

The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV)
Afagh e Jahan Center for Cultural Studies and Strategic
Communication
Islamic Republic of Iran
Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review
Twentieth Session of the UPR Working Group of the UN Human Rights
Council
October-November 2014

Executive Summary:

1. This report deals with practical, monitoring and research actions of the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence and Afagh e Jahan Center for Cultural Studies and Strategic Communication in five fields namely women, children, minorities, refugees and prisoners areas from Iran's commitments to the first round of the UPR. Iranian NGOs too in this period have become very active and are working with more self confidence and quality in these areas. With the coming into power of the new government in 2013, the developments that have taken place have cleared up the horizon of the improvements of the country's human rights challenges; although there are problems and challenges in all five aforementioned areas which the Iranian government must make more efforts to improve them.

2. We NGOs, the preparers of this report, towards practical, monitoring and research actions that have we done on the abovementioned subjects, present the following recommendations for the improvement of human rights in these areas:

Women and Children

3. The necessity for the government to further concentrate on the economic, social and cultural rights of women and children's needs.

4. The necessity for Iranian NGOs specialising in women and children to use the experiences of other countries for the promotion of the rights and status of these two groups.

5. The necessity for further and more diverse cooperation of UN agencies based in Iran with Iranian NGOs active in women and children's issues.

6. Necessity for more activities by the UN and the members of the Human Rights Council for the removal of unilateral and multilateral sanctions imposed against Iran which over the recent years have negatively affected Iranian people, especially vulnerable groups such as women and children.

Minorities

7. The necessity for the continuation of the new policies of the Iranian government on minorities and efforts for their promotion. Especially to give them more opportunities to perform their religious ceremonies, religious and traditional celebrations, protection of their historical monuments, promotion of cultural facilities, job opportunities and encouraging dialogue among religions.

8. Encouragement of the government to prepare a suitable basis for the establishment of NGOs active in minorities issues and promotion of cooperation with them to better understand the needs of minority individuals.

9. The necessity for further mobility and quality activity of the Armenian, Assyrian, Jewish and Zoroastrian members of parliament.

Refugees

10. The necessity for conducting a multilateral balanced and real research on the situation of Afghan refugees in the country with the cooperation of the government, the UNHCR, and NGOs specialising on the subject, to really understand their problems and restrictions.

11. The necessity for the government to prepare a suitable basis for the activities of NGOs specialising on refugees issues to benefit from their expertise and understanding of the refugees community.

12. The necessity for the UNCHR to concentrate further to facilitate the repatriation and reintegration of Afghan refugees and the setting up of a network of Iranian and Afghan NGOs to fight existing problems in this regard.

Prisoners

13. The necessity for improvement and promotion of financial and income support for prisoners' families.

14. Efforts to reduce the prison population through "imprisonment alternative punishments" actions.

15. Presentation and further implementation of better quality cultural programmes towards prevention of crimes taking place in society.

Keywords

Women, children, refugees, minority, prisoner, economic, social and cultural rights, poverty

About us

16. The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) is a nongovernmental, nonpolitical and nonprofit organization in Special Consultative Status to ECOSOC, and

was founded in 1988. Some of the benefits of the 25 year history of the ODVV is the provision of legal and humanitarian services, holding of education courses, holding of general and thematic researches by using experienced and expertise teams in the issues that are required by society, production and publication, transfer of experiences and effective presence in international conferences.

17. The ODVV is associated to or member of the following organizations and associations:

- Network of NGOs for the formation of the international criminal court
- The International Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (IRCT) (membership in its Central Council)
- CONGO
- The AMAN Network of Rehabilitation Centres for Torture Victims in the MENA region, (Network's First Deputy)
- Asia Youth Network
- and In Association with UNDPI

18. To-date (2014) the ODVV has taken part in all Human Rights Council Sessions and submitted written and oral statements held sideline panels, submitted consultative reports on human rights to UN mandate holders.

19. Afagh e Jahan Center for Cultural Studies and Strategic Communication is a research institute studying cultural and social issues. This research center conducts studies in the fields of human rights, NGOs, international communications and social and cultural harms.

