

## International Liberty Association Newsletter

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### EDITORIAL

The Iranian regime is currently facing a deep crisis due to systemic human rights violations, suppression of fundamental freedoms, and a lack of respect for human dignity, both domestically and internationally. These violations have not only put daily life under immense pressure but have also destabilised the foundations of society and government.

Public protests against fundamental rights violations and dire economic conditions have reached a boiling point.

Regionally, the Iranian regime has faced setbacks that have led to a decline in its political and strategic influence. Its support for militia groups in neighbouring countries and the weakening of diplomatic efforts have added to its internal crisis.

At the same time Iranian society is more determined than ever to bring about change. The people's demands for freedom, democracy and an end to human rights violations, especially executions and torture, are reflected in street protests and civil activism. The courage and audacity shown by the people of Iran in the face of increasing repression is a testament to their resilience in the pursuit of freedom. Despite the dangers and crackdowns, Iranian men and women are standing tall every day in the streets, driven by hope for a better future. They

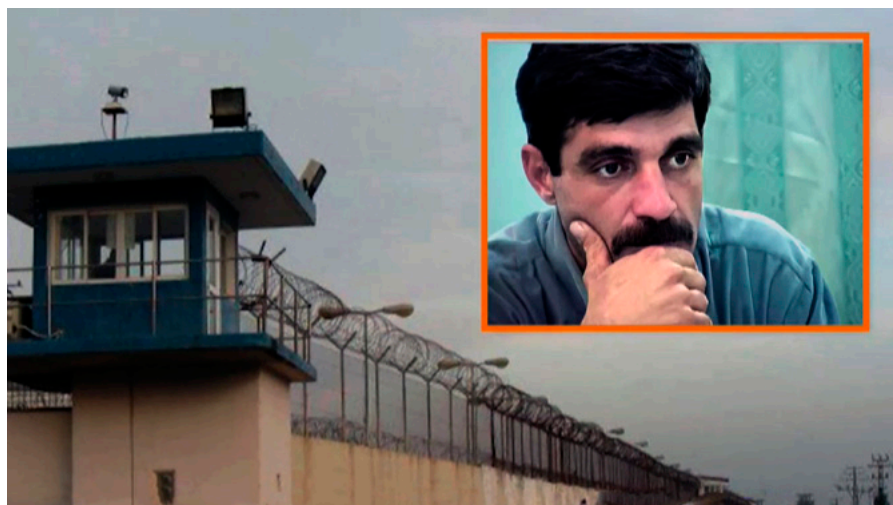
## OVER 350 DISTINGUISHED PERSONALITIES AND NGOs WRITE TO UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONER



In an urgent appeal, some 360 distinguished international experts and NGOs have addressed a letter to **High Commissioner**

**Volker Türk** of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). ... continued on p.2

## LETTER FROM POLITICAL PRISONER: WE WITNESS AN EXECUTION EVERY FOUR HOURS



**Saeed Masouri**, a political prisoner held in Ghezel Hesar Prison for 25 years, has written a letter detailing the torture he has endured. In his letter, he stated:

“While we once faced executions every few weeks or months, we now witness, on average, one execution every four hours.” ... continued on p.2



**Over 350 personalities write to UN Human Rights Commissioner**  
*continued from p.1*

The letter highlights the critical plight of two Iranian political prisoners, **Behrouz Ehsani**, 69, and **Mehdi Hassani**, 48, who face imminent execution following an unjust trial and death sentences confirmed by the Iranian regime’s Supreme Court earlier this month.

The appeal, sent via email and marked “urgent”, underscores the dire urgency of the situation. On the same day, Ehsani and Hassani were forcibly transferred from Evin to Ghezel Hesar Prison, a facility infamous for its executions.

The suspicious circumstances of their transfer, compounded by the sudden severance of communication lines, raise serious concerns that the executions may be carried out in secret within days or even hours. Protests among fellow prisoners erupted in response to the transfer.

