



Joint Statement on IRAN

Ongoing Assault on Access to Independent Counsel and Reprisals Against Lawyers Amid Armed Conflict

2 March 2026

We, the undersigned organisations and members of the international legal community, raise urgent concern about the rapidly shrinking space for legal defence in Iran in the aftermath of the uprising and the subsequent crackdown. Reports received from inside the country point to a dual and mutually reinforcing pattern: detainees, particularly those arrested in protest-related or security-labelled cases, are being blocked from securing independent legal representation, while lawyers who attempt to provide that representation are facing retaliation for doing their jobs. Reports also indicate a marked acceleration of proceedings in some branches, with key procedural steps taken within days rather than months, in ways that raise concerns about the ability of detainees to consult counsel and prepare an effective defence. These developments strike at the heart of basic procedural safeguards and signal an alarming shift toward a justice system in which defence work itself is treated as suspicious.

Across numerous cases, families describe the same obstacles repeated in different forms: uncertainty about where a relative is being held, long periods without phone contact, delays or refusals in granting access to a lawyer, pressure to abandon chosen counsel, and the use of vague allegations framed around “national security” to justify secrecy and restrict scrutiny. When access

to counsel is withheld at the earliest stages of detention, when interrogations begin and evidence is formed, the risk of coercion, forced “confessions,” and other serious due-process violations sharply increases. Denial of counsel is not a technical defect; it is a gateway to abuse.

In addition, recent reporting indicates that some detainees have been explicitly threatened for seeking legal representation. According to accounts attributed to judicial and security-linked officials inside detention facilities, individuals detained in protest-related cases have been warned that if they appoint a defence lawyer, “heavier sentences” will be imposed. These reports suggest a coordinated effort to deter detainees from exercising their right to counsel and have led some families to refrain from formally introducing a lawyer, despite seeking legal advice. Any such threats, whether made directly or indirectly, would amount to an impermissible interference with the right to a defence and would further undermine confidence in the independence and fairness of proceedings.

At the same time, independent lawyers have been subjected to measures that are designed to deter legal assistance to detainees and to silence public discussion of unlawful practices: summonses, interrogations, arrests, detention, and threats of further prosecution. Such measures undermine not only individual cases but the entire possibility of effective representation. A legal profession operating under fear cannot serve as an independent check, and detainees cannot meaningfully exercise their right to defend themselves.

Against this backdrop, we note with concern recent official promotion of “smart” or automated judicial guidance tools that are presented as a means of addressing limited public access to legal advice, including claims that such tools can provide guidance “like a lawyer” for those who cannot afford counsel. In this climate, presenting “smart” legal guidance tools as a substitute for counsel is alarming. Automated advice cannot provide independent defence, confidentiality, or protection against coercion, particularly in criminal and security-related cases where liberty, bodily integrity, and even life may be at stake. Framing digital tools as an alternative to counsel risks normalising the very deprivation of defence rights now being reported, and it does nothing to address intimidation tactics, restrictions on lawyer access, or reprisals against those who provide legal defence.

These practices are incompatible with Iran’s obligations under international human rights law, including fair-trial guarantees and the right to communicate with counsel, and contradict internationally recognised standards on the independence of lawyers, including the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers. Lawyers must be able to perform their professional functions without intimidation, harassment, or improper interference, and must not be punished for representing clients or for drawing attention to due-process concerns.

In the context of escalating military tensions and reported airstrikes affecting urban areas, the situation of detainees in Iranian prisons has become an urgent humanitarian concern. Periods of armed conflict are historically associated with heightened risks of arbitrary detention, secrecy, and abuse, but they also expose structural vulnerabilities in detention facilities that place prisoners’ lives at direct risk.

Prisoners, particularly political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, are held in environments that are not equipped to withstand wartime crises and have no meaningful ability to protect themselves from external threats. They remain entirely dependent on state authorities for their safety. The responsibility for safeguarding their lives rests unequivocally with the Iranian authorities and the judiciary.

We recall that under Resolution No. 211 of the Supreme Judicial Council dated 22 Dey 1365 (12 January 1987), adopted during the Iran-Iraq war, the judiciary is expressly required to utilise available legal mechanisms to safeguard the lives of prisoners in emergency wartime conditions. The resolution provides for the conversion of detention orders, the granting of conditional release, acceptance of bail or surety, and the transfer of prisoners to secure locations. Where such measures

are insufficient, prosecutorial authorities may authorise temporary release of detainees who do not pose a danger, until emergency conditions have subsided. Even in cases involving persons convicted of violent offences, transfer to secure facilities is foreseen as a protective measure.

