



ARCHITECTS OF ATROCITIES

STATE MACHINERY ORCHESTRATING CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY IN
IRAN'S 2022 WOMAN LIFE FREEDOM UPRISING

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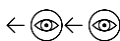
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Cover photo: Artistic rendition combining images from Iran's 2022 Woman Life Freedom uprising, members of Iran's security forces, leaked official documents related to protest repression operations, and segments of organigrams mapping the chains of command examined in this report. The complete organigrams identify 87 officials named by Amnesty International as warranting criminal investigations. Officials depicted on the cover were selected from different national, regional, provincial and county levels solely for illustrative purposes. Their inclusion does not imply any particular level of responsibility compared with other officials named in the report. © Amnesty International

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GLOSSARY

WORD	DESCRIPTION
WORD	Description

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Iranian authorities unleashed an onslaught of atrocities between September and December 2022 when Iran was gripped by large-scale protests during what became known as the Woman Life Freedom uprising. The security forces deployed by the authorities unlawfully killed hundreds of protesters and bystanders, including dozens of children, during this period. They subjected thousands more to arbitrary arrests, incommunicado detention, enforced disappearance and torture or other ill-treatment. They raped and committed other sexual violence against some of those arrested in connection with the protests. Those targeted included children. They also persecuted the bereaved families of those killed.

The Woman Life Freedom uprising erupted on 16 September 2022 after the death in custody of 22-year-old Kurdish woman Zhina Mahsa Amini at the hands of the country's "morality" police, which was responsible for enforcing discriminatory compulsory veiling laws. For the next three months, hundreds of thousands took to the streets peacefully, protesting against decades of repression, discrimination and impunity. Women and girls stood at the forefront, defying compulsory veiling laws that for decades enabled state violence, arbitrary detention, torture and other ill-treatment, and discriminatory exclusion from education, employment and public spaces. Images of women burning headscarves and protesting unveiled reverberated nationwide and globally. The slogan "Woman Life Freedom", first chanted in Kurdish as "Jen Jiyan Azadi", soon spread to other cities in Persian as "Zan Zendegi Azadi". From December 2022 onwards, protests began to die down following three months of deadly repression and amid a militarized environment across the country.

Amnesty International has concluded that the serious human rights violations committed by the Iranian authorities to crush the Woman Life Freedom uprising qualify as the crimes against humanity of murder, torture, rape, sexual violence, enforced disappearance, imprisonment, and persecution on political, gender, ethnic and religious grounds. These crimes were carried out as part of a widespread and systematic attack against a civilian population, pursuant to and in furtherance of a state policy to crush the protests, silence and punish civilians who advocate a different political system respecting gender equality and other human rights, and create a climate of terror to deter future protests.

Amnesty International's research concludes that the two main security forces responsible for the crimes against humanity committed in the context of lethal dispersal of protests in 2022 were the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and the Police Command of the Islamic Republic of Iran (known by its Persian acronym, FARAJA), both of which operated under the General Staff of the Armed Forces. These forces implemented repressive strategies formulated by the Supreme National Security Council, the State Security Council and subsidiary councils at provincial and county levels known as provision councils.

Based on an in-depth analysis of the mandates, command structure and organization of these security bodies, as well as detailed documentation of crimes against humanity committed in Kurdistan, Kermanshah and West Azerbaijan provinces, Amnesty International has identified 87 officials who it considers must be criminally investigated. They include 10 national officials, and 77 other officials at regional, provincial and county level related to the provinces of Kurdistan, Kermanshah and West Azerbaijan.

Since the Woman Life Freedom uprising of September-December 2022, the Iranian authorities have committed further widespread crimes under international law, culminating in unprecedented massacres of thousands of protesters and bystanders on 8-9 January 2026. The protest massacres of 8-9 January 2026 bear the same hallmarks as the crimes against humanity documented in this report, yet on an even deadlier and more staggering scale. This tragically illustrates the risks of not confronting impunity and other root causes of crimes against humanity and other crimes under international law in Iran.

On 28 February 2026, the USA and Israel launched unlawful attacks on Iran, in violation of the UN Charter, resulting in significant civilian harm caused by tens of thousands of air strikes. The strikes killed at least

1,469 civilians, including hundreds of children and women, between 28 February 2026 and 24 July 2026, according to official figures reported by the Iranian authorities. The strikes also resulted in extensive destruction of civilian infrastructure and environmental damage due to attacks on petrochemical and energy facilities.

In parallel, since the unlawful attacks began on 28 February 2026, senior Iranian officials have repeatedly made statements equating any form of dissent with siding with the “enemy” and have openly threatened further mass killings of people expressing dissent or peacefully advocating fundamental political change.

People in Iran remain at acute risk of crimes under international law across two overlapping fronts: violations of international humanitarian law, possible war crimes and humanitarian crisis in the context of the armed conflict between the USA/Israel and the Islamic Republic of Iran; and cycles of crimes against humanity in the context of protest crackdowns.

Amnesty International renews its calls for an enduring ceasefire and accountability for the unlawful US and Israeli attacks on Iran in violation of the UN Charter and all violations of international humanitarian law and possible war crimes committed during the conflict. The organization urges the UN General Assembly and Security Council to consider all possible avenues to deliver and ensure peace, security and justice.

At the same time, Amnesty International stresses that the crimes against humanity committed against protesters and others in Iran must not be sidelined, forgotten or overshadowed amid shifting global attention. The unlawful conduct and significant civilian harm by Israel and the USA must not deflect or obscure crimes against humanity committed by the Iranian authorities. Nor should the pain and suffering of victims of crimes against humanity in Iran be instrumentalized to justify unlawful attacks on Iran in violation of the UN Charter, breaches of international humanitarian law and civilian harm.

Amnesty International calls for a meaningful approach to prevent further atrocities by the Iranian authorities and advance justice for the crimes against humanity committed in the country. This should include the referral of Iran’s situation to the International Criminal Court by the UN Security Council, as well as coordinated national-level criminal investigations and prosecutions pursuant to universal or other forms of extraterritorial jurisdiction. In parallel, given the gravity and scale of crimes committed, the high risks of recurrence, and the political dynamics within the UN Security Council, Amnesty International urges the UN General Assembly to create an international criminal justice mechanism aimed at prosecuting those most implicated in crimes against humanity in Iran.

Any further delay by the international community in pursuing international criminal justice for recurring and escalating atrocities in Iran dangerously contributes to the normalization of mass protest killings and risks emboldening Iranian authorities to carry out further atrocities without fear of consequences.

1.1 SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

Amnesty International interviewed 270 people as part of its investigations, including 221 who were in Iran at the time of the 2022 protests and, in most cases, at the time of the interview, and 49 based outside Iran. They included protesters, former detainees who were subjected to torture and other ill-treatment, including rape and other forms of sexual violence, relatives of those killed or detained, eyewitnesses, lawyers, human rights defenders, journalists and medical workers. In addition, Amnesty International received the testimonies of 19 other individuals, including injured protesters, rape survivors and relatives of those killed, from lawyers and human rights defenders based outside Iran who obtained consent to share the testimonies with Amnesty International.

The organization complemented these interviews with extensive review and analysis of audiovisual evidence. Overall, Amnesty International reviewed more than 2,000 videos recorded between 16 September and 31 December 2022 in connection with the Woman Life Freedom uprising in Iran. From this body of material, Amnesty International selected and verified 456 videos for detailed, in-depth analysis, primarily recorded in the provinces of Kurdistan, Kermanshah and West Azerbaijan. This geographical scope corresponds to the focus of Chapters 6-8 on the circumstances surrounding the unlawful killing of protesters and bystanders in these provinces during the uprising. In its video analysis, the organization focused on the conduct of security forces and their response to the protests, including the use of firearms.

Amnesty International also gathered and reviewed an extensive collection of state media reports and statements by officials, as well as leaked official documents, prosecution orders, court verdicts and forensic records.

The investigation focused on the security forces' response to nationwide protests that were taking place between September and December 2022, while also analysing the impunity that persists to date and the structural factors underpinning it within Iran's constitutional and legislative frameworks. This included investigating reports of protest-related killings, torture, imprisonment, rape and other forms of sexual violence, enforced disappearance and persecution.

With respect to reports of protest-related killings, the organization gathered and analysed an extensive body of evidence about the deaths of 377 protesters and bystanders, including 56 children, who lost their lives during the Woman Life Freedom uprising in 26 of Iran's 31 provinces. They include 326 individuals killed by security forces during protest dispersals or in areas near protests that were ongoing or had recently occurred, where there was a militarized presence of security forces, 18 who died in state custody, 10 who died after release from custody, with reports indicating that their deaths were prison-related, and 23 who died in suspicious circumstances that suggest state agents killed them. At a more in-depth level, the report presents a detailed timeline of events and the causes and circumstances surrounding the unlawful killings of 95 Kurdish protesters and bystanders across 17 counties in Kurdistan, Kermanshah and West Azerbaijan provinces. At a more in-depth level, the report presents a detailed timeline of events and the causes and circumstances surrounding the unlawful killings of 95 Kurdish protesters and bystanders across 17 counties in Kurdistan, Kermanshah and West Azerbaijan provinces.

Amnesty International is publishing alongside this report a document that lists the names and details of these 377 protesters and bystanders together with information on the location and date of their deaths, as well as photographs where available.

In identifying officials for criminal investigations, Amnesty International assessed whether the available evidence provided reasonable grounds to believe that the individuals concerned may bear criminal responsibility under international criminal law through one or more recognized modes of liability, including superior responsibility and aiding and abetting.

On 4 August 2026, Amnesty International wrote to the Supreme Leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, detailing its findings and recommendations and seeking comments. It also wrote to the general commander of FARAHA, Ahmadreza Radan; the general commander of the IRGC, Ahmad Vahidi; and the minister of interior, Eskandar Momeni, requesting that they notify the 87 officials named for criminal investigations and transmit any responses they may wish to provide in exercise of their right of reply. No responses had been received by the time of publication.

1.2 WIDESPREAD AND SYSTEMIC ATTACK PURSUANT TO STATE POLICY

In eyewitness descriptions of the authorities' violent response to the overwhelmingly peaceful Woman Life Freedom uprising, words like war zone, battlefield, killing and shooting appear repeatedly. Shahram from Javanroud, Kermanshah province, described the crackdown to Amnesty International:

"The situation resembled a battlefield. We were pursued by uniformed IRGC [Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps] agents wielding Kalashnikov assault rifles... They unleashed continuous gunfire."

His account is mirrored by that of Mahshid, a protester in Mahabad, West Azerbaijan province:

"I had never seen such scenes before... The situation was very frightening and felt like a war zone. The security forces just kept shooting. They had no mercy towards anyone."

The same pattern emerged in Sanandaj, Kurdistan province, as Iman recounted:

"The agents would shoot anyone in their sight, not caring if they were women, children, passersby or protesters... Many people were injured by metal pellets striking their legs, bodies, chests and faces."

Underscoring how brutality turned into a routine, Rojin from Saqqez, Kurdistan province, said: "Killing and injuring people became normal for the security forces."

The testimonies of Shahram, Mahshid, Iman and Rojin echo hundreds of eyewitness accounts gathered by Amnesty International since September 2022. The organization's investigations have revealed that the Iranian authorities extensively and unlawfully used assault rifles, machine guns, handguns and shotguns loaded with metal pellets to disperse, intimidate and punish protesters and deter others from exercising their right to freedom of peaceful assembly.

Amnesty International's investigations found that security forces opened fire in a broad array of situations, none of which involved an imminent threat of death or serious injury warranting the use of firearms under international law and standards. These included firing into peaceful assemblies; firing into assemblies where the majority of protesters were peaceful while some were engaging in non-peaceful acts, such as stone throwing or vandalism that posed no imminent threat of death or serious injury; chasing and shooting at fleeing protesters and bystanders; and the use of firearms in militarized areas involving armed patrols, checkpoints, roadblocks and vehicle chases. As a result, security forces unlawfully killed hundreds of protesters and bystanders, including dozens of children, across the country and inflicted serious injuries amounting to torture or other ill-treatment on thousands more.

In addition, the authorities arbitrarily arrested tens of thousands of protesters and their real or perceived allies; subjected detainees, including children, to widespread and systematic patterns of enforced disappearance, incommunicado detention, torture and other ill-treatment, including rape and other forms of sexual violence; imposed unjust prison sentences and death sentences following grossly unfair trials that bore no resemblance to legitimate judicial proceedings; and carried out arbitrary executions.

Authorities also waged a campaign of persecution against the families of those killed. They pressured bereaved families to accept false narratives about the causes and circumstances of their loved ones' deaths and imposed severe restrictions on access to victims' bodies, funerals and memorials, enforced through surveillance and threats of death, rape and other harm. Those who resisted faced abusive interrogations, arbitrary detention, torture and other ill-treatment, including through beatings and unlawful shootings causing injuries.

Under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), certain prohibited acts, including murder, imprisonment, enforced disappearance, torture and rape or any other form of sexual violence, qualify as crimes against humanity when "committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population". An attack refers to a course of conduct involving the multiple commission of prohibited acts pursuant to or in furtherance of a state or organizational policy to commit such attack.

Amnesty International considers that the unlawful killing of hundreds, the injuring of thousands, mass arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances and torture, including rape and sexual violence, form a "course of conduct" under Article 7(1) of the Rome Statute. This constitutes an "attack" for the purposes of crimes against humanity.

The targeted civilian population included protesters and their real or perceived allies. Among them were university students, schoolchildren, women and girls who removed their headscarves in public, journalists and other media workers, political dissidents, athletes, artists, writers, social media users and human rights defenders, including lawyers, women's rights activists, labour rights activists, minority rights activists from Iran's oppressed minorities, and civil society activists.

Amnesty International has found that the Iranian authorities' attack was both widespread and systematic. Its scale and the number of targeted individuals show its breadth, while consistent, coordinated patterns of repression carried out nationwide over months reveal its systematic nature.

