

**Commonalities and Differences in Methods and Patterns  
of  
Torture and Ill-treatment of Political Prisoners in Iran  
and  
Why Torturing?!**

Amir Makouei  
MASTER THESIS



**Department of Comparative Politics  
University of Bergen  
June 2018**

## **Abstract:**

This thesis aims to explore how political prisoners are treated in the places of detention and prisons in Iran. In doing so, it targets to specifically find answers to three main questions: 1) What are those common methods and patterns of torture/ill-treatment that are applied to all categories of political prisoners, indifferently? 2) What are those methods and patterns of torture/ill-treatment that might be applied only to specific groups of political prisoners, differently /discriminately? and finally, 3) What are the reasons behind torturing?

This research has been conducted through a review of the available secondary information (desk review), followed by a series of qualitative, in-depth and analytical interviews with former political prisoners from Iran. The theoretical framework for the thesis is established through a review of relevant legal international and domestic tools as well as some key definitions and related concepts.

The main findings suggest that almost all political prisoners are subject to blunt force trauma, in conjunction with a series of psychological tortures, harassments and abuses. It is also suggested that political prisoners belonging to ethnic and non-ruling religious populations are vulnerable to some forms of tortures that target their ethnic or religious backgrounds or orientations. There are also some other determining factors that might be involved in making differences in treatment of political prisoners. Moreover, there are a wide range of goals, sub-goals or objectives behind application of torture and ill-treatment of political prisoners that are pursued by Iranian authorities. However, the main goal is to crush down activists and activism in general and so deter or reduce risks and possible harms to the ruling system.

To all political prisoners who have suffered torture both  
before and after the Iran's Islamic Revolution of 1979, who wished their voices  
would be heard from deep and lonely  
darkness of interrogatory horrors;

To all those who lost their lives under torture and  
to their beloved families and friends;

To all activists who fight for their rights and  
for a better life with dignity.

## **Acknowledgments:**

In a hope to contribute to reducing harms that are inflicted on the political prisoners in Iran, I dedicated quite substantial time and energy on completing this thesis. During this time, I have received help, advice, consultation and extra motivation from many valuable people, without whose contribution, this thesis would not have been possible, to all of whom I express my deep and sincere gratitude.

I would like to thank all the 18 former political prisoners as well as an interviewee who was interrogated and tortured, all of who kindly, meaningfully, patiently and sincerely participated in in-depth interviews and so provided this study with precious amount of data, information, dialogue, consultation and feedback, extracts of which has made large parts of this study.

I would like to thank all my friends, networks, contacts and other human rights activists and former political prisoners who made it possible to connect to the interviewees and so carry out interviews. In this regard, I would like to especially thank my dear friend and colleague, Shahin H. Khyavi from the Association for the Human Rights of the Azerbaijani People in Iran (AHRAZ), who kindly helped me throughout the whole process with full support, as well as Taha Kermani, Mona Silavi, Shahed Alavi, Karim Dahimi, Hossein Tabatabaei, Siyamak Ghaderi, Danial Babayani, and others. I would also like to thank the lawyers Mahnaz Parakand and Naghi Mahmoudi as well as Madyar Samienejad and Beate Ekeløve-Sydal from the Amnesty International's Office in Oslo for their legal consultations, kind help and advice.

My deep and sincere thanks go to my academic adviser Lars Petter Soltvedt from the University of South-Eastern Norway, without whose help, advice, comments, encouragement, and follow-ups this study would not have been materialized. Unforgettable are all those valuable academic classes and sessions that I attended to learn from Terje Knutsen at the University of Bergen, outcomes of which contributed to completing this thesis in a rich way.

I would very much like to thank my family who endlessly supported me and endured many study and working nights and days, without whose help such study would not have been possible.

# Table of Contents:

<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>List of Appendices</b> .....	<b>vii</b>
<b>Illustrations</b> .....	<b>viii</b>
<b>Glossary</b> .....	<b>ix</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
What lacks on the matter of torture in Iran? .....	1
Detailed questions & hypotheses: .....	1
Potential contributions with this research.....	3
Limitations/perspectives .....	4
A short guide to the thesis .....	4
<b>Theoretical Framework</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Definition of torture:.....	6
International standards about ban on torture and treatment of prisoners: .....	7
Domestic tools:.....	9
1. Iran’s Constitution .....	9
2. Iranian Islamic Penal Code (IPC).....	9
3. The unapproved Plan on Torture Ban .....	12
Other international tools:.....	13
Definition of detention and imprisonment: .....	13
Torture methods: .....	13
Political prisoner:.....	15
Iranian Intelligence Services (SAS & MOIS): .....	15
Ethnic and Religious Discrimination in Iran:.....	16
<b>Literature review</b> .....	<b>18</b>
Methods in torture and ill-treatment of prisoners: .....	20
Widespread, systematic and common use of torture.....	23
Torture & deaths: .....	24
Very common patterns of torture in Iran:.....	25
1. Combination of physical torture with psychological torture .....	25
2. Prolonged solitary confinement.....	26
3. Denial of medical care .....	27
The recent United Nations resolution made on the issue of torture in Iran .....	29
The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran .....	29
Torture is being commonly used for a long time in Iran.....	30
Reasons suggested for the conduct of torture in Iran .....	30

1. CONFESSIONS: .....	31
2. TERROR MACHINE: .....	32
3. TO CONTROL PEOPLE: .....	32
Ethnic and religious background of prisoners .....	32
<b>Methodological considerations .....</b>	<b>34</b>
Desk review: .....	34
Interviews: .....	35
Data collection and availability: .....	42
Validity and reliability of data: .....	42
Analysis of data: .....	43
<b>Empirical Analysis.....</b>	<b>45</b>
PART I: Physical tortures: .....	45
PART II: Psychological tortures.....	52
PART III: Determining factors that may make difference in the type/intensity of tortures applied: 64	
PART IV: Suggested reasons by the interviewees for the application of various types of tortures in Iran: .....	70
<b>Concluding Remarks: .....</b>	<b>79</b>
Part I: Commonalities .....	79
Part II: Differences .....	82
Part III: Suggested reasons behind torture in Iran (Why torturing?!).....	86
Part IV: Remarks .....	87
Notes for future researches & suggestions:.....	87
<b>Appendix I: A summary of applied tortures on each interviewee .....</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>Appendix II: Interview Guide/Questionnaire: .....</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY: .....</b>	<b>113</b>

## **List of Appendices:**

**Appendix I:** Summary of applied torture methods on each interviewee (21 pages)

**Appendix II:** Interview guide/Questionnaire (3 pages)

## Illustrations:

### Figures:

Figure 1: Time of first detention & exit from Iran per interviewee .....	39
Figure 2: Number of interviewees per their current status .....	39
Figure 3: Number of interviewees per gender group .....	40
Figure 4: Number of interviewees per ethnic population.....	40
Figure 5: Number of interviewees per religious background.....	40
Figure 6: Torture Links .....	72
Figure 7: Iranian Pro-Torture Triangle.....	74
Figure 8: Common patterns of tortures in Iran.....	80
Figure 9: Commonalities of tortures in relation to activism .....	81
Figure 10: Vulnerability of the political prisoners from ethnic populations.....	83
Figure 11: Vulnerability of the political prisoners from non-ruling religious populations.....	84

### Tables:

Table 1: Percentage of sample population who experienced various physical tortures.....	46
Table 2: Percentage of sample population who experienced various psychological tortures..	52
Table 3: Breakdown of the psychological torture: .....	55
Table 4: Breakdown of the psychological torture: Harsh verbal abuses.....	58



## **Glossary:**

<b>AHRAZ</b>	Association for the Human Rights of the Azerbaijani People in Iran
<b>AHRO</b>	Ahwaz Human Rights Organization
<b>CPJ</b>	Committee to Protect Journalists
<b>ECHR</b>	European Convention on Human Rights
<b>FIDH</b>	International Federation for Human Rights
<b>GC</b>	Iranian Guardian Council
<b>HRANA</b>	Human Rights Activists News Agency
<b>ICCPR</b>	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
<b>ICESCR</b>	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
<b>ICRC</b>	International Committee of the Red Cross
<b>IIS</b>	Iranian Intelligence Services
<b>IPC</b>	Islamic Penal Code of Iran
<b>IRGC</b>	Iranian Revolutionary Guardian Corps
<b>KMMK-G</b>	Association for Human Rights in Kurdistan of Iran-Geneva
<b>LDDHI</b>	League for the Defence of Human Rights in Iran
<b>MOIS</b>	Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>OHCHR</b>	The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>PTSD</b>	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
<b>SAS</b>	Intelligence Organization of the Revolutionary Guardian Corps, known as <i>SAS</i>
<b>TUHRA</b>	Human Rights for Turkmen Sahra
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

## **Introduction:**

The matter of torture and other forms of ill-treatment of detainees/prisoners, especially political prisoners in Iran by the Iranian authorities has undoubtedly remained a fact. There are enough numbers of news, testimonies, statements, local, national and international reports and documents as well as many persons who have been tortured/ill-treated in Iranian places of detention and prisons and then reported about it.

If one reads through the news and reports made about torture and ill-treatment of prisoners in Iran, it is not difficult to understand that a set of general methods and patterns are applied during torture and ill-treatment of all categories of political prisoners (United Nations 2016)

What lacks on the matter of torture in Iran?

Almost all the reports and documents written on the matter of torture and ill-treatment in Iran lack details about how these methods and patterns may differ when it comes to different categories of political prisoners. The only little exception is the reports made by the “Freedom from Torture”, especially its last report made on Iran in December 2017.(Freedom from Torture Iran Report) The following question is therefore not answered well:

***Do Iranian authorities treat all categories of political prisoners in the same way, using the same methods and patterns?***

Detailed questions & hypotheses:

In conducting this research, first, I carried out a desk review of available literature on the subject of this study and so found initial answers to the following question I was interested in (please see findings out of desk reviews):

- *What are common methods and patterns in the conduct of torture and ill-treatment of political prisoners in the Iranian places of detention?*

My hypothesis in this regard was as follows:

*Most political prisoners in Iran experience a set of common methods and patterns of torture/ill-treatment that are applied by perpetrators in the Iranian places of detention and prisons*

Later, there was a need for conduct of a series of in-depth interviews with former political prisoners from Iran to: 1) not only see if conclusions from the desk review in relation to the commonalities in methods and patterns of torture and ill-treatment of political prisoners were consistent with my findings from interviews, 2) but also try to find answers to the following question, something which I could not find answer to, out of the desk review:

- *What are specific methods and patterns in torture and ill-treatment that might be only applied to specific categories of political prisoners?*

My hypothesis in this regard was as follows:

*In addition to these common methods of torture/ill-treatment, a set of varied methods are applied only to specific categories of political prisoners.*

After doing interviews and analyses, I found more answers to the above-mentioned questions as how different categories of political prisoners are treated the same, and in what ways they might be treated differently and what would be determining factors for the differences applied.

Moreover, after doing the desk review, I came to a few suggested reasons for the widespread and common use of torture in Iran. It must be mentioned that even though my main purpose of conducting this research was to focus on the commonalities and differences in methods and patterns of torture and ill-treatment of political prisoners, as mentioned above, I also touched upon the issue of why these acts of torture and ill-treatment of political prisoners happen and what the main goal would be behind these acts. After interviews, I also found more answers to this question through in-depth analytical dialogue with the interviewees.

In short, this study seeks to find answers concerning three main areas of interest, namely: 1) commonalities; 2) differences; and 3) reasons in application of torture/ill-treatment of political prisoners in Iran, as reflected in the subject of this study as well as in the Sections **Empirical Analysis** and **Concluding Remarks**:

In 2011-2012, I worked as the ICRC Protection Delegate and later became responsible for one of its offices in Afghanistan. Among other responsibilities, as one of the main tasks, I visited Afghanistan places of detention and prisons in my responsibility areas, interviewed detainees/prisoners and documented their cases. Therefore, I own technical expertise, knowledge and experiences in the field of my study. From other hand, I was interrogated,

threatened and harassed (but not detained) in 2010 by the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence (MOIS) while I was working for the UNESCO and the ICRC offices in Tehran. Therefore, I have also experiences in observing how the intelligence interrogators act. Moreover, I am still human rights activists and my concern about human rights remains outstanding, something which encourages me to contribute to helping activists in Iran, who are vulnerable to torture/ill-treatment by the Iranian Intelligence Services.

The theoretical framework for this study is derived from both international as well as national tools related to the matter of torture/treatment of detainees/prisoners, outlined in the Section **Theoretical Framework**, where key definitions/concepts related to this study have also been clarified. Data have been collected from both desk review of already existing literature on the matter of torture in Iran as well as from a series of interviews with the former political prisoners from Iran. Large amount of data and information was collected and categorized in mainly three parts to provide answers to the three main questions defined above. Through a set of figures and tables, the results are visually summed up as well.

#### Potential contributions with this research

My study has produced some indicative disaggregated data and information per ethnicity/religion of the political prisoners in Iran. More of such studies need to be carried out, using ethnic, religious, gender and other types of lenses, to find out which groups of political prisoners are potentially vulnerable to which type of specific tortures/ill-treatments, differently. More detailed list of the reasons about why Iranian authorities still use torture and ill-treatment over political prisoners has come up as findings of this study as well.

I hope that my study will encourage more in-depth analyses of the situation in the Iranian places of detention and prisons. Some activists believe that if methods and patterns used in torture and ill-treatment of political prisoners in Iran are shared openly with the activists, it would help them reduce harms when they are exposed to it in such places. Not knowing about the methods and patterns would make them more vulnerable than knowing and being prepared about them. My personal experience in dealing with the Iranian security apparatus`s interrogations proved that I managed to reduce harms when I got to obtain knowledge and consultation about the interrogation methods and goals in advance. Therefore, results of this research and future similar studies, altogether with effective dissemination of information, can help activists and other prisoners be prepared to get less harmed or even save their lives, I wish.

## Limitations/perspectives

My study is limited in scope and the subject itself is very wide, deep, multi-fetched and complex. Conclusions are indicative and there are many other determining factors that might be involved and so may change expected results in terms of prevalence or percentage of occurrence. What is important is that with more similar types of studies, more general conclusions can be made later about vulnerabilities of some groups of political prisoners and differences in their treatment. All earlier studies and reports have attempted to provide a picture of the situation in the Iranian places of detention/prison, in terms of physical conditions as well as treatment of prisoners and legal environment/proceedings when it comes to the political prisoners. Results of such studies might not differ so much in the future, unless involved factors having authoritative/executive roles (such as IIS, IPC, and GC which I have referred to in my study as the Iranian Pro-torture Elements/Structures) are removed or changed meaningfully and positively. This is even though the Iranian governance is a religious bureaucracy that will continue to deny allegations of torture and ill-treatment of prisoners in Iran as they claim it is against Islamic values and traditions. (Asia News Monitor 2012; BBC 2005).

## A short guide to the thesis

Five main sections will present the whole story of this study. First, in the Section, Theoretical Framework the theoretical background behind this study will be presented through defining some of the key concepts and will attempt to clarify common understanding of these concepts, altogether with a review of the main international and domestic tools (for Iran) related to the matter of torture/treatment of detainees/prisoners. A thorough review of existing literature will be presented in the following Section, Literature review, where initial conclusions from the desk review will be presented when it concerns commonalities in treatment of political prisoners and reasons behind tortures. Later, methods used in obtaining data and information will be presented with statistics related to the samples for this study. In the Sections, Empirical Analysis, a summary analysis of physical and psychological tortures experienced by the studied samples will be presented, altogether with finding about determining factors and reasons behind application of torture. At last, in the Section Concluding Remarks:, conclusions related to commonalities and differences and reasons behind torture of the political prisoners in Iran will be presented, with the last part to be about suggestions for future studies. **Appendix I: A summary of applied tortures on each interviewee** is very important part of this study. It was worth having it as the main part of this thesis, but it would have been exhaustive in length. This part is important to

grasp a little glimpse of what a political prisoner from Iran experience in the Iranian places of interrogation/detention or in prisons.

## Theoretical Framework:

We need to better understand the international standards and tools related to treatment of prisoners, especially those of which Iran has signed. Even more importantly, one needs to know and understand domestic legal tools related to torture and treatments of prisoners in Iran. Without such understanding, it would be difficult to better understand torture phenomenon in Iran. This is while some important pro-torture religious-ideological thoughts/concepts<sup>1</sup> that are prevalent in the dominant hardliners' ideology, play very important role in providing a torture-breeding environment. This issue is beyond the scope of my study and needs further studies in future, I would suggest. In addition, we should define concepts such as torture, detention/imprisonment, torture methods, and political prisoners, Iranian Intelligence Services (IIS) as well as give a short introduction to the ethnic discrimination in Iran, all of which have been brought up below:

### Definition of torture:

Article 1 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment<sup>2</sup> defines torture as follows:

"Any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions." (UN 1984)

I have taken this definition as a basic standard in defining torture for my study. Even though some of the so-called "lawful sanctions" referred by the Iranian law, the 2. Iranian Islamic Penal

---

<sup>1</sup> For example, "The Principle of Avoiding More Corruption by Means of Allowing Less Corrupt Behaviour" that is allegedly used for justifying application of torture from an Iranian ideological perspective: For this, you may wish to read the following link: <http://www.ensani.ir>. As well, the principle of "The Necessity of System Protection & Prevention from Disorder according to Imamia Feqh", both of which are allegedly used to solve "cognitive dissonance" for torture perpetrators, meaning that the system protection by any means is imperative. For this, you may wish to refer to the following link: <http://wiki.fmaroof.ir>. Unfortunately, such sources are only available in Farsi (Persian) language, and there are no studies about such important issues in English language.

<sup>2</sup> Approved by the UN Resolution 39/46 of 10 December 1984.

Code (IPC), as punishing tools, obviously amount to torture, indeed. Therefore, when it concerns the political prisoners, I have not taken into consideration the last part (sentence) of the above-mentioned definition by the United Nations that has come on the Convention against Torture. In this regard, there have even been critics from scholarly societies on this matter. In defining torture, its forms and interpretation, I have also referred to the OHCHR document called “Interpretation of Torture in the Light of the Practice and Jurisprudence of International Bodies” (OHCHR 2011).

#### International Standards about ban on torture and treatment of prisoners:

Below, I have referred to some important articles and points from major international tools related to the treatment of prisoners and the matter of torture.

Article 2 of the Convention against Torture indicates each state party’s obligations for prevention of torture at all levels. Article 16 of the Convention also points out each state party’s obligation for prevention of acts that may not amount to torture, but are from type of cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment. Article 4 refers to the criminalization of acts of torture under criminal law and that perpetrators of such acts should be punished. (UN 1984)

Iran has signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)<sup>3</sup> in 1968 and ratified it in 1975. Article 7 of ICCPR reaffirms the Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>4</sup> and states: “No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. In particular, no one shall be subjected without his free consent to medical or scientific experimentation.” (UN 1966)

Article 2 of the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment<sup>5</sup> indicates: “Any act of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment is an offence to human dignity and shall be condemned as a denial of the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and as a violation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.” (UN 1975)

---

<sup>3</sup> Adopted by the General Assembly of the UN on 19 December 1966.

<sup>4</sup> Proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 (Resolution 217 A).

<sup>5</sup> Adopted by the UN General Assembly resolution 3452 (XXX) of 9 December 1975.



The United Nations<sup>6</sup> clarifies that torture is a big concern for the whole world. “Its purpose is to destroy deliberately not only the physical and emotional well-being of individuals but also, in some instances, the dignity and will of entire communities.” (UN 2004)

The United Nations Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment<sup>7</sup> states, in its Principle 1, that “all persons under any form of detention or imprisonment shall be treated in a humane manner and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person.” (United Nations 1988). The Principle 6 states that “No circumstance whatever may be invoked as a justification for torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The term "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" should be interpreted so as to extend the widest possible protection against abuses, whether physical or mental, including the holding of a detained or imprisoned person in conditions which deprive him, temporarily or permanently, of the use of any of his natural senses, such as sight or hearing, or of his awareness of place and the passing of time.” (United Nations 1988)

Principle 21.1 states that “it shall be prohibited to take undue advantage of the situation of a detained or imprisoned person for the purpose of compelling him to confess, to incriminate himself otherwise or to testify against any other person.” (United Nations 1988)

Principle 21.2 also states that “no detained person while being interrogated shall be subject to violence, threats or methods of interrogation which impair his capacity of decision or his judgement.” (United Nations 1988)

The Principle 24 states that “a proper medical examination shall be offered to a detained or imprisoned person as promptly as possible after his admission to the place of detention or imprisonment, and thereafter medical care and treatment shall be provided whenever necessary. This care and treatment shall be provided free of charge.” (United Nations 1988)

The United Nations has approved Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners<sup>8</sup> that sets out rules and standards that covers all categories of prisoners, criminal or civil, untried or convicted, including prisoners subject to "security measures" or corrective measures ordered

---

<sup>6</sup> Extract from the UN Training Manual called “Istanbul Protocol” of 2004.

<sup>7</sup> Adopted by the UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988.

<sup>8</sup> Adopted by the First UN Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held at Geneva on 30 August 1955.

by the judge. (UN 1955). Its rules should be applied impartially, with no discrimination on the bases of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. It points out necessity of respect to the religious beliefs and moral precepts of the group to which a prisoner belongs. It also clearly indicates that unconvicted prisoners are presumed to be innocent and shall be treated as such. (UN 1955)

### Domestic tools:

From a domestic perspective, Iran's Constitution as well as the Iranian Islamic Penal Code (IPC), both have clear references to the ban on the use of torture. Let us have a close look at these tools:

#### 1. Iran's Constitution

Article 38 of the Iran's Constitution states: "All forms of torture for the purpose of extracting confession or acquiring information are forbidden. Compulsion of individuals to testify, confess, or take an oath is not permissible; and any testimony, confession, or oath obtained under duress is devoid of value and credence. Violation of this article is liable to punishment in accordance with the law<sup>9</sup>." (International Society for Iranian Studies 2014). However and unfortunately, acts of torture are conducted continuously and with impunity in the obvious negligence of this important Article of the Constitution.

#### 2. Iranian Islamic Penal Code (IPC)

Article 168 of the IPC<sup>10</sup> states that "a confession shall be admissible only if at the time of confession, the confessor is sane, pubescent, intended [to make the confession] and free<sup>11</sup>." The Article 169 clearly indicates that "a confession which is taken under coercion, force, torture, or mental or physical abuses, shall not be given any validity and weight and the court is obliged to interrogate the accused again." (Iran Human Rights Documentation Center 2014)

Even though the IPC has a clear article on ban on the use of torture, it is very pro-torture/ill-treatment legal document, on the contrary. All the legal convictions made for the political prisoners are issued based on this key legal document that is meant to punish them.

---

<sup>9</sup> Translated by the International Society for Iranian Studies from the Iran's Constitution of 1989 Edition.

<sup>10</sup> The new Islamic Penal Code of Iran of 2013.

<sup>11</sup> Translated by the International Society for Iranian Studies.

In the previous version of the IPC of 1996, there was Article 578 on sanctions and prison punishment for the torturer. Therefore, acts of torture were criminalized in the previous IPC. However, in the new amended version of the IPC of 2013, this article was deliberately removed.