These domestic safeguards reflect a recognition embedded within Iran's own legal framework that prisoners must not be exposed to avoidable life-threatening risks during armed conflict. In light of recent reports concerning conditions in Evin Prison and other detention facilities under current crisis circumstances, the immediate implementation of these protections is both legally required and morally imperative.

Prisoners must not become casualties of circumstances they neither created nor can escape. Safeguarding their lives is not a discretionary act of clemency; it is a binding legal obligation under domestic law and a core requirement under international human rights law, including the right to life and the prohibition of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.

We, therefore, urge the Iranian authorities to take immediate steps to restore minimum safeguards and end reprisals against the legal profession: (1) ensure prompt and confidential access to a lawyer of one's choosing from the moment of arrest, (2) end incommunicado detention and prolonged solitary confinement, (3) provide families with timely information about the whereabouts and legal status of detained relatives, (4) cease arrests and prosecutions of lawyers linked to their legitimate professional work, (5) release all lawyers detained solely for carrying out their professional responsibilities; and (6) urgently implement available legal safeguards applicable during wartime or emergency conditions, including conversion of detention orders, conditional or temporary release where appropriate, and transfer of prisoners to secure locations to protect their lives. We further call for prompt, impartial investigations into allegations of torture or ill-treatment and for accountability where violations have occurred.

Based on information received, the following lawyers have been arrested or detained in recent months after indicating an intention to represent detainees or after making public statements on due process. Restrictions on access to information may mean additional cases remain unreported:

1. **Shima Ghoosheh**¹, a lawyer and member of Central Bar Association, arrested on Saturday 27 Dey 1404 (17 January 2026), currently detained in Ward 209 of Evin Prison. Charges and reasons for arrest remain unknown.
2. **Mohammad-Hadi Ja'farpour**², a lawyer and member of Fars Bar Association, arrested on Sunday 28 Dey 1404 (18 January 2026), released on bail on 14 Bahman 1404 (3 February 2026), after posting bail in the amount of five billion tomans (~ USD 31,833). Charges: "assembly and collusion to commit a crime against national security", "propaganda against the state", "dissemination of false information".
3. **Enayatollah Karamati**³, a member of Judiciary's Legal Advisors Centre (Markaz-e Vokala-ye Ghoveh-ye Ghazaiyeh), arrested on Saturday 20 Dey 1404 (10 January 2026), currently detained in Vakil-Abad Prison in Mashhad. Charges and reasons for arrest remain unknown.
4. **Nazanin Baradaran**, a lawyer and member of Fars Bar Association, arrested on 26 Dey 1404 (16 January 2026). Charges, reasons for arrest, and place of detention remain unknown.
5. **Hossein Shokri**, lawyer and member of the Judiciary's Legal Advisors Centre in Ilam Province, arrested on 5 Bahman 1404 (25 January 2026) in Eyvan County, Ilam Province and released on bail on 31 January 2026. The amount of bail, charges and reasons for arrest remain unknown.

¹ [Shima Ghoosheh – OIAD](#)

² [Mohammad-Hadi Ja'farpour – OIAD](#)

³ [Enayatollah Karamati – OIAD](#)