Pivotal recommendations:

20. This report is prepared on the basis of the below recommendations which were made in Iran's first round of the UPR in 2010:

- Enhance efforts to further promote economic and social rights, as well as the rights of vulnerable groups, including women, children and people with disabilities (Viet Nam);
- Develop a legal framework for protecting and promoting the rights of women (Brazil);
- Adopt measures to guarantee women's equality under the law (Chile);
- Ensure the equal treatment of women and girls in law and practice (Austria);
- Continue to improve its policies and programs to advance the status of women and girls, and protect children, including those with disabilities (Indonesia);

- Step up efforts to enhance the participation of women in all spheres of socio-economic life, in keeping with the progress made in women's education (Bangladesh);
- Continue to make progress in education and health care, with a particular focus on women and girl children (Bangladesh);
- Continue to implement measures aimed at further promoting and protecting children's rights, and intensify efforts to ensure further opportunities for access to higher education (Qatar);
- Continue providing support to the vulnerable group of people who have sought refuge on its territory (Algeria);
- Guarantee the protection of the civil and political rights of all, particularly dissidents and members of minority groups (Chile);
- Respect the human rights of prisoners and detainees, and investigate and stop immediately any alleged abuses (Ireland);
- Establish strict accountability of members of the police and military, prison and detention personnel and the judiciary for any violations of human rights, in particular for torture (Czech Republic);
- Continue its efforts to promote human rights in the economic, social and cultural fields (Sudan);
- Continue to take innovative measures to ensure that its development policies permit the full enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights in the country (Plurinational State of Bolivia);
- Coordinate efforts in a manner that promotes the effective enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, and tackle obstacles in that regard (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya);
- Continue to promote the living standards of the people by allowing the further enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights (Kuwait);
- Continue in its plans to realize the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, and tackle the problems related to the illegal and unjustified economic sanctions against the country (Zimbabwe).

- Strengthen mechanisms at the national level to reduce poverty among members of socially vulnerable groups and the problems facing them, and share its experiences with interested developing countries (Kyrgyzstan);
- Continue efforts to reduce poverty and limit disparities in education and income (Zimbabwe);
- Continue efforts to develop education, particularly in the rural parts of the country, with the participation of the private and public sectors and nongovernmental organizations, with a view to reducing poverty through employment opportunities and the strengthening of human resources (Kyrgyzstan);

Data collection method

21. To present a factual picture on five arrears which this report covers, the preparers adopted a practical method based on the findings of exclusive and field researches, thematic researches, legal monitoring and also media monitoring regarding the activities taken place on the subject.

Advancements

Women

a) Legislative and judicial area:

22. Amendment of the Labour Act towards the protection of women's rights and as a result making some positive changes such as:

- Prohibition of the firing of women workers during pregnancy under no circumstances
- Working from home for women heads of household with the agreement of the employer either all or some of the weekly working hours.
- Prohibition of doing dangerous, arduous and damaging work, or night work and carrying of heavy loads without using mechanical equipment for women.
- Double payment for the final month's wages by the employer in the event the contract is terminated due to reduction in physical and mental abilities due to work (according to the evaluation of the medical commission of the relevant insurance funds)

23. The amendment of the Islamic Punishment Code (2013) and positive developments regarding women, and also the removal of stoning sentence (of course only possible with the signature of the head of the Judiciary)

24. Drafting and ratification of five bills by the cabinet of ministers to create a balance in women's presence in society and their employment with consideration of family time off, particularly for working women (for example: according to this bill women can use sick leave during their child's sickness)

25. Facilitation of pregnant women's work in both the governmental and private sectors.
 26. Ratification of the Family Support Act with a number of positive advancements such as:
 - Article 16: the establishment of advisory centres alongside family courts, to strengthen the family institution and prevention of a rise in family disputes and divorce
 - Article 43: Granting legal custody right to the mother of children whose father is deceased (previously the custody went to the immediate male relative of the deceased father)
 - Clause 3 of article 47: Being entitled to child supplementary benefits, insurance and pension of survivors or parents salaries for the children, in the event of not having a husband or the child until 20 years of age and thereafter in the event of disability or unemployment or student at university.
 27. Ratification of the legislation of working from home for women with children under seven and disabled husbands by the cabinet of ministers. In this ratification women will work 36 hours instead of 44, and their earnings benefits are in full.
 28. Ratification of women's international activities policies on the recommendations of the Women's Cultural and Social Council by the Cultural Revolution Supreme Council.
 29. A change in the approach of the omission of women judges in the justice system. On this basis currently there are 600 women judges active in the Judiciary; 118 of these have masters or doctorate degrees, and have high ranking posts.
 30. Appointment of women as: Deputy President in Women's Affairs; Deputy President in the Environmental Organization; Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and members of Parliament.
 31. Also the use of women in minorities dwelling provinces: the Development and Human Resources Deputy to Sistan and Baluchistan Governor General; Governor of Ghasr Ghand in Zahedan Province; Governor of Hamoon in Sistan and Baluchistan Province; Two Zahedan Education and Training Director Generals; Mayor of Kalat.
- b) Advancement in Education and Training Area:***
32. Scientific studies and holding numerous seminars by Iranian NGOs who are active in women's and human rights issues, by inviting other relevant organizations and presence of relevant governmental organizations which have resulted in changes in views and therefore affected sentences too.
 33. Setting up a data bank of NGOs active in the field of women's rights with the registration of approximately 2000 registered organizations active in the field.
 34. Presentation of cooperation initiative of all departments in the fight against women's illiteracy project by the Centre for Women and Family Affairs with the cooperation of the National Literacy Education Movement.