Criminalization of acts of torture, including complicity or participation have been indicated in the Article 4 of the Convention against Torture, Principle 7 of the Body of Principles on Detention, Article 7 of the Declaration on the Protection against Torture and paragraphs 31-33 of the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

Below, I have brought examples of some articles in the new IPC that are either pro-torture or pro-punishment for political prisoners:

Article 19 refers to the Islamic Punishments (called Ta'zir) that are divided into eight degrees and include deprivations from social, public or occupational rights as well as punishments such as logging.

Article 20 refers to the confiscation of all properties and deprivation from social, public or occupational rights.

Article 23 states that “the court can sentence a person to one or more punishment(s) from the following complementary punishments:

- (a) Compulsory residence in a specified place
- (b) Ban from residing in (a) specified place(s)
- (c) Ban from holding a specified profession, career or job
- (d) Dismissal from governmental and public offices
- (h) Ban from leaving the country for Iranian citizens
- (l) Seizure of the means for commission of the offense or the media or organization involved in commission of the offense.”(Iran Human Rights Documentation Center 2014)

Article 25 refers to the deprivation from social rights and its meaning, for example, not being “employed in all state bodies, including the three branches of power and their dependant companies and institutes, Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, armed forces and other organs under the supervision of the Leader, municipalities, public services institutes, and departments that their names should be stipulated in order to be included in the law.”(Iran Human Rights Documentation Center 2014)

Article 38 refers to the mitigating factors, comprising of the following:

“(b) Effective cooperation of the accused in recognition of accomplices and accessories to the offense and in finding the proceeds of the offense or discovering the properties and goods resulted from, or the means used in commission of, the offense

(d) Statement of the accused prior to prosecution, or his/her effective confession during investigation and prosecution

(e) Regret, good reputation or specific condition of the accused such as his/her age or illness.”(Iran Human Rights Documentation Center 2014)

Article 115 states that in some degrees of punishments, “if the offender repents and his/her regret and correction is certain in the eyes of the judge, the punishment shall not be given.”(Iran Human Rights Documentation Center 2014)

Article 130 clearly states that “anyone who holds the position of a leader of a criminal gang shall be sentenced to the maximum punishment...” The meaning of criminal gang is defined by the IPC as “a relatively organized group consisting of more than three or more individuals, which is formed for commission of an offense, or where its aim is diverted to commission of an offense after its formation. The meaning of leadership is defined as “forming, or planning, or organizing or directing a criminal gang.”(Iran Human Rights Documentation Center 2014)

Article 160 clearly states that “evidence [admissible] for proof of crimes are confession, testimony, and oath in the cases specified by law and also knowledge of the judge.”(Iran Human Rights Documentation Center 2014)

Article 164 defines the meaning of confession “as declaration of a person of commission of an offense by him/herself.”(Iran Human Rights Documentation Center 2014)

Article 166 indicates how a confession must be made by “[saying the] words or in writing; and, if [the above-mentioned ways] are not possible, it can be made by an act such as a gesture; and in any event it should be clear and unambiguous.”(Iran Human Rights Documentation Center 2014)

Article 174 indicates definition of testimony “as declaration of a third party of commission or non-commission of an offense by the accused, or any other matter before the judicial authority.”(Iran Human Rights Documentation Center 2014)

Article 184 clarifies that “testimony must be made by [saying the] words or in writing; and, if [the above-mentioned ways] are not possible, it can be made by an act such as a gesture; and in any event it should be clear and unambiguous.”(Iran Human Rights Documentation Center 2014)

Article 211 indicates that knowledge of the judge can be means such as “an expert opinion, ..., statements of people aware [of an issue], reports of law enforcement officers,...” (Iran Human Rights Documentation Center 2014). Here, the word “expert” implies the IIS’s interrogators. It means what the IIS prepares as the report out of interrogations can make knowledge of the judge.

Amnesty International<sup>12</sup> states that “the new Code did not provide adequate protection against torture and failed to bring Iranian law into conformity with international law and standards. The Code failed to guarantee individuals adequate access to an independent lawyer from the time of arrest, a legal requirement for protection against torture and other ill-treatment. No specific crime of torture is defined in Iranian law and the new Code failed to establish detailed procedures for investigating torture allegations. Moreover, while the Code excludes statements obtained through torture as admissible evidence, it does so only in general terms, without providing detailed provisions.” (Amnesty International 2016)

### 3. The unapproved Plan on Torture Ban

In 2001, the Six Majlis (Iranian Parliament) developed and issued a “Plan on Torture Ban” that was later modified in 2002 and sent to the Iranian Guardian Council (GC) for approval. The GC is a high-ranking state apparatus that has prevented approval of the Plan on Torture Ban of 2001-2002. It also prohibited ratification of the Convention against Torture by Iran. In this respect, the GC had acted very pro-torture and has therefore prevented formation of any national/international monitoring mechanisms in relation to torture/ill-treatment of detainees/prisoners. Therefore, the role of the GC must be studied in detail when it concerns its role in relation to torture, IPC and the IIS.

---

<sup>12</sup> Report 2015/16 – Iran.

### Other international tools:

Iran has signed international tools that promote cultural rights and discourages ethnic/racial discrimination. These include International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination<sup>13</sup> and also the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)<sup>14</sup> that was signed by Iran in 1967. In my study, there will be references to tortures/ill-treatments that were inflicted on the political prisoners on the bases of their ethnicity, cultural/ethnic rights and/or religion.

### Definition of detention and imprisonment:

Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment of 1988 defines detained person as “any person deprived of personal liberty except as a result of conviction for an offence” and defines detention as “the condition of detained persons as defined above”. It also defines imprisoned person as “any person deprived of personal liberty as a result of conviction for an offence” and imprisonment as “the condition of imprisoned persons as defined above”. Throughout this study, I have referred to the detained person, imprisoned person, detention and imprisonment, exactly as it is defined above. Detainees and detentions refer therefore to pre-trial conditions when most parts of interrogations, tortures and ill-treatments take place.

### Torture methods:

The distinction between physical and psychological methods is difficult. This is even though I attempted to do this distinction when I made **Appendix I: A summary of applied tortures on each interviewee** for better understanding. In this regard, I used the “Istanbul Protocol<sup>15</sup>”, a UN training manual on documentation of torture to better classify torture methods. These methods can be classified as it follows, but not limited to:

“(a) Blunt trauma, such as a punch, kick, slap, whipping, a beating with wires or truncheons or falling down;

---

<sup>13</sup> Adopted by the UN General Assembly resolution 2016 (XX) of 21 December 1965.

<sup>14</sup> Adopted by the UN General Assembly resolution 2200 (XXI) of 16 December 1966.

<sup>15</sup> Published by the United Nations in 2004.

- (b) Positional torture, using suspension, stretching limbs apart, prolonged constraint of movement, forced positioning;
- (c) Burns with cigarettes, heated instruments, scalding liquid or a caustic substance;
- (d) Electric shocks;
- (f) Crush injuries, such as smashing fingers or using a heavy roller to injure the thighs or back;
- (i) Sexual violence to genitals, molestation, instrumentation, rape;
- (j) Crush injury or traumatic removal of digits and limbs;
- (l) Pharmacological torture using toxic doses of sedatives, neuroleptics, paralytics, etc.;
- (m) Conditions of detention, such as a small or overcrowded cell, solitary confinement, unhygienic conditions, no access to toilet facilities, irregular or contaminated food and water, exposure to extremes of temperature, denial of privacy and forced nakedness;
- (n) Deprivation of normal sensory stimulation, such as sound, light, sense of time, isolation, manipulation of brightness of the cell, abuse of physiological needs, restriction of sleep, food, water, toilet facilities, bathing, motor activities, medical care, social contacts, isolation within prison, loss of contact with the outside world (victims are often kept in isolation in order to prevent bonding and mutual identification and to encourage traumatic bonding with the torturer);
- (o) Humiliation, such as verbal abuse, performance of humiliating acts;
- (p) Threats of death, harm to family, further torture, imprisonment, mock executions;
- (r) Psychological techniques to break down the individual, including forced betrayals, accentuating feelings of helplessness, exposure to ambiguous situations or contradictory messages;
- (s) Violation of taboos;
- (u) Forcing the victim to witness torture or atrocities being inflicted on others.” (United Nations 2004)

In documenting different types of tortures, I have taken the above-mentioned categorization of tortures as basis and have therefore, developed my own classification for the purpose of this study, as it is shown on the **Appendix I: A summary of applied tortures on each interviewee.**

### Political prisoners:

Among many other definitions available, I have taken a very good definition of political prisoners that is made by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe<sup>16</sup>. It defines political prisoners as it follows:

“A person deprived of his or her personal liberty is to be regarded as a ‘political prisoner’:

- a. if the detention has been imposed in violation of one of the fundamental guarantees set out in the European Convention on Human Rights and its Protocols (ECHR), in particular freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of expression and information, freedom of assembly and association;
- b. if the detention has been imposed for purely political reasons without connection to any offence;
- c. if, for political motives, the length of the detention or its conditions are clearly out of proportion to the offence the person has been found guilty of or is suspected of;
- d. if, for political motives, he or she is detained in a discriminatory manner as compared to other persons; or,
- e. if the detention is the result of proceedings which were clearly unfair and this appears to be connected with political motives of the authorities.” (Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe 2012)

All the interviewees whom I have interviewed for my current study, fall within these categories and therefore all of them can be regarded as political prisoners, including prisoners of conscience.

### Iranian Intelligence Services (SAS & MOIS):

Iranian Intelligence Services include two main apparatuses as follow: The Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS)<sup>17</sup> and the Iranian Revolutionary Guardian Corps (IRGC)’s Intelligence Organization, known as *SAS*<sup>18</sup> in Iran. These two intelligence services have their

---

<sup>16</sup> Taken from the Resolution 1900 dated 2012 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

<sup>17</sup> For more information about MOIS, please also read a report: Iran’s Ministry of Intelligence and Security: A Profile, prepared by the Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, dated December 2012: <https://fas.org/irp/world/iran/mois-loc.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> For more information on SAS, please also read the article: “Revolutionary Intelligence: The Expanding Intelligence Role of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, written by Udit Banerjee in 2015 at Journal of Strategic Studies: <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1449&context=jss>



own interrogation/detention facilities. They operate independently, but sometimes they may have joint operations, or may hand over detainees to each other if there would be such requests. The SAS is under direct supervision of the Iran's Leader, Khamenei and reports only to him and has therefore upper hand over intelligence and security-related matters. MOIS is under the state's President but nominated minister to direct this apparatus needs to be approved by Khamenei. Systems, rules and regulations within these two intelligence apparatuses are very pro-torture and torture-breeding. Please have a look at the summary of the tortures in the **Appendix I: A summary of applied tortures on each interviewee.**

### Ethnic and Religious Discrimination in Iran

There are very few references to the ethnic background of the prisoners who were subject to torture in the Iranian prisons. The direct connection between the ethnic and/or religious background of detainees and their exposure to torture has only been revealed internationally in a few reports in the very recent reports. Generally, the issue of discrimination against non-Fars ethnic populations and/or racism in Iran has remained sensitive and continues to be taboo in general Iranian discourse. Language, cultural and ethnic rights of various non-Fars populations have been denied, repressed and intentionally politicized by the ruling Iranian system (including by its three power branches). Activists who are peacefully engaged in ethnic rights have been accused of acting against national security and are sentenced to heavier punishments. There are few human rights organizations who touch upon such issues and so break imposed taboos. Relatively, the matter of discrimination against non-Shia religious populations is more openly discussed in the contemporary Iranian discourse, even though the ruling system continues to deny discriminations of any type. Iranian human rights organizations or news agencies continue to more highlight religious discrimination than ethnic discriminations. Such topics are therefore reported to the international sources mainly through human rights activists who belong to the non-Fars ethnic and non-Shia religious populations. However, such activities have remained limited to information and news sharing and dissemination, reporting or advocacy. Scientific and academic researchers in these fields (related to the matter of ethnic and religious discriminations in Iran) are very rare, indeed. I hope my study will encourage more researches to conduct similar type of researches in future. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran<sup>19</sup> spoke about the human rights activists and defenders who

---

<sup>19</sup> On A report: "Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran", released by the UN General Assembly on 30 September 2016.

are “often targeted by security and judicial officials not only for their activities but also for their actual or imputed ethnic identity. The Special Rapporteur continued to receive troubling reports . . . ., suggesting that Azerbaijani Turk, Ahwazi Arab, Baluch, Kurdish and other ethnic minority human rights defenders are being targeted by security and judiciary officials for their peaceful activities, and he implores the Government to refrain from targeting ethnic minority rights activists. . . . The Special Rapporteur continues to be disturbed by reports from members of ethnic minority communities regarding arbitrary arrests, detentions, torture and prosecution for protected activities that promote social, economic, cultural and linguistic rights.” (United Nations 2016b)

## Literature review:

The matter of torture and other forms of ill-treatment of prisoners, especially political prisoners in Iran by the Iranian authorities has undoubtedly remained a fact. There are enough numbers of news, testimonies, statements, local, national and international reports and documents as well as many persons who have been tortured/ill-treated in Iranian places of detention and prisons and reported about it. Following notes can be made about information available on the torture and ill-treatment of prisoners in Iran:

- The quantity and quality of these types of information increased drastically, mainly twice by the emerge of the new millennium; the first volume of information appeared about arrests, detention and torture of many Iranians after the July 1999 university student protests known as “18<sup>th</sup> of Tir”. Human Rights Watch report details testimonies, torture and ill-treatment of those arrested during and after these protests.(Human Rights Watch 2004). The second volume of information appeared after the disputed presidential elections in 2009 (and subsequent popular movement called “Green Movement”). This movement witnessed massive and open crackdown of protesters and widespread torture and ill-treatment of the detainees by authorities. This was due to the large numbers of people (being ordinary people or former Iranian high-ranking officials known as “Reformists”) who were badly ill-treated and got the courage to share their experiences that got to be well-documented both by the International organization or those NGOs who are run by Iranians. I call this a turning-point both in history of the Iranian contemporary politics as well as in the awareness of national and international communities about and in documentation of ill-treatments taking place in the Iranian places of detention and in prisons. One of the very few good academic researches about torture has been conducted by the Freedom from Torture (Medical Foundation for the Care of the Victims of Torture), focusing on torture in post-election Iran, during the years 2009-2011. (Freedom from Torture 2013). A very recent report from the same organization could be ranked as the best so far in details about torture in Iranian prisons.(Freedom from Torture 2017)
- Due to the lack of access to visit Iranian political prisoners, researches that have been conducted on the spot by the Iranian health experts/researches<sup>20</sup> are confined to good

---

<sup>20</sup> Only Iranian Ministry of Health (MoH) and Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) have limited access to the limited number of prisons (not to the laces of detention/interrogation) to conduct limited health-related surveys

numbers of researches around hepatitis, HIV/AIDS, infectious diseases, scabies, Tuberculosis, drug abuse, prevention and harm reduction, mental diseases, and psychiatric matters. No research or report on torture or ill-treatment of prisoners in Iranian places of detention or prisons have been made by any local, national or international entities out of direct visits and observations. This is just forbidden.

- The available information on the matter of treatment of detainees/prisoners in Iran have mainly been disseminated through digital world of internet and social media. There are very few numbers of books<sup>21</sup> that have been written about such issues. Those books written about torture in Iran date back either to the 1980s or are written about treatment of prisoners in 1980-1990s. Such books are mainly written in the form of autobiographies of those individuals (former Iranian political prisoners) and their observations and experiences during their interrogation/imprisonment, who had experienced torture in the Iranian places of detention and prisons. Even though such detailed individual accounts are useful and precious (i.e. provide better picture of what an individual prisoner can experience in Iranian places of detention/prisons), such information are outdated and cannot be used much for scientific/academic purposes. Indeed, the field of treatment of detainees/prisoners in Iran hugely lacks scientific and academic studies and researches. Updated information about this matter is only available through internet and digital materials. This is therefore, I have used internet as the main source of information, through which all updated information from authentic sources such as the United Nations, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and others are available in good quality.

If one reads through the news and reports made about torture and ill-treatment of detainees/prisoners in Iran, it is not difficult to understand that a set of general methods and

---

and researches. In the past, Iranian members of parliament have made attempts to guarantee accesses, but they did so in very few occasions that proved to be very limited and restricted in scope, details of which were not accessible to the public.

<sup>21</sup> As such the book “Tortured Confessions: Prisons and Public Recantations in Modern Iran”, written by E. Abrahamian in 1999, or the book “The Massacre of Political Prisoners in Iran”, published by Abdorrahman Boroumand Foundation in 1988 can be mentioned as printed materials available. The book, “A State of Fear; my 10 years inside Iran’s torture jails, written by Dr. Reza Ghaffari, published in 2012, is about the author’s imprisonment and torture stories during his ten years imprisonment in 1980s. Another book, “Prisoner of Tehran; one woman’s story of survival inside an Iranian prison”, written by Marina Nemat, published in 2008, is about the author’s experiences in an Iranian jail back to the year 1980s.

patterns are listed, as being applied during torture and ill-treatment of all categories of political prisoners.

Findings out of desk review and analysis, based on available documents, reports and news:

#### Methods in torture and ill-treatment of prisoners:

A recent report by the Amnesty International states that Iranian authorities have used various torture methods such as beatings, electric shocks, sleep deprivation, stress positions, prolonged suspension by the wrists or ankles and threats against detainees and their loved ones. (Amnesty International 2017)

Methods reported by the United Nations includes prolonged solitary confinement, severe beatings, and threats against detainees' family members, blindfolding, being faced a wall or a corner during interrogation and being interrogated from behind by one to three interrogators. These reports details interrogations allegedly lasted several hours, during which time interrogators usually attempted to force detainees to confess in writing to certain activities, and/or to sign other documents. In nearly all cases, former detainees reported having been subjected to torture or ill-treatment during interrogation and detention. The United Nations<sup>22</sup> states that in 90 per cent of cases, former detainees claimed that their interrogators had subjected them to psychological abuse, including prolonged solitary confinement, mock executions, threats to life, sexual harassment, threats to family members, harsh verbal abuse and threats of rape and other torture. Some 76 per cent also alleged that their interrogators physically abused them in the form of severe beatings to the head and body, often with a baton-like object. Some reported having been subjected to suspension and pressure positions, sexual molestation, electric shocks or burning. (UN 2014)

According to the reports from the United States Department of State, common methods of torture and abuse in prisons included prolonged solitary confinement with extreme sensory deprivation, beatings, rape and sexual humiliation, long confinement in contorted positions, kicking detainees with military boots, hanging detainees by the arms and legs, threats of execution, burning with cigarettes, pulling out toenails, sleep deprivation, and severe and repeated beatings with cables or other instruments on the back and on the soles of the feet. As harsher kind of abuse, torturers reportedly soaked prisoners before beating them with electric cables, and some were subject to electric shocks to sexual organs. Prisoners also reported

---

<sup>22</sup> Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran (A/HRC/25/61), released by the UN General Assembly on 18 March 2014.

beatings on the ears, inducing partial or complete deafness; blows in the area around the eyes, leading to partial or complete blindness; and the use of poison to induce illness. (United States Department of State 2010)

“Guards severely beat several dozen political prisoners in Ward 350 of Evin Prison and forced around 30 to pass between two rows of guards, who punched, kicked, and beat them with batons, causing some to sustain serious injuries, according to relatives of the victims. Officials later subjected at least 31 prisoners to prolonged solitary confinement and degrading treatment<sup>23</sup>”. (Human Rights Watch 2015)

According to the United States Department of State, Mr. Momeni, spokesperson for the Alumni Association of Iran (Advar-e Tahkim Vahdat), wrote a letter in 2009 to the Iranian Supreme Leader, Khamenei in which he detailed the physical and psychological tortures he faced at Evin Prison including severe beatings and suffocations to the point of unconsciousness during interrogations, interrogators holding his head in a full toilet bowl, solitary confinement for 86 days, and repeated threats of rape and imminent execution. He was also forced to false confessions. (United States Department of State 2010)

Iran Human Rights Documentation Centre reports<sup>24</sup> the systematic use of physical abuse, including the use of stress positions, flogging, and electrocution, and routine beatings. It also released reports about beating with electric batons, flogging with cable, electric shocks, lashing, hanging from ceiling, burning with hot water, punching, slapping, kicking, sexual assaults, threats, and insults that are reported by Arab prisoners (Iran Human Rights Documentation Center 2014)

The United Nations reports<sup>25</sup> indicate that inmates are often subjected to ill-treatment and torture by interrogators and guards, including blackmailing, beating and physical abuse, verbal abuse, interrogation for long hours, sleep deprivation, forcing heads into toilets, and solitary confinement. The practice of forcing female political detainees to undress in front of male agents at the time of their arrest were documented in 2017. The cases of 86 detainees subjected to prolonged solitary confinement from 2013 to 2017 were also communicated to the United Nations Special Rapporteur. (United Nations 2017)

---

<sup>23</sup> World Report 2015: Iran

<sup>24</sup> In a report called «A Framework of Violence: Repression of the Arab Ethnic Minority in the Islamic Republic of Iran”.

<sup>25</sup> Extract from «Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, released by the UN General Assembly (A/72/322) on 14 August 2017.

Freedom from Torture reports about the methods of physical torture that were used across 50 cases included blunt force trauma, such as beating, whipping and/or assault (100% of cases) based on both 2013 and 2017 reports; “sexual torture including rape, molestation, violence to genitals and/or penetration with an instrument (60%); suspension and stress positions (64%); use of water (32%); sharp force trauma including use of blades, needles and/or fingernails (18%); burns (12%); electric shock (10%); asphyxiation (10%) and pharmacological or chemical torture (8%). Of the cases sampled, 60% of females and 23% of males reported rape. Psychological and environmental forms of torture, which were highly prevalent in this case sample, included but were not limited to humiliation (82%), solitary confinement (68%), verbal abuse (64%), threats of death (44%) and threats to family (30%), sleep deprivation (24%), and mock executions (14%)”. (Freedom from Torture 2013)

Methods of torture reported from 69 cases studied and examined by the Freedom from Torture organization included “beating or other blunt force trauma (100% of cases), positional torture (75%), burns (29%) and sharp force (22%). Electric shocks (19%), use of water (14%), crushing (12%), pharmacological torture (10%), asphyxiation (6%) and amputation (3%)”. (Freedom from Torture 2017)

According to the Freedom from Torture, “the main forms of blunt force trauma included sustained assault by kicking, punching and slapping and of beatings with a variety of blunt instruments such as rubber or plastic truncheons, flexible or stiff cables, whips, wooden batons or sticks, plastic pipes, iron or other metal bars, electric batons, gun butts, belts and handcuffs. Studied cases reported being assaulted or beaten on all parts of the body including face, head and neck, chest and stomach, back and buttocks, arms, legs, hands and feet, and genitals. Head and face, arms and legs and back were the most commonly beaten parts of the body. Some cases also reported being forcibly thrown to the floor, against a wall or from a height (when the hands and sometimes feet were bound); having the hair violently pulled; the head slammed against a hard surface; and being dragged across a hard or abrasive surface. Most of studied cases (66%) reported being blindfolded while being interrogated and tortured and 32 cases (64%) reported being bound, cuffed or restrained, sometimes in stress positions including suspension. They would have been unable to physically defend or protect themselves in any way during beatings. Beatings and other forms of physical assault were reported to have been carried out concurrently with interrogation sessions in most cases, though some people reported that they were additionally beaten regularly in their cells between interrogations. Suspended methods included a variety of techniques, including upside down or with wrists bound behind the body, from

hooks in the ceiling or bars on the wall, prolonged binding and restraint including shackling. Psychological and environmental forms of torture, which were highly reported, included but were not limited to humiliation (82%, 41 cases), solitary confinement (68%, 34), verbal abuse (64%, 32), threats of death (44%, 22) and threats to family (30%, 15), sleep deprivation (24%, 12), and mock executions (14%, 7).” (Freedom from Torture 2013)

Psychological/environmental forms of torture were reported in the Freedom from Torture’s Report of 2017, including “threats (75%), solitary confinement (72%) and humiliation (64%)”. (Freedom from Torture 2017)

### Widespread, systematic and common use of torture

Torture is commonly used in Iranian detention centres and prisons. It is widespread and used all the time. It is not one-time occurrence. Authorities know about torture that is used with impunity.