Titled *A Call for Immediate Intervention*, the letter outlines the extensive human rights

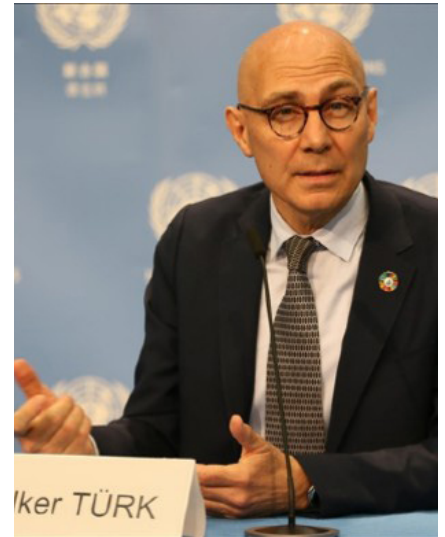
abuses surrounding this case. Both Ehsani and Hassani were convicted on politically motivated charges such as “rebellion”, “spreading corruption on Earth”, and membership in the People’s Mojahedin Organisation of Iran.

The two men endured torture and were denied fair trials, blatant violations of international human rights norms.

The coalition of experts and NGOs urges the High Commissioner to:

- Unequivocally condemn the imminent executions and call on Iranian authorities to halt them immediately.
- Mobilise the international community to pressure Iran to comply with its human rights obligations and end the use of the death penalty as a political weapon.
- Secure immediate access for independent monitors to assess the conditions of political prisoners in Iran.

The letter is co-signed by nearly



360 renowned individuals and organisations, including former political leaders, prominent jurists, human rights advocates, academics, and Nobel laureates.

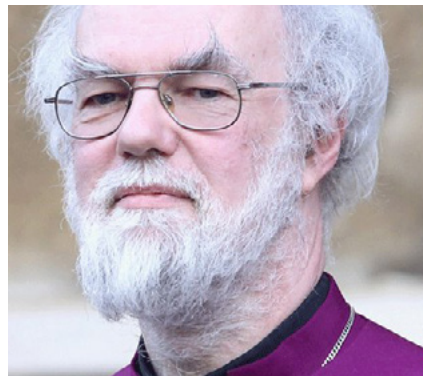
Their collective message underscores the global significance of this crisis and the moral imperative for immediate action.

This appeal comes amid Iran’s alarming trend of escalating executions. In 2024, the Iranian regime executed nearly 1,000 individuals, using mass executions as a tool to suppress dissent and intimidate the populace.

Both Ehsani and Hassani are recognised for their courageous activism, particularly their leadership in the grassroots “No to Execution Tuesdays” campaign. This initiative, now active across 34 Iranian prisons, reflects the growing resistance to the regime’s use of capital punishment. Their activism has made them targets of the government’s ... *continued on p.3*



Lord David Alton and former Archbishop Dr Rowan Williams are among the signatories of the letter to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk



**Editorial** *continued from p.1*

have proven that no power can silence their will for freedom and human dignity.

To support the Iranian people and prevent further human rights violations, we urge the international community to take effective action. This includes

conditioning diplomatic and economic relations with the Iranian regime on halting executions, freeing political prisoners, and supporting human rights movements in Iran.

The people of Iran will continue their struggle for freedom and justice and hope that the international

community will stand in solidarity with their fight. The day will come when the Iranian regime can no longer survive by suppressing and violating human rights. The bravery of the Iranian people who stand firm against oppression, shows that ultimately, freedom and justice will be realised for them.