35. Dynamicity of the presence of women in university and companies education fields (in 2013, sixty-one percent of university entrance tests taken were women and 39 percent men. Twenty-five percent of university lecturers are women and 45 percent of civil servants in the Iranian government are women).

36. Eighty-nine percent of women in Iran are literate. In 2010, over 95 percent of girls were being educated, which is an indication of the eradication of illiteracy of girls in the country.

37. The removal of gender separation from university education courses on the orders of the Minister of Science.

38. Presently 48 percent of schools in Iran are girls schools. The number has been risen to 6,630,054 in 2013.

c) Promotion of health and hygiene area:

39. The improvement of children's nourishment programme by the Health, Treatment and Medical Education Ministry with the presentation of services such as food baskets, nourishment consultations and practical training of mothers regarding children's nourishments and and taking the national improvement of children's conditions indicator to 40 percent.

40. Increase in the number nourishment advisory unites (with duties such as education and nourishment consultations to raise awareness, nourishment views and practices of mothers and ultimately improvement of the children's nourishments situation) from 80 units in 2009 to 150 in 2012.

41. The Mothers' Nourishment Improvement Programme with a cover of iron, sulfuric acid, and multivitamins for pregnant and breastfeeding women who are malnourished 82, 92 and 82 percent respectively.

42. Hopeful statistics in the reduction of women in health homes and increase in their rehabilitation (currently there are 31 health homes across the country to house women with HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis).

43. Identification of 6000 women heads of household by Tehran Municipality in the city, medical checkup of 5300 of them, getting 3700 of them jobs in seasonal mini markets and other centres which have been foreseen by the municipality.

d) The promotion of women's participation in various social and economic arenas:

44. Opening of 450 rural women's credit funds by the Welfare Organization associated to the Agriculture Jihad Organization.

45. The coverage of 1,644,000 women heads of household under supplementary benefits from the Welfare Organization.

Minorities

46. Currently, for the first time, the President of Iran has appointed a special assistant to the presidency on religious and ethnic minorities affairs. It must be said that this position is new and previous presidents only had Sunni minority advisors.

47. Presently two towns in Fars, and Sistan and Baluchistan provinces have Sunni mayors. As well as being a Sunni minority, the mayor of Kallat (Sistan and Baluchistan province) is also a woman; something that in the patriarchal culture of the region and the extreme deprivation of the regions, has a very symbolic effect.

48. Efforts have been made to set up and optimize religious minorities education centres that include: launching and repair of Jewish and Zoroastrian schools in Isfahan and Yazd provinces (from 2008 to 2010), issuing of permit to launch long distance schools for religious minorities (September 2011).

49. Also for the purpose of interaction with minorities based on their beliefs in judicial procedures, from 2010 to-date, the courts of the country do not issue verdicts on religious minorities family disputes and they are obligated to abide by verdicts of religious minority authorities.

50. The country's officials such as the president and the government ministers send greetings for religious minorities' occasions which shows their attention to religious minorities.

51. In taking action towards the freedom to hold religious ceremonies recommendations, steps have also been taken, such as the holding of religious ceremony in Thaddeus Monastery (Armenian) and or provision of welfare, security and health services to Christian pilgrims to this Monastery in 2013.

52. For the preservation of minorities' religious, cultural and historic buildings, in 2012 the restoration and repair of the places of worship of religious minorities was placed in the working agenda of the Bagha' Motebarekeh Office which also has the same mission for Islamic buildings too.

53. According to the field studies of the preparers of this report, since the coming into office of the new administration in Iran (June 2013) notable developments have taken place regarding minorities in the country. Some of them are as follows:

- Resolving the Sabbath problem for the Jews: In Judaism any form of work is prohibited on the Sabbath, even attending school, and this has been one of the problems for the Jewish community in Iran, and their main request has been to close Jewish schools (four in Tehran) on Saturdays, which was accepted with the coordination of the Minister for Education and Training.