Official statements and leaked official documents analysed by Amnesty International show that senior political and security authorities planned, directed, funded and celebrated the repression while demonizing protesters and issuing threats. They included the head of the General Staff of the Armed Forces, senior IRGC and FARAJA commanders, the minister of interior, provincial and county governors, as well as national, provincial and county security councils. This confirms that the crimes committed by the security forces were not spontaneous, but part of a systematic attack waged pursuant to and in furtherance of a state policy to crush protests.

Further evidence of the state policy includes:

- preparatory and planning meetings involving senior political, security and judicial officials across the security apparatus, during which strategic instructions were issued, as shown in leaked official documents from the State Security Council and Supreme National Security Council;
- leaked written orders from IRGC and FARAJA commanders and the head of the General Staff of the Armed Forces;
- public statements by political, security and judicial officials, amplified by state media, urging security forces to "crush", "sweep" or "mop up" protesters;
- the use of public resources to recruit, train, arm and fund thousands of security forces, evidenced by leaked official documents, state media reports and official statements; and

- continued efforts by commanders and other authorities to shield perpetrators, destroy or conceal evidence, and silence victims' families and others seeking truth and justice.

Additional evidence that the attack was carried out pursuant to a state policy lies in the judiciary's crucial role in criminalizing dissent and enforcing impunity, which fuelled further crimes. Prosecution and judicial authorities arbitrarily detained protesters and relatives of those killed and authorized or otherwise facilitated the routine use of enforced disappearance, torture and other ill-treatment by members of the security forces acting as "judicial officers". They also ignored or dismissed complaints filed by victims, actively concealed crimes, and shielded perpetrators of crimes against humanity from criminal investigation and prosecution.

1.3 CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY OF MURDER

Iran's security forces unlawfully killed hundreds of protesters and bystanders as part of their lethal crackdown on the Woman Life Freedom uprising. Following extensive research and investigations, Amnesty International has gathered a voluminous body of information and evidence about the deaths of 377 protesters and bystanders who lost their lives during the Woman Life Freedom uprising. The list compiled by the organization can be divided into four categories:

1. Killings during violent protest dispersals and in militarized areas: A total of 326 of the recorded victims were killed by security forces using firearms or other means of lethal force to disperse, intimidate and punish protesters and deter other people from joining the protests. Of these recorded victims, most were killed during protest dispersals while some were killed by security forces in areas near protests that were ongoing or had recently occurred, where there was a militarized presence of security forces involving armed patrols, checkpoints, roadblocks, vehicle chases, stop orders or violent raids on people's homes or workplaces. The 326 victims comprise 264 men, 13 women and 49 children – 46 boys and three girls – killed in 69 counties across 23 of Iran's 31 provinces.
2. Deaths in state custody: A total of 18 of the recorded victims lost their lives in state custody after they were arrested in the context of protest crackdowns. They comprise 17 men and one woman, who died in 13 counties across 10 provinces. Under international law and standards, Iranian authorities should be presumed responsible for these deaths, and they have failed to rebut this presumption.
3. Post-custody deaths: A total of 10 individuals – five men, two women and three children, comprising a girl and two boys – were recorded as having died after release from custody, with reports published by human rights defenders or journalists indicating that their deaths were prison-related. According to these reports, in five cases, physical injuries resulting from torture and other ill-treatment allegedly caused or contributed to the victims' deaths. In five other cases, individuals died by suicide shortly after release, with reports published by journalists or human rights defenders indicating that they took their own lives due to mental harm allegedly caused by torture or other ill-treatment in custody. These 10 victims died in nine counties across eight provinces.
4. Suspicious deaths, often following a period of disappearance: A total of 23 of the recorded victims went missing after participating in or supporting the protests, with no information available regarding the circumstances of their arrest or abduction and eventual death. Numerous indicators, including consistent patterns in the victims' disappearances, the types of injuries they sustained, the manner in which families were notified and the persecution families faced by the authorities, alongside the authorities' refusal to investigate and their swift attribution of deaths to suicide, illness or accidents, suggest that state agents killed the victims. They comprise 12 men, seven women and four children – two boys and two girls – who died in 12 counties across 10 provinces.

Amnesty International is publishing alongside this report a document that lists the names and details of these 377 protesters and bystanders together with information on the location and date of their deaths, as well as photographs where available. The organization believes that the total number of victims is likely to be much higher.

For 323 of the 377 recorded victims, Amnesty International was able to obtain information about their exact or approximate age. Of this group, at least 17% (56) were children, highlighting their notable presence during the protests and the devastating impact of the authorities' lethal crackdown on children, their families and their communities. Among the youngest child victims were a two-year-old boy, a six-year-old girl and two nine-year-old boys. Eleven other child victims were between the ages of 11 and 14, while 41 others were between 15 and 17.

Teenagers aged 18 or 19 made up 9% (29) of the victims while young people in their 20s accounted for 38% (124) underscoring the prominent role of youth at the forefront of the protests and the tragic loss of young lives.

With respect to 233 of the 326 victims recorded as having been killed by security forces during protest dispersals or in militarized areas, Amnesty International was able to conduct investigations and gather sufficient evidence to support the legal conclusion that the killings were unlawful. This means that the security forces used firearms or other means of lethal force against the victims not to defend against an imminent threat of death or serious injury, but to disperse, intimidate or punish them and create a climate of terror and fear through a militarized presence.

With respect to the remaining 93 victims recorded as killed during protest dispersals or in militarized areas, Amnesty International considers it highly likely that further investigation and access to evidence would confirm that their killings were also unlawful, given the well-documented patterns of unlawful use of firearms against protesters across the country. Credible reports published by other human rights organizations and media outlets on many of the remaining killings further support this assessment.

With respect to the cases of unlawful killings recorded by Amnesty International, the organization has reasonable grounds to believe that such killings amount to the crime against humanity of murder. In all these cases, one or several members of the security forces either intentionally targeted the victim with lethal force to cause their death, or deliberately and unlawfully discharged lethal ammunition into crowds in proximity to the victim(s). In addition to the intent and knowledge requirements to commit the underlying offence of murder, members of the security forces were aware of the broader context in which their actions occurred, namely, the attack directed against a civilian population.

1.3.1 NATIONAL OVERVIEW OF KILLINGS IN PROTEST DISPERSALS AND MILITARIZED AREAS

Amnesty International has documented the names and details of at least 326 protesters and bystanders who were killed by security forces during protest dispersals or in areas near protests that were ongoing or had recently occurred, where there was a militarized presence of security forces. They comprise 264 men, 13 women and 49 children – 46 boys and three girls.

Of these 326 recorded victims, 302 were fatally shot, in at least 45 cases with metal pellets fired from close range. Thirteen victims, one of whom was also stabbed, were subjected to fatal beatings at the hands of security forces. Five were fatally struck by tear gas canisters; one was fatally struck in the head by a kinetic impact projectile; three suffered complications from inhaling tear gas; one was rammed by security forces while riding a motorcycle, causing him to fall, hit a curb and sustain fatal head injuries; and one was deliberately run over by a security forces vehicle.

Of the 326 victims, 55% (178) were killed during the first two weeks of the protests, between 19 and 30 September 2022. This highlights how, from the outset, the authorities swiftly responded with lethal force in an effort to crush the protests immediately.

The pattern of unlawful killings began in Kurdistan province on 19 September 2022, which was gripped by protests marking the third day after the death in custody of Zhina Mahsa Amini. On this day, four men were unlawfully killed by the security forces in Divandareh, Dehghan and Saqqez, all in Kurdistan province. The next day, the security forces unlawfully killed at least seven other protesters and bystanders in Ghaem Shahr, Mazandaran province; Tabriz, East Azerbaijan; Kermanshah, Kermanshah province; and Piranshahr and Urmieh, both in West Azerbaijan province.

As the protests grew larger on 21 September 2022 and spread to many cities across the country, security forces intensified their lethal crackdown, killing at least 60 further protesters and bystanders in 30 counties across 12 provinces. They are Alborz, Gilan, Hamedan, Ilam, Kermanshah, Khorasan Razavi, Mazandaran, Ghazvin, Semnan, Tehran, West Azerbaijan and Zanjan.

Throughout the three-month protest period, 21 September 2022 stands as the day on which the largest number of cities were affected by unlawful killings. The highest death toll was recorded on 30 September 2022, when authorities unlawfully killed at least 87 protesters and bystanders from Iran's oppressed Baluchi minority in a single city, Zahedan, in Sistan and Baluchistan province. Amnesty International has obtained a leaked copy of an official document which reveals that, on 21 September 2022, the General Staff of the Armed Forces issued an order to FARAJA commanders nationwide, instructing a "firm and severe response to any gathering, the dispersal of rioters and their arrest and transfer to bases for obtaining undertakings."

In October 2022, the authorities continued to use firearms and other means of lethal force to disperse ongoing protests, resulting in the killing of at least 49 additional protesters and bystanders. Over half of these recorded killings (26) took place in 10 counties located in three provinces that are home to Iran's oppressed Kurdish minority – Kurdistan, Kermanshah and West Azerbaijan. The remaining 23 victims were killed in 11 counties spread across 10 other provinces.

In November 2022, protests surged in the country, particularly between 15 and 22 November 2022, when protesters marked the anniversary of nationwide protests in 2019. The authorities intensified the use of lethal force, killing at least 95 protesters and bystanders. Once again, protesters and bystanders from Iran's oppressed Kurdish minority in Kurdistan, Kermanshah and West Azerbaijan provinces were among the most affected, with at least 47 recorded victims across 12 counties in these provinces. The remaining 48 victims were killed in 17 counties across 11 other provinces.

From early December 2022 onwards, protests began to die down amid a militarized environment throughout the country and after multiple waves of devastating violence perpetrated by security forces and mass arbitrary arrests of tens of thousands of protesters. Amnesty International recorded the killing of at least four other victims during violent protest dispersals or in militarized areas in December 2022 – one each in Sanandaj, Kurdistan province; Javanroud, Kermanshah province; Bojnourd, North Khorasan province; and Tehran, Tehran province.

1.3.2 UNLAWFUL KILLINGS IN SISTAN AND BALUCHISTAN PROVINCE

Amnesty International has recorded the names of 106 Baluchi protesters and bystanders who were killed by security forces in Sistan and Baluchistan province during protest dispersals or in areas near protests that were ongoing or had recently occurred, where there was a militarized presence of security forces. They comprise 83 men, three women, and 20 children – 19 boys and one girl. These Baluchi victims represent 33% of the total number of recorded deaths.

Of these 106 identified Baluchi victims, 87 people – 69 men, three women, 14 boys and one girl – were unlawfully killed by the security forces during a single lethal crackdown on largely peaceful protests after Friday prayers on 30 September 2022 in Zahedan. Iranians now refer to this day as “Bloody Friday”.

On this day, after Friday prayers in the Great Mosalla of Zahedan, a large prayer site near the city's main mosque, a group of people gathered outside the police station across the road to protest and chant. Security forces responded by firing lethal ammunition, metal pellets and tear gas at them from the rooftop of the police station. Simultaneously, plain-clothes security forces fired at protesters and bystanders from the rooftops of several nearby houses. Security forces also unlawfully fired assault rifles, shotguns loaded with metal pellets and tear gas directly into the vicinity of the prayer site, where hundreds of people, including children and older people, were still performing Friday prayers.

Consequently, 84 people – 69 men, 14 boys and one woman – sustained fatal wounds from security forces unlawfully firing lethal ammunition at protesters, bystanders and worshippers. Two other women died from tear gas-related respiratory complications after security forces unlawfully fired tear gas into a confined space within the women's section of the prayer site while one six-year-old girl was unlawfully killed after a tear gas canister struck her head.

Eleven other Baluchi victims – nine men and two boys – were unlawfully shot and killed by security forces during a lethal crackdown on largely peaceful protests after Friday prayers in the city of Khash on 4 November 2022.

Of the eight remaining victims identified in Sistan and Baluchistan province, five were unlawfully shot and killed during protests that continued in Zahedan on 1 and 2 October 2022 in the aftermath of “Bloody Friday”. Two others, aged 14 and 16 – were unlawfully shot and killed in further protests that took place following Friday prayers in Zahedan on 28 October 2022. Additionally, one man was shot and killed during further protests following Friday prayers in Zahedan on 4 November 2022.

1.3.3 UNLAWFUL KILLINGS IN KURDISTAN, KERMANSHAH AND WEST AZERBAIJAN

Amnesty International has documented circumstances surrounding the unlawful killings of 95 Kurdish protesters and bystanders who were killed by security forces in the provinces of Kurdistan (35 victims),

Kermanshah (19 victims) and West Azerbaijan (41 victims) during protest dispersals or in areas near protests that were ongoing or had recently occurred, where there was a militarized presence of security forces. They comprise 79 men, three women, 12 boys and one girl. These Kurdish victims represent 29% of the total number of recorded deaths, reflecting the disproportionate impact of the lethal repression on this persecuted community.

Of these 95 recorded victims, 90 were fatally shot, in at least 22 cases with metal pellets. Three other victims, all from Kurdistan province, were subjected to fatal beatings at the hands of security forces; one of these three victims was also stabbed. They were **Mohammad Keywan Darvishi** and 15-year-old **Sarina Saedi**, who were fatally beaten in separate incidents in Sanandaj on 26 October 2022, and 17-year-old **Mohammad Arian Khoshgavar**, who was fatally beaten and stabbed in Sanandaj on 17 November 2022. Another victim, **Mohammadi Shariati**, was fatally struck by a tear gas canister while fleeing a violent protest crackdown in Sanandaj on 26 October 2022. A further victim, **Mohammad Hosseini**, was deliberately run over by a vehicle of the Special Cohorts of FARAJA in Saqqez on 12 October 2022 while he was loudly objecting to the use of shotguns and tear gas against protesters and bystanders.