The Special Rapporteur on the Situation of the Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Nations Secretary-General have raised concerns about the frequent use of torture. United Nations said that “it continued to receive reports about disturbing prison conditions and treatment of detainees<sup>26</sup>”. (2012)

The United Nations Secretary-General<sup>27</sup> said that he “remains concerned about the persistent practice of torture and ill-treatment in the Islamic Republic of Iran”. (UN 2017)

United Nations<sup>28</sup> states that “reports regarding the use of psychological and physical torture to obtain confessions indicate the widespread and systematic use of such practices”. (UN 2014)

Freedom from Torture reports that a wide range of physical, psychological and environmental torture methods were practised in a highly systematic way by torturers in Iran during 2009-2013. (Freedom from Torture 2013)

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran<sup>29</sup> was “struck by the magnitude, frequency and recurring nature of certain incidents reported. Testimonies

---

<sup>26</sup> «Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran”, released by the UN General Assembly (A/67/369) on 13 September 2012.

<sup>27</sup> «Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran”, released by the UN General Assembly (A/HRC/34/40) on 30 March 2017.

<sup>28</sup>«Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran”, released by the UN General Assembly (A/69/356) on 27 August 2014.

<sup>29</sup> “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran”, released by the UN General Assembly (A/HRC/25/61) on 18 March 2014.



show a pattern of abuse that violates both international and national safeguards for humane and fair treatment of detained and accused persons”, according to the United Nations. (UN 2014)

“Torture and other ill-treatment remained prevalent and were committed with impunity”, according to the Amnesty International (Amnesty International 2015a, 2016, 2017)

According to the Amnesty International, “torture and other ill-treatment, particularly during pre-trial detention, remained common. State security and intelligence agencies operated their own detention facilities outside the control of the State Prison Organization. Torture and other ill-treatment was common”. (Amnesty International 2015a)

The latest report of the Freedom from Torture clearly states that the “use of torture by the Iranian police, intelligence and security services and in prisons demonstrates the widespread use and acceptance by the government of these interrogation and intimidation tactics”. (Freedom from Torture 2017)

#### Torture & deaths:

Torture in Iran is so severe and serious that it has resulted in many human casualties and deaths.

“League for the Defence of Human Rights in Iran reported that around 50 mostly political prisoners have lost their lives in various prisons since 2003 under dubious conditions for reasons including: beating, torture and subsequent lack of medical care and treatment”. (FIDH 2016)

“Since 1993, Human Rights Watch<sup>30</sup> has documented numerous cases of torture carried by agents of the Ministry of Intelligence, Revolutionary Guards, police, and *Basij (militia)*, particularly against political prisoners. These included beatings, prolonged sleep deprivation, mock executions, and rape and other sexual violence. From 2003 till 2011, at least 17 political prisoners died in Iran’s prisons apparently due to torture, abuse, or neglect”. (Human Rights Watch 2011)

Several cases of dying as a result of severe tortures during and after 2009 protests, including sexual assaults and rape of prisoners have been detailed in the report of the US Department of State. (2011)

---

<sup>30</sup> World Report 2011: Iran

United Nations reports that “dying in prison is not an extraordinary occurrence, according to some prisoners”. (UN 2017)

“Since 2009, officials have reported deaths in custody of at least seven political prisoners who rights activists believed occurred because of torture, ill-treatment, or medical neglect”. (Human Rights Watch 2014)

According to the FIDH, they and other human rights groups have documented cases of nearly 50 mostly political prisoners who have lost their lives in prisons across Iran since 2003 for various reasons, including beating, torture and lack of medical care. “In some cases, the authorities appeared to have deliberately refused timely medical treatment, leading to death of prisoners. In other cases, prisoners have died under torture”. (2016)

#### Very common patterns of torture in Iran:

The mostly common patterns of torture in Iran constitute use of physical torture accompanied by psychological torture, prolonged solitary confinement, incommunicado detention and denial of access to medical care, according to the available literature and reports reviewed under the current study. All these methods are used in combination to punish prisoners and maximize effects of torture and for forced confessions.

The United Nations reported<sup>31</sup> that reliance on physical and mental torture to force confession (mostly during pretrial detention), the use of prolonged solitary confinement and the denial of access to proper and necessary medical treatment for detainees continue to be widely reported. (UN 2017)

Below are the above-mentioned different methods that are used in combination as a pattern that are commonly applied in Iranian detention centres:

##### 1. Combination of physical torture with psychological torture

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran<sup>32</sup> continued to receive reports about the reliance on physical and mental torture or ill-treatment to coerce confessions, mostly during pretrial detention. (UN 2016)

---

<sup>31</sup> «Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran”, released by the UN General Assembly (A/72/322) on 14 August 2017.

<sup>32</sup> “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran”, released by the UN General Assembly (A/71/418) on 30 September 2016.

According to the Freedom from Torture, “a distinctive feature of torture in Iran is the level of psychological torture”. (Freedom from Torture 2017)

## 2. Prolonged solitary confinement

Human Rights Watch reported that “the word most commonly used by the prisoners to characterize solitary cells was “coffin.” Most of them said that even after only a few days in the windowless, airless, soundless cells, they began to break down”. (Human Rights Watch 2004)

“Other forms of ill-treatment of prisoners, such as the widespread use of solitary confinement and incommunicado detention continues to be reported to the United Nations. An analysis of the 33 communications sent by special procedure mandate holders to the Government in 2016 shows that half the individuals covered by those communications were subjected to solitary confinement<sup>33</sup>”. (UN 2017)

“The authorities frequently subjected detainees and prisoners to prolonged solitary confinement with little or no access to their families and lawyers, amounting to torture or other ill-treatment”.(Amnesty International 2016, 2017)

Human Rights Watch states that “in Iran, intellectuals, writers, activists and detainees themselves use the term “white torture” to refer to the use of incommunicado solitary confinement. The conditions of solitary confinement used against political prisoners are designed to break the resolve of detainees such that they capitulate and agree to be videotaped, sign confessions, and give information regarding their political affiliations and associates. Prisoners are held in solitary cell blocks, many in secret detention centres, often underground, with twenty-four-hour artificial light. They are denied communication with other prisoners and access to attorneys, family members, and medical health professionals. Former prisoners emphasized that the increasing use of solitary confinement against those who criticize the government sends a message to others who might consider engaging in political expression: it is not worth it”. (Human Rights Watch 2004)

The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention stated, “such absolute solitary confinement, when it is of a long duration, can be likened to inhuman treatment within the meaning of the Convention Against Torture.”(Human Rights Watch 2004)

---

<sup>33</sup> «Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran”, released by the UN General Assembly (A/HRC/34/40) on 30 March 2017.

### 3. Denial of medical care

According to the Amnesty International, the practice of denial of access to medical care for prisoners is a pattern that they have documented well. (Amnesty International 2015)

The United Nations states that “human rights organizations have written several comprehensive reports documenting the ill-treatment of “political detainees”, including denial of medical care and inadequate nutrition in an effort to intimidate or punish detainees or to force confessions”. (UN 2016)

Amnesty International states that “judicial authorities, particularly the Office of the Prosecutor, and prison authorities frequently denied access to adequate medical care for political prisoners. This was often done to punish prisoners or to coerce “confessions”. (2017)

FIDH stated that it expressed “deep concern about Iranian authorities’ refusal to give sick prisoners of conscience access to adequate medical care, resulting in further deterioration of their health, and fears this may amount to a systematic practice aiming at further intimidating civil society voices critical of the regime”.(Worldwide Movement for Human Rights 2014)

OHCHR stated that a group of United Nations human rights experts warned in 2016 that “over a dozen political prisoners in Iran, including some prominent human rights defenders, lawyers and political activists, were at risk of death in detention due to their worsening health conditions and the continued refusal by the Iranian authorities to provide them with medical treatment”. (2016)

“The condition of several prisoners of conscience with serious health problems has been exacerbated by their continued detention and by repeated refusals to allow their access to the medical facilities and treatment they so urgently require,” the experts said. (OHCHR 2017)

“The denial of medical care, physical abuse, either in overcrowded prisons or in solitary confinement and other forms of torture and ill-treatment exposes prisoners to risk of serious injuries and death,” the United Nations experts said noting that “unfortunately, Iranian prisons are no strangers to such tragedies, many of which could have been avoided if authorities exercised proper care.”(OHCHR 2016)

Amnesty International states that Iranian authorities systematically denied detainees and prisoners access to adequate medical care, including for injuries resulting from torture or health problems resulting from harsh prison conditions. (2015)

Human Rights Watch has documented examples in which the prison authorities have refused access to proper and necessary medical treatment for detainees and prisoners. (2011)

The United Nations reported<sup>34</sup> that Iranian prison authorities denied health care to individuals who were in urgent need of external medical care. (UN 2014)

According to the United Nations<sup>35</sup>, “in many cases, denial, discontinuation and withholding of medication and treatment, as well as denial of release on medical grounds, were reported as intentional acts to intimidate and punish political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, or to extract forced confessions or statements of “repentance” from them”.(UN 2017)

The United Nations<sup>36</sup> stated that depriving prisoners of medical care and putting their life at risk is a well-documented pattern in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The UN Secretary-General recalled that “access to health care for prisoners is a right enshrined in both international and Iranian law and that depriving a prisoner of medical care often causes severe pain or suffering. When health care is denied as a form of punishment, intimidation or to extract a forced confession, it constitutes torture”. He called on the Iranian authorities “to investigate all cases of denial of medical care, to take firm action against the perpetrators and to provide redress and rehabilitation to the victims”. (UN 2017)

According to the United Nations, on 27 April 2016, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran joined a group of other United Nations experts to issue a statement “reminding the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran of its obligations under international standards to respect prisoners’ right to health and to ensure their humane treatment by allowing them adequate access to proper and necessary medical treatment. The experts highlighted the cases of a number of political activists and human rights defenders and expressed regret that the Government had until then failed to properly investigate allegations of mistreatment or to offer relief”. (UN 2016)

The United Nations resolution (A/RES/71/204) adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2016 called upon the Islamic Republic of Iran “to address the poor conditions of

---

<sup>34</sup> “Report of the (UN) Secretary General on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran”, released by the UN General Assembly (A/HRC/25/26) on 7 April 2014.

<sup>35</sup> “Report of the (UN) Secretary General on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran”, released by the UN General Assembly (A/HRC/34/40) on 13 March 2017.

<sup>36</sup> “Report of the (UN) Secretary General on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran”, released by the UN General Assembly (A/HRC/34/40) on 30 March 2017.

prisons, to eliminate the denial of access to adequate medical treatment and the consequent risk of death faced by prisoners”. (UN 2016)

According to the United Nations<sup>37</sup>, “in many cases, the denial of medical care is used as a form of punishment. It further states although such cases have been denounced for years by international human rights mechanisms, no investigation seems to have yet taken place”. (UN 2017)

#### Incommunicado detention

According to the Freedom from Torture, the reason for the use of incommunicado detention and blindfolding or hooding was that many survivors of torture were unable to identify the place of their detention or the identity of their interrogators and torturers. (Freedom from Torture 2017)

#### [The recent United Nations resolution made on the issue of torture in Iran](#)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 2012 and 19 December 2016 called upon the Islamic Republic of Iran “to ensure, in law and in practice, that no one is subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, expressing deep concern at serious ongoing and recurring human rights violations in the Islamic Republic of Iran relating”. Persistent denial of access to medical treatment, as well as reports of detainees dying in custody, being subjected to torture, rape and other forms of sexual violence, harsh interrogation techniques and the use of pressure upon their relatives and dependants, including through arrest, to obtain false confessions that are then used at trials were mainly highlighted. (UN 2017)

#### [The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran](#)

Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran said<sup>38</sup>: “As did my predecessor, I received a large amount of documented cases of persons allegedly subjected to torture and ill treatment with the view to extracting confessions from them. My

---

<sup>37</sup> “Report of the (UN) Secretary General on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran”, released by the UN General Assembly (A/72/322) on 14 August 2017.

<sup>38</sup> In a statement at the 34<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on 13 March 2016.

report describes many instances where prisoners were subjected to prolonged solitary confinement, sometimes during years of detention....”(United Nations 2016a)

### Torture is being commonly used for a long time in Iran

Comparison of old torture cases with the new cases of torture conducted in the Iranian prisons proves that torture is being commonly used for a long time. It is not a new issue or discovery.

Use of torture, threats, torture of family members, deception and humiliation, multiple daily interrogations lasting up to five or six hours, denial of medical care, and denial of family visits, hitting, kicking while sitting on chair with closed hands and blindfolded, insults and forced confessions/sign, sleep deprivation, all have been reported by the Human Rights Watch back to 2004. “When physical torture did not produce the desired confession, the authorities turned to psychological abuse.” (Human Rights Watch 2004)

“Interrogations of political prisoners took on an increasingly ideological and substantive angle: probing, insulting, and manipulating the prisoners’ writings, speeches, and views for hours. Hours of interrogation at a time, while blindfolded, by alternating interrogators, were much more crushing when the prisoners were held in solitary. The prisoner was cut off from information, from family and political events, leaving total control in the hands of guards, interrogators, and judges. Former detainees told Human Rights Watch that this power over the prisoners’ reality, when combined with psychological and physical torture, denial of medical care, and threats to the prisoners’ family, left them with very little will to withstand coercive interrogations. They become increasingly willing to sign retractions of their views, confessions of wrongdoing, or even to participate in videotaped confessions. Many told Human Rights Watch that the interrogations increased in intensity in solitary confinement. Interrogations carried out while detainees are held in abusive detention conditions raise the risk of forced confessions, torture and threats of torture, and use of other coercive techniques.” (Human Rights Watch 2004)

### Reasons suggested for the conduct of torture in Iran

International reports point out the issue of *forced confessions*, as the main reason for the occurrence of torture and ill-treatment in Iran for easily accusing political prisoners and condemning them in courts. Others argue that since Iranian judiciary is completely dependent and heavily influenced by the security and military apparatus, they may not necessarily need confessions as the courts are in favour of condemning political prisoners in any way. The main

reason might be pursuing acts of crushing down political prisoners psychologically, using harsh punishments, to create and spread a *state of fear*. This would be regarded as a deterrence policy to prevent further political opposition and activism against the regime. (The Economist 2009, PassBlue 2013). At the end, it may appear that both goals are valid and pursued by the Iranian authorities in order to maintain further authority. Please note the following suggested answers drawn out of documents and reports on torture in Iran:

#### 1. CONFESSIONS:

Amnesty International states that “continuing lack of judicial independence together with the “confession culture” made courts often act as mere tools of government repression rather than independent arbiters of justice upholding international fair trial standards”. (2017)

“Courts continued to convict defendants in the absence of defence lawyers or on the basis of “confessions” or other evidence obtained through torture or other ill-treatment.” (Amnesty International 2015)

Amnesty International reported that “torture and other ill-treatment of detainees remained common, especially during interrogation, and was used primarily to force “confessions”. Detainees held by the Ministry of Intelligence and the Revolutionary Guards were routinely subjected to prolonged solitary confinement amounting to torture. The authorities systematically failed to investigate allegations of torture and other ill-treatment, sometimes threatening to subject complainants to further torture and harsh sentences. Judges continued to admit “confessions” obtained under torture as evidence against the defendant, although such confessions were inadmissible under the 2015 Code of Criminal Procedure”. (2017)

Amnesty International stated that “detainees and prisoners continued to report acts of torture and other ill-treatment, particularly during primary investigations mainly to force “confessions” or gather other incriminatory evidence”. (2016)

Freedom from Torture reported that “torture was often used to obtain information about individuals and networks involved in organising political or other activity deemed to be ‘anti-regime’ and to force people to sign what they understood to be ‘confessions’ or other statements which were used against them in legal proceedings or which could be so used in the future”. (Freedom from Torture 2013)



## 2. TERROR MACHINE:

Freedom from Torture reported that “brutal methods are used by the Iranian authorities to terrorise those individuals and their family members. Torture is a key tool of repression used by the Iranian authorities as part of their efforts to crush dissent in Tehran and elsewhere in the months leading up to and for an extended period following the presidential elections in June 2009. The Iranian state uses torture to silence and create a culture of fear”. (Freedom from Torture 2013, 2017)

## 3. TO CONTROL PEOPLE:

Freedom from Torture stated that “torture, and the threat of it, is deliberately used by the Iranian government to control a wide array of activities associated with religious, ethnic or political dissent. As a result, large sections of the population are at risk of torture. Iranian state has used torture systematically to control its people”. (Freedom from Torture 2017)

### [Ethnic and religious background of prisoners](#)

Amnesty International reported that “Iran’s disadvantaged ethnic minorities, including Ahwazi Arabs, Azerbaijani Turks, Balochis, Kurds and Turkmen, remained subject to entrenched discrimination, curtailing their access to employment, adequate housing, political office, and their exercise of cultural, civil and political rights. Continued economic neglect of minority populated regions by state authorities further entrenched poverty and the marginalization of ethnic minorities. Members of minorities who spoke out against violations of their political, cultural and linguistic rights faced arbitrary arrest, torture and other ill-treatment, grossly unfair trials, imprisonment, and in some cases the death penalty”. (Amnesty International 2017)

The United Nations reported<sup>39</sup> that “as January 2014, at least 50 ethnic rights defenders, 28 civic and cultural activists and 200 ethnic political activists were reported detained or imprisoned, many convicted of association with armed opposition groups. Sources challenge the legality of these detentions and convictions, alleging torture and denial of fair trial standards for a majority of these individuals”. (UN 2014)

Of different cases under the study of the “Freedom from Torture”, “only one was detained and tortured in relation to perceived religious dissent in the post-2009 period. In a few other cases,

---

<sup>39</sup> “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran”, released by the UN General Assembly (A/HRC/25/61) on 13 March 2014.

where the individual had not identified themselves as Christian or as having an active interest in conversion, they reported that security officials had found Christian materials among their personal possessions when their house was searched, which they believed subsequently impacted negatively on their treatment in detention”. (Freedom from Torture 2013)

Freedom from Torture stated that “torture has been used against people on the basis of their ethnicity, religion, political beliefs, or for behaviour that transgresses Iranian social or moral norms. Five of the nine who reported that their ethnic minority profile and activities were linked to their detention and torture were of Arab ethnicity, and the remaining four were of Kurdish ethnicity. All nine were active on ethnic minority issues in Iran, and some also cited support for, or membership of, organisations deemed separatist groups by the Iranian government” (Freedom from Torture 2017)

## **Methodological considerations:**

### **The objects of the study and methodological design:**

The objects that I put under the study in my research were both non-human and human elements. Therefore, my research was conducted in two main parts when it comes to the core study work, as it follows:

#### Desk review:

To better understand and get a picture of how the situation of political prisoners is in the Iranian places of detention, how they are treated, what methods and patterns are used in tortures and ill-treatments of these prisoners, first, I needed to carry out desk reviews and study existing literature and materials that were available. These materials (*objects of the study*) varied from news, statements, resolutions, reports, letters, available documented, testimonies to other sources available on the internet as well as printed sources. For this purpose, I had already a list of literature which I later updated and expand and used it for analysis of the available literature about the study. Later, I put the results from the desk review altogether with the results from interviews for final analysis.

I would claim that without a good desk review and study of secondary data, it could not have been easy for me to formulate **Appendix II: Interview Guide/Questionnaire**. Indeed, what is so interesting, is the fact that finding of this study from the interviews I conducted, verifies findings from the previous reports/studies and vice versa.

It must be noted that I read many pieces of news, reports and testimonies about arrest, detention, torture and ill-treatment of detainees/prisoners in Iran, many of which (especially when it comes to the Iranian sources) lacked details about the issue of treatment of detainees. Many of these sources have generally spoken about civil/political activists, with many other details in forms of news, but many lacked information about the issue of treatment. Even if the information is available, it could be such as, for example, “the detainee was beaten/tortured...”. This type of general information could simply not be used as they lacked quality details.

The United Nations sources, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Freedom from Torture and so on provide very good amount of data/information about the treatment of political

prisoners in Iran, a summary of which I have brought in the desk review part of the current study.

The analysis of the desk review work provided basic and good amount of qualitative data which I later cross-checked with the findings from conducted interviews, findings of which were consistent with the results from interviews.

#### Interviews:

To achieve the purpose of this study and be able to hear direct voices of the victims, I conducted direct interviews through Skype (video calls) with 18 former political prisoners from Iran, who were arrested, detained/prisoned due to their civil/political activities and have been subject to torture.

Prior to contacting my sources for possible interview candidates, and after I carried out the desk review, I consulted with my academic advisor and others, and studied the international standard and tools related to the treatment of detainees/prisoners (a summary of which has been brought in the Section **Theoretical Framework**, and so could develop **Appendix II: Interview Guide/Questionnaire**), parts of which I shared with each interviewee before the interviews. I used it as a guideline while I was conducting interviews.

I have worked in Afghanistan in 2011-2012, as the ICRC Protection Delegate and responsible for an office there and was in charge of visiting places of detention and interviewing the detainees. I have expertise, practical knowledge and experiences in documenting torture and different forms of ill-treatment. This technical background helped me a lot in conducting quality interviews. In introducing myself to my contacts and the interviewees, I referred to my occupational history relevant to my study, and that proved to be very helpful in catching trust of the interviewees a lot. The matter of torture in Iran is very sensitive, and not many would be willing to speak about it to others. I had also got introduction letter for this study from the University of Bergen that I shared with the interviewees in advance. I knew that a very well-developed questionnaire/interview form together with solid and good interview techniques as well as inter-personal skills can maximize the quality and quantity of data/information one expects to gain through interviews. By no means, I intended to restrict myself and participants to the framework of the questionnaire, even though this made some interviews to happen not just once but as some continued in a few sessions. The questionnaire was made in a way to

maintain *open-ended questions* and enough *flexibility* to let participants speak out about their experiences. My interview techniques proved to be working.

As mentioned above, I conducted interviews with 18 former political prisoners, all of whom are now residing outside Iran. In addition, I interviewed one Iranian (the Interviewee number 3; converted from Islam to Christianity) who was interrogated three times by the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence (MOIS) but was not detained. I did not include his case into the statistics/analysis since all other cases were detained in the Iranian Interrogation Services' places of detention. I just included a summary of his treatment during interrogations he faced, in the **Appendix I: A summary of applied tortures on each interviewee**, just to provide a glimpse of what can also happen when people are just interrogated, something which frequently happens to many activists in Iran.

I had planned to run at least 32 interviews with 32 political prisoners. This did not become possible as I contacted many sources, some of whom promised to introduce cases for interview, but I could not hear from them even after sending reminders.