- 10 billion rials (about 400000 \$) aid to the Sepir Hospital (belonging to the Jewish community)
- Numerous meetings of the Presidential Special Advisor with all religious minorities members of parliament.
- Meeting of the Presidential Special Advisor with the leaders from the Zoroastrian, Jewish, Armenian, Assyrian and Kaldanian communities and investigation of their issues.
- Meeting with members and elders of Mandaee (Sabeieen) of Iran and resolving some of their problems.
- Regular attendance of the Presidential Special Advisor in minorities special ceremonies such as the Armenians' Christmas in Tehran, visiting the St. Sarkis Church and the Armenian Martyrs Museum, visiting St. Mary's Church in Ahwaz and help for its restoration, meeting with the president and vice-president of the Armenian Prelacy in Tehran to resolve the Ararat Club and some Armenian cultural problems, participation in the commemoration of the Daheh Fajr by the Tehran Jewish Women's Association.

54. To this aim, some activities have been planned by the Office of the Special Advisor and are currently being undertaken, such as:

- Formation of a Jewish, Zoroastrian, Armenian, Assyrian, Kaldanian, Mandaean, Sikh, new religions, Bahaiism technical working groups (technical desk) with the presence of minorities members of parliaments, one of their top religious leaders, one of the top university experts, and one of the experts specialising on religions to establish communication with religious minorities, leaders and influential figures to reach an accurate, correct and up-to-date understanding, recognition of concerns, and resolving their problems to establish a suitable basis and better interact with them
- Setting up of a research and study centre on religious minorities and establishing links with existing cultural and academic centres.

Children:

55. Although Iran has taken steps towards protection of children's rights and take action towards the accepted recommendations from the first round of the UPR, but just like many other countries, it is still faced with child labour problem. Over the recent years governmental and particularly nongovernmental organizations in Iran have endeavoured to support child labourers and street children and other vulnerable groups. According to the findings of the preparers of this report, activities that have taken place in support of children can be categorised as follows:

a) Education:

56. NGOs education courses for child labourers with the aim of increasing the capacity of children and their acquirement of life skills, and includes kindergarten and preschool education classes, boosting classes from primary to pre-university education, skills learning classes that include, sewing, make up artist, computer and language lessons, family education (mothers), and holding educational-recreational camping for children. At times nongovernmental organizations have held education centres in open and public spaces to teach street children and their relationships with their families.

b) Hygiene and health:

57. Holding hygiene education and promotion for the preservation of the health of child labourers against viruses and diseases.

58. Prevention of diseases through vaccination, evaluation of the physical conditions of children, screening and sending children to expertise medical centres (such as teeth checkup), eye and hearing tests for children, review of the spread of parasites among children, doing surface dressings and elimination of children's hygienic needs, drawing volunteer doctors and coordination for doctors visits of children, attempts to identify free or low cost treatment opportunities, opening medical and hygienic case files for children, distribution of hygienic goods and food supplements among children (such as toothbrushes and paste, vitamin C and multivitamins), and finally getting medicines for children and their families.

c) Nourishments:

59. In the years 2009 through 2012 the number of children covered by Nourishment Improvement Programme has risen from 47,000 (2009) to 60,000 (2012) .The progress report of the Programme is based on the indicators that show the improvement of the children's conditions (country average at 40 percent) following the presentation of services such as food hampers, nutrition advise, and practical education of mothers in feeding children.

d) Social work

60. NGOs active in children's affairs, have conducted the following activities regarding judicial and educational social work for these children:

- Setting up social work file for children and the prioritization of their needs and their referral to competent centres and follow ups till the children's problems are solved
- Efforts for follow ups on custody and getting birth certificate books for children who do not have them
- Efforts for the improvement of children's conditions in education and welfare
- Elimination of the feeling of humiliation, inferiority complex and weakness among child labourers which are unfortunately imposed by society on them.

e) Public relations

61. For the purpose of information dissemination on child labourers problems and issues, needs and their capacities, the promotion of the rights and best interests of these groups of children within public opinion and drawing financial resources, NGOs have conducted many campaigns in the field of public relations. The holding of conferences, workshops and exhibits in this regard, are some of the other activities of NGOs to sensitize and inform people towards the child labour issues.

f) Provision of financial aid to the children and their families

62. Holding exhibits where works and produces of children or their families are sold and also the payment of the medical treatment of children or their families costs are some of the usual actions among Iranian NGOs active in children's issues, especially child labour.

