

URGENT ACTION

THOUSANDS DETAINED OVER PROTESTS AT RISK OF TORTURE

Thousands of people arbitrarily detained in relation to the nationwide uprising in Iran are at risk of torture and other ill-treatment, including sexual violence, and grossly unfair trials leading to prolonged imprisonment and the death penalty. Many remain forcibly disappeared. Concerns for those detained in connection to the protests that erupted on 28 December are intensified as the Head of Judiciary has ordered prosecutors to “act without leniency” and senior officials have equated protesting with capital offences.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Head of Judiciary, Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei

c/o Embassy of Iran to the European Union, Avenue Franklin Roosevelt No. 15, 1050 Bruxelles, Belgium

Dear Mr Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei,

I am gravely concerned that the thousands of individuals, including children, arrested in connection with the nationwide protests that began on 28 December 2025 are at grave risk of enforced disappearance, torture and other ill-treatment, deaths in custody and prolonged imprisonment and/or arbitrary executions following grossly unfair trials, including before Revolutionary Courts. Amnesty International has gathered evidence that those arrested have been subjected to enforced disappearance as well as to torture and other ill-treatment during arrest and in detention including beatings, sexual violence, threats of summary executions, and deliberate denial of adequate food, water and medical care. Concerns that such crimes under international law and other serious human rights violations are taking place in a widespread and systemic manner are intensified by well-documented patterns during previous rounds of nationwide protests.

Those arbitrarily detained across the country include protesters, human rights defenders, medical care workers who provided care to injured protesters, lawyers, members of ethnic and religious minorities, journalists and university students. Those detained risk being convicted and sentenced to prolonged imprisonment and the death penalty on the basis of forced “confessions” extracted under torture or other ill-treatment. State media has aired propaganda videos of detained protesters, including children, making forced “confessions” of committing various offences during the protests, including those carrying the death penalty, raising grave concerns that the Iranian authorities will continue the execution spree they began during the 2022 Woman Life Freedom uprising. Public statements by senior officials are alarming, smearing protesters as “rioters” and “terrorists” and insisting that they be “tried and punished as quickly as possible” with “no leniency”. Since 10 January, the Prosecutor General of Iran and provincial prosecutors have also repeatedly described protesters as “mohareb” (an individual accused of waging war against God), which is punishable by death.

I urge you to immediately release all those detained solely for exercising their human rights including the right of peaceful assembly; to protect from torture and other ill-treatment all those who have been detained; to disclose the fate and whereabouts of all individuals forcibly disappeared; and to grant access to their lawyers, families and any medical care they require. I further urge you to immediately quash all convictions and death sentences, to refrain from seeking further death sentences and to ensure that anyone charged with a recognizable criminal offence is tried in proceedings meeting international fair trial standards without recourse to the death penalty.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

While state-affiliated media reported the arrests of thousands of people in relation to the protests by 16 January 2026; information received by Amnesty International from independent media, human rights organizations and human rights defenders indicate that tens of thousands of people remain arbitrarily detained. Authorities have carried out arrests across the country, including in the provinces of Alborz, Ardabil, Bushehr, Esfahan, Fars, Gilan, Golestan Hormozgan, Kerman, Kermanshah, Khorasan Razavi, Khuzestan, Kurdistan, Lorestan, Markazi, Mazandaran, Qazvin, Qom, Semnan, Sistan and Baluchistan, Tehran, West Azerbaijan, Yazd and Zanjan according to state media announcements since 8 January. According to state media, accusations against protesters include ties to Persian language media based outside of Iran, including Iran International and Manoto; being part of a monarchist group; being “leaders” of the protests; possessing weapons, “rioting” and killing members of the security forces. Amnesty International has received reports from informed sources that, amid the systemic denial of access to lawyers, authorities are forcing detainees to sign statements they have not been allowed to read and make forced “confessions” to crimes they did not commit as well as to peaceful acts of dissent.

Detainees’ families, activists and journalists have [told](#) Amnesty International that the authorities are routinely refusing to provide any information about the fate and whereabouts of many of those detained, thereby subjecting them to enforced disappearance, a crime under international law. Some of those detained have been taken to prisons and other official places of detention, while others are being held in military barracks, warehouses or other places of detention without official registration, placing them at heightened risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

In one case that Amnesty International [documented](#), security forces raided the family home of a protester, **Amirhossein Ghaderzadeh**, in Rasht, Gilan province, on 9 January 2026 and subjected him and his two sisters to sexual violence in violation of the absolute prohibition on torture and other ill-treatment. Security forces stripped him and his two sisters, one of whom is a 14-year-old child, naked in front of everyone present to inspect their bodies for metal pellets to “prove” their participation in protests. Security forces then arrested Amirhossein Ghaderzadeh and since then, the authorities have refused to disclose his fate and whereabouts to his family, thereby subjecting him to enforced disappearance. Those injured during protests and in detention are also at further risk given well-documented patterns of torture and other ill-treatment during past protest crackdowns. Amnesty International has long documented how security forces routinely deny adequate medical care to injured protesters, including those removed from hospitals, thereby increasing the risk of unlawful deaths in custody. According to an informed source in Iran, in the aftermath of their lethal crackdown on protests on 8 and 9 January, security forces in Esfahan instructed medical staff in hospitals to notify them about patients with gunshot and metal pellet injuries that could indicate their participation in the protests. Two other informed sources told Amnesty International that security forces in Esfahan and Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari provinces arrested wounded protesters from hospitals, including, those needing ongoing life-saving medical care. According to an informed source, Iranian authorities have also arbitrarily arrested medical workers for providing medical care in non-hospital settings to injured protesters who avoided treatment at hospitals fearing arrest.

Protests erupted in Iran on 28 December 2025 following a sharp currency collapse, chronic state mismanagement of essential services and worsening living conditions. Starting with shop closures and strikes in Tehran’s Grand Bazaar, protests evolved into mass nationwide street demonstrations calling for the downfall of the Islamic Republic system. Iranian authorities have [carried out](#) an unprecedented lethal repression, carrying out mass unlawful killings under a nationwide internet shutdown imposed on 8 January 2026 to conceal their crimes.

Amnesty International has repeatedly found that trials before Revolutionary Courts, which exercise jurisdiction over national security-related offenses, are systematically unfair, including in death penalty cases, which result in arbitrary executions. Throughout the years, the organization has documented hundreds of cases where proceedings held before Revolutionary Courts, leading to prison and death sentences, gravely violated the right to a fair trial. These included the rights: to access legal representation at the investigation phase; to access a lawyer of their choosing from the time of arrest and throughout trial and appeal proceedings; to protection from torture and other ill-treatment; not to be compelled to incriminate or confess guilt; to the presumption of innocence; to meaningfully challenge the legality of their detention; to be tried by an independent, competent and impartial tribunal; and to a meaningful review of their cases by a higher court. Since the Woman Life Freedom uprising of 2022, the Iranian authorities have also increasingly weaponized the death penalty to instil fear among the population, crush dissent and punish marginalized communities. In 2025, the authorities carried out the highest number of executions recorded in decades.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Persian, English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: [30 April 2026]

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: all