## Over 350 personalities write to UN Human Rights Commissioner

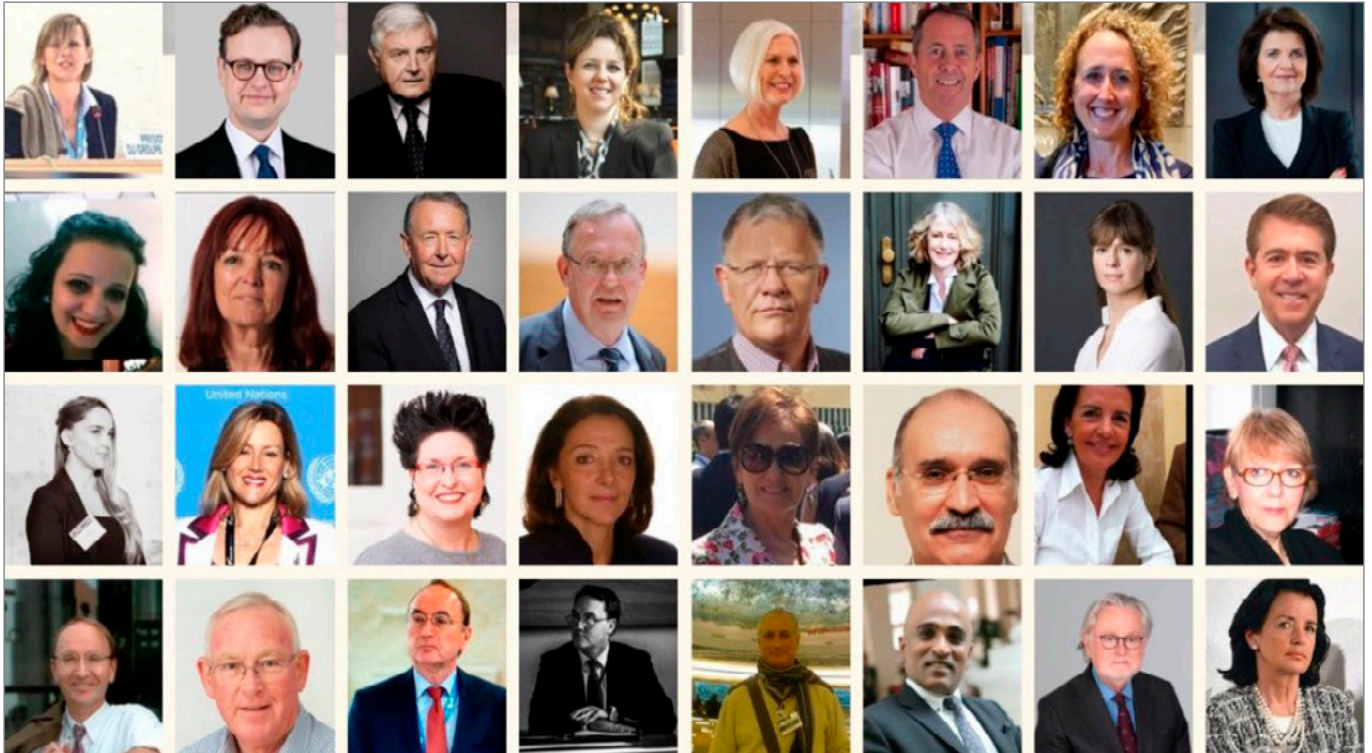
*continued from p.2*

oppressive judicial system.

The appeal closes with a stark warning: the silence of the international community risks

emboldening further human rights abuses in Iran. With time running out, the coalition calls on the High Commissioner to act swiftly to prevent these executions and set a precedent for holding Iran accountable for its actions.

As the world watches, the fate of Behrouz Ehsani and Mehdi Hassani serves as a test of the international community's resolve to stand against injustice and uphold the principles of human rights.



## Letter from political prisoner

*continued from p.2*

In the letter, Masouri wrote: “Perhaps in these 25 years, I have been so consumed by the crimes of this murderous regime that all of this now seems like just a drop in the ocean of atrocities committed by these villains.”

Highlighting the escalating executions, he noted:

“During this Christmas period alone, nearly 25 innocent lives were taken – that’s almost one execution every two and a half hours.”

He continued: “This is the 25th Dey [15th January] and Christmas I have spent in prison. I can no longer fathom what else these eyes must see or what further burdens and heartbreak this heart must bear. This time, I write not to the people of my homeland – who are doing all

they can – but to the awakened consciences of international human rights organisations, particularly the United Nations Human Rights Council, the High Commissioner, the special rapporteurs, especially Ms Mai Sato, and all influential figures.”