6. **Mehdi Ansari**, a lawyer and member of Fars Bar Association, arrested on 8 Bahman 1404 (28 January 2026) and released on bail on 14 Bahman 1404 (3 February 2026), after posting bail. The amount of bail, charges, and reasons for arrest remain unknown.
7. **Mehran Ansari**, lawyer and member of Fars Bar Association, arrested on 8 Bahman 1404 (28 January 2026). Charges, reasons for arrest, and place of detention remain unknown.
8. **Ja'far Keshavarz**, lawyer and member of Fars Bar Association, arrested on 8 Bahman 1404 (28 January 2026). Charges, reasons for arrest, and place of detention remain unknown.
9. **Ja'far Zarei**, lawyer and member of Fars Bar Association, arrested on 8 Bahman 1404 (28 January 2026) and released on bail on 15 Bahman 1404 (4 February 2026). The amount of bail, charges, reasons for arrest, and place of detention remain unknown.
10. **Zohreh Javani**, lawyer and member of Central Bar Association, arrested on 11 Bahman 1401 (31 January 2026). Charges, reasons for arrest, and place of detention remain unknown.
11. **Sepideh Taheri**, a member of the Hormozgan Bar Association, arrested in Shiraz. She was summoned to the Shiraz Prosecutor's Office on Sunday, 12 Bahman 1404 (1 February 2026), and was subsequently arrested there. The charges against her are "propaganda against the regime" and "spreading false information".
12. **Teymour Salari**, a lawyer and member of the Hormozgan Bar Association, arrested on 19 Dey 1404 (9 January 2026) in a public street in the city of Jiroft by officers of IRGC Intelligence, on the pretext of "loitering," despite indications that he had no role in the protests. Mr Salari has been charged with "forming groups against national security" and "propaganda against the regime," with the charges presented to him by an interrogator. Bail was issued approximately one week later; however, the bail offered by his representatives was denied and the prosecutor upheld the detention order. Mr Salari spent around 24 hours in an IRGC Intelligence detention centre before being transferred on 12 January 2026 to Jiroft Prison, where he remains detained. Approximately one month after his arrest, the case was reportedly transferred to the provincial capital and a request for review was approved and sent to the prosecutor's office; however, after referral to an IRGC Intelligence branch, no further information has been provided regarding the progress or status of proceedings.
13. **Alireza Farzaneh Jajroomi**, a lawyer and member of the Khuzestan Bar Association, arrested on 19 Dey 1404 (9 January 2026) in the city of Ahvaz. At present, no information is available regarding the charges, the reason for his arrest, or his place of detention.
14. **Amir Bahadorifar**, lawyer and member of the Khorasan Bar Association, detained since 20 Dey 1404 (10 January 2026) in Mashhad. No information is available regarding the charges, the reason for his arrest, or his place of detention.
15. **Mohsen Darginezhad**, lawyer and member of the Khorasan Bar Association, detained since 20 Dey 1404 (10 January 2026) in Mashhad. No information is available regarding the charges, the reason for his arrest, or his place of detention.
16. **Dariush Ganjeh-Pour Qashqaei**, a trainee lawyer and a member of the Fars Bar Association, arrested in the city of Shiraz. The date of arrest and the charges are not yet known.
17. **Hamid Noroozi**, a lawyer and member of Fars Bar Association, arrested on 25 Bahman 1404 (14 February 2026) in front of his home by security forces. He was released on bail on 5 Esfand 1404 (24 February 2026) and has been charged with "assembly and collusion to commit a crime against national security." Bail was set at 5 billion tomans [~ USD 30,669].
18. **Hadi Sharifzadeh**, a lawyer and member of Central Bar Association, was arrested at his home in Shiraz on 27 Bahman 1404 (16 February 2026) by security forces and taken to an

unknown location. No information is available regarding the reason for the arrest or the charges. Mr Sharifzadeh was released on 30 Bahman 1404 (19 February 2026) on bail. The amount of bail is unknown.

19. **Masoud Shirmardi Shahghasemi**, a lawyer and member of the Central Bar Association (Tehran Bar Association), arrested on 19 Dey 1404 (9 January 2026) on Larestan street, Tehran, and transferred to the detention facility of Evin prison. He has been deprived of access to legal counsel, and during his detention he has been severely beaten and tortured. He has not been allowed to receive treatment for his injuries or to see a doctor, and his physical health is at risk. No information is available regarding the charges against him or the reason for his arrest.
20. **Fatemeh Rouhandeh**, a lawyer in Kerman, was arrested on 4 Esfand 1404 (23 February 2026) after appearing at the provincial Cyber Police (FATA) office following prior summonses from security authorities. She was transferred to the Kerman Narcotics Detention Centre, although the charges against her are unrelated to drug offenses. She has been charged with “propaganda against the regime” and “encouraging people to riot,” reportedly related to her social media posts. She had previously represented some detainees from the 2022 protests.

The arrest of defence lawyers, the imposition of heavy bail conditions, and the transfer of attorneys to detention facilities unrelated to their charges appear to form a broader pattern in protest-related cases. Regardless of stated intent, such measures significantly limit lawyers’ ability to represent clients and may deter others from accepting politically sensitive and human rights cases, resulting in a reduction in access to independent legal defence for detainees. These arrests reflect punitive action against lawyers for undertaking legitimate defence work and engaging in human rights–related advocacy, and they contribute to a wider environment in which members of the legal profession are pressured, silenced, and criminalised for upholding basic guarantees of due process. The current wave of arrests must also be understood against the backdrop of long-standing state policies and practices that have progressively narrowed lawyers’ independence and restricted access to counsel, particularly in politically sensitive cases and during periods of heightened unrest⁴. This is not a new pattern; it predates the recent uprising and, in some instances, has been associated with grave harm, including the death of lawyer Khosrow Alikordi on 4 December 2025 under circumstances that raised serious concern and prompted international calls for scrutiny.

