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Examination of the 4th report and country situation of Iran (Islamic Republic of)

9 October 2023

Statement on Police Brutality in Iran: Roots and Recommendations for Prevention

Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished members of the UN Human Rights Committee,

We stand before you today to shed light on a deeply troubling issue that has plagued Iran for years—police brutality. This form of institutional violence is not an isolated phenomenon but rather a symptom of a broader systemic failure to uphold human rights and the rule of law. It is a grave concern that demands immediate and sustained attention from both the Iranian government and the international community.

The roots of this problem are deeply entrenched in a system that lacks transparency, accountability, and a modern understanding of policing in line with international human rights standards. The absence of these elements has created an environment where misconduct, including torture and other forms of ill-treatment, can occur with impunity.

The Iranian police force has been resistant to reforms that could align it with international human rights norms. This resistance is exacerbated by outdated laws, lack of public oversight, and inadequate training in human rights standards for law enforcement personnel.

To address these systemic issues, we propose a multi-faceted approach aimed at both immediate and long-term reforms:

- 1) The Iranian government must ratify the Convention Against Torture (CAT) and its Optional Protocol (OPCAT) as a foundational step towards aligning its national laws with international standards.
- 2) Iran should modernize its legal framework governing law enforcement to include clear prohibitions against torture and mechanisms for accountability.
- 3) A comprehensive Police Code of Ethics must be adopted, guided by human rights principles.

- 4) Establish independent bodies to monitor detention centers and other places where individuals are at risk of torture or ill-treatment. Civil society organizations should be actively involved in this process.
- 5) Adopt a community policing approach to build trust between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve.
- 6) Implement a robust and transparent system of Police Discipline and Complaints Procedures for holding law enforcement accountable.

By taking these steps, Iran can demonstrate its commitment to human rights and begin to eradicate the scourge of police brutality. The international community, too, must play its part by offering support for these reforms and holding Iran accountable for its human rights obligations.

We urge you to consider these recommendations with the urgency and gravity they warrant. Lives are at stake, and the time for action is now.