



Justice for the Victims of the 1988 Massacre in Iran (JVMI)

H.E. Volker Türk
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

URGENT - BY EMAIL

26 January 2025

Dear High Commissioner Türk,

We urgently appeal for your intervention to save Behrouz Ehsani, 69, and Mehdi Hassani, 48, Iranian political prisoners facing imminent execution. Their death sentences were confirmed by Iran's Supreme Court on 7 January 2025, after an unjust trial for charges linked to their political activism.

On 26 January 2025, both were forcibly moved from Evin to Qezelhessar Prison, where most executions take place, under suspicious conditions, leading to protests among fellow inmates. This move, coupled with the cutting of communication lines, suggests authorities are preparing for their secret execution.

Both men were initially convicted in an unjust trial presided over by Judge Iman Afshari of Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court on 16 September 2024. The charges against them included "rebellion (baghi), waging war against God (moharebeh), spreading corruption on earth (efsad-fil-arz), membership in the People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran (PMOI), gathering and colluding against national security, possession of classified information, and illegal possession of weapons and ammunition."

The sentences were imposed following credible reports of physical and psychological torture during their detention in Ward 209 of Evin Prison after their arrests in late 2022. Denied a fair trial, their appeals were summarily dismissed, violating Iran's obligations under international human rights law. Alarming, Iranian authorities executed approximately 1,000 prisoners last year, using mass executions to terrorise the population and suppress dissent.

Both Mr. Ehsani and Mr. Hassani are long-standing advocates for justice and human rights. Their participation in the year-long "No to Execution Tuesdays" campaign, which has spread to 34 prisons nationwide, reflects their commitment to resisting the death penalty and advocating for systemic change in Iran.

We respectfully urge you to use your leadership and moral authority to:

- Condemn the imminent execution of Behrouz Ehsani and Mehdi Hassani and call for the Iranian authorities to halt these death sentences immediately.
- Mobilise the international community to exert pressure on Iran to comply with its international human rights obligations and cease the use of the death penalty as a tool of political oppression.
- Request urgent access for independent monitors to assess the conditions of political prisoners in Iran.

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The JVMI is a not for profit centre for research and documentation in London which operates internationally

The international community cannot remain silent in the face of such brazen violations of human rights. Time is of the essence, and we respectfully urge you to act decisively and swiftly to prevent these executions. Thank you for your immediate attention to this urgent appeal.

Yours sincerely,

cc:

- Mai Sato, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran
- Morris Tidball-Binz, UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions
- David Lammy MP, UK Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs
- Kaja Kallas, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

SIGNED:

Lord Alton of Liverpool - (United Kingdom)

Chair, UK Parliament Joint Committee on Human Rights (JCHR); Member of the House of Lords

Dr. Mark Ellis - (United Kingdom)

Executive Director, International Bar Association (IBA)

Prof. William A. Schabas - (Canada)

Chair of the UN Independent Commission of Inquiry on the 2014 Gaza Conflict (2014-2015); Chair of the Board of Trustees at the UN Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights (2009-2011); President of the International Association of Genocide Scholars (2009-2011); Professor of international law at Middlesex University in London

Anne Ramberg - (Sweden)

Ad hoc Judge, European Court of Human Rights (ECHR); Board Member, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA); Chair, Board of Uppsala University; Former Secretary General, Swedish Bar Association

Hon. Richard J. Goldstone - (South Africa)

Former Judge of the Constitutional Court of South Africa; Former Chief Prosecutor of the United Nations International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda; Chair of the UN Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict (2009-2010); Honorary President of the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI)

Prof. Wolfgang Schomburg - (Germany)

Judge, UN International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) (2001-2008); Judge, UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) (2003-2008); Judge, Federal Supreme Court of Germany (1995–2000)

Dr. Rowan Williams - (United Kingdom)

Former Archbishop of Canterbury

Dainius Pūras - (Lithuania)

UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health (2014-2020); Chairman of the Coordination Committee of the Special Procedures of the UN Human Rights Council (2018-2019)

Anand Grover - (India)

UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health (2008-2014); Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India

Maud De Boer-Buquicchio - (The Netherlands)

UN Special Rapporteur on the Sale and Sexual Exploitation of Children (2014-2020); former Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Prof. Robert K. Goldman - (United States)

UN Independent Expert on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism (2004-2005); President, International Commission of Jurists (ICJ); Former President, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)

Prof. Heiner Bielefeldt - (Germany)

UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief (2010-2016); former Director, German Institute for Human Rights / Deutsche Institut für Menschenrechte (DIMR)

Tahar Boumedra - (United Kingdom)

President, Justice for the Victims of the 1988 Massacre in Iran (JVMI); former Chief of UNAMI Human Rights Office and Representative of the HCHR in Iraq

Prof. Christian Tomuschat - (Germany)

President of the OSCE Court of Conciliation and Arbitration (2013-2019); Member, UN Human Rights Committee (1977-1986); Member and Chairman, UN International Law Commission (1985-1996)

