighting for decades against the compulsory and discriminatory dress code imposed after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. While the *hijab*, the head cover worn by Muslim women, became compulsory in public for girls and women over nine years old after 1979; a more recent presidential order from 14 August 2022 rules that “violators” of the hijab and chastity law will be fined and even fired in case of posting “inappropriate” pictures on social media.<sup>25</sup> Following the hardline presidential order, morality police had increasingly intensified the often violent cracking down of women who found themselves in non-compliance with the harsh dress regulations. As in the case of Mahsa Amini, women had been arrested, beaten, humiliated and even killed for the “crime” of not wearing their hijabs properly, for wearing make-up or jeans.

The enforcement of compulsory religious dresses and symbols by the state’s law is a clear violation of international human rights and a form of gender-based discrimination. While Iran has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which guarantees people’s right to freedom of expression, of religions, as well as the right to privacy; the country fails to uphold to the rights enshrined in the Covenant, facing further criticism from United Nations independent experts and international human rights organizations. On top of imposing a strict dress code for women, by using systematic coercive methods and sanctions against individuals who refuse to wear religious symbols in public, Iran is violating women’s rights to personal autonomy, privacy and the freedom of expression, religion, conscience and belief.

---

<sup>25</sup> “Iranian President Signs Decree Further Restricting How Women Can Dress”, Radio Free Europe, 15 August 2022, <https://www.rferl.org/a/iran-women-dress-restrictions-raisi/31989759.html>, accessed on 4 January 2023.

### 3.2 Sexual and Gender Based Violence

The most recent violent crackdown starting with September 2022 against women protesting peacefully throughout the country undertaken by the morality police and other state authorities is showing even further violations of human and women's rights. More recent investigations reports run by CNN<sup>26</sup>, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, document several cases of detained women, girls and boys being subjected to sexual assaults carried out by the security forces in prisons since the onset of the current protests in mid-September 2022.

CNN reviewed and documented 11 incidents – sometimes involving multiple victims – of sexual assaults against protesters in Iranian prisons. CNN interviewed sources throughout the flashpoints of protests in Iran, including rights groups from the Western Kurdish areas and Southeast Baluchi region. The stigma attached to victims of sexual assault and the current state censorship on social media made the investigation difficult. Testimonies heard by CNN suggest that sexual assaults against detainees (mostly women and underage children) are not isolated incidents. Such testimony is of Hanna, a Kurdish Iranian woman who has been arrested after peacefully participating in an anti-government protest during which she burned her hijab and who managed to flee Iran after being sexually assaulted in police custody:

*“There were kids as young as 13 and 14-year-old who were captured in the demonstrations. They were brutally hurt. They hurt the girls even more. They sexually violated them.”<sup>27</sup>*

Another such account belongs to a 17-year-old boy who was a victim of sexual assault in prison carried out as a means of torture and punishment because he overheard another rape:

*“They brought four men over who had been beaten, screaming intensely in another cell. And one of the men who was tortured was sent to the waiting room where I was. I asked him what*

---

<sup>26</sup> “How Iran's security forces use rape to quell protests. Covert testimonies reveal sexual assaults on male and female activists as a women-led uprising spreads”, CNN, 21 November 2022, <https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2022/11/middleeast/iran-protests-sexual-assault/index.html>, accessed on 4 January 2023.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

*all that screaming was about? He said they are raping the men.*"<sup>28</sup> A security officer heard the conversation and proceeded at torturing and raping the 17-year-old boy.

Armita Abbasi, 20-year-old, is another Iranian woman who has become a symbol of nationwide protests after she was charged and arrested by the Iranian authorities due to the anti-government messages posted on her Tik Tok and other social media account. The government falsely claimed, according to CNN investigation, that she was the leader of the protests and that they found 10 Molotov cocktails in her apartment. CNN talked to and investigated the leaked social media accounts of 4 doctors from the Imam Ali Hospital in Karaj who witnessed the moment she was brought to the hospital with multiple injuries, including severe internal bleeding, a shaved head and signs of repeated rape. The leaked private conversations of the hospital doctors show clear evidence of brutal rape. Moreover, the doctors have been instructed to write in their reports that the rape has occurred prior to the arrest and the hospital has later denied any record of treating Abbasi.