Of the 95 victims, Amnesty International identified the cases of 16 victims who were unlawfully killed in areas near protests that were ongoing or had recently occurred, where there was a militarized presence of security forces. Of those 16 victims, 12 were unlawfully killed after security forces deliberately opened fire on their vehicles while they attempted to drive away from intimidating security forces. The circumstances surrounding the deaths of the remaining four victims were as follows: **Ardalan Ghasemi** was fatally targeted while writing political slogans on walls; **Mohammad Arian Khoshgavar**, aged 17, was beaten and stabbed while simply walking through a militarized area; **Reza Kazemi**, aged 16, was shot after being stopped by security forces at a checkpoint while travelling with friends; and **Dastan Rasoul** was shot while walking through an unofficial but commonly used Iran-Iraq border crossing point near the village of Choman in Baneh county to attend the memorial ceremony of a relative who had been shot the day before.

In the context of lethal protest dispersals, security forces caused deaths by unlawfully firing both into crowds to force dispersal and at fleeing protesters and bystanders to intimidate and punish them and prevent them from regrouping. Illustrative examples include the deaths of the following individuals:

- **Minoo Majidi** was shot dead with metal pellets at close range in Kermanshah, Kermanshah province, on 20 September 2022 while fleeing from the Special Cohorts of FARAJA on motorcycles, who were chasing panicked protesters and bystanders and repeatedly firing shotguns loaded with metal pellets.
- **Amirhossein Basati**, aged 15, was shot dead in Kermanshah on 21 September 2022 by IRGC agents positioned on the rooftop of a mosque as he turned back to retrieve his slipper while trying to flee from mass shootings.

Unlawful shootings aimed at dispersing protesters resulted in the deaths of not only protesters but also bystanders. For example,

- **Armin Sayadi** was passing through a protest site in Kermanshah, Kermanshah province, on 12 October 2022 in his car when a bullet fired by an IRGC agent, who was shooting from a rooftop at a group of protesters, struck him.
- **Fereydoon Faraji** was shot dead in Baneh, Kurdistan province, on 27 October 2022 when a bullet struck him as he looked out of a window at his place of work to observe events unfolding.
- **Fereshteh Ahmadi** was shot dead in Mahabad on 27 October 2022 when a bullet struck her while she was standing on a rooftop observing the events unfolding.
- **Abdollah Mahmoudpour**, aged 16, was on his way home from work in Balou village near Urumieh on 21 September 2022 when he reached an area where a group of protesters came under fire. As he tried to flee the continuous gunfire, he was fatally shot.

Amnesty International's investigation also revealed a pattern of security forces approaching victims at close range and deliberately shooting them, often aiming for the torso or head, using assault rifles, shotguns or pistols. Illustrative examples include the deaths of the following individuals:

- **Kobra Sheikheh** was fatally shot as she was running towards her home. She was fleeing the security forces who were chasing her and other protesters and bystanders in Mahabad, West Azerbaijan province, on 27 October 2022. Before she could enter her home, one of the agents approached and deliberately shot her in the neck with an assault rifle.

- **Milad Maroufi** was fatally shot while he was similarly being chased by the security forces in Boukan, West Azerbaijan province, on 17 November 2022. He and other panicked protesters had tried to take refuge in an alley.
- **Mohsen Niazi** was deliberately shot in the back and killed while attempting to escape arrest in Dehgolan, Kurdistan province, on 20 November 2022.
- **Zaniar Allahmoradi, Danial Pabandi** and **Foad Savari** had fallen to the ground while trying to flee when agents approached and deliberately shot and killed them from close range. Zaniar Allahmoradi was shot in Sanandaj, Kurdistan province, on 15 November 2022. Danial Pabandi, aged 17, was shot in Saqqez, Kurdistan province, on 16 November 2022. Foad Savari was shot in Divandareh, Kurdistan province, on 19 November 2022.
- **Hossein Abdpanah** and **Houman Abdollahi** were trying to hide from security forces patrolling the streets when they were spotted, approached and deliberately shot and killed. They were shot in Sanandaj, Kurdistan province, in separate incidents on 19 November and 7 December 2022, respectively.

Amnesty International also documented a pattern of members of the security forces exacerbating the risk of death by committing further serious violations after shooting victims. This included beating victims with kicks, batons, sticks and gun handles after they had already fallen to the ground from gunshot or metal pellet wounds.

In other cases, members of the security forces continued shooting to prevent people from approaching and aiding injured victims who had fallen to the ground. They also encircled injured protesters and deliberately left them to bleed without aid before either abandoning the scene or belatedly calling for medical assistance. Illustrative cases include the deaths of the following individuals:

- **Danesh Rahnama** was fatally shot in Balou village near Urumieh, West Azerbaijan province, on 21 September 2022 while he attempted to aid and move Abdollah Mahmoudpour, who had been shot seconds earlier. Members of the security forces also fired at the pickup truck that carried the victims to the hospital, resulting in bullet holes on the vehicle, and subjected the driver of the pickup truck to beatings after he drove back from the hospital.
- **Shahou Bahmani** was fatally shot in Sanandaj, Kurdistan province, on 17 November 2022. He was left on the ground bleeding for approximately 30 to 40 minutes while members of the security forces continued to shoot at protesters who attempted to reach him to urgently transport him to a hospital. It was only after the security forces departed the scene that protesters could belatedly transfer Shahou Bahmani to a hospital, where he died.
- **Hiva Janjan** was fatally shot while in a car in Boukan, West Azerbaijan province, on 17 November 2022. Members of the security forces removed him and his friend from the car, covered the friend's head with a plastic sheet and beat him before taking him away. Meanwhile, Hiva Janjan was left bleeding until the agents finally called an ambulance.
- **Hossein Abdpanah** was fatally shot in Sanandaj, Kurdistan province, on 19 November 2022. After he collapsed, residents attempted to gather around him, but they were forced to disperse as members of the security forces threatened to open fire on them. Members of the security forces threatened to shoot Hossein Abdpanah's son when he arrived after hearing his father had been shot. They retreated after he identified himself, allowing the family to belatedly take Hossein Abdpanah to a hospital.
- **Mohsen Niazi** was shot fatally in Dehgolan, Kurdistan province, on 20 November 2022. He was left bleeding for about 10 minutes as members of the security forces stood over him, preventing onlookers from approaching to help. Members of the security forces even fired shotguns at several medical professionals who attempted to intervene and provide first aid. It was only after the security forces finally departed that individuals could transport Mohsen Niazi to a hospital.

Amnesty International found that the widespread pattern of security forces carrying out arrests at hospitals deterred many from seeking care, forcing the injured into homes, businesses or ill-equipped clinics. This led to deaths from bleeding, infection or complications that timely specialized care could have prevented.

Illustrative examples include the deaths of the following individuals:

- **Foad Ghadimi** was shot in Divandareh, Kurdistan province, on 19 September 2022. Fears of arrest prevented an immediate hospital transfer, so he was first taken to a hair salon and later left outside

Imam Khomeini Hospital. It is unclear how long he remained there unattended, but eventually two people took him inside the hospital, where he died shortly afterwards.

- **Aslan (Nima) Shafaghdoost**, aged 17, was shot in Urumieh, West Azerbaijan province, on 21 September 2022. Protesters first took him to a private residence, then to his uncle's house and later his family home. His family attempted to take him to a hospital but turned back after seeing a heavy presence of security forces at the hospital. Over the following days, he was intermittently treated at an ill-equipped private clinic. His condition worsened due to infection and on 5 October 2022 he was rushed to a hospital, where he died within 30 minutes of arriving there.
- **Milan Haghighi, Sadroddrin Litani** and 16-year-old **Amin Marefat** were shot in Oshnavieh, West Azerbaijan province, on 21 September 2022. Fearing arrests at hospitals, protesters took the three injured teenagers to a private home instead of a hospital. After about 90 minutes, as their conditions deteriorated from blood loss, they were transferred to a hospital, where they died shortly after arrival.
- **Hezhar Mamkhosravi** was shot in Boukan, West Azerbaijan province, on 17 November 2022. Due to fear of arrest, Hezhar Mamkhosravi asked his family not to transfer him to a hospital. After several hours, his condition severely worsened, prompting his family to transfer him to a hospital despite the risks. He died shortly after arrival.
- **Milad Maroufi** was shot in Boukan, West Azerbaijan province, on 17 November 2022. Due to fear of arrest, protesters first took him to a private home and then to an ill-equipped medical centre. He was later transferred to a hospital in Boukan, where he died in the early hours of 18 November 2022.

1.3.4 STATE NARRATIVE

The Iranian authorities' narrative about the scale, causes and circumstances of protest killings can be broadly grouped into three lines of argument. These are reflected in a report issued by the Special Committee to Investigate the 2022 Unrests (Special Committee) a body lacking independence and impartiality that was established on 7 May 2023 by the then president, Ebrahim Raisi, to "examine, clarify and redress any infringements upon citizens' rights during the riots". Based on its detailed monitoring and analysis, Amnesty International has concluded that the authorities created the Special Committee to create a façade of accountability for the international community, divert attention from the crisis of systemic impunity prevailing in the country and discourage member states of the UN Human Rights Council from establishing a UN Fact-Finding Mission on Iran and renewing its mandate.

First, the Special Committee only acknowledged 202 deaths during the protests, while attributing some other deaths, reported by human rights defenders and victims' families as having been caused by security forces, to causes unrelated to the protests, including illness, car accidents, drug overdoses, dog attacks, falls from heights and suicide. The Special Committee's report neither identifies the victims nor provides information on the specific circumstances of their killings or disaggregated data such as gender, age or ethnicity.

Second, the Special Committee attributed most deaths to non-state actors, claiming that, of the 202 people who "lost their lives during the protests", 112 were killed by "rioters and... armed terrorists".

Third, the Special Committee claimed that the remaining 90 victims were killed "while carrying or using weapons... in clashes and attacks on military and law enforcement headquarters, critical infrastructure or law enforcement personnel", suggesting that this justified the use of lethal force.

The Special Committee provided no evidence to substantiate the claim that the victims were armed. Moreover, while focusing the narrative on allegations of weapon possession and use, it did not even claim that those killed posed an imminent threat of death or serious injury that would have justified the use of lethal force, the applicable threshold under international law.

Additionally, the Special Committee alleged in its report that 54 members of the security forces were "martyred as a result of widespread violence by rioters and terrorists", but provided no details about the alleged incidents.

Amnesty International emphasizes that the deaths of state agents, like all deaths, must be subject to independent, impartial and effective criminal investigations. However, in investigating the killings of protesters and bystanders, Amnesty International did not identify any case in which a protester or bystander was shot dead in the same incident as the killing of a state agent. This is significant as it undermines the authorities' apparent attempt to invoke the deaths of state agents to justify the use of lethal force and create

a veneer of legitimacy around the killings of some protesters. Under international human rights law, attacks by protesters against state agents can be relevant to assessing the threat faced by security forces in a specific incident. However, the authorities cannot rely on generalized claims that security personnel were killed elsewhere during the protests to justify or legitimize the killing of protesters and bystanders in unrelated incidents.

As noted earlier, the organization's in-depth investigations found that security forces opened fire in a broad array of situations, none of which involved an imminent threat of death or serious injury meriting the use of firearms. These included firing into peaceful assemblies; chasing and shooting at fleeing protesters and bystanders; using firearms in militarized areas involving armed patrols, checkpoints, roadblocks and vehicle chases; and firing into assemblies where the majority of protesters were peaceful while some engaged in throwing stones, vandalizing property or burning car tyres that posed no imminent threat of death or serious injury.

Amnesty International emphasizes that an assembly is considered "peaceful" unless serious violence is manifestly widespread within the assembly. Isolated acts of violence by some participants are insufficient to render an entire assembly "non-peaceful". Furthermore, under international law and standards, even if some protesters commit violent acts, security forces must ensure that those who remain peaceful can continue protesting without undue interference or intimidation. It is also important to recall that, even when a protester engages in non-peaceful conduct falling outside the protective scope of the right of peaceful assembly, they retain their other human rights, including the rights to life and to freedom from torture and other ill-treatment, which must be respected.

1.4 CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY OF TORTURE

Amnesty International's investigation has found that security forces intentionally inflicted painful injuries on protesters and bystanders through the unlawful use of lethal and less lethal force. This included the unlawful use of firearms, such as rifles, machine guns, sub-machine guns and handguns; prohibited weapons which should never be used in the context of policing protests, such as shotguns loaded with metal pellets, and less lethal weapons, such as batons, electric shock devices, kinetic impact projectiles and tear gas canisters, including in confined spaces. Security forces also unlawfully used physical violence, including punching, kicking, dragging and throwing individuals to the ground, stamping on them and pulling their hair.

Given the nationwide scale of the protests, their three-month duration, the participation of tens of thousands in them and Amnesty International's extensive documentation of security forces' widespread use of both lethal and less lethal weapons designed to inflict injuries in crowded protest areas across the country, Amnesty International believes that the number of injured is likely to be in the thousands.

Many protesters and bystanders died from their injuries, in some cases, because security forces obstructed access to medical treatment. Victims who survived injuries were left with severe physical trauma including permanent vision loss; wounds to the head, face, neck and torso; fractures of the ribs, skull, facial bones, teeth and limbs; traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries; damage to internal organs, including the kidneys, diaphragm and intestines; nerve and vascular injuries, and internal bleeding. Many of these injuries caused lasting health complications or disabilities, including chronic pain, mobility or speech impairments, recurring infections, debilitating headaches and the need for ongoing specialist medical care, multiple surgical operations and prolonged rehabilitation. In numerous cases involving metal pellets, doctors could not remove embedded fragments, leaving victims in pain and at risk of infection, brain damage or organ failure.

The infliction of such injuries caused victims severe pain and suffering, both physical and mental. Amnesty International considers that the threshold of severity required for establishing torture is clearly met in these cases.

Based on the types of weapons repeatedly used and how they were employed, Amnesty International has concluded that security forces either intended to cause severe pain and suffering or acted knowing that this was a virtually certain consequence of their conduct in the ordinary course of events.

In addition to torture during protest dispersals, authorities tortured individuals in state custody for the purposes of intimidation, punishment and humiliation, for reasons based on discrimination, and/or to extract forced "confessions" later used as a basis for indictments and convictions.