I am human rights activist who is founding and managing member of a human rights non-governmental organization which is called Association for the Human Rights of the Azerbaijani People in Iran (AHRAZ)<sup>40</sup>. Our organization is based in Norway and prepares, updates and releases news and reports about the situation of arrestees, detainees and prisoners at Iranian places of detention, who belong to the Azerbaijani Turkic population residing in Iran. AHRAZ is also a member of Iran Impact<sup>41</sup>, a coalition of 17 human rights organizations that work around human rights issues in Iran, in close collaboration with international human rights organizations such as the United Nations and others. AHRAZ also actively participates in the OHCHR's Forums on Minority Issues<sup>42</sup> annually and reports to the United Nations. Therefore, I have access to many reliable human rights sources who could introduce candidates for interviewees that I conducted for this study. As such, I received help from my colleagues from AHRAZ who connected me with various human rights organizations. A member of AHRAZ was also interviewed. Another interviewee who sends updates to AHRAZ was interviewed. Other

---

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.ahraz.org/>

<sup>41</sup> <http://impactiran.org/members/>

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Minority/Pages/Session10.aspx>

interviewees belonging to the Azerbaijani Turkic populations in Iran were introduced through AHRAZ and its contacts. Ahwaz Human Rights Organization (AHRO)<sup>43</sup> introduced interview candidates who belong to the Arab populations from Iran. Association for Human Rights in Kurdistan of Iran-Geneva (KMMK-G)<sup>44</sup> introduced people who connected us to the candidates for interview from the Kurdish populations from Iran. Human Rights for Turkmen Sahra (TUHRA)<sup>45</sup> who works in close collaboration with the Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA)<sup>46</sup>, introduced a candidate for interview from the Balochi populations from Iran. Amnesty International<sup>47</sup>, Norway Branch, introduced a female candidate for interview with lawyer background who later introduced another female candidate who was interviewed. An Iranian journalist who is Middle East and North Africa Advisor to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)<sup>48</sup> introduced another candidate for interview.

Indeed, it took substantial amount of time and energy to find interviewees for planned interviews. I had planned to interview those former prisoners who were also engaged mainly in women rights, labour rights, or were from Baha'i religious community, or some of those converted from Islam to Christianity and so on to have enough diversity concerning the political, ethnic or religious backgrounds of the study samples. This proved to be not easy. I did my outmost and at the end I could only interview 19 persons. I did not reject anybody for interviews for my current study by any means. Indeed, I contacted Baha'i sources and women rights activist sources and received initial responses. However, I could not get names for interviews from these sources at the end. After consultation with some lawyers from Iran, I received names of some activists who are now residing in Iran, who I contacted for interviews, but what I received was very short histories of their arrest and detention/imprisonment, with very poor details about their treatment in the places of detention. Therefore, I could not include these pieces of information into my analysis/study, either. I consulted some Iranian lawyers as

---

<sup>43</sup> <http://ahwazhumanrights.org/en/>

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.kmmk-ge.org/>

<sup>45</sup> <http://tuhra.org/>

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.en-hrana.org/?en-hra>

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/norway/>

<sup>48</sup> <https://cpj.org/>

well the Amnesty International Office in Oslo and so got good pieces of advice that were useful for my study.

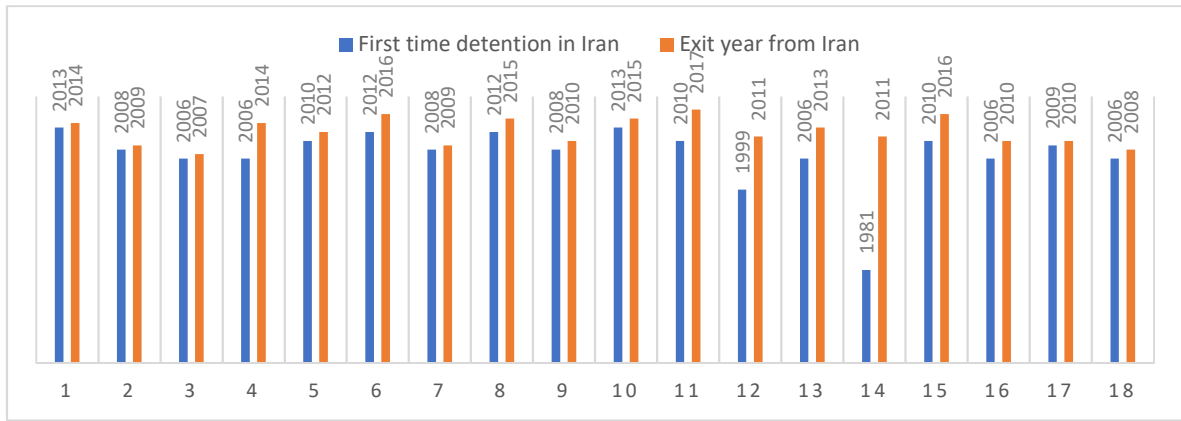
Interviews were in-depth analytic, seeking not only information about treatment, methods and patterns of torture, commonalities and differences, or determining factors in making differences, but also there was focus on finding out about possible reasons behind tortures, derived from the interviewees' own experiences and knowledge, and in comparison with the findings from international sources.

Totally, I conducted 55.5 hours of interviews through 29 Skype sessions (approximately 3 hours per interviewee, ranging from 2 hours up to 5 hours and 40 minutes), some of which were completed in a series of sessions in different days.

Out of the 19 interviewees, just two of them wanted to be anonymous. Others wanted their names to be mentioned. Nevertheless, I removed names of some of those interviewees, where I understood that there would be some pieces of sensitive information that should not be publicized with names.

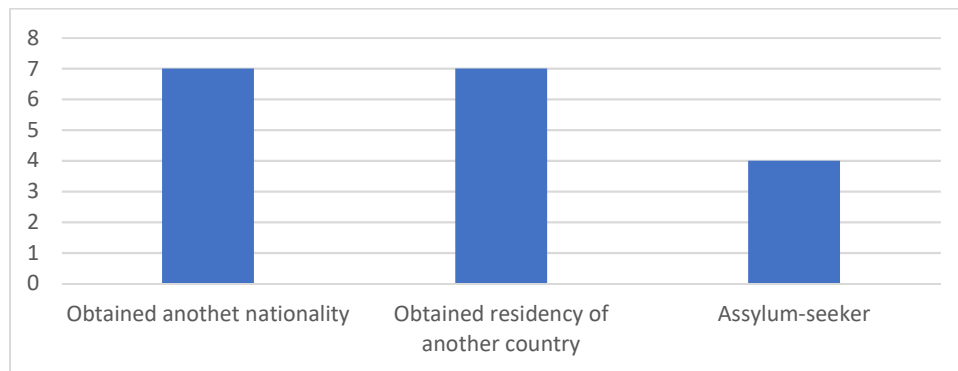
Participants were all political prisoners (as defined by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe; please see the Section **Theoretical Framework**), majority of whom were either university students, or held higher university degrees or higher positions. These former political prisoners were civil/political activists, with a couple of exceptions. The Interviewee 10 was a religious activist and the Interviewee 17 was just an ordinary street protester against racism who was not initially an activist and had no record of previous activism.

My study samples were not old cases, as the figure below shows. There were only two cases whose arrest/detention date go back to 1981 and 1999. The other cases were detained from 2006 up to the year 2013. Many of the interviewees had to flee the country after their release while some others had to stay in Iran and later decided to flee the country. This is shown in the figure 1:



**Figure 1: Time of first detention & exit from Iran per interviewee**

The figure below shows the interviewees' current status. 77.7% of the interviewees have either got another nationality or have obtained residency of other countries. Only 4 interviewees are now asylum-seekers residing in another countries. The below figure shows their status:



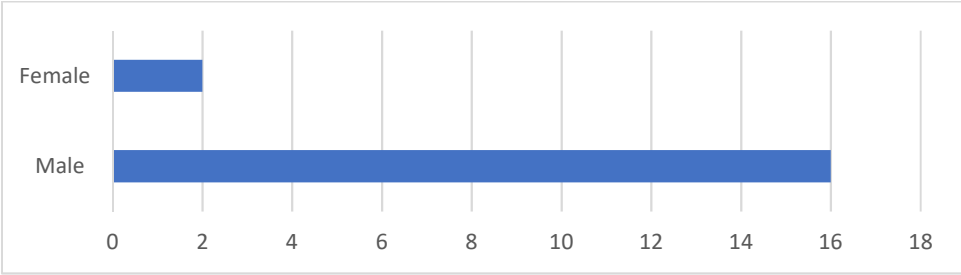
**Figure 2: Number of interviewees per their current status**

It was very difficult to get female interviewees to keep gender balance. I contacted many sources to get female candidates for interviews, but it proved to be very difficult. I would say this can be due to two reasons, as follow:

First, when it concerns activism, it is still male-dominant in Iran, even though there are good numbers of female activists now, but still it is disproportionate. Secondly, it may seem that many female activists are reluctant, due to several reasons, to unveil unpleasant and disturbing details of their treatment. I would suggest that if such interviews can be carried out by expert female researchers in future and see if this would make changes/effects.

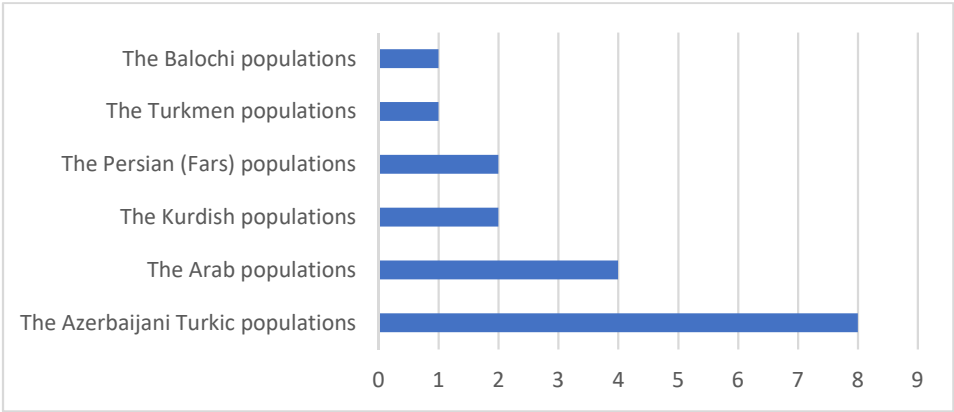


I could only interview two female formerly political prisoners to whom I need to express my gratitude, who provided valuable information. Making gender balance in such studies might be a challenge, indeed. The below figure shows the composition of interviewees in terms of their gender:

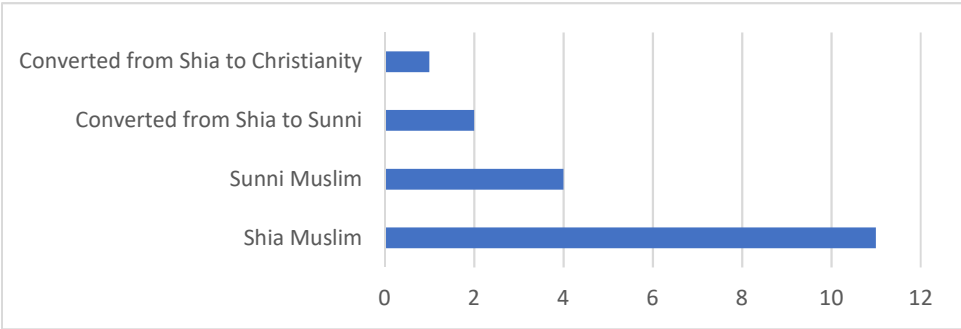


**Figure 3: Number of interviewees per gender group**

The below figures show composition of the interviewees in terms of their ethnic and religious backgrounds.



**Figure 4: Number of interviewees per ethnic population**



**Figure 5: Number of interviewees per religious background**

Indeed, I did not put any limit on how many I would interview from the represented ethnic/religious populations. These numbers are indeed those I got introduced to interview, not selected. No candidate from any ethnic, religious, or political populations were rejected. This composition only shows how many I got opportunity to interview. Indeed, there were some candidates who did not want to be interviewed due to their previous negative experiences of being interviewed, something I had to respect. As mentioned before, getting candidates for interviews is very time-consuming and challenging. Without help from my colleagues from AHRAZ and other human rights non-governmental organizations and friends who connected me to many other networks of activists, I would not be able to get opportunity of getting know fabulous interviewees who generously and honestly shared their hard stories with me to document them for the purpose of this study.

Conducted interviews provided both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data obtained from interviews were cross-checked with the data from desk review. Quantitative data, out of statistics, provided a picture of how some determining factors could make differences in the way political prisoners are treated.

Throughout the interviews, there have been cases of visible emotional reflections from the side of some interviewees who got affected by reminding those unpleasant memories from their detention/imprisonment/post-detention periods in Iran. I was careful not to make damages of any kind which could have been inflicted on the interviewees because of interviews. For many interviewees, the interviews were kind of psychological debriefing as well. A few of the interviewees said that they were also engaged in interviewing activists from Iran regarding torture/ill-treatment of political prisoners. They said the interviews conducted through this study were educational for them, something which gave me more confidence in continuing the research. This is even though, I asked for feedback from each and every interviewee, all of which were both encouraging and constructive.

As mentioned before, the interviews were conducted through Skype video-calls. There were only two cases who wished only voice-calls through Skype. Therefore, face-to-face interviews were important for me, but when interviewees asked for just voice interviews, then I respected it. Before each interview, I gave a good introduction of the subject of the study, purposes behind, a brief introduction of myself as the researcher, and gave information about the fact that their participation was voluntarily and that they would remain known or anonymous, the way they wished. There were only two interviewees who wanted to be anonymous. However, due

to sensitivities of some pieces of information, I had to make some more interviewees anonymous, also.

Throughout the whole process, frequent meetings with, advices and follow-ups from my academic advisor for this thesis proved to be both encouraging and very helpful in conducting this study.

#### Data collection and availability:

In collecting data, I did not face big challenges, because I could review plenty of reports and information through the desk review, as mentioned above. I could also get large amounts of data and information that I obtained through 19 in-depth interviews. Data availability was not such big challenge, even though both desk review and interviews took much energy and time. This is while the available information on torture and ill-treatment, through news and reports, were not *disaggregated* well by sex, ethnicity, religion, and so on. Indeed, my study provided some disaggregated information in this field. Throughout the process, I consulted and got advice from my academic adviser, my network, organizations, institutions and other individuals concerned.

#### Validity and reliability of data:

To increase validity of data and information, I attempted to use multiple sources such as through a review of available data and information (desk review), interview with 18 former political prisoners as well as consultations with other human rights activists and organizations, used my own experiences with the Iranian Intelligence Ministry (MOIS) and my relevant occupational experiences from the past. Moreover, I attempted to use reliable sources such as the United Nations sources, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Freedom from Torture and so on. I also checked as much as possible to contact reliable human rights organizations and activists who could introduce to me reliable candidates for interviews. During interviews, I noticed that the interviewees demonstrated a great sense of honesty, in a way that they could say what they actually experienced and what they did not experience. I was repeating questions directly and indirectly and so checked their accuracy in telling about the truth. I can say that the sources and data obtained are reliable and results presented are stable and consistent. I myself was interrogated and threatened to the big extent by the Iranian security apparatus in 2010, have gone through PTSD and have been after years interviewed by the United Nations, as I wished

to contribute to the UN's research. Therefore, I know that there are many activists who have lost a lot in their lives and so they would not gain much by telling the untrue.

The empirical results demonstrated and illustrated (numerically in percentage) in the PART I: Physical tortures: and PART II: Psychological tortures sections are indicative, and they may change (in percentage) if the composition of interviewees' backgrounds/profiles change regarding their ethnicity, religion, gender and so on. In the section PART III: Determining factors that may make difference in the type/intensity of tortures applied:, I have listed some determining factors that can affect application of torture by perpetrators, something which can change the results both in terms of percentage as well some other new torture methods may come up with new studies of such type. Moreover, the general results mentioned in the Section **Concluding Remarks:** can be generalized to other similar settings and therefore can still be valid in other similar studies.

The political and/or religious background of political prisoners (18 interviewees) are independent variables, while torture is dependent variable. My intention was not to measure<sup>49</sup> the degree of torture/ill-treatment that each political prisoner had experienced and then to compare them, but rather I tried to find out in what sense their treatment looked like/differed from each other. In other words, which methods and patterns of torture/ill-treatment were applied commonly to all political prisoners and which ones were applied differently, and ultimately tried to find out about possible reasons behind torture.

#### Analysis of data:

Analysis of data both from desk review and from interviews were categorised in three parts, in line with the subject of this study, namely 1) to come out with commonalities of tortures and patterns of torture and ill-treatment of political prisoners, 2) find out possible differences in treatments, and 3) finally the reasons behind these tortures. These three parts are reflected at the end of the **Literature review** as well as in the Sections **Empirical Analysis** and **Concluding Remarks:**. In order to better analyse data that were obtained from interviews, I made a summary of both physical and psychological tortures that each and every interviewee had experienced (which can be found at the **Appendix I: A summary of applied tortures on each interviewee**). This could provide me with both qualitative and quantitative data as well as disaggregated data per

---

<sup>49</sup> This is a very technical issue and I simply do not possess the expertise required. Other available tools for measuring extent of torture (quantitative and Non-medically-based) are very general and increase risk of generalization. Therefore, I avoided it.

ethnicity, religion and gender of the interviewees. These summaries per interviewee provided data for analysis of commonalities and differences in treatment of political prisoners. The in-depth discussions and dialogue with each interviewee about the possible reasons behind tortures that were obtained through interviews were also classified and presented as findings.

## **Empirical Analysis:**

First, I had come to the results from the desk review, a summary of which is presented in the Section Literature review. This first step was very essential and helped me a lot in understanding the situation around torture in Iran, before I developed Appendix II: Interview Guide/Questionnaire. Literature review provided me with already documented references about torture. However, after conducting 19 interviews, I obtained very large amounts of data and information about the subject of this study. One of the interviewees (The interviewee number 3) was just interrogated several times and was not detained. Therefore, I did not include his case in my statistics, simply because he did not experience torture while he was detained/prisoned. This was for accuracy of results. The summarized forms of tortures that each interviewee had experienced (Please see the **Appendix I: A summary of applied tortures on each interviewee**) while being kept in the places of detention, made it possible to extract statistics and see how many of the sample study (out of 18 interviewees) were exposed to different forms of tortures. The **Appendix I: A summary of applied tortures on each interviewee** is very important and provided me with necessary input for the analysis work, descriptive results of which are shown below in this section:

### **PART I: Physical tortures:**

The first summary of tortures to be presented is about physical tortures. The table in the next page shows percentage of the studied sample who experienced each form of physical tortures. This table made it possible to find out which form of physical torture is applied almost on all political prisoners. With disaggregated data available (per ethnicity, religion and gender background of each interviewee), it was also possible to find and suggest possible differences in application of physical torture and their possible relations to the ethnic and/or religious background of political prisoners.

The percentages shown in the table are indicative and they may change if the composition of interviewees' backgrounds/profiles change regarding their ethnicity, religion, gender and so on. Later in the section PART III: Determining factors that may make difference in the type/intensity of tortures applied, I have listed some determining factors that are involved in application of torture by perpetrators, something which can change the results.

	<b>Type of the physical torture experienced</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
1	Blunt force trauma	94.4% (35.2% of which were applied using various beating devices; 88.2% of whom were beaten while being blindfolded)
2	Positional torture	55.5
3	Harmful stretches	33.3
4	Forced exercises	27.7
5	Pharmacological torture	16.6
6	Crush injuries <sup>50</sup>	16.6% (5.5% of which ended in complete broken bones)
7	Sexual violence/assault	11.1
8	Electric shocks	5.5
9	Burns	5.5
10	Number of the interviewees who reported physical tortures that were experienced by other inmates	50

***Table 1: Percentage of the sample population (out of 18 detainees<sup>51</sup>) that experienced various physical tortures***

The table above shows results in relation to the physical tortures that the sample population had experienced. Below analytical explanations for each form of physical tortures are presented:

**Blunt force trauma:**

Blunt force trauma is the main and widely used type of physical torture. 94.4% of all interviewees reported experiencing various forms of blunt force trauma. Only one case, the interviewee number 7 reported not being tortured physically. He indeed reported being physically assaulted, but gently as to impose humiliation, something which did not necessarily amounted to pain. The reason claimed by this interviewee was proposed to be that maybe those detainees who are widely known (possess larger network) and/or may hold higher official posts may not be exposed to physical torture but are rather exposed to higher degree of psychological tortures. Freedom from Torture’s Report on Iran indicated that their sample study showed 100% of cases reporting this type of torture (2017), something which is almost consistent with the findings of the current study. However, my study shows that there can be rare possibilities for very low exceptions, approximately 5-6 % of the detainees who may not be exposed to physical

<sup>50</sup> To detainees (interviewees 11 & 13) experienced forms of torture, equivalent to crush injuries that did not end in real crushes, but harmful pains/injuries as if finger bones are being crushed.

<sup>51</sup> 83.3% of whom were interrogated, and tortured while being blindfolded.

torture, where specific profile of the detainee may be a determining factor. This needs to be further examined with similar in-depth studies in future.

The main forms of blunt force trauma inflicted included, but not limited to mostly sustained assaults by punching, slapping, and kicking. Other forms also included hitting the head on firm surfaces, tapping on the head, pinching the skin of the body or ears, squeezing the head or neck forcefully, sudden forced pushes forward from backside while the detainee walks or sitting on the interrogation table that resulted in the body parts hitting the wall or firm surfaces, as well as hitting pen or keys on the head or shoulders, hitting the head, waist or other parts of the body with bended fingers or elbow.

The studied cases reported being beaten or assaulted on all parts of the body, including face, head, neck, stomach, legs, arms, ears, feet, sole of the feet, waist, hands, chest, back, and buttocks. In one case (interviewee 17), harsh blunt force trauma resulted in crush injury, while in some others they resulted in swellings, sudden and/or sustained pains. In some cases, blunt force trauma resulted in bleedings from nose, ears because of harsh slapping, as well as bleeding rapture on waist, or bleeding sole of the feet and back due to whipping or beating with other instruments.

Many interviewees reported that torturers are more cautious not to cause severe physical harms/death to the detainees, traces or results of which may not be removed/hided easily, even though almost all forms of the blunt force trauma caused severe sudden and/or sustained pain or accumulated stress, unrest and anxiety. However, this is not the case when the detainees are beaten severely with various instruments, as it is explained below:

Six detainees (35.02% of the interviewees) were exposed to severe beatings with variety of blunt instruments such as cable, baton, hard plastic hose, whips, wooden sticks, and butt stock. Of these cases beaten with instruments, 50% reported being fastened to a bed (usually referred to as “the Torture Bed”) while being beaten (sustained position). As an example, the interviewee 13 said that he was fastened on his belly on a bed (called by the interrogators as “the Curing Bed”, indeed the torture bed) and was beaten with a thick cable on the sole of feet while a recorded voice of Quran was broadcasted, accompanied with hits on the head and face. After it, the detainee was forced to stand on his feet and so torturer pressed detainee’s feet fingers with his shoes and hit the sole of feet with sponge sandals. They made the detainee’s feet wet after this. The detainee could not walk afterwards. Significantly, five out of six detainees who were exposed to harsh beatings with instruments were either Sunnis or those converted from Shia to



Sunni, belonging to various ethnic populations. Considering that totally six interviewees had Sunni as their religious background, this statistic may propose a pattern that Sunnis or those converted from Shia to Sunni are highly vulnerable to harsh beatings with various instruments. This is while some of these cases had secular backgrounds (something which they said may not make difference when it comes to torturing persons belonging to religious minorities) or had shifted from Shia to Sunni as a political objection to Shia ruling.