The political prisoner also made a passionate plea to the UN Secretary-General, the President of the European Commission, and the President of the European Parliament to take urgent action. He urged them to go beyond merely expressing concern or condemning the executions and to adopt decisive measures to stop the Islamic Republic's executions. He stressed that the growing number of executions must not be reduced to statistics and called for diplomatic and political ties with the “execution regime” to be conditional on halting its

machinery of death and adhering to human rights standards.

Masouri concluded his letter by saying:

“Perhaps if effective actions had been taken earlier, even Italian journalist Ms Cecilia Sala would not have fallen victim to the Islamic Republic's hostage-taking policies today.”

Saeed Masouri is one of Iran's longest-serving political prisoners. He was arrested on 8 January 2001, in the city of Dezful. Following his arrest, he spent 14 months in solitary confinement at the Intelligence Department in Ahvaz before being transferred to Ward 209 of Evin Prison.

In 2002, Masouri was sentenced to death by the Tehran Revolutionary Court on charges of “moharebeh” (waging war against God). His death sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment.



## RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION IN IRAN

### Ten Baha'i women jailed

At 6 a.m. on Wednesday, 22 January 2025, ten Baha'i women residing in Baharestan, Isfahan, were arrested and transferred to Dolatabad Prison in Isfahan.

The detainees include **Nasrin Khademi Qahfarrokhi, Roya Azadkhash, Sara Shakib, Boshra Motahar, Mojgan Pourshefi Ardestani, Maryam Khorsandi, Shourangiz Bahamin, Sanaz Rasteh, Firouzeh Rastinejad,** and **Azita Rezvanikhah.**

Security forces raided their homes, creating an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, before transferring them to prison to serve their sentences.

The arrests trace back to Sunday, 25 April 2021, when these individuals, alongside several other Baha'i women in Baharestan, were detained. After 23 days in custody, they were released on bail.

A year later, the Revolutionary Court's First Branch in Isfahan

sentenced them to imprisonment, fines, social deprivation, and travel bans.

Subsequently, the 37th Appeals Court of Isfahan upheld severe penalties for these women: five years of imprisonment, a fine of 50 million tomans, five years of exclusion from social services, and a two-year travel ban.

This series of events underscores the continued targeting of the Baha'i community in Iran, as they endure systematic repression and discrimination, stripped of their basic human rights.



### 96 Christians sentenced to 263 years in prison in Iran

Article 18, in collaboration with three international Christian organisations (Open Doors, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, and Middle East Concern), released its seventh annual report on the situation of Christians in Iran.

Titled *Tip of the Iceberg*, the report highlights documented human rights violations against Christians in Iran in 2024, emphasising that these represent only a small fraction of the broader, often unreported abuses faced by the Christian community, especially converts.

According to the report, there was a six-fold increase in prison sentences for Christians in 2024 compared to the previous year. A total of 96 Christians were sentenced to 263 years in prison, as opposed to 22 Christians receiving 43.5 years in 2023.

Furthermore, at least 139 Christians were detained for their faith or peaceful religious activities, with 80 individuals arrested and 77 charged. By the end of 2024, 18 Christians remained in prison, enduring harsh conditions, including physical torture. In total, Christians were sentenced to 263 years of imprisonment, 37 years of internal exile, and nearly \$800,000 in fines.

The report also highlights the plight of Armenian and Assyrian Christians, who, despite being officially recognised minorities, face systemic discrimination. If they part-

icipate in religious activities beyond government-approved frameworks, such as joining converts in Bible studies or prayer meetings, they risk arrest and persecution.

The report features cases like that of **Hakob Ghochoomian**, an Armenian Christian sentenced to 10 years for possessing Persian-language Bibles. Converts such as **Laleh Saati** and **Mina Khajavi** suffer from poor health and lack of medical care in prison.





## THE VOICE OF UNITY FOR JUSTICE EXECUTION OF PAKHSHAN AZIZI HALTED



In recent days, the Kurdistan region witnessed a widespread and coordinated public strike in protest against the death sentence of Pakhshan Azizi, a Kurdish political prisoner. This unprecedented movement highlighted the unity of the people in the region and their collective will to resist systematic oppression and the implementation of unjust rulings.