Common physical torture methods included beatings with batons and chains; slapping, kicking and punching; flogging; prolonged solitary confinement; electric shocks; exposure to extreme temperatures; hair pulling; forced administration of chemicals; painful stress positions with blindfolding or head-covering; denial

of medical care for injuries; and prolonged deprivation of food and water. Other reported methods included the submersion of victims under water, the insertion of needles into sensitive areas of the body, the forcible removal of nails, the use of pepper spray, including on eyes, mock executions and the suspension of victims from their neck or wrists.

Common psychological torture methods included threats of further torture, killing or life imprisonment; threats to arrest, kill, harm, rape or forcibly disappear family members; the exposure of victims to sustained light or sound, including at night; the compulsion of victims to perform humiliating acts; persistent degrading insults and profanities; and the exposure of victims to the screams of other detainees being tortured.

Given the extreme physical and mental harm caused by these methods of torture, and their deliberate use by members of the security forces, Amnesty International has concluded that the mental element of the crime against humanity of torture is satisfied.

1.5 CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY OF IMPRISONMENT

Iranian authorities arbitrarily arrested tens of thousands of men, women and children, some as young as 10, during the Woman Life Freedom uprising. Amnesty International's evidence shows these arrests were overwhelmingly for acts protected under international human rights law, including peaceful protest, chanting, dancing, removing headscarves, writing slogans, sounding car horns, showing solidarity online and, in the case of bereaved families, seeking truth and justice. Journalists were detained for investigating protest-related human rights violations, and lawyers for representing protesters or families of those killed.

In many cases, security forces arrested people without warrants, violently forced them into unmarked vehicles and took them to undisclosed locations where they were tortured, including through rape and other sexual violence. Some victims were abandoned in remote areas after hours or days. Others were eventually registered at detention facilities run by the security forces, where they faced further torture and were coerced into writing false "confessions" which were then used to issue convictions and harsh sentences, including lengthy prison terms and the death penalty.

Across all documented cases, arrests and detentions violated due process and fair trial rights. Detainees were denied access to lawyers, protection from torture, timely information on charges, the right to silence, presumption of innocence, and the ability to challenge detention or prepare a defence. Trials lacked impartiality, transparency and defendants were denied meaningful appeal.

Given the violent circumstances, lack of legal basis and systematic denial of due process, Amnesty International has concluded that the elements of the crime against humanity of imprisonment are met.

1.6 CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY OF RAPE AND OTHER SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Amnesty International has documented in detail the cases of 16 individuals who were subjected to rape while arbitrarily under arrest in connection with the Woman Life Freedom uprising. They comprised six women, seven men, a 14-year-old girl and two boys aged 16 and 17. Six of them – four women and two men – were subjected to forced sexual penetration by multiple male state agents. State agents penetrated women and girls vaginally, anally and orally, while men and boys were penetrated anally. Victims were penetrated with wooden and metal batons, glass bottles, hosepipes and/or the sexual organs and fingers of agents.

Amnesty International documented the cases of 29 other individuals who were subjected to forms of sexual violence other than rape while arbitrarily arrested in connection with the Woman Life Freedom uprising.

In the cases of women and girls, acts of sexual violence routinely involved male members of the security forces putting their hands under the victims' clothing and into their underwear; grabbing, groping, beating, punching or kicking their breasts, genitals or buttocks; stripping them of their clothes, including in front of male detainees; conducting intrusive body searches; holding them naked for hours or days in detention, including in front of video cameras and in freezing conditions; and threatening to rape them or their female relatives.

In the cases of men and boys, documented forms of sexual violence included members of the security forces threatening to rape them or their relatives; forcing them to undress; subjecting them to cold temperatures while naked; administering electric shocks to their genitals; inserting needles into their

genitals; touching, pressing, kicking or beating their testicles or buttocks; and putting ice on their testicles for prolonged periods.

Based on the above, Amnesty International has concluded that the elements of the crimes against humanity of rape and sexual violence are met and that the modalities and circumstances in which rape and other sexual violence were committed show that the perpetrators acted with the required mental element of intent and knowledge.

1.7 CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY OF ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE

Security forces and prosecution authorities worked together to frequently subject detainees from the Woman Life Freedom uprising to enforced disappearance for days or weeks by withholding all information from families about their fate or whereabouts. Some were held in official detention centres; others in unofficial sites such as warehouses, schools and residential buildings colloquially referred to by the security forces as “safe houses”.

Relatives interviewed by Amnesty International described visiting police stations, prosecution offices, Revolutionary Courts and prisons in search of loved ones. Officials often concealed information despite knowing detainees were in custody, or admitted they were detained but refused to disclose their location or the charges against them.

Enforced disappearance removed detainees from legal protection, enabling torture and other ill-treatment and the extraction of forced “confessions” later used in grossly unfair trials to secure indictments and convictions. The uncertainty caused psychological harm to families, leaving them in anguish over whether loved ones were dead or alive amid reports of protest-related killings.

Amnesty International has concluded that these acts meet the elements of the crime against humanity of enforced disappearance.

1.8 CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY OF PERSECUTION

According to the Rome Statute, persecution as a crime against humanity occurs when a perpetrator severely deprives, contrary to international law, one or more persons of their fundamental rights and such targeting is conducted by reason of the identity of a group or collectivity to which they belong; based on political, racial, national, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender or other prohibited grounds; and in connection with prohibited acts, such as murder, torture, enforced disappearance and imprisonment, or any other crime within the ICC’s jurisdiction.

Amnesty International has concluded that the elements of the crime against humanity of persecution, on intersecting political, gender and ethnic grounds, are met for multiple targeted groups. All protesters and their supporters were persecuted on political grounds; women and girls defying compulsory veiling faced persecution on political grounds intersecting with gender and religious grounds; Kurdish and Baluchi protesters faced persecution on political grounds intersecting with ethnicity; and families of those killed faced persecution on political grounds.

1.8.1 PROTESTERS

Protesters and their supporters constituted a nationwide group or collectivity targeted for prohibited acts such as murder, imprisonment, enforced disappearance, torture, rape and other forms of sexual violence that inherently amount to severe deprivations of fundamental rights. This targeting was conducted on discriminatory political grounds, based on victims’ real or perceived opposition to the Islamic Republic’s theocratic system.

Evidence of discriminatory intent on political grounds is clear from official statements, laws and policies. During and after the crackdown, authorities repeatedly branded protesters and their supporters as “enemies of the state”, used hate-filled and discriminatory language, misrepresented protests as “hybrid warfare” and celebrated the deadly repression. They presented the Islamic Republic system as the embodiment of “divine ideals” and “God’s law”, ordered security forces to crush anyone “attempting actions against the Islamic

Revolution” and insisted on absolute allegiance to the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Supreme Leader).

1.8.2 WOMAN AND GIRLS

Women and girls who joined the protests and defied discriminatory compulsory veiling constituted another identifiable group targeted nationwide. Authorities viewed them as challenging a system of gender-based oppression and domination, justified in the name of sharia law and enforced through numerous laws and policies and a vast state apparatus. Security forces committed murder, torture, imprisonment, enforced disappearance, rape and other sexual violence against women and girls not only to suppress political opposition but also to enforce gender discrimination and punish transgression of state-enforced gendered roles and behaviours rooted in strict interpretations of sharia law. This targeting was, therefore, based on gender grounds intersecting with political and religious grounds.

Evidence of discriminatory intent on gender grounds is clear from the context and official rhetoric surrounding the repression of women and girls. Authorities repeatedly portrayed protesters’ demands for gender equality as a “conspiracy”, incited violence against women and girls who defied compulsory veiling and labelled them and their supporters as “enemies of Islam”. They praised security forces as “heroes” defending “Islamic sanctities” while framing women’s “chastity” as a matter of national security and the survival of the Islamic Republic.

1.8.3 KURDISH AND BALUCHI PROTESTERS

Baluchi protesters in Sistan and Baluchistan province and Kurdish protesters in Kurdistan, Kermanshah and West Azerbaijan provinces constituted other distinct targeted groups or collectivities. Kurdish protesters initiated the protest movement after the death in custody of Zhina Mahsa Amini, herself Kurdish, and both Kurdish and Baluchi communities sustained protests despite lethal crackdowns.

Kurdish and Baluchi victims account for 62% of the total number of those recorded as having been killed during protest dispersals or in areas near protests that were ongoing or had recently occurred, where there was a militarized presence of security forces. Amnesty International has found that this disproportionately high toll cannot be explained by protest size alone; patterns of intentional lethal force against these communities were distinct and markedly more severe.

In Sistan and Baluchistan, security forces carried out the deadliest crackdown of the entire protest period, killing 87 protesters and bystanders in Zahedan in a single day on 30 September 2022 through mass shootings. In the provinces of Kermanshah, Kurdistan and West Azerbaijan, security forces adopted a far more militarized response than elsewhere, frequently deploying military-grade firearms immediately after protests began. These included assault rifles such as AK-pattern models; SVD-pattern designated marksman rifles and G-3 rifles; sub-machine guns such as Uzi-pattern and MP5-pattern models, and DShK heavy machine guns mounted on top of pickup trucks.

Amnesty International has concluded that prohibited acts, including murder and torture, were committed against Kurdish and Baluchi protesters with discriminatory intent on political and ethnic grounds. Iranian authorities persistently portrayed Kurdish and Baluchi protesters as “terrorists” and “separatists” and framed their peaceful assemblies as a threat to Iran’s territorial integrity and as “enemy plots” pursuing “ethnic and religious conflicts”. Authorities distorted facts, either misrepresenting Kurdish and Baluchi victims as armed militants or falsely claiming that they were killed by armed Kurdish and Baluchi opposition groups. In parallel, authorities praised security forces for “preventing sabotage by separatists” fostering a climate that enabled disproportionate lethal force and impunity. The extreme patterns of repression against Kurdish and Baluchi protesters did not occur in isolation; they stemmed from decades of systemic discrimination and a history of lethal force and arbitrary executions disproportionately targeting Iran’s oppressed ethnic minorities.

1.8.4 FAMILIES OF THOSE KILLED

Families of those killed constituted another distinct group or collectivity targeted by reason of their real or perceived efforts to speak out, expose the circumstances of the killings and seek truth, justice and accountability. Security forces subjected families of those killed to prohibited acts, including imprisonment, enforced disappearance, torture and sexual violence, that inherently amount to severe deprivations of fundamental rights. These involved subjecting families to beatings and metal pellets fired from shotguns

during funerals and memorial ceremonies, causing injuries amounting to torture; arbitrary arrest and detention; threats of death, rape and sexual violence; and unfair trials leading to unjust imprisonment.

In addition, security forces subjected families to a catalogue of human rights violations that collectively constitute a severe deprivation of fundamental rights. These included denying information about the whereabouts of victims' bodies; concealing victims' bodies in unidentified locations without families' knowledge or consent; conditioning the return of victims' bodies on families accepting false official state narratives about the circumstances of the deaths of their loved ones and/or agreeing to arbitrary restrictions on funeral and memorial ceremonies; denying victims' families the right to perform cultural burial rituals, such as washing the bodies and saying farewell by kissing, hugging or touching their loved ones before burial; denying victims' families the right to fully view the bodies of their loved ones before burial, including to observe and photograph signs of injury; forcing victims' families to bury loved ones quickly during irregular hours at night or dawn and in the presence of security forces; forcing victims' families to bury loved ones in locations not of their choosing, sometimes in remote areas far from their home towns; preventing memorial ceremonies; coercing victims' families to sign false statements and appear in state propaganda videos; threatening to destroy victims' graves and/or exhumate victims' bodies and re-bury them in unidentified locations; subjecting families to surveillance, threatening calls or intimidating visits; subjecting families to abusive interrogations and threats of death, rape and other sexual violence and other harm; forcing family members to sign undertakings not to participate in further protests or memorial ceremonies; denying families access to vital evidence including autopsy reports and CCTV footage; issuing burial or death certificates that contain inaccurate or incomplete information or failing to issue a burial or death certificate altogether; and refusing to conduct independent, transparent and impartial investigations to establish the truth about the causes and circumstances surrounding victims' deaths and the identities of those responsible.

Amnesty International has concluded that families of those killed were subjected to a severe deprivation of fundamental human rights on political grounds. Authorities targeted bereaved families as a means to suppress demands for truth, justice and reparation and enforce a political system steeped in repression and impunity for serious human rights violations. Families were also targeted based on the perception that they might share or support the political beliefs and activism of their deceased relatives and must therefore be suppressed and coerced into submission and silence.

1.9 SYSTEMIC IMPUNITY

Amnesty International's investigation has concluded that Iran's criminal justice system is neither willing nor able to deliver justice for the crimes against humanity committed in the country. Impunity is intentional and built into the country's judicial, legal and constitutional system. This entrenched impunity gives perpetrators the confidence to continue their crimes, enforcing a state policy of crushing dissent through the commission of serious human rights violations and crimes under international law.

1.9.1 LACK OF INDEPENDENCE OF JUDICIARY

Iran's justice system lacks independence and impartiality, functioning as an arm of state repression rather than a body for justice. This is rooted in constitutional provisions and appointment processes that embed judicial and prosecution authorities within the security apparatus, eliminate separation between prosecution, judicial and executive functions, and place executive, legislative and judicial authority under the Supreme Leader's control.

Key constitutional provisions shaping the architecture of impunity include the following:

- Articles 110 and 157 empower the Supreme Leader to appoint the head of the judiciary and dismiss them at any time.
- Article 162 empowers the head of the judiciary to appoint the head of the Supreme Court, the national prosecutor general as well as all provincial and county prosecutors.
- Article 176 identifies the head of the judiciary as a member of the Supreme National Security Council.
- Article 158(3) grants the head of the judiciary extensive powers, including the authority to appoint and dismiss judges, define their roles, manage promotions and transfer judges, without any involvement from independent judicial councils or commissions that are typically established to ensure impartial, merit-based appointments.