Another pattern shows that detainees who are detained and interrogated in Tehran, for example in Evin Prison (including those from Tehran), are less vulnerable to harsh physical tortures than those who are detained and interrogated in detention centres far from the capital city, Tehran. Even though the intensity of the psychological tortures might be higher in Evin Prison, as claimed by those detainees who are originally from Tehran. This is debatable and needs to be tested against more samples. In my study, there is an exception (interviewee number 15) whose detention goes far back to 1981. This interviewee who herself was a lawyer claimed that intensity of physical tortures back to the older decades, especially the 1980s and 1990s was very high and considerable, something which cannot be compared to those of the recent couple of decades, as in the recent decade more focus is put on psychological tortures than physical.

Most of the detainees who were exposed to blunt force trauma (88.2%) were tortured while being blindfolded. This could maximize both the physical and psychological effects (fears and stress) of the tortures inflicted as the detainees could not defend themselves or could not be prepared for any physical assault. Some detainees were handcuffed or fastened (sustained) while being beaten, limiting their physical body movements. Beating and other forms of physical torture reported to be mainly carried out during their first days or weeks of the interrogation while their frequency per day or month may decrease later as time goes, or after interrogation period is over. This is though some detainees reported being tortured immediately after their arrival at the interrogation centre without being interrogated or being sometimes beaten in their cells without specific reason or without any interrogation. Interviewee 5 said that he was brutally beaten and was taken back to the solitary confinement at the previous interrogation centre because his complaint letter about tortures was discovered and confiscated by the Karun-e-Ahvaz prison authorities. Interviewees said that they experienced blunt trauma force if they refused to give information or did not want to speak against their friends/co-activists, confess/write about what they were asked for by their interrogators/torturers. Some interviewees also said that they were beaten because their interrogators said that they had lied and had not spoken about truth and therefore they were religiously punished for their lies

(religious justification). As a pattern, the intensity and frequency of blunt trauma force was very high during the first day/weeks of the detention and interrogation, but later as the time passed, their intensity and frequency decreased and was replaced by more psychological tortures/abuses. This pattern applies to those who were detained and interrogated in other cities rather than Tehran. Interviewees also reported various types of blunt trauma force that were experienced by their inmates or other detainees.

### **Positional torture:**

Over half of the studied cases (55.5%) reported being tortured while being positioned in difficult conditions or fastened to something such as bed or metal bars that made body movements very difficult or almost impossible. Two interviewees also reported various types of positional torture that were experienced by their inmates or other detainees. Number of detainees who were subject to this type of the physical torture is considerable (the rank two in the Table 1: Percentage of the sample population (out of 18 detainees) that experienced various physical tortures).

### **Harmful stretches:**

One third of the sample cases (33.3%) reported being subject to harmful stretches such as grabbing and pulling the head hair forcibly, twisting arms and hands, grabbing ears and stretching them, lifting the handcuffed arms from backside upward, stretching the detainee's fingers backwards, and so on. According to these detainees, this form of physical torture was applied while the interrogators/torturer was angry, and/or it was used for humiliation. Even though all these cases relate to the Azerbaijani or Turkmen Turkic populations, no clear ethnically-related pattern can be suggested to this form of torture, rather it may suggest relatively higher probability of occurrence of such form in the interrogation centres in Tabriz, for example.

### **Forced exercises:**

Less than one third of the studied cases (27.7%) reported being subject to various forms of prolonged and forced exercises such as frog jumps, sit down – stand up exercises, creeping on hard surfaces or on stairs, lifting heavy items overhead. Most of the reported cases (four out of five cases) were imposed on the detainees while being under interrogation, and only one case was conducted as disciplinary punishment in Evin Prison (related to the interviewee 15). The

main reason behind this form of torture was humiliation of the detainee, as claimed by the interviewees.

### **Pharmacological torture:**

One sixth (16.6%) of the studied cases reported being subject to pharmacological tortures. These detainees experienced periods of horrible and disturbing visual hallucinations, to the amount that one detainee (interviewee number 2) thought that he had got Schizoaffective disorders. The detainees also reported annoying physical side-effects such as insomnia, anorexia, constipation, bloody urination and so on. Considerably, three out of four detainees who spent over 90 days in solitary confinement reported being subject to this form of physical torture. Even though, one detainee with Azerbaijani Turkic background and two others with Arab background reported this type, no clear pattern related to ethnicity can be suggested for this type of torture. The only conclusion that can be suggested is that those detainees who spend a longer period in solitary confinement are more vulnerable to experience pharmacological torture than others. Some interviewees also reported that pharmacological tortures are being used more than before. However, these suggestions and claims need to be tested against with more studies of this type, I would suggest.

### **Crush injuries:**

One sixth (16.6%) of the studied cases reported being subject to the types of injuries that either produced very harsh and amounted pain as if bones are crushed or it resulted in real broken bones. Two out of the three cases reported that interrogators put pen(s) between fingers and squeezed them against each other harshly and forcibly (so-called “Pen Method”), something which caused higher amount of feelings as if finger bones were crushing. One detainee reported being hit by ruler on the top of his finger bones that produced similar feelings. Another detainee (the interviewee 17) was kicked very badly on the bones of his legs, something that caused him loose his balance and fall on his hands (while being blindfolded) that at the end resulted in broken and swollen elbow and arm bones. This caused interruption of the interrogation and his immediate release without medical care. However, all the three cases suggest that the real intention behind these exercises were not indeed to cause crush injuries, but rather to produce higher amounts of pains. Even though crush injuries were apparently more prevalent before in the previous decades, for example in Evin Prison, as it was witnessed by the Interviewee 15.

**Sexual violence/assault:**

One female interviewee reported that her interrogator attempted very close physical proximity while she was sitting on the interrogation chair. It was limited to actions such as the interrogator rubbing himself to the detainee from backside while the detainee was sitting on the interrogation chair. Another male detainee, the interviewee 17, was forced to perform harsh anal penetration of a pen, being interrogated in such position and then was forced to take it out and lick it. The detainee was told by his interrogator that this amount of huge humiliation was meant to give a lesson to the detainee that performing political/civil demonstrations against the regime is like eating own's faeces. This interviewee reported that many others who were captured during the same event/demonstrations were also humiliated, being exposed to the same sexual violence method. The interviewee 4 also reported that another detainee, a boy from his neighbouring cell was several times raped brutally in his cell. This shows that both female and male detainees are vulnerable to sexual violence/assault.

This form of the torture is a huge taboo, something which was not easy to be discussed during the interviews. Therefore, there could be possibility of unreported cases of such form of the torture.

**Electric shocks:**

Only one detainee (interviewee 10) reported being tortured with electric shocks on his neck, something that caused burn-like feelings and senselessness of his body.

**Burns:**

Only one detainee (interviewee 11) reported being tortured by being exposed of his hand skin to the burnt matchsticks several times during interrogation, something which caused huge pains.

**Reports about others being tortured physically:**

Half of the interviewees (50%) reported that they either were directly exposed to other detainees/inmates being physically tortured, or that later they heard their stories about physical tortures while they got opportunity to talk to other inmates.

## PART II: Psychological tortures

The second summary of tortures to be presented here is about psychological tortures. The table below shows percentage of the studied sample who experienced each form of psychological tortures. This table made it possible to find out which form of psychological torture is applied almost on all political prisoners. With disaggregated data available (per ethnicity, religion and gender background of each interviewee), it was also possible to find and suggest possible differences in application of psychological tortures and their possible relations to the ethnic and/or religious background of political prisoners.

The percentages shown in the below table are indicative and they may change if the composition of interviewees' backgrounds/profiles change regarding their ethnicity, religion, gender and so on. Later in the section PART III: Determining factors that may make difference in the type/intensity of tortures applied:, I have listed some determining factors that are involved in application of torture by perpetrators, something which can change the results.

	<b>Type of the psychological torture experienced</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
1	Forced confessions	100 (16.6% of which were video-recorded)
2	Threats (of death/to family/of rape, etc.)	100
3	Harsh and abusive questioning of religious, ethnic/identity/political values	100
4	Humiliations (incl. harsh verbal abuses <sup>52</sup> )	100
5	Denial of medical care <sup>53</sup>	100
6	Extended psychological torture/abuse outside detention/prison	100 <sup>54</sup>
7	Solitary confinement	94.4 <sup>55</sup>
8	Other various psychological techniques	83.3
9	Forced betrayals	55
10	Sleep deprivations	38.8
11	Exposed to others being tortured	38.8
12	Simultaneous harmful interrogation of close family members	16.6
13	Forced labor at prison	11.11
14	Mock execution	5.5
15	Number of the interviewees who reported psychological tortures that were experienced by other inmates	55.5

***Table 2: Percentage of the sample population (out of 18 detainees) that experienced various psychological tortures***

<sup>52</sup> Including 77.7% of the interviewees who were exposed to various forms of harsh verbal abuses.

<sup>53</sup> Not all cases ended in need for medical care, but all those requiring medical care were denied.

<sup>54</sup> All of those interviewees not fleeing the country after the release were exposed to various harmful abuses imposed by the Intelligence Services outside detention.

<sup>55</sup> Only one interviewee was not detained at solitary confinement due to the extreme overcrowding at Evin Prison, because all available solitary confinement cells were used for crowd (group) detentions.

The table above shows results in relation to the psychological tortures that the sample population had experienced. Below analytical explanations for each form of psychological tortures are presented:

### **Forced confessions:**

All the interviewees (100%) were forced to false confessions that is a very common used method during interrogations. The detainees were forced to write as much as possible and sign/fingerprint them during most of their interrogation period. Arash, the interviewee 14, reported that he was forced for such practices beyond the interrogation period, even at prison and after his release as a regular practice. The interrogator had pressed his fingers on the written confession papers so hardy, forcibly and continuously that he started to feel that his fingers and hands were not any longer his own.

The interviewees reported that some of them had to write and sign as much as hundreds of pages up to approximately 800 pages. For some of these detainees, it took almost a few days to be able to sign all pages that they had written under pressure and force. Some of the detainees were also forced to sign repentance letter to indicate that they felt deep regret about their political/civil activities and that they would not repeat such activities again after their release. Some were also given false promises for lighter court orders/less punishments, early releases, permitted sleep, or being saved from imminent threats such as death or execution if they confessed as they were told by their interrogators. A few interviewees were also forced to sign blank/unread papers. One detainee was forced to sign a letter about “Lack of Cooperation” with his interrogators.

Three interviewees reported that their forced confession sessions were video-recorded (16.6% of the cases). Out of these three, two interviewees reported that their video-recorded forced confessions were assembled, fabricated and was shown on TV for the public manipulation. Moreover, one detainee claimed that he was harshly beaten and forced for video-recording of false confessions, but he resisted and so could scape this practice.

In many cases, the interviewees were tortured and forced for betrayals to write names of their friends, co-activists and others as well as write and sign against them, claiming false accusations on others.

**Threats:**

All the interviewees (100%) reported being subject to various types of threats during their interrogation, at court and even during their post-detention period after release. This is just very common method of torture. These threats varied very much and included many types, but not limited to the following:

Threats to death, to execution/death penalty, to expose close family members to various risks (for example, rape of family members or bringing family members to the interrogation centre for tortures), to rape/sexual assaults, for impossibility of the work permit after release (to miss the right to work), to very long imprisonments and/or life imprisonment, to severe tortures such as suspension, to heavier false/fabricated accusations against detainees, to sleep deprivations, to Islamic punishments such as amputation of hand and leg, to beatings with cable/whipping, to be banned from university study (to miss the right to study), to ban on family visits, and so on.

The threats were made and imposed by the interrogators/torturers, but it was also made by prosecutors or judges, sometimes. Close family members of some interviewees were also threatened and interrogated at their working place, or their families were threatened not to release any information about whereabouts of their beloveds to the outside. In one case, the interviewee 2 was threatened for insertion of needles into his fingers after he demanded medical care to test if he was saying right about the fact that his fingers had become senseless because of exposure to severe tortures.

Threats were mainly made to obtain false confessions or extract information required. Threats were also imposed to create an atmosphere of excessive fear for the detainees' submission to their interrogators/torturers. It was also made to limit detainees' movements/activities in the future after release for maximum control and avoidance of future civil/political activism.

**Harsh & abusive questioning/interrogation of religious, ethnic/identity/political values:**

All the interviewees (100%) were exposed to harsh and abusive questioning of/interrogation about their thoughts and values. According to the interviewees, this type of questioning was like inquisition, through which the interviewees' religious, or ethnic/identity, and/or political views and stands were harshly questioned. It was mainly to impose/induce dubiety on their values, thoughts, beliefs, or point of views. According to the interviewees, longer questionings, debates, complicated, repeated and confusing and abusive nature of questions around the

interviewees' values, beliefs or thoughts were directed to induce that their stands and values were wrong, or priceless. Lengthy interrogations of this type were also to induce hopelessness about the interviewees' or their co-activists' civil/political activism. Interrogators attempted to force the interviewees to accept that their activism, values or beliefs were wrong and that they must not continue to have such stands in the future after their release. Many interviewees were forced to sign repentance letters to admit their regret and deep sorrow over their civil/political stands/activism. According to the interviewees, this type of questioning was harsher than other types of tortures, simply because the interrogators tried to impose the ruling system's political/ideological cliché of thoughts and stands. This was very annoying and intolerable for the interviewees. The below table shows breakdown of a form of psychological torture; harsh and abusive questioning/interrogation targeting the interviewees' political/civil values, or ethnicity/ethnic related issues and/or their religion/religious values:

<b>Type of the psychological torture experienced</b>	<b>Breakdown</b>	<b>Percentage (%) of the detainees</b>
Harsh & abusive questioning/interrogation;	of political/civil values	94.4 <sup>56</sup>
	of ethnicity of the detainee/ethnic related issues	55 <sup>57</sup>
	of both religion and ethnicity of the detainee/ethnic related issues	16.6
	of only religion of the detainee/religious values	5.1

***Table 3: Breakdown of the psychological torture:***

***Harsh & abusive questioning/interrogation***

94.4% of the interviewees were exposed to harsh and abusive questioning of/interrogation about their civil/political thoughts, stands or activities. There is only one interviewee (number 10) who claimed that his interrogation was focused on his religious activism, something which was not necessarily political, in his view. However, all activities (be civil/political/ethnic/religious) which may challenge the ruling Iranian Islamic system are considered as the opposition that must be cracked down.

---

<sup>56</sup> This percentage (94.4%) overlaps with percentages (55% & 16.6%). It means those who were harshly and abusively questioned about their ethnicity/ethnic related issues or about both their religion and ethnicity, were also questioned about their political/civil values/stands.

<sup>57</sup> This percentage (55%) does not overlap with the percentages mentioned its below (16.6% and 5.1%). It means these percentages stand for their own.



55% of the interviewees (all of whom are from non-Fars ethnic population) claimed that harsh and abusive questioning/interrogation was targeted toward their ethnicity or was about ethnic/identity-related values, or about ethno-political thoughts or stands. Some of these interviewees experienced hard ideological arguments about their ethnic identity or values. Arash's interrogators was, for example, heavily engaged in inducing him to forcibly accept that his Azerbaijani Turkic identity and Azerbaijani land all were false and fake. Ethno-political stands and views of these interviewees were harshly debated and sometimes were humiliated (this issue will be further elaborated in the section "Humiliations"). Taha was forced to read book about Kurdish movement issues and give feedback on all details and his view on it.

16.6% of the interviewees (all of whom are from non-Fars and non-Shia populations) reported that harsh and abusive questioning/interrogation was targeted toward both their religion and ethnicity/ethnic-related issues.

5.5 % of the interviewees (only the interviewee 10) reported that harsh and abusive questioning/interrogation was targeted only toward his religion.

In short, the above-mentioned statistics and findings suggest that those detainees with non-Fars ethnic background who are engaged in the activities around ethnic/ethnically-related rights (or even those who were not activists, but only had publicly objected to the racial insults, as it was the case with the interviewee 17) are highly vulnerable to the harsh and abusive questioning of/arguments and debates about their ethnicity, ethnic identity and their ethno-political thoughts and stands. Targeted attempts were made by the interrogators to induce hopelessness and wrongness about these detainees' civil activism.

Those detainees with non-Shia background (or even those who had secular thoughts and so did not practice religion) are highly vulnerable to the harsh and abusive questioning of/arguments and debates about their religious values and thoughts. Attempts were sometimes made by the interrogators to persuade shift of the detainees' sect from Shia to Sunni.

### **Humiliations, including harsh verbal abuses:**

All interviewees (100%) reported being subject to various forms of humiliations, including harsh verbal abuses. This is a very common method of psychological tortures. Humiliations were either targeted at the detainees themselves personally, for example through very disrespectful inspections, or was directed at their friends/co-activists, or values, points of views, their ethnicity, ethno-political views, or their religion. For the Interviewee 7, physical assaults

that were not amounting to pain were performed by the interrogators at Evin Prison, not as physical torture, but rather as to humiliate him. Some others reported exposed to various forms of physical assaults that were amounting to higher unpleasant pains that were meant to be humiliating at the same time. Interviewee 16 was humiliated because of her not being able to regard perfect Hijab at prison. Interviewee 17 experienced very brutal and sexual humiliation as he was forced for anal penetration of pen while he was interrogated. He was then asked to lick the penetrated object. This was a sexual violence with huge humiliation that was also experienced by many others who had been arrested at the same demonstration that the interviewee had participated (please see the “*Sexual Violence/assault*” Section). The same interviewee and many of his co-detainees had to eat leftovers and bones thrown away by the guards, intentionally as humiliation, at Tabriz Police Station. Interestingly, some interviewees claimed that the interrogators/torturers were very sensitive about them saying some religious phrases or words out of the severe pains they had to endure due to physical tortures. These interviewees said that their torturers were not true believers/religious people as they themselves started to insult both the interviewees and holy religious figures, out of rage and anger over the interviewees who had asked for help from God or other religious figures while being tortured. This was very shocking to those of the interviewees who experienced this type of severe insults.

Many interviewees claimed that harsh verbal abuses and insults were very commonly used against them, their close family members, their co-activists, or others engaged in civil/political activities in an offensive way. This caused many to conclude that there would not have been any moral principles in detention centres.

50% of the interviewees reported that the interrogators directly humiliated their ethnicity, ethnic values, ethno-political stands, their co-activists and friends who were involved in civil activities around ethnic rights, as well they humiliated the country or autonomous region with the same ethnic origin. For example, interrogators humiliated the Republic of Azerbaijan or Nagorno-Karabakh territory when it came to the detainees with the Azerbaijani Turkic ethnic background or they humiliated the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq when it came to the detainees with the Kurdish ethnic background, all as provocative humiliating behaviours. The interrogators used the latter kind of humiliations through harsh debates while they were deeply involved in abusive questioning of the detainees’ ethnic values or their ethno-political views/stands.

Interrogators, torturers, guards or prison authorities performed humiliations either physically or through harsh and abusive questioning/interrogations, or by harsh verbal abuses.

77.7% of the interviewees were exposed to various forms of humiliations through harsh verbal abuses that were targeted either at their ethnicity, ethnic identity, ethno-political views and stands, or their religion, or their civil/political views and stands. This means a big part of humiliations were performed by using harsh verbal abuses.

The below table shows breakdown of a form of psychological torture; harsh verbal abuses targeting the interviewees’ ethnicity/ethnic related issues and/or their religion/religious values:

<b>Type of the psychological torture experienced</b>	<b>Breakdown</b>	<b>Percentage (%) of the detainees</b>
Harsh verbal abuses;	all types	77.7
	targeting ethnicity/ethnic related values of the detainee	33.3
	targeting religion and ethnicity of the detainee	16.6
	targeting only the religion of the detainee	5.5

**Table 4: Breakdown of the psychological torture: Harsh verbal abuses**

Three out of four detainees (77.7%) were exposed to various forms of harsh verbal abuses and insults. Many verbal abuses included disturbing sexually-contained insults to the detainees and/or their close family members. These insults were very harsh, abusive and offensive.

At least six detainees (33.3%) reported that the interrogators directly and clearly insulted their ethnic identity and background with very offensive, racist and insulting phrases directed at their ethnicity (as Arabs, Azerbaijani Turks, Balochis, Kurds, and Turkmen). In addition, other three detainees (16.6%) reported that interrogators/torturers insulted both their ethnicity and religious backgrounds (as Sunnis) with very harsh, racist, offensive and insulting phrases. Only one interviewee (5.5%) reported that the harsh verbal abuses directly and only targeted his religious background as Sunni. Half the interviewees (50%) reported that the interrogators/torturers insulted their co-activists, friends and other popular ethno-political figures who were involved in ethnic rights with harsh verbal abuses, as provocative acts.

In conclusion, the above-mentioned statistics and findings indicate that those detainees with non-Fars ethnic backgrounds who are engaged in the activities around ethnic/cultural/civil rights (or even those who were not activists, but only had publicly objected to the racial insults,

as it was the case with the interviewee 17) are highly vulnerable to the harsh verbal abuses directed to their ethnicity, ethnic identity and their ethno-political thoughts and stands.

Those detainees with non-Shia background (or even those who had secular thoughts and so did not practice religion) are vulnerable to the harsh verbal abuses directed at their religious origins.

### **Denial of medical care:**

Denial of medical care in various forms was a very common method applied to all the detainees who needed medical care. All of those who were tortured and so became injured, were denied of care. This applied to even the worst cases. For example, the interviewee 17 got crush injury on his elbow and arm with swollen muscles but was not provided with the medical care. Those who had chronic or other types of sicknesses experienced the same. The interviewee 16 was exposed to very unhygienic solitary confinement. This unpleasant physical condition became accompanied with the lack of access to bathing, underwear and other required hygienic items such as sanitary napkins, toothpaste and so on for a longer period. Therefore, she obtained very severe disturbing skin diseases such as scabies, severe infections and sores in the mouth, skin and legs. She was operated in a hospital only after almost a year when the condition became out of control. The interviewee 7 who was not exposed to beatings or other forms of physical torture had a record of serious health problems. His fragile health condition accompanied with huge psychological pressures/tortures and hunger strike faced denied of medical care, all of which resulted in 50% loss of vision and brain stroke, consequences of which the interviewee bears today. Daniyal, the interviewee 11, was provided with first aid (bandaged hand) only to stop bleeding hand after being subject to physical torture. Denial of care for bleeding ears after torture caused severe infection for Saleh, the interviewee 8, something that resulted in partial loss of hearing. Haray, the interviewee 12, who was detained with his father could not convince his interrogators to provide medical care for his father who could simply die because of very low blood pressure. His father was left fainted and senseless for hours before the interviewee's crying eyes.

Denial of medical care seems to be very serious practice and discipline that is imposed on all the detainees at all the detention centres, a kind of intentional and directed denial that has resulted in irreparable health/body damages for some of the interviewees. It is suggested that this form of torture is applied to inflict serious punishment over political detainees or to make civil/political activism very risky/costly.

### **Post-detention/post-prison harassment & psychological tortures:**

All those interviewees not fleeing the country after their release were systematically exposed to various harmful abuses or psychological tortures that were imposed by the Intelligence Services outside detention/prison after their release. Those fleeing the country after their release who were afraid of more retaliations and harassments outside the prison did not, of course, experience this type of abuses/tortures.

This type of systematic harassments/abuses or psychological tortures varied very much in diversity and meant to create a long-lasting atmosphere of control and fear over the political/civil activists/dissidents. It is also meant to deter any future risk to the system that might have caused due to civil and/or political activities or from any public gatherings/demonstrations.

