

KNK



Kongreya Neteweyî ya Kurdistanê
Kurdistan National Congress

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN IRAN

- Briefing Paper -

February 2011

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INTRODUCTION

Iran is a multi-national country with the population of 72 millions. Six different national groups exist in this country including Fars, Kurd, Azeri, Baluch, Arab and Turkmen. There are also a number of ethnic and religious groups including Yarsan, Alawi, Bahaye, Zoroastrian and Christians. All these national, ethnic and religious groups have been deprived of their social, cultural, linguistic and economical rights. They have no rights to express their opinion or to practise their own cultural norms. The Iranian government have zero tolerance toward religious differences and have done its utmost to Islamize all other religious groups. The expression of identity by the national and sub-national groups is not tolerated and regarded as a security issue. Those who express their distinct identity are either labelled as the pawn of outsiders or as terrorists and separatists. The dissenting voices are severely suppressed and the political opponents are regarded as “the enemy of God”.

Anyone who holds distinct political opinions or religion view, conduct differently or writes in a different manner is deemed to suffer. The arbitrary arrest, torture and execution of political and civil activists are frequent. Mock execution, electric shock and all type of torture and ill-treatment of the prisoners of conscious to extract information and confession to use as evidence in the “show trails” are widespread in the Iranian prisons. The violation of human rights in Iran is reaching a tragic point; mass-executions of civil and political activists are culminating to an unprecedented scale. To create the atmosphere of fear and terror among the people, they have carried out a range of execution by hanging in the public places. The Iranian authorities rarely respond to the human right organisation and Amnesty International has not been permitted to visit Iran to assess the human rights situation at first hand for more than 30 years after the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

Since the Islamic Revolution in 1979 the Iranian people in particular the Kurdish nations have been subjected to these extreme policies and violent treatments. The founding father of Islamic Republic and the supreme leader of the revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini declared Jihad, the holy war, against the Kurdish people, a decree whose heritage is still lingering in Kurdistan and haunting the Kurdish people. The Kurds have been deprived of the very basic human rights including registering their children with Kurdish names, having a right to education in mother tongue as stipulated in the article 15th Iranian constitution. The Kurdish areas have been economically neglected, resulting in a widespread unemployment and entrenched poverty. Forced evictions and destruction of Kurdish homes are regular phenomena which have led the Kurds to restricted access to adequate housing. The Kurdish students are restricted by various rules demanding conformity to Islam and denying them access to universities.

There is no such a thing a human right in Iran and all the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights including individual, social, groups, economic, religious, and cultural rights are violated by the Iranian Islamic Republic . Any individual or group who work for the protection of human rights is deemed to suffer, i.e., the head of the Kurdistan Human Rights Organisation is arrested and sentenced to ten years imprisonments. Having institutionalised such an atmosphere of fear on the Iranian society has left no leeway for any human right and civil institution or any NGO to operate. Among others, the most prominent collective entity which managed to resist such oppressions was the Free Life Party of Kurdistan (PJAK). Notwithstanding, the PJAK has suffered a huge blow and lost some its founding figures, but owing to the fact the PJAK has laid a strong hold on the Kurdish community and built its own arm wing, it managed to survive the Iranian oppressions.

SYSTEMATIC EXECUTION POLICY

The medieval style of execution has reached an alarming stage in Iran. With the population of 72 million, Iran is rated second in the world after China (that has a population of 1.3 billion people) for its high rate of executions. Based on Iran's population to execution ratio, it has the highest number of executions in the world. Zahra Bahrami, the 45 year old Iranian-Dutch citizen and mother of two who was arrested during the 2009 Ashura protests (December 27, 2009), was hanged on Saturday 29th 2011. Zahra Bahrami was executed even though her case filed with political charges was still opened and unresolved. Ferhad Tarem, a Kurdish political activist was executed on Wednesday 27th January for his involvement in Kurdistan Democratic Party. Anyone, unrelated his ethnic origin or political views, opposed to Iran and all those participating in

demonstration are accused of being a “drug dealer” or “enemy of God” and being executed. More than 100 politicians and activist have been executed by hanging since the beginning of the New Year.