As a result of these widespread protests, the Iranian regime retreated from carrying out the death sentence against this prisoner.

Pakhshan Azizi, a Kurdish social worker, was arrested

in Tehran by the Ministry of Intelligence forces in August 2022. After enduring more than four months of detention in solitary confinement, he was sentenced in August 2023 by Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court to death on charges of “enmity against God” (*baghi*) and “membership in opposition groups”. This sentence was recently confirmed by the Supreme Court.

In response to this ruling, the people of Kurdistan decided to hold a general strike. The strike, which

involved the closure of markets, shops, and other businesses, took place in most cities across Iran’s Kurdistan province.

The suspension of Pakhshan Azizi’s death sentence symbolises the victory of unity and solidarity among the people. It demonstrated that the unity and coordination of the people can challenge repressive policies.

The strike garnered attention from media and international human rights organisations around the globe, putting additional pressure on the regime ruling Iran.

The people of Kurdistan have once again proven that justice, freedom, and human dignity are values that cannot be silenced through pressure and repression.



## POWERFUL WORDS OF IRAN PRISONER SET TO BE EXECUTED BY BARBARIC REGIME HELLBENT ON CRUSHING DISSENT

*Reported by The Sun newspaper*

**Behrouz Ehsani**, 69, and **Mehdi Hassani**, 48, were handed death sentences in September over their alleged membership of a banned opposition party.

After receiving his death sentence, Ehsani vowed



he was “ready” to sacrifice his life in a bid for freedom for the Iranian people.

He said: “This

execution-driven regime cannot offer anything else.

“I will not bargain over my life with anyone and am ready to sacrifice my insignificant life for the liberation of the Iranian people.”

Father-of-three Hassani was arrested in September and has suffered torture in Evin Prison.





## A CRY FOR AWARENESS FROM THE DEPTHS OF IRAN'S PRISONS: LETTER FROM PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE IN IRAN



Members of the European Parliament holding pictures of Iran's death row prisoners of conscience

### In the name of the homeland, the love of every human's pure and honourable nature.

Once again, crimes against humanity are rampant. In this era of democracy, freedom, and equality, the news and images emerging from the horrifying prisons of a dictatorship clearly expose the bloodthirstiness of the dictator of our time, the cursed criminal Bashar al-Assad, who has taken the lives of millions. This reflects the hatred these dictators harbour against freedom and equality. It must also be noted that this criminal is a protégé of the tyrannical Khamenei regime.

When these criminals are gone, countless other atrocities will be unveiled. Unfortunately, we have repeatedly witnessed the horrifying conditions imposed upon our defenceless compatriots in Iranian prisons. Despite the testimonies and evidence provided by survivors, international human rights organisations have failed to take decisive action.

### What Goes On in the Dictator's Prisons?

1. Fathers left in limbo for nearly a decade while their children grow up in their absence.
2. Long-term imprisonment pushing families to the brink

of collapse, poverty, and corruption.

3. Young men who have aged prematurely in these prisons, with their parents dying of grief.
4. Divorce, child abandonment, and countless other tragedies. Meanwhile, the regime uses a tactic of "delusion", boldly allowing its prison guards to beat political, ideological, and security prisoners. These guards delete footage from the prison cameras and dismiss the prisoners' claims as lies against the authorities. One example of such an atrocity took place in Ward 6/1 not long ago.

We, the prisoners of conscience demand that the United Nations and human rights organisations lift the veil on the regime's horrifying prisons. The dictators must be held accountable so that such inhumane acts are never repeated, allowing us to leave behind a beautiful, peaceful future for the next generations.

### And our final word:

Let us not forget our loved ones who were withered and crushed under the tyranny of this regime. We will always remember those who remain imprisoned and the families of those who sacrificed their lives for the freedom of our

homeland. Together, we shout for the liberation of our homeland.

### About the Authors of the Letter

The letter is attributed to political prisoners including **Isa Eid-Mohammadi, Farhad Shakri, Abdulhakim Azim Gorgij, Abdurrahman Gorgij, and Abdolbaset Orsen**. These individuals were arrested in 2015 by intelligence agents as part of a joint case and transferred to Vakilabad Prison in Mashhad a year later.