Almost all the interviewees staying at the country after their release were under close surveillance. Their family members were also exposed to various forms of threats imposed by the security/intelligence apparatus, somethings which some claimed to continue as to date even now that they are residing in other countries as refugees. Some close family members missed their jobs because of the intelligence services putting pressure on their employees because of the interviewee's civil/political activism. Some family members were just threatened to miss their jobs because of their beloved ones. In one case, the interviewee 4, the intelligence services had gone so far to persuade his father-in-law to make his daughter get divorced from the interviewee. The interviewees claimed that their employers or business partners were threatened not to work with them after their release or dismiss them from their jobs. This caused them to miss their jobs. Only a few could later engage in some small private businesses of their own. Many were also banned to travel or continue to study after their release.

Some interviewees said that security agents/militia (*Basiji*) performed violent motor ride shows in front of their homes many times to terrorize the interviewee and his/her family. Some said that Intelligence Services cars were parked in front of their homes or working place to induce atmosphere of very close control and surveillance.

Many said that they were asked to go to the Intelligence Services Centre more regularly after their release to sign papers there, and they did so. Some received repeated telephone calls from the Intelligence Services asking them to go the Intelligence Services Centre where they would be either interrogated again or would be waiting to sign papers showing that the interviewee was in the Intelligence Centre. Haray said that before every imminent civil gatherings/events,

he received telephone calls from the Intelligence Services, ordering the interviewee not to go out to gatherings, or he would be arrested on the spot. Some said that while being at the Intelligence Services Centre, they were also exposed to sessions of religious, political or so-called moral advices made by Mulla or security agents to persuade interviewees not to engage in any civil/political activism. Some were also asked to cooperate with and report about their co-activists or friends to the Intelligence Services. These regular sessions would take hours, but the main reason behind, according to many interviewees, is to show it to the public that civil/political activists are cooperating with the Intelligence Services and report to them, in an attempt to impose mistrust of their co-activists, friends and the public in general over the detained/prisoned activists. After his release, Arash was many times interrogated by the same interrogator inside the intelligence services car in front of his home (*mobile interrogation method*). The interviewee 17 was called to the court many times, but was not met, or was insulted/humiliated while waiting without any results. This was very annoying and stressful for the interviewee.

Post-detention harassments and abuses meant to work as the same as psychological tortures imposed inside the interrogation centre. The scope and variety of methods applied by the Intelligence Services over the detainees after release from detention were very huge and considerable in terms of quantity, quality and intensity of harassments. This caused all of them flee the country after they understood that they could not anymore tolerate continuation of stressful harassments that affected all cycle of their lives and families. They could not work, study, travel, or continue their normal life and were afraid of being arrested at any time again and gain.

Because of scope of the details obtained from interviews, it was not possible to speak about many other details of post-detention harassments and psychological tortures. There is need for a more in-depth study just to focus on this type of harassments/tortures, I would recommend.

**Solitary confinement:**

94.4% of the interviewees experienced solitary confinement. Only one interviewee was not detained at solitary confinement due to the extreme overcrowding at Evin Prison, because all available solitary confinement cells were used for crowd (group) detentions. This shows that all political prisoners are subject to solitary confinement as a common method. Solitary confinements ranged from 5 up to 98 days. Average time length in the study sample is 41 days.

In majority of cases the solitary cells were empty small cells with no bedding or sanitary facilities. Therefore, interviewees had very limited access to toilet (three times per 24 hours). Those who had kidney and/or frequent urination problems suffered the most. Some detainees had to cry for hours due to the limited access to toilet. Interviewee 11 reported that a toilet was equipped at his solitary confinement. Interviewees experienced complete isolation with no human encounter other than guards, interrogators/torturers, or sometimes prosecutors. Their solitary confinement was accompanied with prolonged harsh interrogations. Some solitary cells were equipped with hidden cameras, something which the interviewees noticed later. Many solitary cells were constantly lightened up with artificial lights even at nights, leaving no sense of time for the interviewees. Some other solitary cells had windows without any lighting at nights. Some were also put at solitary confinement during their prison period, as part of disciplinary punishment. Some reported cold temperatures at cells while having no access to extra clothing or blankets. Some others reported very hot temperatures, something which made them feel difficulties in breathing. According to the interviewees, this kind of complete isolation accompanied with interrogation and physical/psychological tortures made it the worst for them. As mentioned earlier, those detainees who spend a longer period in solitary confinement were more vulnerable to experience pharmacological torture than others. Solitary confinement was mostly accompanied with deprivations such as limited access to toilet, very late and limited access to bathing, lack of access to shifting/extra clothing, lack of access to sanitary/personal hygiene materials, lack of access to open air, lack of visits, complete lack of access to communication with the outside world, lack of a sense of time, lack of bedding facilities (only limited access to blankets), lack of books rather than Quran or limited number of religious books, and so on. While in solitary confinement, some detainees were also exposed to strange unpleasant human sounds and screams, or humane sounds due to terrible tortures coming from the neighbouring cells or from the corridor. A few were also beaten/tortured at their solitary cells in addition to tortures at the interrogation rooms.

**Other various psychological techniques, including forced betrayals and sleep deprivations:**

83.3% of the interviewees reported other various psychological tortures/abuses that varied in form and intensity. They included, but not limited to the very lengthy interrogations per day as well as prolonged interrogations for over month(s). Some of these intensive periods were accompanied with sleep deprivations. 38.8% reported intensive sleep deprivations during long interrogations end even at nights. Some others just said that they were interrogated at nights,

without speaking about sleep deprivation. Some interviewees reported that the interrogators/torturers made very violent and loud shouts and screams while beating, making insults/humiliation or during their interrogation. Some interrogators were engaged in questioning the interviewees about their past relations with the opposite sex and forced abusive moral debates. Some interrogators induced false psychological concerns about close family members of the detainees or gave false information about the death or critical health situation of the detainees' close family members. This caused, for example, the interviewee 16 to faint because of excessive stress due to the false news about the death of her mother.

Over half of the interviewees (55%) were exposed to direct forced betrayals; they were forced to write and confess falsely against their friends, or co-activists some of whom were detained simultaneously with them at the same interrogation centre. What were written as false confessions against their friends/co-activists were then shown to their friends to demonstrate that friends/co-activists act against them/are engaged in betrayals. This also created an atmosphere of mistrust among the activists and dismantlement of their group activities later, even though some groups attempted not to blame each other, but rather understand and accept forced betrayals under hard circumstances during interrogations. Many reported that due to the forced betrayals imposed by the interrogators/torturers, their friends/co-activists were sentenced to very heavy punishments/imprisonments. This made those interviewees who were forced for betrayals feel very and deeply regretful about themselves, negative psychological effects of which bothers them still to date, according to some interviewees. This technique is very damaging and have had big impact on all the interviewees. Majority of the interviewees were either involved in forced betrayals directly or were affected by the forced betrayals of their friends/co-activists.

Many interviewees reported about receiving or being persuaded with false promises made by the interrogators/torturers on their release, or lesser punishments/imprisonment. Three interviewees (16.6%) reported that their close family members also were simultaneously and harmfully interrogated and abused to put extra pressure on the interviewees during their interrogation period.

Two interviewees (11 & 15) reported being subject to ban on the use of their own mother tongue at prison or during family visits with parents. Two other interviewees (11%) reported being subject to forced labour at prison, a case of which lasted for many hours per day and for months (interviewee 11).



All the above-mentioned examples show that even though some methods and techniques are very common that may be imposed on all the detainees or majority of them, but some other methods/techniques might be applied to only few cases and randomly with less clear patterns.

#### **Mock execution:**

Only the interviewee 11 (5.5%) reported that he was taken to other open locations and was told that he would be prepared for execution (to be hanged up). He said at least three times (as he remembered), he was exposed to mock executions (the rope was fastened around his neck, and the chair under his feet was taken out, making him be hanged for a while, something that made him feel suffocated to death. He was later freed out from that terrible condition, something that caused huge stress and anxiety.

#### **Reports about others being tortured psychologically:**

Over half of the interviewees (55.5%) reported that they either were directly exposed to other detainees/inmates being psychologically tortured, or that later they heard their stories about physical tortures while they got opportunity to talk to other inmates. Out of this number, 38.8% reported that they were directly exposed to others being tortured. This caused huge psychological stress on these detainees.

### **PART III: Determining factors that may make difference in the type/intensity of tortures applied:**

The results demonstrated and illustrated in the above section are indicative and they may change if the composition of interviewees' backgrounds/profiles change regarding their ethnicity, religion, gender and so on. In this the section, I have listed some determining factors that might affect application of torture, something which can change the results. This list is a result of in-depth consultations and dialogue with the interviewees through interviews, as suggestive, and not limited to the below-mentioned factors. The list came out as a response to the question about what/which factors might make difference in the treatment of political prisoners. It just shows that the study of treatment of political prisoners is so complex and not easy. There might be many involved factors that can make difference in treatments applied by torture perpetrators in Iran. A summary of the suggested responses, therefore, comes below:

▪ **Ethnic and religious background of political prisoners:**

From interviews conducted through this study, it is understood that non-Persian (Fars) populations (for example, Arabs, Azerbaijani Turks, Balochis, Kurds, and Turkmen) are discriminately vulnerable to some of the tortures/ill-treatments (for example, harsh and abusive questioning/interrogation, harsh verbal abuses and humiliations) that may target their ethnicity, ethnic identities and values, or ethno-political views and stands in very offensive ways.

It can also be concluded that non-Shia populations (for example Sunnis and those converted from Shia to Sunni) are discriminately vulnerable to some of the tortures/ill-treatments (for example, harsh and abusive questioning/interrogation, harsh verbal abuses and humiliations) that may target their religion, religious identities and values, in very offensive ways. These populations might also be relatively more vulnerable to harsher blunt force trauma forms such as beatings with blunt instruments.

Therefore, both ethnic and religious backgrounds of political prisoners may discriminately make difference in the way they are tortured/treated by their interrogators/torturers, guards, prison authorities, judges and others.

▪ **Ethnic and religious background of perpetrators (interrogator/torturer):**

Comparisons of the testimonies of the interviewees from this study shows that if the interrogator/torturer does not belong to the same ethnic and/or religious background as the political prisoner belongs to (as it was referred to by some of the interviewees as “*The Imported (Non-Local) Interrogators/Torturers*”), the vulnerability of the political prisoner to tortures, ill-treatments or abuses increases, especially when it comes to the ethnically/religiously-oriented humiliations, harsh verbal abuses and harsh and abusive questioning of ethnic/religious values and views.

Therefore, this study suggests that the ethnic and/or religious background of interrogators/torturers (perpetrators) may discriminately make difference in the way they treat political prisoners from different ethnic/religious populations.

▪ **Gender of the detainee:**

Even though there have only been to female interviewees, both cases provided details about how women/girls may discriminately be deprived of their basic essential gender-based needs. These deliberate deprivations put women/girls in higher risks of health-related risks

and problems that also degrade their dignity considerably. Women/girls are also vulnerable to gender-based humiliations.

Therefore, specific gender background of the political prisoners (*to be female*) make these political prisoners deprived of their basic gender-based needs or put them in higher health risks and make them vulnerable to gender-based humiliations.

▪ **Location of Interrogation: stationed or not stationed in the capital city, Tehran:**

Through this study, some differences were noticed between if the political prisoners were interrogated in Tehran or if they were interrogated in other interrogations centres not stationed in Tehran.

Relatively, those who were interrogated in other centres not located in Tehran, were subject to harsher variety of physical tortures.

It also came out to be known that interrogators/torturers in the interrogations centres that are not located in Tehran, are used to first start with intensive periods of threats and physical tortures upon arrival at the interrogation centre and repeatedly during the first two weeks, for example. Later, they increase psychological tortures. However, at the interrogation centres in Tehran, interrogators start with psychological tortures and abuses. If this method did not answer, then they would start with physical tortures.

Through the interviews, it was also suggested that judges and courts in cities other than Tehran are heavily and in big scale influenced by the IIS and that judges are as mere tools that just follow IIS's orders.

On the other hand, there has been cases, for example, the interviewee 16 who claimed that the IIS may not have such big and total influence over judges in Tehran and that judges in Tehran attempt to reserve their autonomy.

Even though, these differences were discussed during interviews, they cannot be used as an absolute conclusion. These are primary conclusions/theories, out of this study's limited sample population. There is need for more studies of these types to see if such conclusions can be generalized.

▪ **Time of the arrest:**

It is important to understand that IIS arrest, detain, interrogate and torture activists regularly and frequently as part of their defined projects/scenarios to detect and dismantle any group activities, or parts of large civil movements. Moreover, they do the same during and after

any public protests/demonstrations of any type (be political, social, or for ethnic/cultural/environmental/labour/women rights, and so on) to crush down and control development of civil uprisings.

However, in the case of the latter one (event-based arrests), non-activists who were not initially involved in civil/political activities before and just participated in public protests against the system (as it was, for example the case with the interviewees 14 and 17), they might be subject to even more violent and random forms of tortures that might be more driving from stress, resentment, rage and anger of the IIS/perpetrators. Similar random and more violent forms of tortures have been also documented after popular Iranian uprising of 2009, reports of which have been documented in the report of Freedom from Torture in 2013 and other reports from the United Nations, Human Rights Watch and so on. Therefore, my study does not show more violent forms of physical tortures such as burns, sharp force, use of water, asphyxiation, amputations, or even higher rates of sexual violence. If my samples would be composed of many of those who were arrested during popular protests, then there would be higher probability of more violent physical tortures.

This factor, time of the arrest (regularly as the Intelligence Services' on-going pre-defined projects/scenarios or during popular protests and uprisings) can be determining in the type and intensity of the tortures that the political prisoners experience. There are indeed much more determining factors that need to be taken into account in such complex studies. More violent and shocking forms of torturers in Iran are therefore possible.

▪ **Interrogating authority:**

Through the interviews, it was suggested that the two interrogating authorities from IIS, namely MOIS and Intelligence Organization of the Revolutionary Guardian Corps (known as *SAS* in Iran) are somehow acting differently. Many believe or have experienced that *SAS* has acted not systematic, but harsher and has used more violent methods of torture of the physical types. It is interesting to know that sometimes interrogators/torturers from MOIS threatened political prisoners that they would have handed over them to *SAS* for harsher and more violent tortures if they did not cooperate with interrogators, or that they acted better than *SAS* (as it was reported by the interviewee 4 and 16). For instance, the interrogators/torturers from MOIS had threatened the interviewee 16 to submit his wife to *SAS* for forced rape if he did not accept video interview for confessions. This caused the detainee to threaten his interrogators for burning himself in front of the UN Central Building in Tehran if MOIS would have done so.

▪ **Type of the activism (civil/armed):**

All my samples for this study were involved in civil/political activism, or just protested racism. None of them, as claimed by the interviewees, were involved in armed activities, even though a few were also accused (false accusations) of membership in the organizations pursuing armed opposition. According to the interviewees, those political prisoners who are involved in armed opposition face the most brutal and inhumane forms of torture and ill-treatment, majority of whom later become executed. If there would be surviving cases of such, it would be most probable to document the harshest violent forms of physical tortures.

▪ **Degree of unknownness/anonymously or popularity of political prisoners:**

One determining factor for torture that was highlighted by many interviewees was the degree of popularity or unknownness of the political prisoners. A few interviewees claimed that since they had higher-ranking relatives, they did not relatively face brutal tortures. Some others claimed that their popularity, or their political/civil network/connections lessened harm inflicted on them. It is therefore suggested that anonymousness of the arrestees, especially during popular protests or uprising, when unknown people are arrested, may make them more vulnerable to worse forms of tortures since their news would not be gone out to many others outside the detention centre/prison. However, this does not mean that those known civil/political figures or those who may have networks of their own are not exposed to higher degrees of tortures. There are many determining factors for tortures that this factor is just one of those determining, as suggested.

▪ **Degree of information sharing with outside sources about whereabouts of the political prisoners:**

The interviewees said that if information about detention/torture of political prisoners is shared with the outside world, especially with the media at the time they are detained, it would lessen harms inflicted on them. According to some of the interviewees, their families/friends/co-friends shared information about their situation with media, and this saved them from more harms. This is the reason why the IIS threatens political prisoners not to share any information with others, even their families, otherwise they would face retaliation. IIS had threatened the families of the interviewees not to share information about their beloved ones. According to the interviewees, this factor can be very determining and the key in reducing harms that the political prisoners may experience during their interrogation/imprisonment.

▪ **Degree of the familiarity with interrogation techniques:**

Some interviewees, for example and especially the interviewee 16 and 2 claimed that since they knew and had read before about the interrogation techniques of the IIS, this saved them from traps, false promises, and many other harms coming from their interrogators/torturers. Familiarity with the interrogation techniques is very key, according to the interviewees since it also gives confidence to the political prisoners. It can diminish the over-exaggerated dominance of the interrogators/torturers over political prisoners, without which they would submit themselves completely to the interrogators/torturers.

▪ **Degree of familiarity with the domestic laws and rights:**

A few detainees also pointed out the fact that if political prisoners have knowledge about the domestic laws and their rights defined in such laws, then it can also save their lives and can diminish harms inflicted on them. These interviewees, for example, the Interviewee 16 claimed that if the political prisoners know that accepting some certain offences/accusations under torture and forced confessions/forced betrayals may result in life-threatening sentences for them/others, they would better resist against tortures or coerced confessions. According to them, some political prisoners sign forced confessions to get rid of tortures/harms, but they do not know that by doing so they put themselves/others in much higher imminent risks.

▪ **The age and personality of political prisoner:**

Some interviewees claimed that those political prisoners who have little experience or are at their early ages, might be more vulnerable to beatings and threats than those who are not very young, or have got more experiences. The older/experienced political prisoners might instead be more vulnerable to more complex psychological tortures.

▪ **Degree of physical, mental or psychological sensitivities/vulnerabilities of the political prisoners:**

Some interviewees reported that if interrogators/torturers find out that the political prisoners might be sensitive/vulnerable to something, then interrogators would expose them to such sensitivities/vulnerabilities more. For example, if the interrogators found that one was worried more about his/her family members, then the interrogators started to use it as a weapon and so exposed them to bad, false, or worrying news about their family members. If interrogators found out about if the detainee was vulnerable to some deprivations such as limited access to toilet, then they would use it (prevent the access) to coerce confessions/forced betrayals in exchange for access to it. If the detainees are sensitive and

fragile about insults to his/her family members, ethnicity, religion, or ethno-political issues, then the interrogators/torturers would repeat them to inflict more psychological tortures of the same type. If women/girls are sensitive and more vulnerable to the lack of sanitary items/facilities and family/child visits, the interrogators/torturers would prevent them from such accesses, as kind of torture to inflict more suffering on these political prisoners. There have been more examples of such ill-treatments during interviews. The interviewees suggested that one would need to be cautious about letting the interrogators/torturers find about their sensitivities or vulnerabilities.

#### PART IV: Suggested reasons by the interviewees for the application of various types of tortures in Iran:

One of the objectives of this study, as indicated in the subject of this study, was to find out the possible reasons behind application of torture in Iran. Through in-depth consultation and dialogue with the interviewees, I came to the below suggested list. In the Section Reasons suggested for the conduct of torture in Iran, I listed a short number of reasons that only came out of the literature review. However, the list below is outcome of interviews with all the interviewees that introduces a wider range of goals and sub-goals/objectives that are pursued by the Iranian system, when it concerns application of torture in Iran. In this section, I will also introduce a holistic model (Figure 6: Torture Links) for understanding the links between torture breeding environment and reasons behind the torture. In addition, I will introduce a new model (Figure 7: Iranian Pro-Torture Triangle) that highlights those major elements/structures that are very pro-torture/torture-breeding. Now, let us below review the various suggested reasons behind application of tortures in Iran:

- **To extract the information required:**

Some parts of interrogation sessions and tortures were to extract type of information that the IIS did not know about. These types of information included access to password and other technical details of e-mails, social media applications, websites and other electronic tools which the civil/political activists were using for communication and dissemination of information. In addition, the interrogators/torturers need to know about the planned and future activities, with which they could analyse different civil/political movements and activities to better prevent or reduce risks for the system. According to the interviewees, there was a very direct link between tortures and demand for extracting information by the

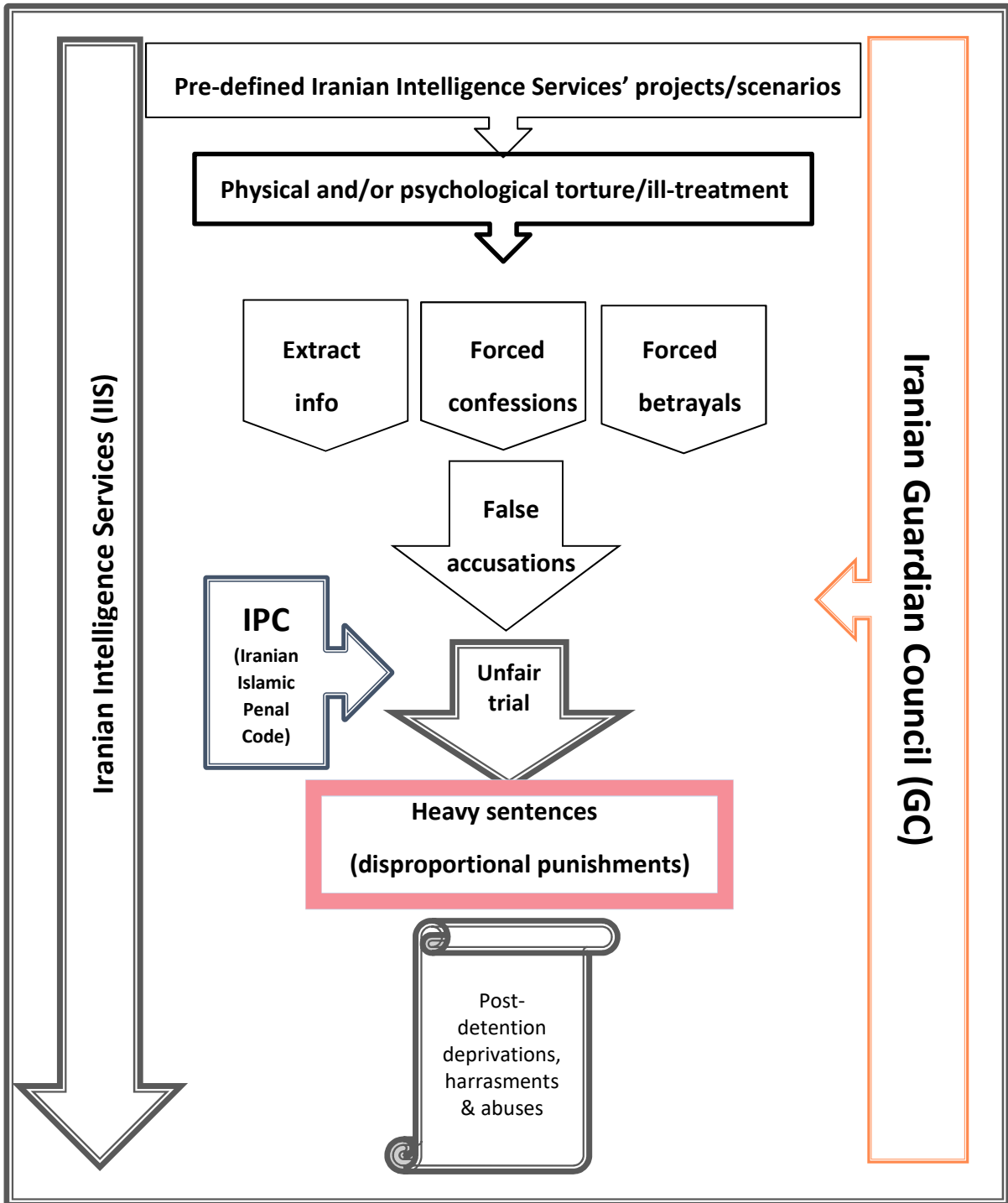
interrogators/torturers. If the interviewees (political prisoners) resisted and did not give type of the information required, then they would be tortured physically to the extent to submit themselves to the interrogators. This makes it evident that one obvious reason behind torture is to extract information/intelligence that is not known to the system/IIS. However, this may not be the main and only reason behind tortures that are applied by the interrogators/tortures in the Iranian detention centres.