Accordingly, and consistent with Iran’s obligations under international human rights law, including the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) (ICCPR, notably articles 6, 9 and 14), the [UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers](#) (principles 1, 8, 16, 18–23), and the [UN Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment](#) (principles 2, 6–11), **we urge the Iranian authorities to take the following immediate steps:**

1. **Guarantee access to counsel from the moment of arrest** for all persons detained in connection with protests and related cases and ensure that access remains effective at every stage of detention, investigation, and trial.
2. **Respect the right to choose one’s lawyer freely** and ensure prompt and confidential communication with counsel without obstruction, including during questioning and interrogation.
3. **End reprisals against lawyers** and cease all harassment, intimidation, summonses, prosecutions, arrests, and other measures linked to the lawful exercise of professional duties, including representing detainees and raising due-process concerns.

⁴ Centre for Supporters of Human Rights & International Bar Association’s Human Rights Institute. (2025, November). [No defence: The status of lawyers and the bar associations in Iran: Challenges and recommendations](#)

4. **Release lawyers detained solely for performing legitimate professional functions** and ensure their safety, including protection from torture or ill-treatment and access to medical care where required.
5. **Remove structural restrictions** that undermine the independence of the legal profession and obstruct legal representation, and bring laws, policies, and practice into alignment with international fair-trial standards and protections for an independent legal profession.

We further urge the United Nations, including the UN Fact-Finding Mission on Iran, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, to continue to document and follow up on cases involving lawyers who are detained, prosecuted, or otherwise targeted, and to take action within their respective mandates, including through communications, public reporting, and other appropriate measures.

We stand with lawyers in Iran who continue, at significant personal risk, to defend fundamental rights and the integrity of the justice system in the face of repression.

Signatories from the legal community worldwide:

Legal organizations

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| 1. The Centre for Supporters of Human Rights (CSHR) | 2. International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI) |
| 3. International Observatory of Lawyers at Risk (OIAD) | 4. Alliance for Lawyers at Risk |
| 5. The Common Good Foundation, Inc | 6. Federation of European Bar Associations (FBE) |
| 7. International Association of People's Lawyers Monitoring Committee on Attacks on Lawyers | 8. Lawyers for Lawyers |
| 9. Asociación Profesional de la Abogacía Saharaui en España (APRASE) | 10. Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada |
| 11. Consiglio Dell'Ordine Degli Avvocati Di Torino | 12. Consiglio Dell'Ordine Degli Avvocati Di Padova |
| 13. Jurists' Council for a Democratic Iran | 14. Ordre des avocats de Genève (Geneva Bar Association) |
| 15. Deutscher Anwaltverein (DAV) - German Bar Association | 16. Milan Bar Association |
| 17. Comitato Pari Opportunità dell'Ordine degli Avvocati di Milano | 18. Consiglio Dell'Ordine Degli Avvocati Di Patti |
| 19. Ordine degli Avvocati di Brescia | 20. Tax & Legem, SLP |
| 21. 1Kalameh | |

Names of lawyers and legal professionals

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|------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Nina Ogilvie | 2. Sara Lazzaroni |
| 3. Afrooz Maghzi | 4. Saeede Mokhtarzade |