g) Research

63. Conducting research on child labourers, finding the roots in social problems and finding methods to combat them. It must be said that according to researches carried out by the preparers of this report, it has become clear that the Welfare Organization, City Municipality and the police are the governmental bodies responsible for the protection of children, and over the years they have carried out various projects in support of child labourers some of which are as follows:

	Project Title	Year	Project Manager
1	Equipping and launching of centres for the collection, identification and guidance of child beggars and street children project 700 covered in 2012	2011-13	Welfare Organization with the Cooperation of the Police and City Municipality
2	The identification, assessment and replacement of street children project	2011-13	Welfare Organization with the Cooperation of the Police and City Municipality
3	Organizing of street children project 5200 children alone in 2012 and the beginning of 2013 were organized	2011-13	City Municipality with the cooperation of the Police
4	Street children's health shelter project	2011-13	Welfare Organization with the cooperation of NGOs
5	Protection of child labourers project (the first stage street children labourers)	2011-13	Welfare Organization with the cooperation of NGOs
6	Protection of all children that are discharged by welfare centres project	2013	Welfare Organization

Refugees

64. From 2010 consecutively till 2013 the ODVV signed tripartite agreements with the Interior Ministry's BAFIA and the UNHCR for 4 education-capacity building projects for Shahr-e-Rey, Semnan and Kan regions for Afghan refugees.

65. Concentrating on the training of peers, in total this project has trained 7020 Afghan refugees on prevention of violence, promotion of life skills, strengthening of the family and the promotion of the mental-social health. The project titles were:

- Prevention of domestic violence and life skills training project (Kan region, 2013)
- Promotion of the mental-social health of Afghan refugees project (Shahr-e-Rey, 2012)
- Strengthening of the family institution and prevention of violence project (Semnan, 2011)
- Community based awareness raising for the prevention of GBV project, (Shahr-e-Rey, 2010)

66. Based on this experience and the field studies of the preparers of this report, currently the following actions are under way in support of refugees in Iran:

Education assistance

67. According to reports released by the Iranian Ministry of Education and Training, currently there are 280000 refugees students being educated in schools in Iran. Furthermore there are almost 7000 refugees studying in universities alongside their Iranian counterparts.

Hygienic assistance

68. The Iranian Ministry of Health, provides services such as vaccinations, treatment and other emergency needs particularly regarding special care patients equally as given to Iranian citizens without any prejudice. Although in some instances shortfalls are observed which the Iranian government with the cooperation of the UNHCR is trying to bring down to the minimum. Provision of complementary medical services insurance for refugees began in 2011 and to-date is renewed annually. More than 200,000 vulnerable and special care patients are covered by this insurance.

Income support

69. Towards presentation of sustainable solutions for refugees problems, particular their income, over the years NGOs, the UNHCR, and also the Iranian government partner the National Technical and Professional Organization, have provided thousands of refugees with technical and professional training across Iran. In these projects many of vulnerable refugees, particularly women heads of household have taken various courses.

Prisoners

70. According to the field studies of the preparers of this report over the last few years positive actions have been taken with regards to the treatment of prisoners in the country, some of which are as follows:

71. Psychological measures: Over the last three decades positive approaches have come about towards the provision of psychotherapy services to prisoners. Some of the highlighted examples are:

- Setting up the Psychotherapy Council to organize psychotherapy programmes and actions
- Establishment of and drawing psychologists and psychotherapists who provide round the clock services to prisoners.
- Conducting group therapy programmes for interested prisoners, for example currently in daily TC programmes are being held some prisons.

Financial and economic support:

72. For the support of prisoners who are included in financial crimes, the Diah Council has been set up in the Prisons Organization whose duty is to collect people's donations for the release of financial crimes prisoners. Also the Association for the Support of Prisoners is active for the financial support of prisoners and their families.

Hygiene and education:

73. Recognition, identification and speaking about the consequences and the prevention of the spread of the HIV virus and necessary education of prisoners which is being done extensively in some prisons with the help of relevant international organizations. This

education alongside education on other transmitted and dangers diseases such as Hepatitis are conducted in the form of triangular clinics in prisons.

74. Education of fundamental skills such as anger management, decision making, daring and self confidence are underway in prisons.

Probation upon release:

75. The Centre for the Post Release Activities is a centre which has launched by the Prisons' Organization in the recent years. This centre's duty is to internship, marriage, continuing education, housing, provision of bank loans to prisoners after they are released from prisons.