In 2019, Branch 1 of the Mashhad Revolutionary Court, presided over by Judge Mahmoud Davoodabadi, sentenced Farhad Shakri, Isa Eid-Mohammadi, Abdulhakim Azim Gorgij, and Abdurrahman Gorgij to death on charges of "rebellion through membership in a Salafi group and membership in the National Solidarity Front of Sunni Iranians." Abdolbaset Orsen was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

The death sentences were later overturned by Branch 41 of the Supreme Court, presided over by Judge Ali Razini, and the case was sent for retrial. However, in early August 2023, a branch of the Revolutionary Court reissued death sentences for these prisoners.



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### GLOBAL CONCERNS OVER REGIME'S HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS



During the 48th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), representatives from various countries voiced serious concerns about the Iranian regime's human rights record, highlighting issues such as the treatment of women, the use of the death penalty, and the repression of civil and political freedoms.

The session highlighted overwhelming global outrage at the Iranian regime's brazen and persistent disregard for human rights, as well as its cynical use of the death penalty to silence dissent and perpetuate repression. Representatives demanded Iran engage with international bodies, enact substantive reforms, and fulfil its obligations under international law without further delay.

### INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE FORCES REGIME TO TEMPORARILY HALT EXECUTION OF ACTIVISTS



Two Iranian political prisoners, **Behrouz Ehsani** (69) and **Mehdi Hassani** (48), faced

imminent execution following the upholding of their death sentences by the Iranian regime's Supreme Court. Their forced transfer on 26 January 2025, from Evin to Ghezel Hesar prison – commonly used for executions – heightened concerns about their fate.

An international campaign to stop the execution of these two human rights activists put immense pressure on the regime ruling Iran.

On Monday, 29 January, their lawyer announced on social media that they had learnt that an order had been issued by a court to halt the execution of Ehsani and Hassani, ensuring that the sentence would not be carried out until the legal proceedings were concluded.

### PRICES OF DAIRY PRODUCTS CONTINUE TO RISE IN IRAN



According to media reports, the pace of price increases in Iran has intensified in recent weeks, and alongside rising costs, people are also witnessing shortages of essential goods in the market.

In this regard, the state-run Hamshahri newspaper reported on Sunday, 12 January, that dairy products have once again experienced a price hike in less than three months.

The report emphasised that in recent days, dairy products have been supplied to stores and dairies at new prices.

While the price increase in January is not as steep as in

October, the repeated price hike within just three months is "highly unusual, as dairy prices previously changed on an annual basis."

### RETIREES CONTINUE TO SHOUT FOR THEIR RIGHTS



Iran has witnessed a surge in protests across various cities, with citizens voicing their anger and frustration over a wide range of issues, including government corruption, economic hardships, and social injustices.

The widespread demonstrations highlight growing dissatisfaction among Iranians as they demand their rights and push back against the regime's oppressive policies.

### SECURITY FORCES IN IRAN ATTACK PEACEFUL PROTEST OF RETIRED EDUCATORS



On 20 January, Iran witnessed a surge in protests sweeping across various provinces and cities. Thousands of retirees, workers, and patients took to the streets to voice their discontent over the regime's policies and disregard for their fundamental rights.

In Tehran, protests outside the Ministry of Education were met with brutal suppression by security forces. This attack left several teachers injured.



## List of ILA events in the coming months:

**Kingston upon Thames: 1st March 2025 from 1pm–4pm**  
Cornerstone Church, 234a Canbury Park Road, Kingston KT2 6LF

**Sevenoaks: 5th April 2025 from 1pm–4pm**  
St Luke's Church, Eardley Road, Sevenoaks TN13 1XT



## Please join us at our NoRuz celebration:

**Saturday 19 April 2025 from 2pm–7pm**  
ILEC Conference Centre, 47 Lillie Road, London SW6 1UD



**RSVP: Please email [info@iliberty.org.uk](mailto:info@iliberty.org.uk) or call 020 8452 3481**