



Forum: Human Rights Council

Issue: The topic of Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners in the Islamic Republic of Iran

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I. Introduction:

Although declaring themselves as presidential democracy the Islamic Republic of Iran is often considered as an authoritarian regime. That is the case because the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei is provided with the ultimate sovereignty over the state. Also, the Islamic Republic of Iran throughout the last decades frequently attracted international attention for various accusations of Human Rights violations.

A significant source of such is the heavily discussed Evin Prison as well as several other ominous and illegal Detention Centers. The Islamic Republic of Iran already drew international attention in the 20th century with various controversial imprisonments of political opponents. Throughout this time, especially the Evin Prison grew to prominence when numerous incidents of torture and even execution were reported. Nowadays, detainees still speak of inhumane circumstances within the facility as measures like humiliation, threats of torture and denial of medical care still seem to be commonly taken by the authorities.

Another issue the nation has is a number of illegal detention centers which are problematic as the circumstances are reported to be even worse than in the Evin Prison and furthermore they act covert and are not to be found officially. First of all, former prisoner complain of the transport to such centers not being reasonable since they were being forcibly pushed into the back of a car where they were made blindfolded and without orientation transported to the facility. Within their imprisonment they claim that the circumstances were even worse than in Evin Prison; the operating militia groups even drew public attention as they publically beat protesters, kidnapped student leaders and threatened Human Rights Activists.

So it is to be seen that since the 1970s the situation for prisoners in public institutions has slightly improved, however especially the prisoners of illegal detention centers but also those of the Evin Prison are reported to be facing serious Human Rights violations which gained international prominence.

II. Definition of Key Terms:

Evin Prison:

Evin Prison is an official captivity in the Region of Teheran in Iran¹:



It was opened in 1972 and since then constantly drew international attention as there were several human rights violations reported within its walls. It mostly consists of political detainees and critics of the government.

Illegal Detention Center:

In General, a detention center is a sort of prison where often illegal immigrants are kept while a decision about their further stay is made.

In the case of Iran these centers are known to torture their detainees through brutal means. Furthermore, most of them can neither be localized nor is their administration or management known which makes it even harder to take action against them. They are run by various intelligence and security agencies and their inmates are not only immigrants but mostly opponents of the system in form of protesters or activists.

Also, it seems like the illegal detention centers are somehow connected with the official prisons as for some cases former prisoners reported that they have been relocated from Evin Prison to such detention centers in case that they do not confess in order to bring them to a breaking point mentally. Furthermore, when coming back to official prison they were threatened with being taken back in case of misconduct.

1

https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.voanews.com%2Fa%2Fmiddle-east_iran-jails-british-dual-national-spying%2F6174639.html&psig=AOvVaw1HkQmxKAsl_r48V-X_TeBW&ust=1638785347681000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAwQjhxqFwoTCLDV76W1zPQCFQAAAAAdAAAAABAF



Parallel Institutions:

Iranians use the term “*nahad-eh movazi*” literally “parallel institutions” to refer to the various extralegal agents of state coercion that have grown in formality, organization, and capacity².

In General, these organizations such as *Basiji* (militia) or *Ansar-e Hizbollah* (partisans of the party of God) are highly suspected to run the illegal detention centers. In public, they are also often referred to as the “plainclothes ones” as they do not stand out with any sort of uniform or special emblem but operate completely covert. Even former prisoners claim that the guards in the detention centers did not wear any uniforms.

Solitary Confinement:

Solitary Confinement is the measure of isolating a detainee from other inmates in a single cell. It is usually used when a prisoner is a threat to themselves, to other inmates or threatened by fellow inmates.

According to the UN solitary confinement surpassing 15 days is to be considered torture as it can cause long term negative psychological effects as well as a higher risk of self-harm due to a lack of human contact.

In Iran, exactly this possible psychological damage is made use of as political prisoners often face such solitary confinement in order to break them mentally and extort confessions from them.

III. Background Information:

Initially, when being opened in 1972 Evin Prison was supposed to serve the purpose of a detention center housing those who awaited trial. Those then should have been transported to extern prisons where they served their punishment. It was designed for 320 inmates, however due to several expansions its capacity nowadays reaches an estimated 15.000.

In its history, several reports of prisoners occurred describing horrifying methods such as torture, threats and executions. Especially government opponents in form of protesters, journalists, etc. were facing a brutal handle by the guards.

Nowadays, Evin Prison is not the only fear of Iranian detainees but the Illegal Detention Centers. It is believed that prison authorities work together with such institutions and transfer some detainees to them. The conditions in the detention centers are worse than in official prisons and therefore they are used to damage the detainees mentally.

² <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/iran0604/5.htm>



The main threat of inmates in Iranian prisons is interrogations. Coercive techniques such as torture or threats of torture are used during such in order to force confessions.

Overall, it is to be said that imprisonment in the Islamic Republic of Iran is a quite controversial topic that is heavily discussed internationally.

IV. Major Countries and Organizations Involved:

The Islamic Republic of Iran:

As the affected country the Islamic Republic of Iran is a major part of the issue. With the national law being based on the Sharia³ Iran is approaching a harsh policy when it comes to crimes concerning e.g. same-sex relations or any drug related crimes. Therefore, public executions and other controversial measures are nothing new to the Iranian citizens.

Iran Human Rights:

Iran Human Rights is a Norwegian international non-governmental organization that is invested in the protection of the Human Rights in Iran. They mainly advocate for the abolition of the death penalty by spreading international awareness through annual reports and the media.

Human Rights Watch:

Being invested in securing Human Rights internationally, also the Human Rights watch took notice of the circumstances in Iran. They are also invested in spreading awareness about the topic by publishing reports in the media and generally informing people via the internet.

United States of America:

Since the United States withdrawal from the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) agreement on Iran's nuclear activities they are sanctioning Iran mainly economically. With one focus on humanitarian imports Iran therefore struggled with medical equipment which severely damaged their healthcare system throughout the Covid-Pandemic. Over the last years, tension between the two states increased constantly which is not only due to Human Rights violations but several instances apart from the prison-problem.

³ **Shari'ah**, also spelled **Sharia**, the fundamental religious concept of Islam—namely, its law (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Shariah><https://www.britannica.com/topic/Shariah>)

V. Questions Delegates should consider During Research:

1. How are the diplomatic relations between your nation/organization to the Islamic Republic of Iran?
2. What are the circumstances prisoners have to face in your nation?
3. Is your country/organization invested in finding a solution for the problem?
4. What is your country's/organization's opinion on the Iranian regime?

VI. Useful Links and Sources:

<https://www.hrw.org/reports/2004/iran0604/5.htm> (03.12.2021)

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/24/iran-confirms-leaked-footage-of-harsh-conditions-in-evin-prison> (03.12.2021)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evin_Prison (03.12.2021)

<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/iran> (05.12.2021)

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/iran/report-iran/>
(05.12.2021)