Challenges and Difficulties

76. Despite the earlier mentioned achievements in different areas, according to the researches and observations of the preparers of this report, it seems there are problems and challenges that must be resolved. These challenges are highlighted in two areas:

Challenges regarding women:

77. Despite all the positive actions taken towards women's education, the women's share of illiteracy in the country is high and over 1.4 million women are illiterate.

78. Despite the presence of women in the country's justice system, it seems that they must try harder to get equality with their peers, and they are still with discrimination in the form of incompetence

Refugees Problems:

79. According to the refugees Amayesh programme which has been carried out by BAFIA in 2011, there is a population of 840,158 Afghan and 42,501 Iraqi refugees living in Iran. This is while nearly 2 million Afghan refugees are also living in Iran legally and illegally who also have similar needs. In the meantime, the total number of refugees who entered in Iran in the 80s and the current statistics show that 97 percent live in towns and cities and only 3 percent live in various refugee camps. Therefore the sheer number of refugees in towns and cities and particularly the suburbs and in rural areas, have imposed very high costs for the country and the people, and the provision of services to these individuals has been difficult.

80. Currently due to the presence of extremist groups such as al Qaeda and the Taliban and also foreign troops which have all caused an escalation in violence against the civilian population of he country, the necessary conditions for the repatriation of refugees have still not come about. The figures of repatriated Afghan refugees h is a confirmation of the above claim. According to reports to the end of December 2012, approximately 15,000 Afghan refugees and a little less than 2000 Iraqi refugees voluntarily repatriated to their country. The overall repatriation rate, particularly regarding Afghan refugees has also been less in 2011. It is estimated that a large refugees population still remains in the country and are in search of hygiene and education services in Iran.

81. Therefore in view of the different issues that have risen such as the Iranian government's economic reforms for the removal of subsidies to necessary items and energy, for the purpose of increasing the capacity of the host society and the empowerment of the refugees population for the fulfillment of their basic needs and expansion of their access to the abovementioned services, the international community must make a more highlighted presence in providing services and financial aid to NGOs, and UN agencies in Iran and also the Iranian government.

82. Furthermore, the existence of unilateral and multilateral inhuman sanctions imposed, have not only affected Iranian citizens but also the livelihoods of vulnerable refugees have been affected. It is necessary for international bodies to make fundamental reconsiderations and think of more effective humanitarian and realistic measures.

Recommendations

Women and children

83. Necessity for the government's further attention to the rights and economic, social and cultural demands of women and children's needs.

84. Necessity for Iranian NGOs expertising in women and children's affairs to use the experiences of other countries with regards to the promotion of the rights and status of these two groups.

85. Necessity for further and more diverse cooperation of UN agencies in Iran with Iranian NGOs active in the field of women and children.

86. Necessity for further activities of the UN and the Human Rights Council towards the removal of unilateral and multilateral sanctions imposed against Iran which over the recent years have had damaging effects on the Iranian people, particularly vulnerable groups such as women and children.

Minorities

87. Necessity for the continuation of new Iranian government policies regarding minorities and the promotion of their conditions.

88. Necessity for the encouragement of the government to prepare a suitable basis for the forming of NGOs active on minorities issues and promote cooperation with them for a more accurate understanding of the needs of minorities.

89. Necessity for further and with more quality activities of Armenian, Assyrian, Jewish and Zoroastrian members of parliament.

90. Providing the necessity for religious minorities with more opportunities to perform their religious ceremonies, have more job opportunities, receive the necessary certificate for their publications, preventing any form of propaganda against religious minorities in the mass media and encouraging dialogue among religions.

Refugees

91. Necessity to conduct an all sided balanced and real research on the situation of Afghan refugees in Iran with the cooperation of the government, UNHCR and NGOs in the field, to have a real understanding of their problems and restrictions.

92. Necessity to prepare a suitable basis by the government for the activities of NGOs active on the subject of refugees for appropriate benefiting from their expertise and understanding of the refugees communities.

93. Necessity for further UNHCR's further concentration on facilitating the repatriation and reintegration of refugees and setting up of a network of Iranian and Afghan NGOs to overcome existing problems in this regard.

Prisoners

94. Necessity to improve and promote financial and income support to prisoners' families.

95. Necessity to take on more therapists and psychologists to speed up psychotherapeutic education for prisoners.

96. Efforts to reduce the number of prisoners through "alternative punishment" measures.

97. Presentation and further and better quality implementation of cultural programmes towards crime prevention within society.