

Human Rights Council

45th Session

General Debate Item 4

***Joint Statement***

Thank you Madame President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of 47 countries.

We recognize the challenges the Islamic Republic of Iran is facing in addressing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We remain deeply concerned about the persistent human rights violations in Iran especially related to the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly. Credible Reports of arbitrary detentions, unfair trials, forced confessions and practices of torture and ill-treatment of detainees in the context of the recent protests are particularly concerning. We urge Iran to ensure independent, transparent and credible investigations on the disproportionate use of force against non-violent protesters, and to hold all perpetrators accountable.

We strongly condemn Iran's continued use of the death penalty, including against juvenile offenders, such as Barzan Nasrollahzadeh. In addition, the sudden execution of Navid Afkari, on 12 September, was appalling, given the concerns about his trial, the reports of forced confessions, and his treatment in detention. We reiterate our opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances, and urge Iran to enact a moratorium.

We commend the unwavering courage of Human Rights Defenders in Iran – including women's rights defenders, environmental activists and lawyers. They continue to suffer intimidation, prosecution and ill-treatment.

We call on Iran to immediately release all of those who are arbitrarily detained as well as political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, such as Nasrin Sotoudeh and Narges Mohammadi. We call on Iran to ensure the independence of the judicial system, the rules of fair trial, the right to defense and access to a freely chosen lawyer.

Finally, while appreciating Iran's recent engagement with the Office of the High Commissioner, we call on Iran to fully cooperate with relevant Special Procedure mandates, most importantly the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

We stand ready to work constructively with Iran towards this end.

Thank you Madame President.