- Articles 157 and 162 require that the head of the judiciary, the head of the Supreme Court and the general prosecutor all be a *mojtahed* (a person learned in Islamic law), entrenching discrimination on the grounds of religion and political opinion by excluding non-Muslims, individuals with differing interpretations of Islam and those who uphold secular principles such as the separation of religion and judicial authority.

Judicial independence is further undermined by appointment criteria. Under the Law on the Selection of Judges and related guidelines, judges must be male and show “practical commitment to Islamic principles”, “loyalty to the Islamic Republic” and “adherence to the principle of absolute guardianship of the jurist”.

The prospect of impartial investigations and trials into crimes by members of the security forces become even more remote as such cases fall under the jurisdiction of military prosecutors and courts. A decree issued by the Supreme Leader requires at least 50% of judges, prosecutors and staff in military prosecution offices and courts to be members of the armed forces, including the IRGC, FARAHA and the Islamic Republic of Iran Army (Army).

1.9.2 LEGALIZED IMPUNITY FOR LETHAL REPRESSION OF PROTESTS

The architecture of impunity in Iran is reinforced by a set of laws that criminalize the exercise of the right to freedom of peaceful assembly; authorize the use of firearms to disperse protests; and grant state agents legal immunity for unlawful killings and injuries resulting from such use of force.

Under the Law on the Use of Firearms by Armed Forces in Necessary Incidents (Law on Firearms), security forces are permitted to use force to disperse “illegal demonstrations” if protesters ignore orders to disperse and suppression is deemed impossible without the use of firearms.

The term “illegal” applies to all assemblies except those pre-authorized by the Ministry of Interior, and such authorization is only available to registered political parties. The Law on the Activities of Political Parties and Groups (Law on Parties) ensures no group critical of the Islamic Republic or the Supreme Leader can register. This framework excludes dissenting voices from seeking authorization, making any protest outside the Islamic Republic’s ideology automatically “illegal”. This circular design criminalizes peaceful assembly and creates a permanent legal pretext for using force and firearms against protesters.

Article 12 of the Law on Firearms exempts state agents from civil or criminal liability when using firearms in line with the law. Article 13 adds that, if a military court rules that the use of firearms was lawful and that “innocent” individuals were killed or injured as a result, the security body to which the agent belonged must only pay *diyeh* (blood money) to victims’ families. The article requires the government to allocate an annual budget for these payments. Neither the Law on Firearms, nor the Law on the Punishment of Crimes by the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Law on Crimes by Armed Forces) defines “innocent”. In practice, military prosecutors and courts rely on security bodies’ information and hold that peaceful refusal to disperse or engagement in acts like stone-throwing can render victims “guilty”, disqualifying families from receiving even *diyeh* (blood money) let alone justice.

An illustrative case is that of **Mehdi Babrnejad**, killed during protests in Ghouchan, Khorasan Razavi province, on 21 September 2022. The authorities reduced the criminal case to a matter of *diyeh* (blood money) and denied the family other forms of redress, such as holding individual perpetrators to account, after concluding that the security forces were authorized to use firearms to disperse protests despite the absence of any threat of death or serious injury warranting the use of firearms. In a ruling on 18 September 2023, Branch 1 of Military Court One of Khorasan Razavi denied his family even *diyeh* (blood money), stating that Mehdi was “not innocent and bore fault”. For this determination, the court relied on reports from FARAHA and the IRGC’s Provincial Corps of Khorasan Razavi, the very security forces implicated in the killing. On this basis, the court stated:

“Many rioters were throwing stones and other objects towards military and police forces, causing damage to public property. It appears that there was no alternative but to use firearms to disperse the rioters. The deceased, Mehdi Babrnejad, was participating in the unrest and was observed causing damage and confronting military and police agents through throwing stones... The shootings carried out by police, Basij and IRGC agents were therefore consistent with Articles 2, 4, 7 and 8 of the Law on Firearms and no criminal offence has been established.”

Mehdi Babrnejad’s family appealed against the verdict. On 29 April 2024, Branch 1 of the Military Appeal Court of Khorasan Razavi amended the decision. It granted the family 30% of the *diyeh* (blood money) for a Muslim man, citing the manner of the shooting, the body part struck and the fact that the shooter was a

FARAJA or IRGC agent. It denied the remaining 70%, claiming Mehdi “participated in riots, filmed rioters and instigated them.”

The case of Mehdi Babrnejad is, however, exceptional, given that the vast majority of criminal complaints filed by victims’ families have not even reached this stage.

First of all, Amnesty International found that victims’ families overwhelmingly refrained from filing complaints, citing the futility of seeking justice from a judiciary integrated into the same security apparatus responsible for crimes against humanity. The sense of futility was reinforced by the fact that prosecution and judicial authorities routinely issued public statements within hours or days of killings, exonerating security forces and blaming deaths on accidents, suicides or non-state actors. Families also feared reprisals and reported harassment and intimidation from security forces aimed at deterring them from filing complaints.

According to Amnesty International’s findings, in the few cases where families pursued complaints, prosecution officials either refused to process complaints – leaving cases dormant while denying families information – or formally dismissed complaints without conducting meaningful investigations. In dismissing complaints, prosecution officials claimed, among other reasons, that they had “insufficient evidence” to prove the responsibility of the security forces for the shooting, were unable to identify the shooter or considered that the use of firearms had been lawful under the Law on Firearms. Illustrative examples include the following cases:

- **Mohammadreza Sarvari**, a 14-year-old boy of Afghan origin, and **Mohammad Javad Farmani**, were both fatally shot during protests in Shahr-e Rey, Tehran province, on 21 September 2022. A prosecution official dismissed complaints from the families concerned, citing a lack of CCTV footage and the inability of complainants to present any eyewitnesses.
- **Abolfazl Adinezadeh**, a 17-year-old boy, was killed during protests in Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi province, on 8 October 2022. A prosecution official dismissed a complaint from the victim’s family, citing the “absence of sufficient evidence of shotgun use by military or police forces.” The official relied on statements from the FARAJA commander of Khorasan Razavi province, who admitted FARAJA agents carried shotguns but claimed they were not used, and from the IRGC, which asserted that none of its agents at the scene were armed with shotguns.
- **Fereydoon Mahmoudi** was killed during protests in Saqqez, Kurdistan province, on 19 September 2022. A prosecution official concluded that, “although shootings by agents of the Special Cohorts of FARAJA were confirmed, it was not possible to identify the individual perpetrator.” As a result, he dismissed a complaint from the victim’s family seeking individual criminal accountability and referred the case to a military court solely to determine whether the Special Cohorts should pay *diyeh* (blood money), contingent on findings about Fereydoon Mahmoudi’s “guilt” or “innocence”.
- **Pedram Azarnoush** was killed during protests in Dehdasht, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, on 22 September 2022. A prosecution official dismissed a complaint from the victim’s family after stating that “inquiries had been made to the Intelligence Protection Organization of FARAJA and the IRGC to identify the individuals concerned, and no response was received.”

Amnesty International is aware of only three complaints that advanced to trial and resulted in convictions. However, these limited successes were swiftly undermined by interventions from senior judicial and security officials, which ultimately served to exonerate perpetrators, limit redress to the payment of *diyeh* (blood money) by the state, block proportionate punishments and exclude commanders from liability.

For example, in the case of **Mohammad Jameh Bozorg**, the then general commander of the IRGC, Hossein Salami, submitted a request to the head of the judiciary to annul the verdict against the agent convicted of his killing on the grounds that it was “in blatant contravention of sharia law” and to refer the case back to the Supreme Court. Mohammad Jameh Bozorg had been killed in Malard, Tehran province, on 24 September 2022. An agent from the IRGC’s Basij battalions, Shahram Bazrbouy, was convicted of his murder and sentenced to death under the Islamic principle of *qesas* (retribution in kind). The head of the judiciary, Gholamhossein Mohseni Eje’i, subsequently granted Hossein Salami’s request. Without any regard for the evidence filed, Gholamhossein Mohseni Eje’i reclassified the killing as unintentional, simply based on Shahram Bazrbouy’s own statement. He also stated that, as Shahram Bazrbouy had not received proper training in the use of shotguns and their ammunition, the fault lay with the IRGC as an institution rather than with the defendant individually; therefore, *diyeh* (blood money) had to be paid by the IRGC. In a verdict issued on 11 October 2025, Branch 1 of the Supreme Court convicted Shahram Bazrbouy of “quasi-intentional homicide” instead of murder, sentenced him to three years’ imprisonment and ordered the IRGC to pay the family *diyeh* (blood money).

Amnesty International's previous research found that the majority of victims of torture, including victims of rape and other forms of sexual violence, were similarly hesitant to file complaints, referring to the futility of seeking justice through the Islamic Republic judiciary.

Out of the 45 victims of rape and other sexual violence whose cases were documented by Amnesty International, all but three refrained from filing complaints because they feared further harm from the authorities and believed the judiciary to be a tool of repression rather than redress. Amnesty International found that their fears were justified as the judicial authorities not only consistently dismissed or covered up evidence of sexual violence, but also relied on forced "confessions" extracted under sexual violence and other torture and other ill-treatment to unjustly prosecute and convict the victims. The three victims who filed complaints with police and prosecution authorities were subjected to further human rights violations. They were eventually forced to withdraw or stop pursuing their complaints after repeated threats by security forces or months of inaction by the prosecution authorities.

1.10 COMMAND STRUCTURES OF SECURITY FORCES

The General Staff of the Armed Forces in Iran oversees four entities which are collectively referred to as the "armed organizations" or "armed forces" of the Islamic Republic of Iran under Iranian law. The four entities are the Army, the IRGC, FARAJA, which is the country's police force, and the Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces Logistics of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Ministry of Defence). The General Staff of the Armed Forces in turn falls under the command of the Supreme Leader. As the commander-in-chief, the Supreme Leader appoints and dismisses the head of the General Staff of the Armed Forces and the general commanders of the Army, the IRGC and FARAJA, and exercises command over them. The minister of defence is appointed by the president, with the approval of the Supreme Leader and after receiving a vote of confidence from the parliament.

The term "armed forces", as used by Iranian authorities, refers to entities authorized to carry firearms either for military operations in armed conflicts or for domestic security operations. Except when quoting Iranian authorities directly, Amnesty International uses the broader term "security forces".

The mandates of the General Staff of the Armed Forces, the IRGC and FARAJA, as set out in the decrees of Iran's Supreme Leader and various laws, such as the Law on the Police Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Police Force Law), the Statute of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC Statute) and the IRGC Recruitment Regulations Law, include the "sacred defence of Islam", "protecting the achievements of the Islamic Revolution", "expanding the rule of God's law, and "combating elements and movements that disrupt national security". These broad, vaguely defined mandates fail to distinguish between violent acts and peaceful dissent, investing security forces with vast powers to suppress freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly and use force and firearms against peaceful protesters and others who criticize the ruling establishment, challenge the authority of the Supreme Leader and peacefully advocate alternative sociopolitical visions and systems.

1.10.1 FARAJA

The general commander of FARAJA holds authority over the police force nationwide. They appoint a FARAJA commander for every province and county.

FARAJA is a complex entity that consists of numerous branches, including the Prevention Police and the Special Cohorts.

The Prevention Police carries out regular policing functions, including first response to protests. The general commander of FARAJA appoints the national head of the Prevention Police. Each province has a provincial head of the Prevention Police, also appointed by the general commander of FARAJA.

The Prevention Police oversees police stations across counties and neighbourhoods. It comprises nearly two dozen specialized sections, including the Assistance Cohorts, which provide backup to police stations when extra support is needed, including for repressing protests.

The Special Cohorts, described by authorities as the "system's iron fist for critical situations", are deployed when protests escalate beyond the capacity of police stations and Assistance Cohorts to disperse. The national commander of the Special Cohorts at the time of the 2022 protests, Hassan Karami, has stated that, since their establishment in 1991, the Special Cohorts have played an "exemplary" role in suppressing "riots". The general commander of FARAJA appoints the national commander of the Special Cohorts.

Communication, coordination and implementation of FARAJA's operations are facilitated through command and control centres (known by the Persian acronym MARFOUK) operating at national and provincial levels.

FARAJA is institutionally linked to the minister of interior at the national level and to provincial governors and county governors, who are the local representatives of the minister of interior.

The minister of interior is integrated into the FARAJA command structure through two interconnected roles. First, they head the Ministry of Interior, which is responsible for domestic security; their orders to FARAJA regarding the fulfilment of the ministry's security responsibilities are binding. Second, they hold a concurrent appointment by the Supreme Leader as the deputy commander-in-chief for police affairs, which places them above the general commander of FARAJA within the FARAJA chain of command.

Additionally, the authority of the minister of interior over security operations is reinforced through a third concurrent role as the head of the State Security Council. Under Iranian law, the council's resolutions become binding orders only when communicated for implementation by the minister of interior. In this capacity, the minister of interior exercises significant power not only over FARAJA but also the IRGC.

1.10.2 IRGC

The IRGC is a complex entity with its military personnel organized into four forces: the Navy Force, the Ground Resistance Force, the Aerospace Force and the Qods Force, which leads the operations of the IRGC abroad. The Supreme Leader appoints the IRGC's general commander as well as the commanders and deputy commanders of each force.

The Ground Resistance Force consists of units that operate primarily on land, including those deployed to repress street protests. Since 2008, the Ground Resistance Force has been organized through the IRGC's 32 provincial corps. In Tehran province, there are two such corps, one for the city of Greater Tehran and another for the rest of the province. Above the 32 provincial corps, there are 11 IRGC regional headquarters, each responsible for overseeing several provincial corps. The General Commander of the IRGC appoints the commanders and deputy commanders of provincial corps and regional headquarters.

Each IRGC provincial corps comprises provincial-level operational divisions or brigades and county-level Basij Resistance Sector Corps, which are the enforcement arm of the provincial corps at the county level. Additionally, many provincial corps include units known as Security Cohorts.