*“When she first came in, (the officers) said she was hemorrhaging from her rectum... due to repeated rape. The plainclothes men insisted that the doctor write it as rape prior to arrest.”*

The New York Times has reported a case of a 14-year-old girl from Tehran who suffered sexual assault after she courageously took off her head scarf at school, citing Center for Human Rights in Iran.<sup>29</sup> According to the New York Times, she has been identified by the school cameras and detained. Soon after her detainment, she was taken to the hospital with “severe vaginal tears”. She lost her life and her mother disappeared soon after that, the news agency accounts.

Iran International documented a series of abuses and sexual assaults interviewing protesters who have become victims in detention centers, prisons and sometimes unofficial places outside the system such a warehouses in several major cities of Iran, including Esfahan, Rasht, Tehran,

---

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> “Iran Uses Rape to Enforce Women’s Modesty”, The New York Times, 17 December 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/17/opinion/iran-women-rape.html>, accessed on 4 January 2023.

Karaj, Bandar Abbas, Ahvaz, Tavriz and Mashhad.<sup>30</sup> One victim who has been freed on bail after 20 days in Vali Asr Garrison in Tehran stated that upon her arrival to the detention center after her arrest, she and other detainees were stripped naked before the male security officers, groped in the genital area and were repetitively electrocuted and forced to confess their “crimes” in a televised show. The victim, whose identity remains private due to fear of retribution against her and her family and the stigma associated with sexual harassment and assault declared the security officers used the threat of sexual assault as means of coercion into confession: “*They threatened us with rape!*”<sup>31</sup>

Amnesty International and Iran Human Rights Monitor confirm that sexual assault is widely used in Iran as a method of torture and repression of protesters who have been detained, having been reported by the survivors in the 1980s, during the Green Revolution, in the 2019 protests, and more recently, during the nationwide protests from mid-September 2022. The 2020 Amnesty International report accounts:

“[...] *interrogators and prison officials perpetrated sexual violence against detainees. They would strip them naked, conduct invasive searches to humiliate them, use pepper spray on their genitals, and electroshock their testicles.*”<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> “Detained Victims in Iran Share Harrowing Stories of Sexual Assault”, Iran International, 27 December 2022, <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202212279992>, accessed on 6 January 2023.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> “Iran: Detainees flogged, sexually abused and given electric shocks in gruesome post-protest crackdown – new report”, Amnesty International, 2 September 2020, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/2965/2020/en/>, accessed on 6 January 2023.

### 3.3 Unlawful Killings and Detention of Children

Since the start of the uprising in Iran in mid-September 2022 until 9 December 2022 when the report was last updated, Amnesty International<sup>33</sup> documented 44 killings of children undertaken by the Iranian security forces, as a result of unlawful use of force to crackdown the ongoing protests. Most of the victims have been killed due to unlawfully firing live ammunition carried out by Iranian security forces in order to disrupt and crush the protests. At least 5 children died due to injuries and internal bleeding after suffering fatal beatings; 1 girl has been killed after being struck with a gas canister on her head and at least 5 children died after having been fired metal pellets at their heads, hearts and other vital organs.<sup>34</sup> Families of victims have reported that they have been pressured to make false confessions regarding their children's death and to deny the involvement of the security in their killing.

Hasti Narouie, a 6-year-old Baluchi girl, was killed on 30 September 2022 after being struck on her head with a gas canister. The fatal incident happened while the girl was at the prayer site, during a violent government crackdown of a protest that took place in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan province. The father of the victim has been threatened by the security and intelligence forces that his family and surviving children will suffer consequences unless he will cooperate into providing an official statement that denies the involvement of security officers into her killing.<sup>35</sup>

During the demonstration that took place in the same day in Sistan and Baluchistan province, several eyewitnesses interviewed by Amnesty International declared that the Basiji agents started firing live ammunition to disperse the crowd. Mohammed Rakhshani, a 12-year-old Baluchi boy, has been shot in his head, while his brother was shot in the back after intervening to save his brother's life. Documenting the unlawful use of firearms against peaceful protesters, including children, Amnesty International reviewed 2 videos from the event taking place on 30 September

---

<sup>33</sup> "Iran: Killings of Children during Youthful Anti-Establishment Protests", Amnesty International, 9 December 2022, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/6104/2022/en/>, accessed on 6 January 2023.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

2022.<sup>36</sup> One video shows peaceful protesters, including Omid Sarani, a 13-year-old Baluchi boy, running away from the security forces who were shooting directly towards them and taking shelter behind a wall. The second video reviewed shows protesters carrying wounded bodies away from the fire, including clear footage of the face of one wounded child, whose face was covered in blood.

