

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

QUOTE

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Iran: Landmark UN fact-finding mission marks long-awaited turning point in tackling systematic impunity

Responding to today's announcement that the UN Human Rights Council has passed a landmark resolution to establish a fact-finding mission to investigate human rights violations in Iran related to the protests that began on 16 September 2022, especially with respect to women and children, Agnès Callamard, Amnesty International's Secretary General, said:

"This important and long overdue step shows that the cries of people in Iran for justice have finally been heard. We hope the establishment of this fact-finding mission marks a fundamental shift in the international community's approach to tackling the crisis of systematic impunity that has long fueled crimes under international law and other serious human rights violations in Iran. The resolution not only enhances international scrutiny of the dire situation in Iran, but also puts in place a process to collect, consolidate and preserve crucial evidence for future prosecutions.

"Amnesty International has been working towards the establishment of an international investigative and accountability mechanism on Iran for years. While the fact-finding mission should have come far sooner, today's vote sends a clear message to the Iranian authorities that they can no longer commit crimes under international law without fear of consequences.

"States must now ensure that the mandate is made operational and sufficiently resourced without delay and call upon the Iranian authorities to cooperate fully with the mission and allow unhindered access to the country. Today's vote must also serve as a wake-up call for the Iranian authorities to immediately end their all-out militarized attack on demonstrators."

Background

As the resolution was being negotiated in Geneva, the Iranian authorities continued to reject the findings of UN experts and human rights

organizations. In the meantime, at home they persisted in their widespread use of unlawful lethal force and sought the death penalty for protesters.

The fact-finding mission has a mandate to “collect, consolidate and analyze evidence of such violations and preserve evidence, including in view of cooperation, in any legal proceedings.”

The Iranian authorities’ deadly repression of the ongoing popular uprising in Iran, which erupted after the death in custody of Mahsa (Zhina) Amini on 16 September 2022, is the latest in the cycle of violent attacks waged by the authorities against people expressing their legitimate grievances since December 2017-January 2018.

Amnesty International has consistently documented crimes under international law and other serious human rights violations committed by the Iranian authorities in the context of protests, including unlawful killings following unwarranted use of lethal force, mass arbitrary arrests and detentions, enforced disappearances, torture and other ill-treatment, and the sentencing of individuals to lengthy prison terms or death following grossly unfair trials. The Iranian authorities have ignored repeated calls by the international community to open criminal investigations into such crimes. Instead, they have sought to destroy evidence of their crimes while persecuting survivors and victims’ relatives calling for truth, justice and reparation.