Prof. David M. Crane - (United States)

Founding Chief Prosecutor, UN Special Court for Sierra Leone

Kate Mackintosh - (United Kingdom)

Executive Director, Promise Institute Europe, UCLA School of Law

Sir Richard J. Roberts - (United Kingdom)

1993 Nobel Laureate in Physiology or Medicine

Elfriede Jelinek - (Austria)

2004 Nobel Laureate in Literature

Prof. Jean-Pierre Sauvage - (France)

2016 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry

Prof. David Wineland - (United States)

2012 Nobel Laureate in Physics

Prof. Barry C. Barish - (United States)

2017 Nobel Laureate in Physics

Ingrid Betancourt - (Colombia)

Former Senator and Presidential candidate

Stanislav Pavlovski - (Moldova)

Judge, European Court of Human Rights (2001-2008); Minister of Justice of Moldova (2019)

Miriam Ekiudoko - (Hungary)

Member of the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent (2021-present)

Francisco Assis - (Portugal)

Member of the European Parliament

Petras Auštrevičius - (Lithuania)

Member of the European Parliament

Sebastian Everding - (Germany)

Member of the European Parliament

Veronika Vrecionová - (Czech Republic)

Member of the European Parliament

Dr. Jessika van Leeuwen - (Netherlands)

Member of the European Parliament

Villy Søvndal - (Denmark)

Member of the European Parliament

Loucas Furlas - (Cyprus)

Member of the European Parliament

Niels Geuking - (Germany)

Member of the European Parliament

Milan Zver - (Slovenia)

Member of the European Parliament

Marc Angel - (Luxembourg)

Member of the European Parliament

Katrin Langensiepen - (Germany)

Member of the European Parliament

Per Clausen - (Denmark)

Member of the European Parliament

Benedetta Scuderi - (Italy)

Member of the European Parliament

Andrey Kovatchev - (Bulgaria)

Member of the European Parliament

Rasa Juknevičienė - (Lithuania)

Member of the European Parliament

Arkadiusz Mularczyk - (Poland)

Member of the European Parliament

Amb. Zorica Marić-Djordjević - (Montenegro)

Ambassador of Montenegro to the UN Human Rights Council and WTO (2013-2018)

Amb. Amanda Ellis - (New Zealand)

Ambassador and Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations in Geneva (2013-2016); Prime Minister's Special Envoy and inaugural Ambassador for Women and Girls

Amb. Filloreta Kodra - (Albania)

Former Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Albania to the United Nations in Geneva

Amb. Ken Blackwell - (United States)

Former US Ambassador to the UN Commission on Human Rights

Amb. Tudor Ulianoschi - (Moldova)

Foreign Minister of Moldova (2018-2019); Permanent Representative to the UN Office at Geneva (2016-2018)

Amb. Lincoln P. Bloomfield, Jr. - (United States)

US Assistant Secretary of State for Political Military Affairs (2001-2005)

Dr. Maude Barlow - (Canada)

Former Senior Advisor on Water to the President of the United Nations General Assembly; Former Chairperson of the Council of Canadians

Prof. Rebecca Cook - (Canada)

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Chief Commissioner of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (1999-2005)

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Barrister at Doughty Street Chambers; Member of the List of Counsel for the International Criminal Court (ICC)

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Former President, European Bars Federation / Fédération des Barreaux d'Europe (FBE)

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President, International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Canadian Section; Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa

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Professor of Religious Studies, University of Alabama; former First Vice-President, International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS)

Malcolm Fowler - (United Kingdom)

Solicitor and Higher Court Advocate, member of JVMI, and formerly of the Council and Human Rights Committee of the Law Society of England and Wales

Prof. Ben Kiernan - (United States)

Founding Director, Cambodian Genocide Program, Yale University; Founding Director of the Genocide Studies Program (1998-2015) at Yale University

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Executive Director, South Asia Democratic Forum; Former Member of the European Parliament

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Co-Director, International Council for Diplomacy and Dialogue (ICDD); Board of Governors Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Political Science, Rutgers University

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Barrister

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Human Rights Defender

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President of the Law Society of England and Wales (2018-2019)

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Associate Dean, Director of the National Hub for Social Innovation and Technology and Professor, University of Wolverhampton

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Director, writer, producer of the documentary about Iranian human rights activist Nasrin Sotoudeh "Nasrin"

Prof. Siobhan Wills - (Northern Ireland)

Director, Transitional Justice Institute (TJI), Ulster University; Professor of Law, School of Law, Ulster University

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Barrister

The Hon. Tony Clement PC - (Canada)

Former Member of Parliament from Canada; former Canadian Minister of Industry, Minister of Health and President of the Treasury Board

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International Consultant, Lex Collective; Climate Counsel, Anti-Corruption Authority

Prof. Roger S. Clark - (New Zealand)

Member, UN Committee on Crime Prevention and Control (1987-1990)

Prof. John Packer - (Canada)