The Basij Resistance Sector Corps of each county consists of various Basij battalions, including the Imam Ali Battalions and the Beit Al-Moghaddas Battalions. These Basij battalions are deployed to suppress street protests when provision councils at county and provincial levels determine that FARAJA forces require additional support. The Iranian authorities refer to Basijis as the "people's forces" of the IRGC, creating the impression that they are a voluntary paramilitary force. In reality, Basij members receive financial compensation for their activities, and processes related to their recruitment, training, mobilization, and remuneration are governed by the IRGC Recruitment Regulations Law.

Imam Ali Battalions are tasked with "confronting riots" and, according to official statements, since their establishment after the mass protests of 2009, they have played a significant nationwide role in protest suppression. The Central Imam Ali Headquarters in Tehran oversees the nationwide development, training and equipping of Imam Ali Battalions. Beit Al-Moghaddas Battalions are described in official statements as "rapid response battalions" standing ready to "confront security and defence threats and protect local neighbourhoods."

1.10.3 SECURITY COUNCILS

The Supreme National Security Council sets Iran's overall defence and security strategies, including protest response. Article 176 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran (the constitution) tasks it with "safeguarding national interests, the Islamic Revolution, territorial integrity and sovereignty." Members include the heads of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the state; the head of the General Staff of the Armed Forces; two Supreme Leader appointees; the ministers of foreign affairs, interior and intelligence; and the general commanders of the Army and the IRGC. The head of the Supreme Council is the president of the Islamic Republic.

The State Security Council is a subsidiary body of the Supreme Council, the responsibilities of which include, as per Article 1 of the Law Regarding the Determination of Duties and the Organization of the State Security Council (State Security Council Law), "determining domestic security policies... clarifying the duties and

authorities of each institution regarding domestic security... and monitoring and evaluating the consequences of implementing the Council's decisions”.

The State Security Council is headed by the minister of interior, who typically appoints their deputy for police and security as the secretary of the State Security Council. Other members include the general commanders of the IRGC and FARAJA.

The State Security Council Law provides for the establishment of subsidiary councils known as provision councils at provincial and county levels. The law provides that the State Security Council must “establish communication with the provincial provision councils and receive periodic reports on the security, political and social conditions of each province”. County provision councils have analogous responsibilities to the provincial provision councils at the county level. This means that they must monitor and report on the situation of the county to the respective provincial provision council, and define, in coordination with the provincial provision council, the duties of various state entities in relation to the county's security.

The head of the provincial provision council is the provincial governor while the head of the county provision council is the county governor. Provincial and county governors typically appoint their respective deputy governors for political, security and social affairs as the secretaries of the relevant provision councils.

The decisions of security councils become binding only when communicated for implementation by their respective heads. This structure gives the minister of interior and governors significant control over security operations, including the ability to authorize the intervention of the IRGC to assist FARAJA in repressing protests and obstruct implementation.

1.11 OFFICIALS WARRANTING CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

The planning, direction, organization and execution of the crimes against humanity committed during the Woman Life Freedom uprising was made possible by a vast, coordinated security apparatus characterized by hierarchical command structures. The security forces leading on deadly protest dispersals included FARAJA and the IRGC.

According to information and evidence gathered by Amnesty International, including official statements and leaked official documents, IRGC and FARAJA forces implemented repressive strategies, which were devised by the Supreme National Security Council, the State Security Council, and provincial and county provision councils. The strategies were enforced through orders from the minister of interior and his representatives at the provincial and county levels, namely provincial and county governors.

Based on its in-depth documentation of the circumstances surrounding the unlawful killing of 95 Kurdish protesters and bystanders across 17 counties in the provinces of Kurdistan, Kermanshah and West Azerbaijan between 19 September and 7 December 2022, as well as injuries to many more, Amnesty International has been able to identify multiple branches or units of FARAJA and the IRGC as involved.

The FARAJA branches involved include the Prevention Police, including its Assistance Cohorts, as well as the Special Cohorts. The Special Cohorts of FARAJA used shotguns loaded with metal pellets and firearms, including AK-pattern rifles, while both the Prevention Police and the Special Cohorts of FARAJA resorted, more broadly, to the unlawful use of force, including the use of tear gas and beatings with batons, sticks and kicks, to disperse, intimidate and punish protesters.

The IRGC units involved include the 22 Beit Al-Moghaddas Operational Division of the IRGC's Provincial Corps of Kurdistan, known as the Beit Al-Moghaddas Corps; the 29 Nabi Akram Operational Division of the IRGC's Provincial Corps of Kermanshah, known as the Nabi Akram Corps; and the 3 Hamzeh Operational Division of the IRGC's Provincial Corps of West Azerbaijan, known as the Shohada Corps. In all 17 counties across the provinces of Kurdistan, Kermanshah and West Azerbaijan, Basij battalions of the Basij Resistance Sector Corps of the relevant counties, including the Imam Ali Battalions and the Beit Al-Moghaddas Battalions, were also involved. In Kurdistan and West Azerbaijan, all the IRGC units involved operated under the authority of the IRGC's regional Hamzeh Seyed Al-Shohada Headquarters, while, in Kermanshah, they fell under the IRGC's regional Najaf Ashraf Headquarters. In connection with the crackdown in Javanroud on 21 November 2022, the Ansar Al-Rasoul Ranger Brigade, a unit of the IRGC's Special Forces based in Javanroud, was also likely involved.

Based on detailed documentation of the security forces involved in the commission of crimes against humanity and in-depth analysis of their command structures, Amnesty International has identified 87

individuals – 62 commanders of security forces and 25 Ministry of Interior officials – and found reasonable grounds to believe that the elements required to establish the modes of liability of superior responsibility or aiding and abetting under international criminal law are met in their cases.

Amnesty International's analysis focused on elements relevant to the mode of liability of superior responsibility in relation to commanders and aiding and abetting in relation to Ministry of Interior officials. These modes of liability were selected as they were most readily applicable based on the evidence currently available to the organization.

Of the 87 officials, at least six have since died. Amnesty International calls for criminal investigations to be initiated against those who are alive, including under universal or other forms of extraterritorial jurisdiction, and for arrest warrants to be issued, where sufficient evidence exists, regardless of the accused's absence or presence in the territory of the jurisdiction concerned. Deceased individuals cannot be subjected to criminal investigation or prosecution. Nevertheless, investigation of their alleged conduct remains important for truth-seeking, establishing historical records and understanding chains of command and the possible criminal responsibility of other individuals.

In its analysis, Amnesty International has applied a "reasonable grounds to believe" standard of proof. This means that the organization has decided to call for an individual to be criminally investigated only when, based on the available evidence, it was reasonable to believe that the person was allegedly responsible for the crimes against humanity the organization has documented under one or more recognized modes of liability.

In naming individuals for criminal investigations, Amnesty International has considered the following elements, which are relevant to the modes of liability of superior responsibility and/or aiding and abetting:

- the position held by the individual within the hierarchy of Iran's security apparatus and the specific role they played in the lethal repression of the 2022 Woman Life Freedom uprising based on their position;
- the authority and control exercised by the individual as a superior over subordinates responsible for the crimes against humanity documented by Amnesty International;
- the acts carried out by the individual to assist, encourage or lend moral support to the perpetration of the crimes against humanity documented by Amnesty International, and the substantial effect that this assistance had on the commission of the crimes;
- public statements made by senior commanders of security forces and Ministry of Interior officials that encouraged or demonstrated support for agents who perpetrated crimes against humanity on the ground;
- leaked official orders that authorized or facilitated crimes against humanity; and/or
- the individual's link to the crimes against humanity documented.

Amnesty International emphasizes that only independent and impartial criminal investigations and, if sufficient evidence exists, prosecutions carried out in line with international human rights standards on fair trials can establish individual criminal responsibility beyond reasonable doubt, based on evidence specific to each individual and in relation to the incidents underlying the charges.

The 87 individuals listed include 10 national officials and 77 regional, provincial and county officials covering the provinces of Kurdistan, Kermanshah and West Azerbaijan and the 17 counties within them. Amnesty International's findings are in no way exhaustive and should not preclude consideration of the role – whether direct or indirect – of officials it has not named in the commission of crimes. The organization examined the roles of numerous other officials but named those for whom the strongest body of evidence was available.

Amnesty International has selected the regional, provincial and county officials based on its in-depth documentation of lethal protest dispersals in seven counties across Kurdistan province, five counties across Kermanshah province and five counties across West Azerbaijan province. This documentation included detailed accounts allowing it to establish the timeline of events, evidence of the unlawful killing of 95 protesters and bystanders and injuries to others, and a thorough review of official statements made by three provincial FARAJA commanders, 10 regional and provincial IRGC commanders and deputy commanders and six provincial governors and deputy governors in these areas.

Despite this limited geographic scope, the evidence presented on the nationwide commission of crimes against humanity, including hundreds of unlawful killings in other provinces, alongside detailed information on chains of command consistently structured at national, regional, provincial and county levels, can guide

future investigations by other actors seeking to identify additional officials who may allegedly bear criminal responsibility.

1.11.1 SUPERIOR RESPONSIBILITY

Amnesty International analysed the alleged criminal responsibility of 62 commanders under the mode of liability of superior responsibility: the commander-in-chief of all armed forces (Supreme Leader), the head of the General Staff of the Armed Forces, 33 IRGC commanders and 27 FARAJA commanders.

The mode of liability of superior responsibility is codified in Article 28 of the Rome Statute of the ICC. Under customary international law, holding a superior criminally liable for crimes committed by their subordinates requires proof of effective control by the superior over the subordinates; that the superior knew or had reason to know that the criminal act was about to be or had been committed; and that the superior failed to take necessary and reasonable measures to prevent the criminal act or punish the perpetrator, or submit the matter to competent authorities for investigation and prosecution.

Amnesty International has reasonable grounds to believe these elements are met with respect to the 62 commanders.

1.11.1(1) EFFECTIVE CONTROL

Evidence gathered by Amnesty International demonstrates a range of powers collectively indicative of the effective control exercised by the commanders. These include powers to:

- issue orders to undertake operations to repress protests and ensure compliance with orders through national and sub-national channels that require consistent surveillance, reporting, coordination, assessment of implementation and suppression of deviations;
- control logistical resources, including through the allocation and use of equipment, weapons or ammunition and the standardization of forces through consistent mobilization and tactical and ideological training programmes;
- control financial resources, including through the commanders' membership of decision-making bodies such as the State Security Council, which allocate budget required for the expenses of deployed security forces;
- hold public profiles, manifested through public appearances and statements that concern the operations aimed to repress protests; and
- exercise control over appointments, performance evaluations, promotions, or removals of subordinate FARAJA and IRGC agents and commanders, as well as the authority to initiate investigations and disciplinary proceedings.

Further indicators of effective control can be found in official statements made by commanders of security forces during and after the September-December 2022 crackdown. These statements consistently emphasized that operations were being orchestrated and carried out in strict compliance with the commands of the Supreme Leader and under his "absolute" and "wise leadership". Commanders portrayed a cohesive, well-functioning chain of command, with no suggestion of deviation, highlighting their "prudent and decisive management". Subordinate agents were consistently described as "soldiers of the Supreme Leader" and "warriors", and praised for disciplined conduct as "commendable", "praiseworthy", "vigilant", "selfless", "intelligent" and "honourable".

This portrayal is significant in light of the international jurisprudence on superior responsibility, which indicates that non-compliance or a weak chain of command indicates a lack of effective control, whereas projecting awareness and discipline, such as publicly claiming that commanders are "well conversant with the situation" and that subordinates are obedient, indicate the exercise of effective control.

Further evidence that commanders exercised effective control over their subordinates and were able to issue orders is provided by leaked official documents containing or referring to six orders issued by the following authorities:

- the General Staff of the Armed Forces, which issued an order on 21 September 2022;
- the then FARAJA commander of Mazandaran province, Morteza Mirzaee, who issued an order on 23 September 2022;

- the then commander of the IRGC Corps of Greater Tehran, Hassan Hassanzadeh, who issued an order on 9 October 2022 and another on 12 October 2022;
- the then minister of interior and deputy commander-in-chief for police affairs, Ahmad Vahidi, who issued, in his capacity as the then head of the State Security Council, an order on 18 September 2022 and another on 26 September 2022.

At the top level, the General Staff of the Armed forces set the overall tone and strategic direction, calling for a “firm and severe” response, the dispersal of protesters and arrests. The minister of interior likewise directed FARAHA and the IRGC to prioritize the prevention of assemblies, ordering nationwide surveillance and singling out Kurdistan for intensified action. Orders from FARAHA and IRGC commanders extended to operational details, including specifying the number and types of forces to be deployed, precise deployment locations, and weapons and ammunition to be used.

Evidence obtained by Amnesty International shows that the 21 September 2022 order from the General Staff of the Armed Forces was transmitted through FARAHA’s MARFOUK system down to the county level, logged in local police records and enforced by FARAHA county forces, demonstrating implementation through the chain of command from the national level to the local level.

The leaked official documents also show how State Security Council resolutions were converted into binding orders by the minister of interior, transmitted via cover letters from the deputy minister of interior for police and security to multiple security bodies, requesting implementation and reporting. This further demonstrates a well-functioning chain of command through which commanders were able to execute orders across institutions.

1.11.1(II) KNOWLEDGE

Amnesty International considers that commanders’ roles and powers within Iran’s security hierarchy imply that they were continuously informed of events on the ground and their subordinates’ actions. Numerous other interrelated factors further provide reasonable grounds to believe that commanders knew, or had reason to know, that subordinates had committed or were about to commit crimes.

A well-functioning internal reporting and monitoring systems is evidenced by leaked official documents, official statements and court documents. When analysed as a whole, these documents show that officials across the security apparatus, spanning various entities and levels, were closely monitoring and communicating the situation on the ground and the status of operations. These documents also demonstrate a high level of awareness including about the types of weapons and the quantities of bullets used and the incidents where protesters were shot dead;

Amnesty International considers that the commanders were also aware that crimes against humanity were or were about to be committed by their subordinate forces through media coverage, human rights reporting and public protests by victims’ families, protesters, activists, public figures and others in Iran and abroad.