On 2 November 2022, Mohamed Zadkarimi, aged 17, was beaten and fatally shot by the security forces. Human Rights Watch confirmed that the wounds appearing on his back are caused by metal pellets.<sup>37</sup> On 4 November 2022, following Friday prayers from Al-Khalil Mosque gathered in Kash, Sistan and Baluchistan province to peacefully protests. Video footage reviewed by Amnesty International are clearly showing uniformed security forces standing on the rooftops of high building and firing live ammunition towards the protesters. Worshipers who were just leaving the Friday prayer without participating in the demonstration have been also caught in the brutal crackdown. The official Telegram channel of the Al-Khalil Mosque issued a statement soon after the fatal shooting:

***“After Friday prayers...a number of worshippers who were peacefully protesting were shot by live ammunition directly fired by plain clothed and uniformed security forces. They were shot in their upper bodies, in their heads and chests, with live bullets. Children and youth make up the majority of those killed.”***<sup>38</sup>

A further statement of the leader of the Al-Khalil Mosque, published on the Telegram channel on 8 November 2022, states:

***“We called on the security forces to not fire towards the people, but they ignored [our calls]. I even contacted the officials responsible and asked them to remove the security forces from***

---

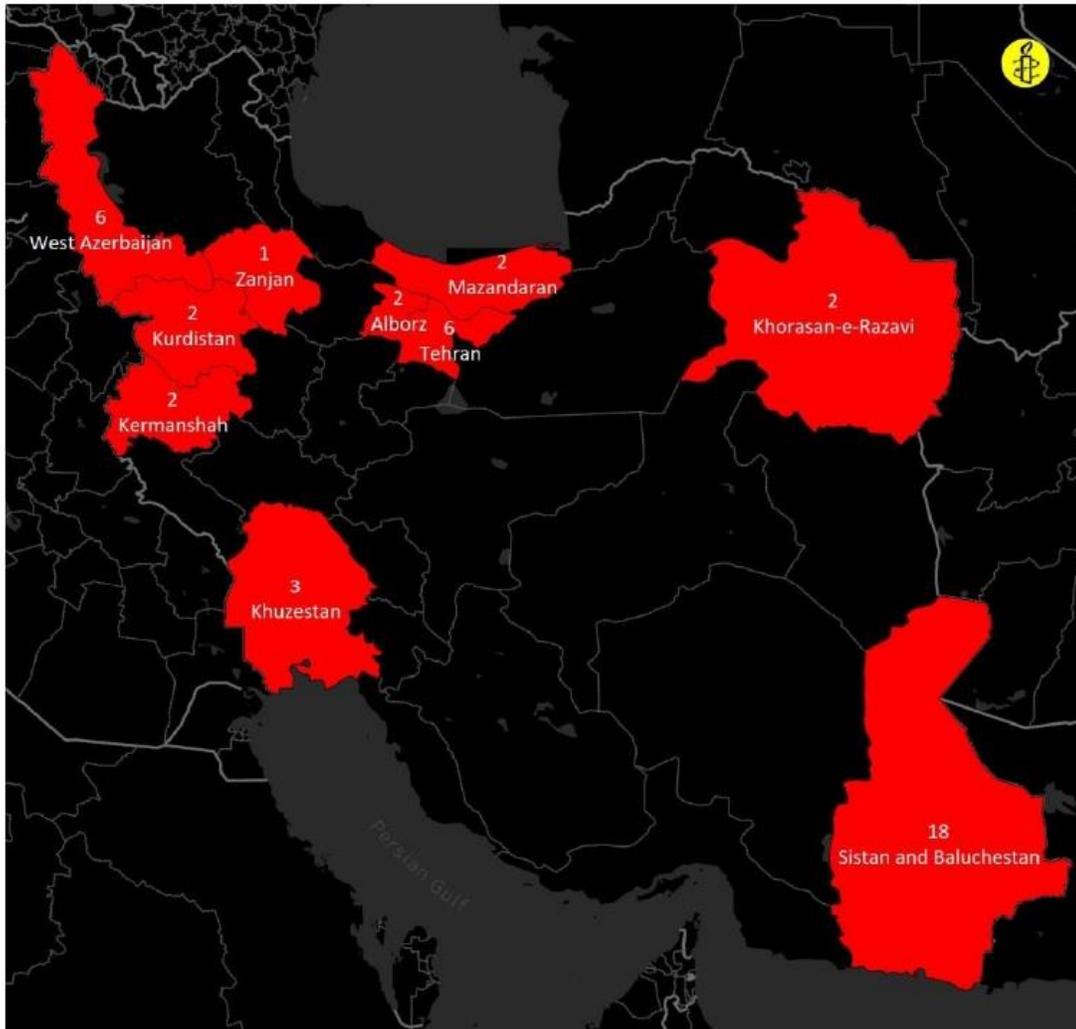
<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> “Iran: Brutal Repression in Kurdistan Capital. Security Forces Use Lethal Force against Protesters, Wrongful Detention, Beatings”, Human Rights Watch, 21 December 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/12/21/iran-brutal-repression-kurdistan-capital>, accessed on 6 January 2023.