Husen Xizri was executed in 15th January and was convicted of being “the enemy of God”, for his involvement in the Free Life Party of Kurdistan (PJAK). Mr. Xizri was not the first political activist to be hanged for his affiliation with PJAK. Over the course of last three years, eight Kurdish activists have been executed for their involvement in the Free Life Party of Kurdistan (PJAK). Farzad Kamangar a 35-year-old teacher and member of the Teachers' Trade Association of Kurdistan, with four others including Ferhad Wekili, Ali Heyderyan, Shirin Elem Holi and Medhi Islamiyan were executed in 9th May 2010. Their bodies have not yet been given back to their family to arrange proper funerals. Fasih Yasamani another Kurdish political prisoner was executed by hanging on 6th January 2010. Ehsan Fatahyan was also executed in 11th November 2009 and the Iranian authorities told his family that they will not receive his body back but will be informed of his tomb after 6 months.

One of the most brutal and vicious acts of the Iranian authority was the execution of Hesssen Hekmet Demir in 20th February 2007. Mr. Hekmet Demir was seriously wounded and in need of urgent medical treatment. Instead of providing him with treatment they amputated both of his legs under tortures and callously hanged him for his involvement in PJAK. There are 16 Kurdish civil and political activists in death row and convicted of being “the enemy of God”, for their political opinion. They are, Miss Zeyneb Celalyan, Hebibollah Letifi, Hebibollah Golperi Pur, Reshid Axxendi, Sherko Mearifi, Mostefa Selimi, Anwer Rostemi, Seid Cemal Mohemedi, Seid Sami Hoseini, Eziz Mohemed Zade, Abdullah Siruryan, Zanyar Muradi, Luqman Muradi, Mohamed Amin Agushi, Irec Mohemedi, Ehmed Pulad Xani.

WOMEN'S SITUATION

As the consequences of the Political Islam held by the regime as the main ideology, women have been subjected to double-suppression and far much deeper violation of human right. An often quoted phrase in regard to women's condition in Iran states: “We are both women and Kurds; so, in the Islamic Republic of Iran, we are doubly accused”. Women are victims of violence on a daily basis and face discrimination in the patriarchal society as well as by state officials. Perpetrators of violence against women may be state officials, members of groups or private individuals including family members. To escape the violence and the double suppression some women resort to the most extreme form of self-harm including self-immolation. Iran's justice system has provided no remedy to the obstacles and violence facing women and girls. The authorities do not even investigate complaints of rape, murder or suicide of women. The police and judiciary are openly biased against women and the violations they suffer.

Iranian women human rights defenders have often aroused more hostility from the state authorities than their male colleagues because their activities are perceived as defying cultural, religious or social norms about the role of women. As a result, they face human rights violations not only for their work as human rights defenders but also because of their gender. The fate of women has been subjected to patriarchal system, the most cruel and inhuman system against women for the last millennium. Iran is one of these places that are dominated by religious fundamentalism and Political Islam. Worst of all is that all these sorts of mistreatment of women are backed and endorsed either by the constitution and cultural norms or by their social behaviours and customs. Nevertheless, Iranian' women, particularly the Kurdish women, are playing a leading role in the struggle for democracy and human rights in the country. Among other activities, women's groups are providing education programmes for illiterate women, supporting victims of abuse, and generally raising awareness about women's rights.

The emergence of Free Life Party of Kurdistan (PJAK) pioneered by women and youths is regarded as a turning point in the history of women's struggle for freedom and equal rights. While PJAK has endeavoured to secularise the culture of the society, it advocate equal rights for women and men in all political, social and economic areas. PJAK has managed to achieve considerable positive results in this respect. The emergence of PJAK is seen as a negation of all mentalities that relegate women into such a humiliating position. PJAK is of opinion that the only solution to the women issue in Iran and Middle East is transformative education of women. To achieve this end PJAK has done its utmost to dismantle all the anti-women concepts endorsed and practiced by the Iranian religious and theocratic authorities. PJAK has been running transformative education course for the women in the areas of politics, philosophy, sociology, language and media. Through conferences and seminars, PJAK educated and enhanced women to a level that currently women have their own party, and even their own defence-forces.

BOMBARDMENT AGAINST CIVILIAN AREAS

The Turkish and Iranian armies are constantly bombarding Southern Kurdistan (Northern Iraq); this is the most conspicuous violation of International Laws. The Iranian army do often carry out cross-border operations against the Kurdish guerrillas of PJAK. In numerous instances they have shelled the Kurdish villages resulting in civilian casualties. In the last month, 3 civilians including a child have lost their lives. Moreover, many homes, fields and gardens have been targeted during

the bombardment and around 350 families have been forced to leave their homes. Gule Abdullah (53) of Meredu and 3 other people have lost their lives as a result of the Iranian bombardment of Rezger, Mereduve and Sinawe villages in Jarawe of Pisdar district on 15 May. Kurdish girl of only 13 year old Zuzan Cebbar Xelil, who was working in a field in Berdenaze area of haci Umran, lost her life during an air assault in 2010.