Between September and December 2022, a large number of statements were issued by human rights organizations and UN authorities, including the UN Secretary-General, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran (UN Special Rapporteur on Iran) and other special procedures, raising grave concerns about the lethal repression of the protests and urging the authorities to cease the use of unnecessary or disproportionate force against protesters.

The security forces’ consistent use of lethal force, as reported by human rights groups and media outlets and evident in videos emerging from the country, triggered widespread public outrage both within Iran and around the world. Inside Iran, shopkeepers, merchants and factory workers across the country staged hundreds of strikes in protest at the lethal crackdown, while many celebrities, including artists and athletes, expressed outrage and solidarity. Around the world, large rallies took place, attracting extensive media attention.

Governments around the world also reacted to the violent protest crackdown in Iran, issuing statements and imposing sanctions. Furthermore, on 24 November 2022, member states of the UN Human Rights Council convened a special session and passed a resolution to establish the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Islamic Republic of Iran (UN Fact-Finding Mission on Iran) to investigate serious human rights violations related to the Woman Life Freedom uprising.

Leaked documents and official statements reviewed by Amnesty International provide evidence that the Iranian authorities were aware of the media coverage, human rights reports and global pressure about the unlawful conduct of the security forces, and were compelled to respond. In their public statements and

reports circulated to member states of the UN Human Rights Council, officials, including those named in this research, repeatedly rejected reports of unlawful killings carried out by their forces, attributing them to “non-state actors” without any evidence. Simultaneously, they continued to warn of a harsh response, promising ultimate victory over the protests, which they described as “hybrid warfare”, and encouraged their forces to continue their actions.

Leaked documents further reveal that, from the early days of the protests, high-ranking officials within Iran’s security apparatus were systematically monitoring and planning repressive responses to silence individuals and groups reporting and raising public awareness about the crimes perpetrated by the security forces. In official discussions recorded in the leaked documents, such individuals and groups are described as “hostile celebrities”, “embassies”, “international offices and associations” and “NGOs”, as well as “athletes, artists, actors, singers, bloggers, political figures, families of the deceased, and foreign media”.

The authorities’ efforts to suppress reporting extended beyond Iran’s borders. On 25 September 2022, state media announced that Iran’s foreign ministry had summoned the UK ambassador in Iran the previous day to protest against what it described as “a hostile atmosphere created by London-based Persian-language media outlets”. This was in reference to Iran International and BBC Persian, whose satellite broadcasts exposing serious human rights violations by security forces during the protests were being watched by millions inside Iran.

A leaked official letter from the secretary general of Iran’s Supreme Council to the Iranian president, dated 8 November 2022, further highlights that awareness of international concerns regarding the crimes committed by the security forces extended to the highest levels of the chain of command. The letter outlines strategies to control the narrative about the violations committed by the security forces and block the establishment of the UN Fact-Finding Mission on Iran.

1.11.1(III) FAILURE TO PREVENT AND PUNISH

The commanders named by Amnesty International, who held the highest positions within the chain of command at national, provincial and county levels, had a duty to prevent and punish the criminal conduct of their subordinates, as well as the material ability to fulfil this obligation. The duty to prevent continued throughout the entire protest period.

The officials have a duty to ensure that their forces are adequately trained in international law. However, the content of official statements and state media reports reviewed by Amnesty International reveals that the training of security forces demonstrates a complete disregard for international law and standards governing the use of force and firearms in protest situations. The trainings emphasize shooting drills and violent repression designed to forcibly disperse crowds.

Two leaked official orders from the early days of the protests – one issued by the General Staff of the Armed Forces to FARAJA forces nationwide on 21 September 2022, and another issued by the FARAJA commander of Mazandaran province to the forces under his command on 23 September 2022 – reflect a stark breach of the duty to issue orders aimed at ensuring security forces act in accordance with international law. Instead of instructing lawful conduct, the order from the FARAJA commander of Mazandaran province instructed security forces to “respond mercilessly and go as far as causing death”, while the one from the General Staff of the Armed Forces mandated a “firm and severe response to any gathering, the dispersal of rioters, and their arrest and transfer to bases for obtaining undertakings.”

Leaked documents detailing discussions and directives of the State Security Council show that commanders at no point considered initiating investigations or preventing unlawful use of force and firearms by forces under their control. Instead, they were focused on measures aimed at crushing the protests

Hundreds of official statements reviewed by Amnesty International show that, despite mounting evidence of crimes by their forces, commanders consistently did the exact opposite of what international law required of them. Instead of condemning criminal conduct, halting operations, imposing disciplinary measures or referring the matter to competent judicial authorities, they praised FARAJA and IRGC forces for their “bravery”, “steadfastness”, “intelligence” and “effective performance” in “countering enemy seditions” and “combating hybrid warfare”, language routinely used to delegitimize the protests.

Moreover, commanders actively ordered the continuation of the crackdown, framing it as a mission to protect “the country’s security, greatness and glory”, “the Islamic Revolution”, “Islam” and “the Supreme Leader”. Instead of taking measures to reduce the risk of the commission of crimes, they escalated such a risk by consistently using violent, dehumanizing rhetoric, branding protesters as “enemies of God’s religion”, “infidels”, “seditionists”, “conspirators”, “chaos makers”, “hired terrorists”, “mercenaries”, “anti-

revolutionary elements” and “mosquitoes”. Such language emboldened subordinates and contributed to an environment of brutality and impunity.

Considering the above and the evidence of crimes against humanity presented earlier and given that the criminal conduct of FARAJA and IRGC forces persisted for three months with widespread notoriety, Amnesty International has reasonable grounds to believe that the 62 commanders named failed to take any necessary and reasonable measures to prevent crimes against humanity within their areas of responsibility.

Likewise, there is no evidence they took any necessary and reasonable measures to punish perpetrators, despite a steady stream of alarming reports about the widespread crimes committed by their subordinates against protesters and bystanders.

As stated previously, Iranian authorities at all levels completely failed to secure any form of accountability. Instead, state entities, including those under the command of the named commanders, actively worked to conceal evidence, obstruct investigations, shield suspects from prosecution, persecute bereaved families seeking truth and justice, and prevent justice from being served.

1.11.2 AIDING AND ABETTING

Amnesty International analysed the alleged criminal responsibility of 25 Ministry of Interior officials under the mode of liability of aiding and abetting. The organization examined the roles of numerous other Ministry of Interior officials but has only named those for whom the strongest body of evidence was available.

The 25 officials are the minister of interior, who also served as the head of the State Security Council and deputy commander-in-chief for police affairs; the deputy minister of interior for police and security, who also served as the secretary of the State Security Council; the provincial governors of Kurdistan, Kermanshah and West Azerbaijan, who also served as the heads of the provision councils of their respective provinces; the deputy provincial governors for political, security and social affairs of Kurdistan, Kermanshah and West Azerbaijan, who also served as the secretaries of the provision councils of their respective provinces; and 17 county governors who presided over the counties of Sanandaj, Saqqez, Divandareh, Baneh, Dehgolan, Kamyaran and Mariwan in Kurdistan province, the counties of Kermanshah, Javanroud, Eslam Abad-e Gharb, Salas-e Babajani and Ghasr-e Shirin in Kermanshah province, and the counties of Boukan, Mahabad, Piranshahr, Oshnavieh and Urumieh in West Azerbaijan province, each also serving as the head of their respective county provision council.

With respect to Ministry of Interior officials, Amnesty International focused its analysis on aiding and abetting as the stronger theory of liability because it captures their essential coordination and facilitation role in the commission of crimes, without requiring proof of effective control over forces, which is needed for superior responsibility. The organization faced evidentiary challenges in establishing effective control for Ministry of Interior officials due to lack of access to official records, which remain classified, as well as a May 2015 State Security Council resolution that appears to limit tactical interference by Ministry of Interior officials in security operations. However, these challenges should not preclude future investigations from examining whether Ministry of Interior officials may also bear criminal responsibility under superior responsibility should additional evidence become available.

The mode of liability of aiding and abetting is codified in Article 25(3)(c) of the Rome Statute of the ICC. Under customary international law, aiding and abetting requires proof that the accused carried out acts specifically directed to assist, encourage or lend moral support to the perpetration of a crime, and this assistance had a substantial effect on the commission of the crime; that the accused knew that their acts assisted the commission of the crime by the principal perpetrator, or was aware of the substantial likelihood that their acts would assist the commission of such crimes; and that the assistance was specifically directed towards criminal conduct.

Amnesty International has reasonable grounds to believe that these elements are met with respect to the 25 Ministry of Interior officials.

1.11.2(I) ASSISTANCE

Based on leaked official documents, official statements and detailed analysis of the roles of the above Ministry of Interior officials, Amnesty International has found reasonable grounds to believe that they substantially assisted the commission of the crimes against humanity it has documented. Their acts of assistance included the coordination and facilitation of violent operations through the State Security Council and its subsidiary provision councils, which ensured that operations by various security forces proceeded in a coordinated and systemic manner across the country for months. Their assistance also involved the

provision of administrative and logistical support through the Ministry of Interior and its subsidiary provincial and county governance structures, the communication of directives, the transmission of orders, the allocation of resources, and public expressions of moral support to the security forces committing crimes on the ground.

Firstly, the positions of the minister of interior, provincial governors and county governors encompassed multiple sources of authority over security operations. They respectively presided over the State Security Council and the provincial and county provision councils, which formulated security policies and strategies. Under Iranian law, the resolutions of these councils became binding orders only when communicated for implementation by the minister of interior, provincial governors and county governors.

Secondly, these authorities were integrated into the FARAJA command structure and had extensive involvement in coordinating, facilitating and supporting FARAJA operations. They also had administrative oversight of FARAJA affairs across domains including organizational structure, recruitment, training, budgeting, weapons and equipment, performance evaluation, promotion, disciplinary procedures, and reporting of field situations and intelligence.

In the case of the minister of interior, he was also appointed by the Supreme Leader as deputy commander-in-chief for police, granting him superior authority over the general commander of FARAJA within the command structure.

Additionally, provincial and county governors can authorize the use of firearms under the Law on Firearms, which permits the use of firearms when dispersal of an assembly cannot be achieved by other means.

The deputy minister of interior for police and security served as the secretary of the State Security Council during the September-December 2022 period. In this capacity, he was the operational link between the State Security Council's resolutions and their implementation by security forces. In a similar vein, deputy provincial governors for political, security and social affairs were secretaries of their respective provincial provision councils. In this capacity, they served as the operational link between the resolutions of the provincial provision councils and their implementation by security forces.

Two leaked resolutions of the State Security Council, dated 18 and 26 September 2022, reveal that, from the outset, the minister of interior and other authorities prioritized crushing the protests. The documents reveal coordinated and systematic response planning through directives issued under the leadership of the minister of interior and transmitted to key state institutions, including FARAJA, the IRGC, provincial and county provision councils, the Ministry of Intelligence and the judiciary. Cover letters signed by the then deputy minister of interior for police and security, Majid Mir Ahmadi, transmitted the resolutions to various senior officials, instructing them to implement the orders and report back.

A leaked letter from the then minister of interior, Ahmad Vahidi, to the then president, Ebrahim Raisi, dated 8 January 2023, reveals that on 13 October 2022, the State Security Council ordered the allocation of 9 trillion rials (22 million US dollars) to the Ministry of Interior to cover "heavy security costs" amid prolonged protests. Additionally, Ahmad Vahidi noted that the Ministry of Interior and offices of provincial and county governors were actively managing the significant financial costs arising from the prolonged deployment of thousands of security forces across the country, including transportation, food and accommodation costs.

Official statements and established procedures indicate that provincial provision councils issued resolutions enabling the crimes against humanity documented by Amnesty International. For example, on 21 September 2022, Esmail Zarei Kousha, the then provincial governor of Kurdistan, confirmed that the Provision Council of Kurdistan was issuing instructions to the security forces in relation to the protests and claimed that these instructions were being followed. On 11 October 2022, the then head of the Office of the Deputy for Political, Security and Social Affairs of Kermanshah, Mohammad Pourhashemi, acknowledged that the Provision Council of Kermanshah province was actively "managing" the protest response through resolutions. On 21 November 2022, the then head of the Ministry of Intelligence office in West Azerbaijan province revealed that the resolutions of the Provision Council of West Azerbaijan province addressed the use of firearms by security forces during protests.

State media reports and official statements also highlight that sustained operations required coordination between provincial and county governors and councils and that such coordination efforts intensified during periods where killings increased.

For example, on 20 November 2022, as Mahabad was gripped by mass protests met with unlawful shootings, state media reported that provincial governor of West Azerbaijan and other provincial provision council members convened a meeting with members of the Provision Council of Mahabad county, during which "emphasis was placed on ensuring maximum security by using the capabilities of the police force."

On 7 December 2022, the then head of the Office of the Deputy Provincial Governor for Political, Security and Social Affairs of West Azerbaijan, Reza Ebrahimi, stated:

“The measures taken at the provincial level and the efforts of county governors... have played a crucial role in neutralizing the enemies’ conspiracies. County governors, in coordination with provincial authorities, must be prepared to defeat the enemy.”

The sustained, systemic operations over more than three months demonstrate that their actions had a substantial effect, consolidating security forces towards a unified repressive purpose.

Throughout and after the September-December 2022 protests, the minister of interior, his deputy for police and security, provincial governors and deputy provincial governors for political, security and social affairs repeatedly provided public encouragement and moral support to the security forces. They demonized the protesters as “rioters”, “enemies”, “heartless terrorists” and even “mosquitoes” pursuing “evil schemes”, “ideological and cultural sedition” and “a widespread conspiracy against the people”. In parallel, they legitimized the criminal conduct of security forces by praising them for their “coordination, synergy and unwavering determination” and dismissing concerns about violations as “rumours spread by anti-revolutionary media outlets.” They also encouraged the continuation of the crackdown by warning of “firm” action against “enemies” or declaring that they “will deepen their surveillance of... rioters, and... neutralize their conspiracies”.