▪ **To obtain and use false confessions for false accusations and unfair sentences (torture links):**

According to the interviewees, one of the main reasons behind the torture is to obtain false confessions. All the interviewees were asked to confess for the acts that they did not perform. They mostly faced question around “Why” and “How” they performed acts (accusations) that they were not involved in. There was no principle of presumption of innocence. According to the IIS, all the arrestees are guilty and therefore they must answer questions around “Why”, “How”, “When” and “When” they performed offences. The interrogators said that they knew “What” the detainees were doing, but they rather wanted to know why and how they did offences. According to the interviewees, these acts/method of interrogation by the interrogators/torturers put huge unpleasant stress and confusion on the interviewees who tried to convince their interrogators/torturers that they did not do so. However, interrogators continued to force the interviewees to falsely confess for what they had asked for/pushed for. All the interviewees indicated that if they did not write about what they were asked for, then they would be tortured, threatened or faced various forms of deprivations. Some were given false promises for release, lesser punishments or forgiveness, if they confessed falsely against themselves and/or against others (forced betrayals). All the detainees had noticed later that their forced false confessions were later used for false accusations against them at courts and therefore, they were unfairly sentenced to heavy imprisonments or other types of punishments/deprivations based on forced confessions or forced betrayals by their friends/co-activists. This is a usual practice and pattern, a link between interrogation/torture and unfair punishments of political prisoners. Many interviewees said that false confessions are forcibly obtained based on the IIS’s pre-defined scenarios and projects to crack down civil/political activism as well as to make activists passive, ineffective or gone away. According to the interviewees, there were not real accusations. False accusations must have been made against the detainees, based on



forced false confessions. Moreover, according to the interviewees, the recorded forced confessions were either used against detainees, their co-activists or in general against their activism at the time when they were detained/imprisoned or manipulated recorded videos would be kept for use in future when the time comes.



*Figure 6: Torture Links*

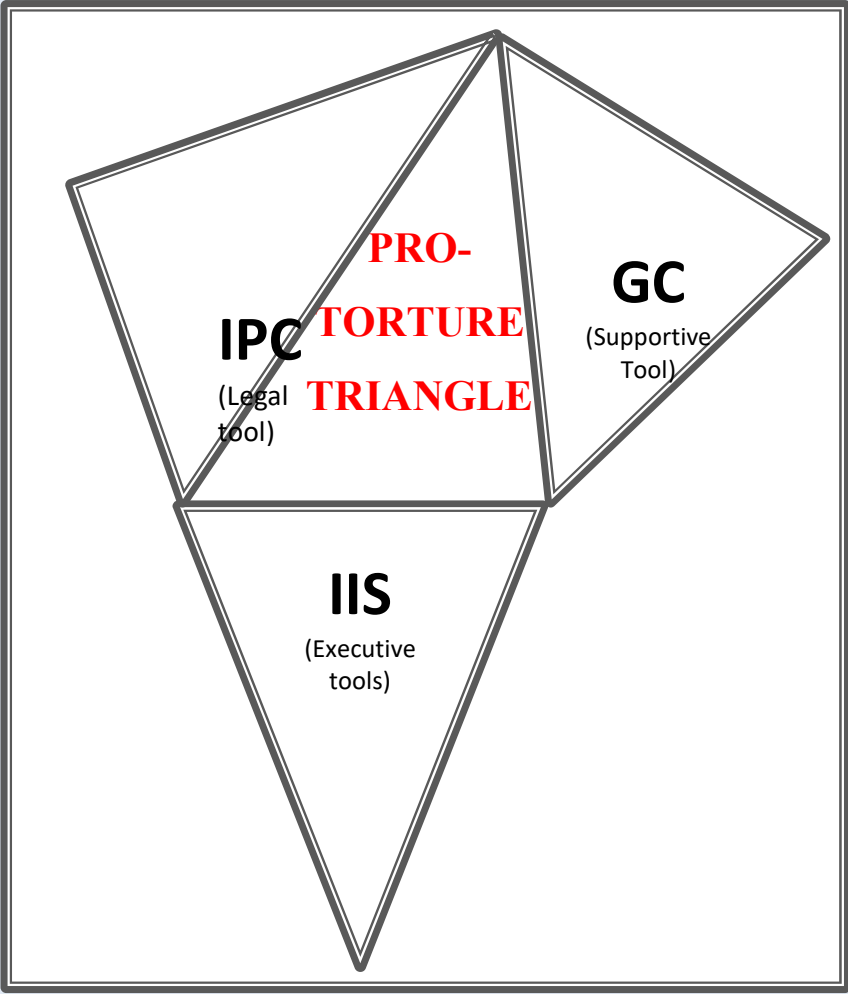
The above picture (Torture Links) shows the links between torture breeding environment and reasons behind the torture. It also shows the links between the IIS's pre-defined projects and scenarios that make their interrogators/torturers apply different forms of physical and psychological tortures to coerce forced confessions/forced betrayals as planned:

As a continued planned process, all the above-mentioned acts are pursued to impose false accusations on political prisoners that are presented at courts by judges that according to the interviewees are either part of the IIS, or that they are controlled by/afraid from the IIS. Through unfair trials, with very limited access to lawyers (that are intimidated by the IIS) if any available, heavy sentences (disproportional punishments) are imposed over political prisoners without giving them time to defend themselves.

These links demonstrate why tortures happen mostly and in big part during detention/pre-trial periods. IIS has dominance and control over the whole process, from the time of arrest, at the detention centres or prisons and after release from detention/prison. Courts and judges are not independent and so are heavily controlled by the IIS. Many interviewees said that their false accusations were told to them at the time of interrogation, something which turned to be read to them at courts as their legal accusations. Interrogators and torturers had said to some interviewees that the IIS themselves make legal sentences and that they have control over judiciary. For example, Interviewee 8 said that his interrogator had told him that they tell judges what sentences must be made against prisoners.

Interviewee 19 said that his interrogators/torturers told him: "We ourselves define sentences; lawyers just waste your money." Some interviewees said that they were completely and absolutely astonished by observing how much judges are afraid from ordinary guards and officers from the IIS. Some said that they observed that written notes/sentences by the IIS were just put in front of judges to them out. Interviewee 10 objected to the accusations and sentences that were read against him and so confronted the judge who had replied that he was irresponsible and that he just got orders from higher-ranking authorities. Therefore, majority of interviewees said that sentences/imposed punishments read by courts were all politically-motivated/fabricated with a strong dominant security lens. This is though, for example, the interviewee 16 proposed that the judiciary in Tehran may not be completely affected by the IIS. This is an interesting subject for research to see what the difference might be between Tehran and other cities in relation to the control of the courts by the IIS.

The Iranian Islamic Penal Code (ICP) is not only a very pro-torture legal tool, but also there are clear articles in this Penal Code about what forms of heavy punishments certain offenses can result in. ICP is the main legal tool that are used and referred to by judges at Iranian unpublic (Revolutionary Courts) courts to impose heavy punishments and other forms of post-detention deprivations over political prisoners. Shortly said, false accusations out of forced confessions/forced betrayals are bases for impose of heavy sentences/punishments over political prisoners, in reference to the ICP, legally and religiously. Moreover, the Iranian Guardian Council (GC) is the systems' only dominant establishment (religiously and legally) that has prevented approval of any plan to ban tortures or plans to joint international mechanisms that can monitor application of tortures and investigate allegations. Therefore, the most determining pro-tortures elements, structures or tools in Iran are the following: IIS (as the executive tool for torture), IPC (as the legal tool), and GC (as the supportive establishment). These three pro-torture elements are illustrated through the below figure:



*Figure 7: Iranian Pro-Torture Triangle*

- **To send out signals:**

The interviewees also mentioned that by acts of torture, ill-treatment, abuses, and intimidations, the ruling system intends to send out signals to the outsiders/co-activists over the fact that activism can be very costly and so must be avoided. They said that this can be regarded as giving lessons to outsiders. This goal was followed by creating/introducing a dangerous, fearful and untrustworthy atmosphere of activism to make activism seem highly costly.

- **To maximize submission of prisoners:**

The interrogators/torturers use torture to maximize fear and shock, humiliate and crush character of the political prisoners for better submission of them to their interrogators/torturers that in turn can facilitate forced confessions or betrayals.

- **To create a psychological atmosphere:**

Torture is also used to create a public psychological atmosphere of fear and terror in the society as part of the Iranian system's deterrence policy.

- **To inactivate activists:**

Post-detention harassments, abuses and deprivations from job, studies, trips outside their living locations, as well as deprivations from other social, political and civil rights/activities make activists very passive and ineffective. This makes them feel and experience serious insecurity in terms of job/occupation, physical/mental health, and social identity/contacts. Later, activists feel themselves passive (isolated) and unproductive after the release. This make them feel that their identity is taken away, as it was illustrated by many interviewees.

- **To crush down activists psychologically:**

All the tortures during detention, prison or after their release are also targeted in crushing down political prisoners/activists psychologically, and make activists feel, experience and accept that they can easily be broken or used/misused if the system wants so. All of that is done to make activists feel completely powerless and invaluable versus a very powerful, organized, resourceful, fearless, ruthless and unaccountable system. This is one of the main reasons behind application of different forms of tortures and ill-treatment, as claimed by many interviewees.

- **To crackdown activism:**

Tortures, ill-treatments, abuses and other forms of post-detention harassments are all meant to make activists passive and dismantle and destroy any group activities/organizations (be

political, social, ethnically-driven, or religious, cultural, or environmental) and so put an end to pursued activism. According to the interviewees, group activities, even in very small scale, is considered to be very dangerous for the system and therefore it must be avoided by any means. This, in turn, may create psychological fear of ordinary people from group or organized activities (be any type). The ultimate goal of the ruling system is therefore to prevent development of any activism or attempt to reduce risks of any kind of protests, gatherings, or demonstrations in the future and hinder demands for any rights, changes or reforms. All the above-mentioned objectives/goals are also pursued through close surveillance and control of activists, even their personal lives.

▪ **To indirectly make activists prefer to flee the country:**

The amount of pressure put on the activists, their families, friends, employees and others after their release is so much high that many of them refer to flee the country sooner or later. This is also because of lack of security and due to imposed passiveness and unproductivity over activists. Some interviewees said that the system will have this happen so that risks to the system are gone away with less costs or effects. To understand this, please have a close look at the Figure 1: Time of first detention & exit from Iran per interviewee.

▪ **To induce/impose psychologically negative feelings:**

Interrogators spent considerable time through harsh and abusive interrogations to induce an atmosphere of hopelessness for the type of activism that the political prisoners (interviewees) were engaged in. Interrogators also forced the prisoners to feel/accept regret for the activism that the prisoners had pursued and coerced them to sign statements/letters of repentance, as a proof that the political prisoners were wrong in their thoughts, view, stands, or in doing their activities.

▪ **To make activists seem untrusted after their release:**

This goal was pursued by the IIS mainly through forced betrayals at the interrogation centres, by which friends and co-activists were coerced by the interrogators/torturers to confess and sign testimonies against one another. This created a very destroying psychological feeling of distrust among friends and co-activists who either were used to work together or were part of bigger political/cultural/ethnic movements. Some interviewees said that they attempted to understand each other and do not blame each other for forced betrayals, but some mentioned that the scope of the problems arising from such forced betrayals were so big that finally their group activities got dismantled simply because of imposed distrust. Those of the interviewees, or their friend/co-activists who were coerced

for forced betrayals have gone through very bad psychological stress and trauma every time when they had to think about the fact that their forced testimonies against their friends/co-activists made them be condemned at courts with heavy unfair sentences. They blame themselves and feel accountable for what could have been avoidable if they did not write against their friends under torture. According to many interviews, the amount of this type of still on-going post-trauma stress is very big and unimaginable, a type of *torture* that is still suffering them.

Another type of distrust against the activists was imposed on the activists after the released prisoners had to regularly and frequently go to the IIS just to sign papers or show that they were present at the location. This caused even the ordinary people to think that the activists now work for the IIS and are not therefore any longer trustworthy. This in turn made activists even more isolated socially.

▪ **To try/make changes over political prisoners:**

Interrogators also spent time through harsh and abusive interrogations to induce that activists' beliefs, views, attitudes or behaviours were wrong. They tried to induce/impose self-doubt/dubiety over beliefs, views, attitudes, behaviours and objectives/goals around pursued activism of the political prisoners. By doing so, the interrogators attempted to make changes in the beliefs, views, attitudes, stands, point of views, values, thoughts and behaviours of the activists. Interrogators were engaged in harsh debates and discussions, to make these changes. Some interrogators had even attempted to bring Mulla or other religious experts to try to change interviewees from Sunni to Shia, a clear example of which was mentioned by the Interviewee 10.

▪ **To impose long-lasting substantial physical and/or psychological harm:**

It seems that one of the other reasons behind torture would be to create long-lasting physical and/or psychological harm over political prisoners to make activism highly costly, as mentioned earlier. Some interviewees mentioned that due to tortures, they have lost their senses partially, or that they got damages physically and/or psychologically. I could not focus on the side-effects of endured psychological tortures, abuses or ill-treatments. This is something that needs more expert researches and studies in detail.

▪ **To force/encourage activists to work for/report to the IIS:**

One of the goals that always have been on the top wish-list of the IIS is to coerce or encourage activists to work/report to them, while it must be kept secret. The IIS use

whatever they can to coerce political/civil activists to work for them as they could then gather information that the system needs. I myself, while working for the UNESCO Office and later at the ICRC Office in Tehran, was interrogated twice by the MOIS in 2010 and so was threatened to work for/report to them as their agents while working for these international organizations.

- **To take revenge/discharge resentment or hate (be political, ideological, religious or racial/ethnically-driven):**

Another motive behind application of tortures was mentioned to take revenge (in a few cases) from activists, discharge resentment and anger or hate over them. Some also mentioned that personal desire/mental satisfaction of the interrogator, or even the typical character of some interrogators/torturers also played roles in the use of tortures.

## **Concluding Remarks:**

Conclusions are presented in three main categorized parts, as expected outcomes from this study, namely commonalities in tortures of political prisoners, differences in their treatments/tortures, and reasons behind tortures in Iran. At the end, a final part will come about some remarks as well as some suggestions for future studies. Below is a summary of the conclusions related to the commonalities in application of tortures that may apply to all political prisoners:

### **Part I: Commonalities**

The results of this study strengthened my first hypothesis that most political prisoners in Iran experience a set of common methods and patterns of torture/ill-treatment that are applied by perpetrators in the Iranian places of detention and prisons. The following six general and concise conclusions are related to the commonalities that can be seen in the use of torture and ill-treatment on almost all political prisoners in Iran. These conclusions are derived from a review of available literature (**Literature review**) on the matter of torture in Iran as well as a series of in-depth interviews (please see the **Appendix I: A summary of applied tortures on each interviewee**) with formerly detained and tortured political prisoners as well as consultations with other activists from Iran:

#### **Conclusion 1:**

Torture, ill-treatment, abuses, and harassments of political prisoners are very common in the IIS's detention centres. Various forms of tortures are widely and systematically used in these centres, some of which continue to be systematically used against political prisoners even after their release. Iranian prison authorities also apply disciplinary punishments and/or other forms of deliberate ill-treatments against political prisoners that amount to torture. Extreme intolerable physical conditions of the IIS's detention centres as well as in some prisons that amount to torture, are also very common.

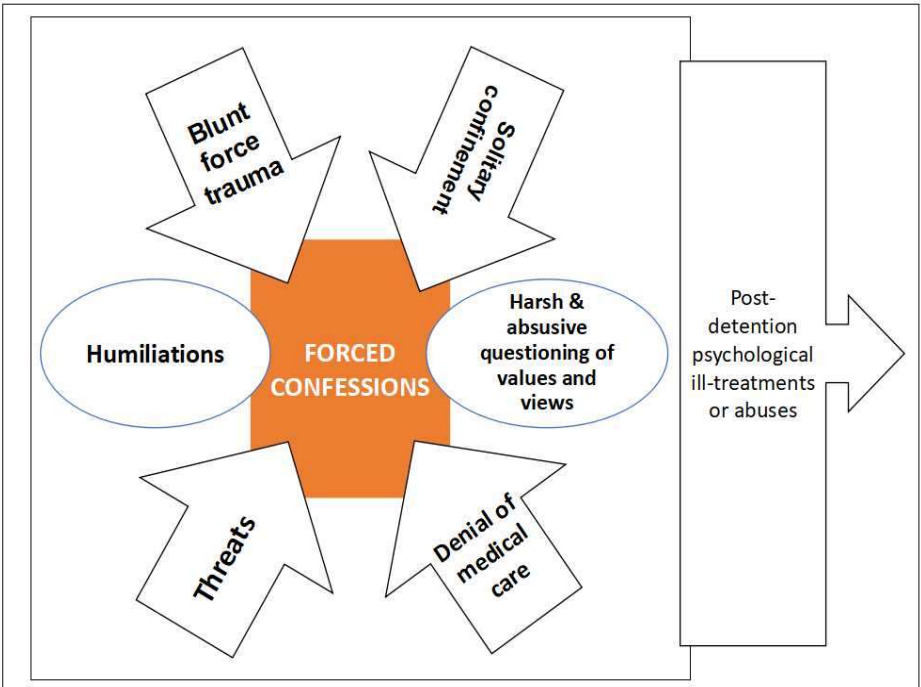
#### **Conclusion 2:**

All the political prisoners in Iran are subject to various forms of systematic psychological tortures and ill-treatments that are big and complex in their scope, durability as well as purposes behind their application.



**Conclusion 3:**

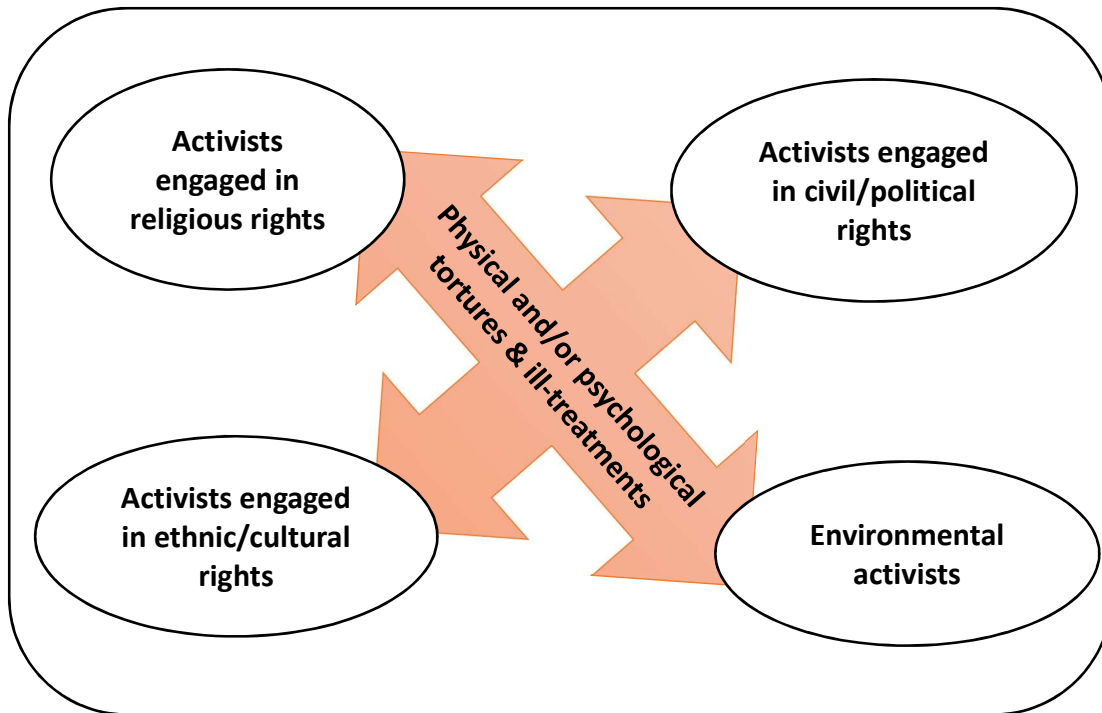
Almost all the political prisoners in Iran are subject to blunt force trauma, solitary confinement, forced confessions, threats, humiliations, harsh and abusive questioning of their values, thoughts and views, denial of medical care as well as post-detention psychological tortures, abuses and harassments after their release. The IIS use a combination of these forms of tortures and ill-treatments in addition to other possible forms of torture, as a common pattern, applied against the political prisoners during pre-trial detention period. The following figure demonstrates this common pattern of tortures that is widely applied in the IIS’s detention centres:



*Figure 8: Common patterns of tortures in Iran*

**Conclusion 4:**

People in Iran are arbitrarily arrested, detained and/or tortured and abused because of their civil/political activities, thoughts and views around civil and political rights, cultural, ethnic and linguistic rights, religious rights as well as issues related to environmental activism. The following figure (next page) demonstrates general commonalities behind the reasons for torture and ill-treatment of political prisoners.



*Figure 9: Commonalities of tortures in relation to activism*

**Conclusion 5:**

Both female and male detainees are vulnerable to sexual violence/assault.

**Conclusion 6:**

Iran does not adhere to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) that it has signed. Iran does respect other related international standards that ban use of torture, either. These include, but not limited to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Convention against Torture, Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment, and Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. Moreover, Iran does not adhere to the international standards that it has signed that promote cultural rights and discourages ethnic/racial discrimination. These include International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and ICESCR.

From a domestic perspective, Iran does not respect its own domestic rules and regulations such as Iran’s Constitution as well as the IPC, where there are clear references to the ban on the use of torture.

However, even though the IPC has a clear article on ban on the use of torture, it is very pro-torture/ill-treatment legal document, on the contrary. All the legal convictions made for the political prisoners are made based on this key legal document that is meant to punish them.

The GC is a very pro-torture high-ranking state apparatus that has acted as supportive body for the execution of torture and ill-treatment of political prisoners in Iran. It prevented ratification of the Six's Iranian Parliament (Majlis)'s Plan on Torture Ban of 2001-2002. It also prohibited ratification of the Convention against Torture.

The two Iranian apparatuses that are very pro-tortures that execute torture and ill-treatment against political prisoners are the MOIS as well as the Revolutionary Guardian Corp's Intelligence Organization (so-called *SAS* in Iran).

Therefore, the most determining pro-tortures elements, structures or tools in Iran are the following: IIS (as executive tool for torture), IPC (as legal tool), and GC (as supportive establishment). These three pro-torture elements are illustrated through the Figure 7: Iranian Pro-Torture Triangle.