The alliance of the Iranian Regime with Turkey has brought a new dimension in the assaults against the Kurds. While the military deployment continues, the Kurdish villages have been the main targets of their offensive and military raids. Although Iran's stated rationale for the assault is the PJAK guerrillas, the assaults on civilian areas does not support Iran's justification. Iranian regimes have bombarded at least 20 villages in the Sidekan and Coman areas. 2 houses in the Eze village on the outskirts of Qendil have been hit. In summer 2010, the Iranian military had set fires on the Kurdish forests more than 800 times destroying more than 7000 hectares of lands. Their claimed rationale for the conflagration and decimation of Kurdish natural and vegetation life was the PJAK guerrillas. But if the forests have been used by the Kurdish guerrillas, why the destruction and decimation of more than 7000 hectares of Kurdish forests has not cost a life of a single Kurdish guerrilla? Nevertheless, PJAK declared its unilateral ceasefire in 2009 and since then it has adhered to it and stays in a non-action phase.

Additionally PJAK released a declaration in October 2010 outlining seven articles as the main ground for a peaceful and democratic solution to the Kurdish issue in Iran. PJAK has demonstrated its intention for democratic methods devoid of any violence to solve the Kurdish issue. In 6th article of the declaration PJAK stated that: "People without access to their own language, will not be able to represent themselves or make manifest of their being as a people, consequently no one would be able to discuss their being as a people since they will be emptied of their own cultural, ethnical and national essence. Therefore, the legal recognition of different languages in Iran particularly the Kurdish language in education and in all administrative and non-administrative institutions is the initial condition." But not long after the PJAK's declaration, the Iranian Deputy for Foreign Minister claimed that they were intending to ban the use of any language in Iran except the Persian language. And in November 2010 the Iranian authority officially banned the use of Kurdish language in the schools of Seqiz, a Kurdish city in East Kurdistan (Iran). The Iranian prohibition of the Kurdish language, after the PJAK's declaration, is an explicit response to the PJAK's call for peace and the recognition of Kurdish and other languages in Iran. To ban a language that is spoken by more than 40 million people had previously been tried by Turkish regime but it failed to bear any fruit.

On the one hand the Iranian regime forces the Kurdish people into poverty and on the other hand it offers them jobs in the mercenary position and other pro-government militias such as Besiji, meaning the mobilised. People who turn down these offers are deemed to suffer poverty or forced to work in the borders smuggling goods inside the country. Iranian soldiers have in many occasion set ambushes for the smugglers and open fire on them. According to ANF records, the Iranian regime has massacred more than 54 smugglers in 2010, though it is believed that the real figures are even higher. At least 53 smugglers have been murdered by Turkish and Iranian soldiers between July and December in 2009. 52 smugglers have been murdered by Iranian soldiers and 1 by Turkish soldiers in September 2009. This year, the Iranian assaults on the border were commenced much later than the Turkish assaults.

TO THE ATTENTION OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

During the last two year, the horror of these executions has become even more acute. The death penalty has become a systematic political tool for the Iranian government to oppress peaceful protests of democrats as well as representatives of minority groups. The number of executions increased dramatically after the beginning of the protests against the ruling regime. According to Amnesty International, a total of 388 executions were carried out in 2009.

In the context of these protests, at least six people were arrested and sentenced to death on the grounds of 'enmity towards God'. This category of criminal offence is used liberally and randomly by Iranian courts automatically leading to the death penalty. Dozens of political prisoners – mostly from minority groups such as Kurds, Balutschis and Arabs – are awaiting their execution on these grounds.

This is about many human lives and the integrity of UN human rights standards. The UN must use its influence bilaterally and in cooperation with European and international partners to put an end to the inhuman practice of executions in Iran. We therefore ask for your support of a resolution of the UN human rights commission condemning the Iranian government for its abuse of the death penalty and other cases of serious human rights violation.

We call on the EU and the UN to lend their support to the democratisation of Iran and to fight for a democratic solution of the Kurdish question in the country. We ask the EU to prevent the Iranian government to continue its inhuman policy against to all Iranian peoples (human rights abuse, lack of freedom of association and speech, especially bloody execution policy)– with the help of European courts as well as diplomatic and economic sanctions in cooperation with all relevant international actors.