Amnesty International considers that provincial and county governors should also be investigated for providing assistance that extended beyond the principal crimes against humanity of murder and torture during protest dispersals and related to involvement in the crime against humanity of persecution against the families of those killed. These officials were frequently involved in withholding bodies, imposing restrictions on burials and silencing families, thereby helping to conceal the crimes committed, suppress evidence and obstruct public exposure of unlawful killings. Amnesty International considers that such conduct contributed to the cover-up of the unlawful killings committed and the climate of impunity that fuelled their continuation.

1.11.2(II) KNOWLEDGE AND NEXUS

Drawing on the same evidence presented in the section above on superior responsibility regarding knowledge, including extensive reporting mechanisms, widespread media and human rights reporting, and systematic responses through denial and distortion, Amnesty International has reasonable grounds to believe that the continued facilitation of security operations by the named Ministry of Interior officials demonstrates sustained awareness and knowledge that their actions were enabling crimes against humanity.

The nexus between assistance and criminal conduct is established by the fact that these officials’ coordination through security councils and the Ministry of Interior, along with their provision of material, administrative and moral support to the security forces, was specifically aimed at implementing operations to suppress protests, with a clear link to the resulting killings and injuries during violent dispersals.

1.11.3 LIST OF OFFICIALS WARRANTING CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

The following table lists the 87 officials whose responsibility was analysed by Amnesty International. The six individuals who have since died are marked by an asterisk. Amnesty International calls for criminal investigations to be initiated against those who are alive, including under universal or other forms of extraterritorial jurisdiction, and for arrest warrants to be issued, where sufficient evidence exists, regardless of the accused’s absence or presence in the territory of the jurisdiction concerned. The titles listed reflect the positions held by the individuals at the time of the September-December 2022 protests.

Commander-in-chief	
1	Ali Khamenei, commander-in-chief of all armed forces (Supreme Leader)*
General Staff of the Armed Forces	
2	Mohammad Bagheri, head of the General Staff of the Armed Forces*

IRGC commanders

National level

- 3 Hossein Salami, general commander*
- 4 Mohammad Pakpour, commander of the Ground Resistance Force*

Regional level

- 5 Mohammad Taghi Osanlou, commander of the regional Hamzeh Seyed Al-Shohada Headquarters, covering Kurdistan and West Azerbaijan provinces
- 6 Majid Arjmandfar, deputy commander of the regional Hamzeh Seyed Al-Shohada Headquarters, covering Kurdistan and West Azerbaijan provinces
- 7 Mohammad Nazar Azimi, commander of the regional Najaf Ashraf Headquarters, covering Kermanshah, Ilam and Hamedan provinces
- 8 Kourosh Asiabani, deputy commander of the regional Najaf Ashraf Headquarters, covering Kermanshah, Ilam and Hamedan provinces

Kurdistan province

- 9 Sadeqh Hosseini, commander of the Beit Al-Moghaddas Provincial Corps of Kurdistan
- 10 Alireza Madanifar (Madani), deputy commander of the Beit Al-Moghaddas Provincial Corps of Kurdistan
- 11 Jamshid Rezayee, commander of the 22 Beit Al-Moghaddas Operational Division of the Beit Al-Moghaddas Provincial Corps of Kurdistan
- 12 Morteza Miraghayee, commander of the Basij Resistance Sector Corps of Sanandaj county
- 13 Yousef Maroufi, commander of the Basij Resistance Sector Corps of Saqqez county
- 14 Ali Ahmad Safizadeh, commander of the Basij Resistance Sector Corps of Divandareh county
- 15 Abbas Amri, commander of the Basij Resistance Sector Corps of Baneh county
- 16 Sadeqh Jamali, commander of the Basij Resistance Sector Corps of Dehgolan county
- 17 Hossein Maleki, commander of the Basij Resistance Sector Corps of Kamyaran county
- 18 Mansour Valy Yee, commander of the Basij Resistance Sector Corps of Mariwan county (until 29 October 2022)
- 19 Gheisar Omid, commander of the Basij Resistance Sector Corps of Mariwan county (after 29 October 2022)

West Azerbaijan

- 20 Habib Shahsavari, commander of the Shohada Provincial Corps of West Azerbaijan
- 21 Taleb Rahimi, deputy commander of the Shohada Provincial Corps of West Azerbaijan
- 22 Yadollah Abroushan, commander of the 3 Hamzeh Operational Division of the Shohada Provincial Corps of West Azerbaijan
- 23 Samad Mohammad Alizadeh, commander of the Basij Resistance Sector Corps of Boukan county
- 24 Akbar Norouzi, commander of the Basij Resistance Sector Corps of Mahabad county
- 25 Jalil Naghshi Ghareghbagh, commander of the Basij Resistance Sector Corps of Piranshahr county
- 26 Yaghoob Rashidi, commander of the Basij Resistance Sector Corps of Oshnavieh county

- 27 Ghahreman Eyvazlou, commander of the Basij Resistance Sector Corps of Urumieh county

Kermanshah province

- 28 Bahman Reyhani, commander of the Nabi Akram Provincial Corps of Kermanshah
- 29 Masoud Ghanbari, deputy commander of the Nabi Akram Provincial Corps of Kermanshah
- 30 Mojtaba Karami, commander of the 29 Nabi Akram Operational Division of the Nabi Akram Provincial Corps of Kermanshah*
- 31 Abouzar Anvari, commander of the Basij Resistance Sector Corps of Kermanshah county
- 32 Bahram Mirzaee, commander of the Basij Resistance Sector Corps of Javanroud county
- 33 Arsalan Soltangholi, commander of the Basij Resistance Sector Corps of Eslam Abad-e Gharb county
- 34 Ma'ref Olfati, commander of the Basij Resistance Sector Corps of Salas-e Babajani county
- 35 Mohsen Darabi, commander of the Basij Resistance Sector Corps of Ghasr-e Shirin county

FARAJA commanders

National level

- 36 Hossein Ashtari, general commander
- 37 Hassan Karami, national commander of the Special Cohorts
- 38 Mehdi Masoum Beigi, head of the Prevention Police (until 14 November 2022)
- 39 Reza Baniasadifar, head of the Prevention Police (after 14 November 2022)

Kurdistan province

- 40 Ali Azadi, commander of Kurdistan province
- 41 Mohammad Alizamani, commander of the Special Cohorts of Kurdistan province
- 42 Alireza Moradi, commander of Sanandaj county
- 43 Ali Safari, commander of Saqqez county
- 44 Alireza Karaji, commander of Divandareh county
- 45 Rasoul Karami Chegini, commander of Baneh county
- 46 Yousef Darvishi, commander of Dehgolan county*
- 47 Behrouz Jalilian, commander of Kamyaran county
- 48 Kambiz Rostamnia, commander of Mariwan county

West Azerbaijan province

- 49 Rahim Jahanbakhsh, commander of West Azerbaijan province
- 50 Reza Faraji, commander of the Special Cohorts of West Azerbaijan province
- 51 Salman Heidary, commander of Boukan county
- 52 Mohammad Tohidi, commander of Mahabad county
- 53 Hessam Salahi, commander of Piranshahr county

54 Taleb Mohammad Gholizadeh, commander of Oshnavieh county

55 Hassan Sheikhnejad, commander of Urumieh county

Kermanshah province

56 Ali Akbar Javidan, commander of Kermanshah province

57 Mohsen Panahi, commander of the Special Cohorts of Kermanshah province

58 Alireza Daliri, commander of Kermanshah county

59 Behrouz Fakhri, commander of Javanroud county

60 Houshang Mobaraki (Mobarakipour), commander of Eslam Abad-e Gharb county

61 Shahram Kasani, commander of Salas-e Babajani county

62 Mohammad Mohammadi, commander of Ghasr-e Shirin county

Ministry of Interior officials

National level

63 Ahmad Vahidi, minister of interior, deputy commander-in-chief for police affairs, and head of the State Security Council

64 Majid Mir Ahmadi, deputy minister of interior for police and security and secretary of the State Security Council

Kurdistan province

65 Esmail Zareie Kousha, provincial governor of Kurdistan

66 Mehdi Ramezani, deputy provincial governor for political, security and social affairs of Kurdistan

67 Hassan Askari, county governor of Sanandaj

68 Jafar Tavan, county governor of Saqqez

69 Taher Hosseini, county governor of Divandareh

70 Kamal Khedry, county governor of Baneh

71 Hamid Motasami, county governor of Dehgolan

72 Keyvan Shafeyee, county governor of Kamyaran

73 Esmail Ahmadi, county governor of Mariwan

West Azerbaijan

74 Mohammad Sadegh Motamedian, provincial governor of West Azerbaijan

75 Reza Ebrahimi, head of the Office of the Deputy Provincial Governor for Political, Security and Social Affairs of West Azerbaijan

76 Babakhan Eskandari, county governor of Boukan

77 Amir Ghaderi, county governor of Mahabad

78 Kheyr Kak Darvishi, county governor of Piranshahr

79 Ali Torabi, county governor of Oshnavieh

80 Gholam Hossein Ammari, county governor of Urumieh

Kermanshah province

- 81 Bahman Amiri Moghaddam, provincial governor of Kermanshah
- 82 Mohammad Pourhashemi, head of the Office of the Deputy Provincial Governor for Political, Security and Social Affairs of Kermanshah
- 83 Ebrahim Rahimi Zanganeh, county governor of Kermanshah
- 84 Sa'di Naghshbandi, county governor of Javanroud
- 85 Hamidreza Karami, county governor of Eslam Abad-e Gharb
- 86 Faramarz Bavandpouri (Bavandpour) Gilan, county governor of Salas-e Babajani
- 87 Mohammad Heidary, county governor of Ghasr-e Shirin

1.12 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Amnesty International has long warned that failure to address systemic impunity for crimes under international law during successive lethal protest crackdowns, including in December 2017-January 2018, November 2019 and September-December 2022, will fuel further atrocities in Iran. These warnings have been tragically borne out. Four years after committing crimes against humanity to crush the Woman Life Freedom uprising of September to December 2022, the authorities perpetrated another wave of atrocities bearing the same hallmarks, but on an even deadlier and more staggering scale, in January 2026. Over just two days, on 8 and 9 January 2026, they massacred thousands of protesters and bystanders during the January 2026 protests.

In the absence of accountability, authorities have been emboldened to treat protesters and dissidents as “enemies” and militarize public spaces to maintain a political system grounded in fear and repression. Civilians remain exposed to gunfire, injury and death whenever they exercise their right to peaceful protest to demand fundamental change and respect for human rights.

Iran’s criminal justice system is neither willing nor able to investigate and prosecute the crimes against humanity committed by the authorities. Impunity is built into the country’s constitutional, legislative and political framework. The constitution, reinforced by numerous laws and policies, fuses the judiciary with the security apparatus, ensuring they operate in unison to wipe out dissent and enforce impunity. Under the constitution, the judiciary falls under the control of the Supreme Leader, who is also the commander-in-chief of the security forces which carry out crimes against humanity. The legislative framework not only excludes definitions of international crimes but also contains provisions that place a seal of legality on unlawful killings, the use of firearms to disperse protests and the criminalization of peaceful assembly.

Amnesty International’s analysis of the systemic and deliberate nature of impunity in Iran is reinforced by the findings of the UN Special Rapporteur on Iran, who has likewise concluded:

“The form of government, known as *velayat-e faqih* [Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist], consolidates executive, legislative and judicial authority in the position of the Supreme Leader... This system of governance establishes a particular relationship between individuals and the State, where the maintenance of the system of governance and the political ideology takes precedence over protecting and respecting the rights of individuals. Within this configuration, there is no meaningful way by which the population can... hold decision makers accountable... Conditions for ensuring accountability are missing at the legislative and executive levels, and the judiciary acts as a repressive organ instead of an independent body towards which individuals can seek recourse.”

The UN Fact-Finding Mission on Iran has similarly stated:

“There has been long-standing impunity with respect to human rights violations committed against protesters... The domestic legal framework is set to prevent and obstruct any efforts of victims and their families to obtain a remedy and reparation. The lack of independence of the judiciary and prosecutors... and the lack of transparency and accountability of the judicial system... create further impediments for victims of human rights violations to access justice.”

Victims of crimes against humanity in Iran should not be made to wait for justice until a new, independent justice system is formed through constitution-making and legislative reform, processes that depend on profound change in the country’s situation. Nor can the people in Iran be left exposed to further massacres

for exercising their human rights. Iranian officials responsible for crimes against humanity must not remain immune from prosecution and punishment.

In the absence of domestic avenues for justice for crimes against humanity, Amnesty International calls on the Iranian authorities to ratify the Rome Statute of the ICC and submit a declaration to the ICC accepting retroactive jurisdiction pursuant to Article 12(3) of the Rome Statute. This step is essential to enable the ICC to address the major accountability gap in line with its complementarity principle.

Amnesty International's calls on the international community include the following:

1.12.1 UN SECURITY COUNCIL

- Refer the situation in Iran to the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

1.12.2 UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Create an international criminal justice mechanism aimed at prosecuting those most implicated in crimes against humanity in Iran. To facilitate this, consider mandating the UN Secretary-General to propose context-specific legal options for an international criminal justice mechanism, and then identify the most suitable option to enable its implementation.

1.12.3 PROSECUTION OFFICES OF THIRD STATES

- Undertake criminal investigations, based on universal and other forms of extraterritorial jurisdiction, against Iranian officials allegedly responsible for crimes against humanity and other crimes under international law, including the officials named in this report, with a view to issuing arrest warrants, where sufficient evidence exists, irrespective of the absence or presence of the accused in the territory of the state concerned.
- Open structural investigations into crimes against humanity and other crimes under international law committed in Iran, including those documented in this report, especially where victims may be present on the territory of third states, with a view to establishing command and decision-making structures and identifying and grouping potential perpetrators with a view to pursuing criminal accountability.
- Establish joint investigation teams to investigate crimes against humanity and other crimes under international law committed in Iran, including those that are linked to repeated cycles of deadly protest crackdowns.