<sup>38</sup> “Iran: Killings of Children during Youthful Anti-Establishment Protests”, Amnesty International, 9 December 2022, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/6104/2022/en/>, accessed on 6 January 2023.

*around Al-Khalil Mosque. But...the security forces started shooting from four sides, and a large number of people and worshipers were killed and injured. The beloved people who died,*

*some of them were not even participating in the protests. They were bystanders who were simply walking in the street.”<sup>39</sup>*



Number of children recorded by Amnesty International as having been killed by Iran's security forces during protests in 10 provinces across Iran since September 2022 [Last updated on 9 December 2022]

Source: Amnesty International, 9 December 2022

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

Iran is a signatory of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, under which, it has the obligation to protect children's rights of freedom of expression and peaceful protest, as well as to protect children's right to life under any circumstances. The United Nations Basic Principles of the Use of Force and Firearms clearly prohibit the use of excessive and lethal force except in the cases of imminent threat of death or serious injury. Moreover, UN warns against the usage of metal pellets and firing multiple projectiles at the same time as non-compliant with the principles of necessity and proportionality. By systematically using shotguns and Kalashnikov assault rifles to fire live ammunition, metal pellets and teargas towards protesters, including children during demonstration, Iran is gravely violating international human rights and the rights of the children.

Along with grave violation of human rights concerning children's right to life or to freedom of expression, Iran is also breaching international human rights treaties related to arrest, detention and imprisonment of children. Save the Children International accounts that between 500-1000 children have been arrested and detained after deadly crackdowns of demonstrations, some of them having been threatened with execution, other being detained together with adult inmates and some of them being forcefully sent to correction detention facilities.<sup>40</sup>

Global Campus for Human Rights reports arbitrary raids and arrest in schools across Iran, as well as unlawful detainment of schoolgirls due to removing their headscarves in classrooms.<sup>41</sup> Children are detained together in horrendous detention center, alongside smugglers and drug traffickers. Moreover, the Ministry of Education of Iran announced on 12 October 2022 that detained children will be transferred to psychological reeducation and correction centers, to prevent them from developing anti-social behaviors. Inside juvenile detention facilities, children are coerced to undergo obligatory correction therapy under the supervision of a cleric and a

---

<sup>40</sup> "UN Must Take Immediate Action to Respond to Human Rights Violations Against Children in Iran", Save the Children, 22 November 2022, <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/un-must-take-immediate-action-respond-human-rights-violations-against-children-iran-save>, accessed on 6 January 2023.

<sup>41</sup> "Are International Human Rights Mechanisms Enough for Protecting Children's Rights in Iran?", Global Campus for Human Rights, 8 December 2022, <https://gchumanrights.org/preparedness/article-on/are-international-human-rights-mechanisms-enough-for-protecting-childrens-rights-in-iran.html>, accessed on 6 January 2023.

psychologist. Upon children's refusal to undergo behavioral treatment, they are administered psychiatric drugs, according to New York Times investigation.<sup>42</sup>

The New York Times investigated 23 raids on high schools across Iran, during which the security forces barged in on students in classes, interrogated and beat them. In one of the case investigated, one Tehran school was attacked by militia, while students were chanting anti-government slogans in the school yard. The security forces attacked the children with tear gas and demanded access to the students' phones during harsh interrogations, resulting in unlawfully arresting children and forcefully taking them to a detention center.<sup>43</sup>



These are among the nearly 50 minors that rights groups say Iran has killed in the past two months, as protests swept the country. Security forces shot or beat to death most of them during protests. Amnesty International

44 Iranian children killed by the government during ongoing September 2022 protests.

Source: Amnesty International, 9 December 2022

<sup>42</sup> "Stymied by Protests, Iran Unleashes its Wrath on its Youth", The New York Times, 14 November 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/14/world/middleeast/iran-protests-children.html#:~:text=Iran%2Dfocused%20rights%20groups%20and,are%20held%20in%20adult%20prisons.,> accessed on 6 January 2023.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.