5. Saeed Dehghan
7. Sara Ghoreishi
9. Tannaz Kolahchian
11. Sina Yousefi
13. Maryam Abedi
15. Nasrin Karimi
17. Beate Bahnweg
19. Ingrid Yeboah
21. Roland Meister
23. Michael Plöse
25. Anja Lederer
27. Nadija Samour
29. Patricia Fernandez Vicens
31. Lukas Theune
33. José Ramón Juez Cabañes
35. Robert Grabosch
37. Alejandro Villaluenga Garrido
39. Simon Rollason
41. Marta Herrero de Pablo
43. Carmen Lamarca
45. Tony Fisher
47. Christina Blacklaws
49. Germán Javier Laverde
51. Carmen Sanchez Vidanes
53. Nieves Sanz Álvarez
55. Melanie Johanna Schweizer
57. Nadine Essmat
59. Alexandra Falla
61. Flora Marrero Ramos
63. Jose Manuel Paredes
65. David Fraser Sutherland
67. Faustino Barriguín Fernández
69. Armen Harutyunyan
71. Begoña López
73. Sara Chandler KC
75. Shokoufeh Najafi
77. Mahtab Kian
79. Jonathan Andrew
81. Stuart Russell
83. Kiarash Houshmand
85. Ida Esfandiari
87. Sidi Talebbuia
89. Leila Alikarami
91. Sandra P. Gonzalez A.
93. Estrella del Valle Calzada
6. Grazia Quacquarelli
8. Paola Cerullo
10. Emilio Midolo
12. Lara Trifilo'
14. Domenico Polimeni
16. Federica Triboldi
18. Simone Seno
20. Sonia Slucca
22. Giuliano Rizzardi
24. Anna Bettini
26. Qader Qolizadeh
28. Natalia Rubino
30. Masoud Ebrahimian
32. Leonardo Boifava
34. Mahdokht Damghanpour
36. Neda Akbari
38. Rocco Greco
40. Francesco Pasini Inverardi
42. Aurora d'Agostino
44. Remo Klinger
46. Claudia Calubini
48. Luciano Eusebi
50. Alessandro Magoni
52. Lorenzo Milanese
54. Barbara Porta
56. Diana M. Davidson
58. Michele Lombardi
60. Mauro Tosoni
62. Agnese Usai
64. Giampaolo Cassio
66. Emanuela Balzarini
68. Hossein Raeesi
70. Marco Fiaccavento
72. Roberto Lancellotti
74. Andrea Ghirardelli
76. Anita Bettoni
78. Marco Rigoni
80. Laura Radici
82. Paolo Vivaldini
84. Stefania Amato
86. Vincenzo Farina
88. Maria Elena
90. Federica Mor
92. Annalisa Zordan
94. Elvio Mori

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|---|-------------------------------|
| 95. Fahime Naqib | 96. Sara Squassina |
| 97. Carmen Ordóñez Montellano | 98. Maria Teresa Tomasoni |
| 99. Karl Mattias Bergsten | 100. Vittorio Arena |
| 101. Sanya Karakas | 102. Alessandra Onofri |
| 103. Pierrick Clément | 104. Stefano Formenti |
| 105. Alexis Anagnostakis | 106. Alessia Zilio |
| 107. Camilla Prunas Tola | 108. Claudia Brioni |
| 109. Rebecca Onezime | 110. Monica Baresi |
| 111. Carlos Lema Añón | 112. Martino Pelizzari |
| 113. Joey Doyle | 114. Romano Manfredi |
| 115. Leonardo Arnau | 116. Alessandro Macca |
| 117. Cristina Almeida | 118. Andrea Abeni |
| 119. Pavel Chikov | 120. Afshin Afari |
| 121. Marie-Aimée Peyron | 122. Francesco Pizzuto |
| 123. Joshua Lam | 124. Vanina Zaru |
| 125. Elodie Mulon | 126. Giovanni Michelin |
| 127. Thierry Aballea | 128. Turella Svetlana |
| 129. Pia Hundal | 130. Fabrizio Casetti |
| 131. M. H. Fabiani | 132. Rodolfo Bettiol |
| 133. Ingrid Hönlinger | 134. Margarete Mühl-Jäckel |
| 135. Gontard Thierry | 136. Shantha Dalugamage |
| 137. Roques Laurence | 138. Silvia C. Groppler |
| 139. Gavin Magrath | 140. Begoña Barrio |
| 141. Aminata Niakate | 142. Daniel Trajilovic |
| 143. Monireh Afshar | 144. Cesar Raul Sivo |
| 145. Karouby Suganas | 146. Louis-Georges Barret |
| 147. Mariacarmela Ribecco | 148. Adriana Vignoni |
| 149. Jessica Lundgren | 150. Robert Sabata Gripekoven |
| 151. Detlev Heyder | 152. Ceren Uysal |
| 153. Armaghan Naghipour | 154. Sven Krautschneider |
| 155. Hélène Fontaine | 156. Carola Rossato |
| 157. Catherine Morris | 158. Amir Vojdani |
| 159. Hanna Bokhari | 160. Águeda Teja |
| 161. Paul Calarco | 162. David Paterson |
| 163. Margaret Stanier | 164. Sebastian Cording |
| 165. Robin Ford | 166. Elham Abdollahi |
| 167. Bill Holmes | 168. Afshar Ja'fari |
| 169. Gail Y. Davidson | 170. Vahid Maleki |
| 171. Grace Li Xiu Woo | 172. Javad Mirzadeh |
| 173. Susannah Roth | 174. Somaye Kazemlou |
| 175. Francesca Restifo | 176. Andrey Ragulin |
| 177. Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger | 178. Antonino Galletti |
| 179. Mani Mostofi | 180. Shadi Safavi |