Former UN Staff Member, Member of the UN's Standby Team of Mediation Experts (2012-2014); Director of the Human Rights Research and Education Centre (HRREC), Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa

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Former Director, International Nuremberg Principles Academy

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Former Anti-Discrimination Commissioner of Tasmania; former judge on the High Court of Fiji

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Secretary to the Human Rights Commission of the European Bars Federation (FBE) and Former President of the FBE; Former Chair of the Human Rights Committee, Law Society of England & Wales

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Member, UN Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen (2017–2021); Former Federal Labor Member for Fremantle; Former Minister for International Development (AusAID)

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Chair, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (2023-2024); Associate Dean and Director of Global Social Action, Simon Wiesenthal Center

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Recipient of US Secretary of State's International Women of Courage Award 2015

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President, Institute for Democratic Strategies; former Executive Director, Freedom House

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Director, The Duty Legacy

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Professor, Irish Centre for Human Rights, School of Law, University of Galway

Tali Nates - (South Africa)
Recipient of the US Secretary of State Religious Freedom Award (2023)

Eric Sottas - (Switzerland)
Founder and former Secretary General, World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)

Nicolas Walder - (Switzerland)
Member of the National Council, Vice-President of the Green Party

Dr. Jelena Aparac - (Croatia)
Chair-Rapporteur and Member of the UN Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries (2018-2023)

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Member, UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Judy Sgro – (Canada)
Member of the House of Commons of Canada; Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship (2003–2005)

Hon. Wayne Easter – (Canada)
Solicitor General of Canada (2002-2003)

Erkki Tuomioja – (Finland)
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland (2000-2007, 2011-2015)

Tonio Borg – (Malta)
Deputy Prime Minister of Malta (2004-2012); Minister of Foreign Affairs (2008-2012)

Anatol Salaru – (Moldova)
Minister of Defence of Moldova (2015-2016)

Edvard Júlíus Sólnes – (Iceland)
Minister of the Environment of Iceland (1990–1991)

Kelvin Thompson – (Australia)
Former Member of Parliament

Maria Grecea – (Romania)
Former Member of Parliament

Lars Rise – (Norway)
Former Member of Parliament; Co-chair of the Nordic Friends of Free Iran Committee

Elisabeth Nauc ler – (Finland)
Former Member of Parliament

Bob van Pareren – (Netherlands)
Former Senator and member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Derk Jan Eppink – (Netherlands)
Former Member of Parliament and Member of the European Parliament

Peter Tatchell – (United Kingdom)
CEO, Peter Tatchell Foundation

Mandy Sanghera OBE – (United Kingdom)
Philanthropist; international human rights activist

Donna Robinson Divine – (United States)
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Co-founder, L'chaim: Jews Against the Death Penalty

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Co-founder of the Syrian Center for Legal Studies and Research

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Founder/President Lopez Liberty LLC

Hiljmnijeta Apuk – (Kosovo)
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Chief Operating Officer - London Centre for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism

Maarten Freriks - (Netherlands)
Chairman of the id Fix Foundation and the Freethinkers International community

Elisabetta Zamparutti - (Italy)
Treasurer, Hands Off Cain

Jennifer Wright Knust – (United States)
Professor of Religious Studies, Duke University

Maurice Martin - (France)
Author

Prof Manfred Nowak - (Austria)

Secretary General of the Global Campus of Human Rights in Venice/Italy; Former UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment (2004-2010); Former member of the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID)

Dr. Donna M. Hughes – (United States)

Professor Emerita, Eleanor M. and Oscar M. Carlson Endowed Chair in Women's Studies Emerita, Department of Gender and Women's Studies, University of Rhode Island

Craig Foster AM – (Australia)

Human Rights Activist, Advocate for Refugees and Social Justice, Adjunct Professor of Sport & Social Responsibility; former captain of the national soccer team

Phil Glendenning – (Australia)

Former President at Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA); Emeritus Director at Edmund Rice Center

Renas Sino – (Switzerland)

CEO of TEVIN Associates

Javier Zarzalejos - (Spain)

Member of the European Parliament

Carlo Ciccioli - (Italy)

Member of the European Parliament

Justice for the Victims of the 1988 Massacre in Iran (JVMI) - (United Kingdom)

Iran Human Rights Monitor (Iran HRM) – (Sweden)

World Without Genocide - (United States)

Le Comité de soutien aux droits de l'homme en Iran (CSDHI) - (France)

Center for the Study of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Crimes Against Humanity, The Graduate Center—City University of New York (CUNY) - (United States)

Women's Human Rights International Association (WHRIA) - (France)

International Council for Diplomacy and Dialogue (ICDD) - (France)

International Alliance of Women – (United States)

Intersection Association for Rights and Freedoms – (Tunisia)

Tunisian Initiative for Justice and Rights (TIJR) – (Tunisia)

Syrian Center for Legal Studies and Research – (Germany)

L'chaim: Jews Against the Death Penalty – (United States)

Hands Off Cain – (Italy)