



AI Index: IOR 40/4770/2021  
23 September 2021

-Check against delivery-

ORAL STATEMENT  
ITEM 4: General Debate

## THE COUNCIL MUST URGENTLY ADDRESS THE SITUATIONS IN IRAN, EGYPT, SAUDI ARABIA, AND CHINA

UN Human Rights Council  
Forty-eighth session  
13 September – 8 October 2021

There is a crisis of impunity in **Iran**. We see it in the tools repeatedly used by security forces to crush protests – use of firearms, enforced disappearances, torture – leaving hundreds, including children, dead and many more injured. We see it in the country's current president – who must be investigated for crimes against humanity as a [member of a 'death commission'](#) that forcibly disappeared and extrajudicially executed thousands of dissidents in 1988. We fear the next cycles of bloodshed in Iran. With total absence of domestic avenues for justice, there is one solution – accountability through an international mechanism. We urge the Council to establish such an independent and impartial mechanism to collect, preserve and analyse evidence of the most serious crimes under international law committed in Iran to facilitate fair and independent criminal proceedings, as a matter of priority.

In **Egypt**, impunity prevails for extrajudicial executions and other unlawful killings, mass arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances and torture and other ill-treatment carried out by security forces under the guise of combatting terrorism. In recent months, Egyptian authorities have also stepped up executions and intensified their use of emergency courts against peaceful critics and opponents. Amnesty International has also recently [documented](#) how the authorities continue to subject human rights defenders and political activists to travel bans and asset freezes, unlawful summons and extrajudicial probation measures to deter human rights work or political activism. These ongoing violations cast significant doubts on the seriousness of the recently launched national human rights strategy. We reiterate our calls for this Council to establish a monitoring and reporting mechanism on Egypt.

Amnesty International has also [documented](#) how, when the spotlight faded after **Saudi Arabia's** G20 presidency, the authorities intensified their persecution of human rights defenders and dissidents, and stepped up executions. For a tweet criticizing economic policies, a humanitarian worker was not just convicted of a crime, but sentenced to prison for 20 years. This alone would belie claims of true and meaningful human rights reform,

but we have documented much more. With the establishment of a monitoring mechanism merited, this Council must ask hard questions of Saudi Arabia.

On **China**, we note the High Commissioner's statement earlier this session that there has been no progress on her efforts to conduct a meaningful visit to Xinjiang, where [our Organization has documented](#) draconian repression of Muslims which our evidence shows amounts to crimes against humanity. We were pleased to hear that the Office is finalising its assessment of the available information on allegations of serious human rights violations in that region, with a view to making it public, which we look forward to seeing soon, and once again remind this Council of its responsibility to take meaningful action to address the grave situation in Xinjiang and beyond.