## Part II: Differences

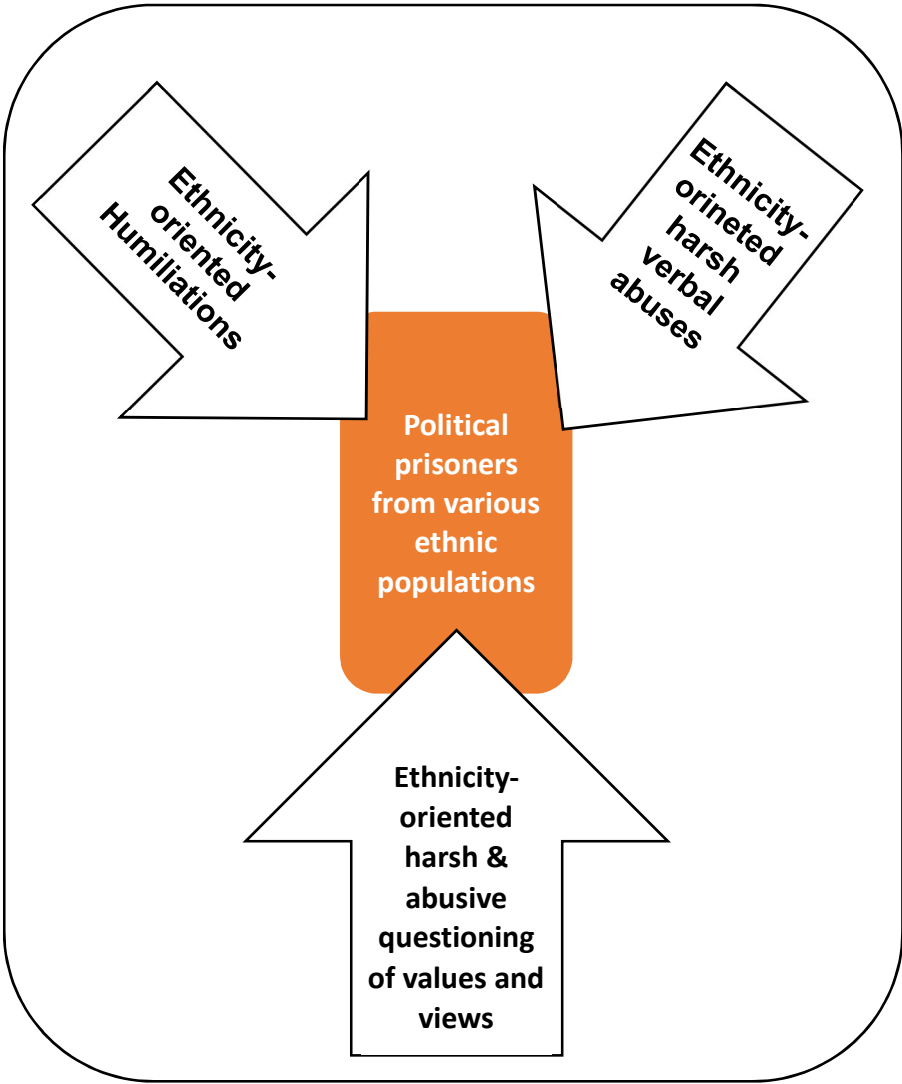
Moreover, the results of this study strengthened my second hypothesis that in addition to common methods of torture/ill-treatment, a set of varied methods are applied only to specific categories of political prisoners. The following six concise conclusions are related to the differences that may occur in the application of torture and ill-treatment over political prisoners in Iran. These conclusions are derived from a review of available literature (Please see the Section **Literature review**) on the matter of torture in Iran as well as a series of in-depth interviews (Please see **Appendix I: A summary of applied tortures on each interviewee**) with formerly detained and tortured political prisoners and consultations with other activists from Iran:

### **Conclusion 1:**

The current situation regarding torture and ill-treatment of political prisoners has not differed so much from (a) decade(s) ago. The only difference would be that now psychological tortures and abuses have increased in scope, diversity and complexity.

**Conclusion 2:**

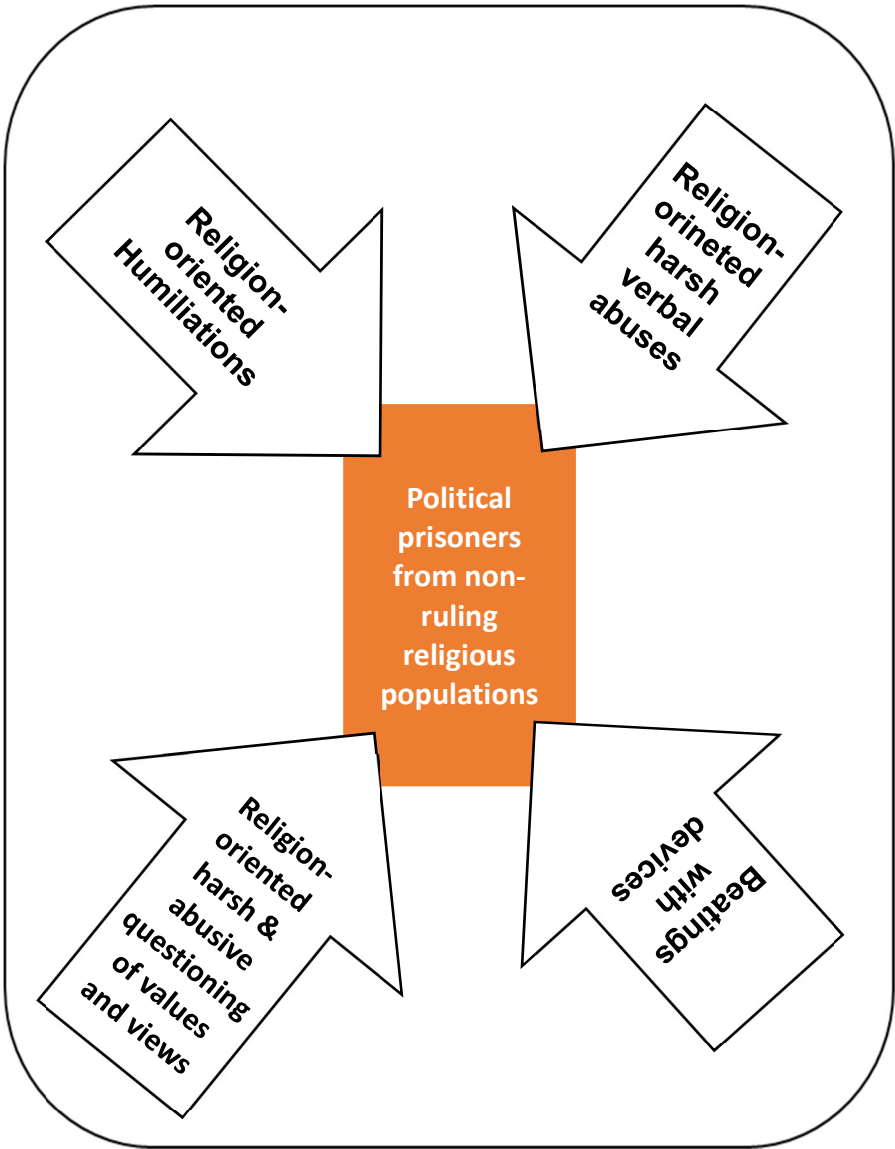
Political prisoners who belong to the ethnic populations (non-Fars ethnic populations such as Arabs, Azerbaijani Turks, Balochis, Kurds, and Turkmen) are vulnerable to some forms of offensive psychological tortures and harassments such as humiliations, verbal abuses and harsh and abusive questioning that directly target their ethnic identity/background, ethnic values/views or their ethno-political thoughts and stands. The figure below demonstrates this type of specific vulnerability when it concerns political prisoners from different ethnic populations.



*Figure 10: Vulnerability of the political prisoners from various ethnic populations*

**Conclusion 3:**

Political prisoners who have the non-ruling religious backgrounds (for example the Sunni believers or seculars) are vulnerable to some forms of offensive psychological tortures and harassments such as humiliations, verbal abuses and harsh and abusive questioning that directly target their religious identity/background and religious values/views. Moreover, they are more vulnerable to harsher beatings with blunt devices than others with Shia backgrounds. The figure below demonstrates this kind of specific vulnerability when it concerns political prisoners from non-Shia populations, for example Sunni political prisoners (believers or seculars).



*Figure 11: Vulnerability of the political prisoners from non-ruling religious populations*

**Conclusion 4:**

Those detainees who spend a longer period in solitary confinement are suspected of being more vulnerable to experience pharmacological tortures than others.

**Conclusion 5:**

Even though some methods and techniques are very common that may be imposed on all the detainees or majority of them, but some other methods/techniques might be applied to only few cases and randomly with less clear patterns.

**Conclusion 6:**

The study of tortures applied in Iran is not simple. It is a multi-fetch and complex phenomenon. There are many determining or involved factors that may make difference in the forms, intensity or reasons for their application on political prisoners. Some determining factors, to be suggested, can be mentioned below, but not limited to:

- Ethnic and religious background of political prisoners;
- Ethnic and religious background of perpetrators (interrogator/torturer);
- Gender of the political prisoner;
- Location of interrogation: stationed or not stationed in the capital city, Tehran;
- Time of the arrest (during mass protests/demonstrations or detained as the IIS's plans and projects)
- Interrogating authority;
- Type of the activism (civil/armed);
- Degree of unknownness/anonymously or popularity of the political prisoner;
- Degree of information sharing with outside sources about whereabouts of the political prisoner;
- Degree of the familiarity of the political prisoner with interrogation techniques;
- Degree of familiarity of the political prisoner with the domestic laws and rights;
- The age and personality of political prisoner;
- Degree of physical, mental or psychological sensitivities/vulnerabilities of political prisoner.

### Part III: Suggested reasons behind torture in Iran (Why torturing?!)

As mentioned before, the matter of torture is not simple. It has multi-faceted and complex reasons behind its application in Iran. There can be many reasons that might be all pursued by the ruling system, with some reasons on focus, and others as minor and subsequent goals/objectives. The below mentioned conclusions are derived from a review of available literature on the matter of torture in Iran (Please see the Section **Literature review**) as well as a series of in-depth interviews and consultations with formerly detained and tortured political prisoners and consultations with other activists from Iran. Some of the reasons, to be suggested, can be mentioned below, but not limited to:

- To extract information required;
- To obtain and use false confessions for false accusations and unfair sentences;
- To send out deterring signals to outsiders;
- To maximize submission of political prisoners;
- To create a psychological atmosphere of fear and control;
- To inactivate civil/political activists;
- To crush down activists psychologically;
- To crackdown activism;
- To indirectly make civil/political activists prefer to flee the country;
- To induce/impose psychologically negative feelings on activists;
- To make activists seem untrusted after their release;
- To make changes in political prisoners;
- To impose long-lasting substantial physical and/or psychological harms;
- To force/encourage activists to work for/report to the IIS;
- To take revenge/discharge resentment or hate (be political, ideological, religious or racial/ethnically-driven).

There is a very direct link between tortures and demand for extracting information by the interrogators/torturers. However, this is not the main and only reason behind tortures. The focus of IIS, as expected output, for the application of torture is to coerce confessions/betrays by which false/fabricated accusations are made against the political prisoners. Later, via unfair trials with reference to the IPC, heavy sentences are imposed on the political prisoners as punishment. In a torture-breeding environment and through involvement of three pro-torture elements (i.e. IIS, IPC and GC), tortures and ill-treatment of political prisoners are practiced with impunity and in lack of any international or national monitoring bodies. The ultimate goal

of the ruling system, as deterrence policy, is to crush down civil/political activists and prevent development of any activism. Moreover, attempts are made by the system to reduce risks of any kind of protests, gatherings, or demonstrations in the future and hinder demands for any rights, changes or reforms through dominance of an atmosphere of fear and control.

#### Part IV: Remarks

The results of this study were a bit shocking to me when I came to understand the following issues:

- ✓ The scope and complexity of psychological as well as post-detention tortures, ill-treatments, abuses and harassments are enormous and got to be beyond my imagination.
- ✓ The scope of intentions (goals/sub-goals/objectives) behind application of tortures on political prisoners and their short-term/long-term effects or side-effects is very high and was beyond my initial calculations.

#### Notes for future researches & suggestions:

1. For studies concerning political prisoners, it is very important not only be familiar with the major Iranian political calendars (in which major large-scale popular demonstration and protests, arrests and detentions are marked), but also try to know and use other local/regional political calendars that are related to ethnic/religious populations' popular demonstrations, arrests and detentions in larger scales, information about which might not be made available in national scale.
2. I encourage more researchers to conduct similar studies in which more samples from more diverse ethnic and religious populations are taken into study. Such studies have been completely rare.
3. There is need for researches in which more samples from women/girls are taken into study to find out more about their gender-based vulnerabilities and discriminations that they face in the Iranian places of detention and prisons. I have not found such a study to focus on the above-mentioned gender-based challenges and problems. Female



researchers are more encouraged to conduct such studies because women might be keener to speak about their problems more easily with women than men.

4. It is important to also focus on the treatment of those political detainees and prisoners who might be from/be accused of armed opposition. It is believed that such prisoners face the most terrible and harshest physical tortures that may either end in their execution, or their death under custody.
5. Some of the interviewees suggested focused studies on allegedly increased use of pharmacological tortures and use of drugs to extract forced confessions/betrayals that now occur more than before in the Iranian places of detention.
6. More interviewees suggested expert studies by participation of psychologists about the issue of increasingly applied complex forms of psychological tortures that result in devastating and very wide range of long-lasting physical and psychological side-effects. Many interviewees claimed that no clinical treatment or consultation was offered to them and as a result they and their families continued to suffer up to date.
7. It is also suggested not only focus on the treatment of political prisoners, but also about forgotten issue of allegedly brutal treatment of criminal cases and well as drug-related criminals by the Iranian Law Enforcement Force that take place at the Police Interrogation Centres.
8. One of the very common used forms of interrogation techniques by the IIS is a technique which is very similar to “Reid Technique”/good cop – bad cop technique. According to the interviewees, application of this technique amounts to torture, something which is very complex and destructive. There is a need to investigate more about different interrogation techniques which are used by the IIS that are more or less equivalent to forms of tortures.

## **Appendix I: A summary of applied tortures on each interviewee:**

It has to be mentioned that even though this part is brought as appendix, it is one of the very important parts of this thesis. This appendix provides a very brief summary of what each interviewee has experienced. With an artificial classification of physical and psychological tortures, it was meant to provide a better and clear picture of tortures that are inflicted on political prisoners in Iran. With a brief profile of each interviewee, one can also get a glimpse of torture phenomenon in Iran. This part helped me better classify obtained data and come to analysis and conclusions in a systematic way. Interviews/names are brought randomly as they were studied/listed, and no reason is behind such order. No communicated data/information in relation to the torture/ill-treatment of the interviewees is intentionally removed from the list. In this respect, higher accuracy was applied throughout the study.

**Interviewee 1: Taha Kermani**

Belonging to the Azerbaijani Turkic populations in Iran; 28 years old; arrested, detained, and interrogated in 2013 by the Ministry of Intelligence in Tabriz; was university student; environmental and ethnic/language/civil rights activist (focused activity on saving the Lake Urmia); 45 days detained in the Intelligence Interrogation Center in Tabriz & over 4 months in Tabriz Central Prison; sentenced to 13 years in prison (later decreased to 7 years); accused of espionage, insult to the Iran's Leader, propaganda against the regime, blasphemy, assembly, collusion and acts against national security, and membership in ethnically-driven groups.

Summary of the main experienced physical tortures			
Blunt force trauma		Harsh physical/ environmental conditions	
1) Beating while being blindfolded; 2) slapping from backside on face and neck; 3) kicking incl. pair kicking; 3) pair beating; 4) punching on the head and other parts of body; 5) hitting the head on wall; 6) sudden pushes from the back to lose balance.	1) Extreme overcrowding (without sleeping facilities) at Tabriz Central Prison, Quarantine & Section III that caused lack of oxygen, felt not being able to breathe, had to stand in queue for breathing from a little hole on window; 2) contaminated prison with large amounts of lice insects.	1) Prolonged forced frog jumps ( <i>kalagh porj</i> );	1) Grabbing and pulling head hair forcibly.

Summary of the main experienced psychological tortures								
<b>Humiliation</b>	<b>Solitary confinement</b>	<b>Harsh verbal abuses including insults to ethnic-political views</b>	<b>Threats (of death/threats to family/threats of rape, etc.)</b>	<b>Harmful deprivations such denial of medical care</b>	<b>Forced confessions</b>	<b>Harsh &amp; abusive questioning of ethnic identity and political values</b>	<b>Other psychological techniques such as forced betrayals</b>	<b>Experienced by other inmates</b>
1) Detainee was given little container for urine disposal inside solitary confinement with camera; 2) repeated humiliation of the country with the same ethnic origin.	1) 45 days solitary confinement (2*3 meters empty cell with no facility/complete isolation (no visits), including 35 days with long interrogations, exposed to constant artificial light even at nights with no sense of time.	1) Harsh verbal abuses; 2) insults to ethno-political views/stands; 3) insults targeting co-thinkers (civil activists).	1) Interrogating and threatening the detainee's father by the same interrogator several times at father's working place; 2) threatening the detainee not to engage in civil activities outside; 3) threatening not to be given work permission for any work outside detention; 3) threats to longer imprisonment.	1) Denial of medical care after nose-bleeding due to severe beatings; 2) restricted access to toilet made the detainee cry and suffer from severe kidney pains for a long period without medical care during intelligence detention; 3) severe headache and migraine pains with no provided medicine.	Forcing the detainee to write and sign as much as possible for 35 days (false confessions)	1) Harsh and deep questioning of ethno-political/ideological views; 2) forcibly inducing that the detainee's thoughts and values are wrong; 3) forcing the detainee to read books on ethnicity issues and give feedback on them; 4) forced ideological arguments; 5) inducing hopelessness about civil activities.	1) Extreme loud voices, shouts and screams by interrogators while beating; 2) imprisonment with arrogant drug-addicted, dangerous criminals and those sentenced to death (seen never again); 3) sleeping at interrogation room; 4) forced labor (to paint Tabriz Prison for 5 minutes telephone call to family); 6) inducing psychological concerns about condition of family members while the detainee was interrogated; 7) no sleeping facility at Tabriz Prison ( <i>bande seghane</i> ); 8) Very lengthy interrogations per day; 9) prolonged interrogations for 1.5 month;	1) A detainee was not given own medical eyeglasses for 2 months.

## Interviewee 2: Duman Radmehr

Belonging to the Azerbaijani Turkic populations in Iran; 35 years old; arrested, detained, and interrogated in 2008 by the Ministry of Intelligence in Tabriz; was university student; political and ethnic/language/civil rights activist (focused activity on South Azerbaijan Student Movement & a key member of an unofficial political party); 98 days detained in the Intelligence Interrogation Center in Tabriz & 7 days in Tabriz Central Prison; sentenced to 3 years in prison; accused of propaganda against the regime, acts against national security, and establishment of illegal group.

91

### Summary of the main experienced physical tortures

Blunt force trauma		Positional torture		Pharmacological torture		Forced exercises		Harmful stretches	
1) Beating; 2) slapping from backside and from the front on face and neck; 3) Kicking on all parts of the body; 4) routine tapping with the head of fingers on the head during interrogations; 5) hitting the head on the wall; 5) hitting the back and body sides with bended fingers (dumsuk); 6) punching on the neck; 7) hitting on the head with the hard-bending side of hand fingers (qirxan).		1) Hands were cuffed from behind extremely tight (hands meeting each other from behind) for 5 hours while standing caused senseless finger for weeks.		1) The detainee experienced periods of disturbing visual hallucinations while being kept in complete isolation (prolonged solitary confinement) causing him to think he had got Schizoaffective disorder (suspected contaminated food).		1) Prolonged forced Sit down – Stand up Exercises for several hours that caused severe cramp in legs; Then, interrogator started kicking the cramped legs.		1) Grabbing and pulling head hair forcibly.	

### Summary of the main experienced psychological tortures

Humiliation		Solitary confinement		Harsh verbal abuses including insults to ethnic-political views/values		Threats (of death/threats to family/threats of rape, etc.)		Harmful deprivations such denial of medical care		Forced confessions		Harsh & abusive questioning of ethnic/identity and political values		Other psychological techniques such as forced betrayals	
1) Humiliation of ethno-political values and stands.		1) 98 days solitary confinement (2 *1.5 meters empty cell with no facility/complete isolation (no visits), including 65 days with long interrogations, exposed to constant artificial light even at nights with no sense of time, equipped with hidden camera.		1) insults targeting co-thinkers (civil/political activists); 2) harsh verbal abuses.		1) Threatening the detainee to insert needles to senseless fingers (as a test) that was caused due to torture; 2) threatened at the interrogation center by the prosecutor to collaborate with the interrogators.		1) Severe sleep deprivations; 2) restricted access to toilet; 3) denial of medical care.		1) Forced recorded false confessions in front of video camera; 2) forced signing of repentance letter; 3) forcing to write as much as possible for 65 days (approx. 800 pages).		1) Forcibly inducing that the detainee's thoughts and values are wrong; 2) harsh and deep questioning of ethno-political/ideological views; 3) inducing hopelessness about civil activities.		1) Very close physical proximity of interrogator to the detainee during interrogation; 2) Very lengthy interrogations (10 hours a day); 3) prolonged interrogations for 65 days; 4) moral questioning about relations with the opposite sex; 5) inducing that family's situation is very bad because of the detainee's political activities; 6) forced betrayals and induced acts of fellow activists against the detainee.	

**Interviewee 3: Akbar Sadeghnezhad (NOT DETAINED; JUST INTERROGATED; NOT INCLUDED IN STATISTICS)**

57 years old; Interrogated 3 times in 2008 by the Ministry of Intelligence (NOT DETAINED); was expert accountant; religious activist (converted from Islam to Christianity; engaged in missionary (Basharat) for Christianity); accused of espionage and apostasy.

Summary of the main experienced psychological tortures						
<b>Solitary confinement</b>	<b>Harsh verbal abuses</b>	<b>Forced confessions</b>	<b>Harsh &amp; abusive questioning of religious and political values</b>	<b>Other psychological techniques such as forced betrayals</b>	<b>Extended psychological torture/ abuse outside detention</b>	<b>Experienced by others</b>
1) The detainee was only interrogated 3 times (did not experience detention or solitary confinement).	1) Harsh verbal abuses, incl. sexual insults to the close family members.	1) Several times, the detainee was forced to signing of commitment letter (not read) not to preach for Christianity at any place.	1) Inquisition: harsh and deep questioning of religious (Christianity), social and political views/thoughts; 2) forcibly inducing that the interviewee's thoughts and values are wrong.	1) The interviewee was allowed to call his family from the interrogation center. He hears terrible torture cries and sounds on the phone. The same was heard on phone by the wife, mother, and sister, causing them to faint from horror and shock.	1) Being under very close surveillance for years until fleeing from Iran (fear from arrest at any time).	1) Widespread threats to and detention of family members of those converted from Islam to Christianity.

**Interviewee 4:** (Due to sensitive information, the interviewee's name is not given, even though he wanted to be named.)

Belonging to the Azerbaijani Turkic populations in Iran; 42 years old; arrested, detained, and interrogated in 2006 by the Ministry of Intelligence in Tabriz; was university student; ethnic/language/civil rights activist; 10 days detained in the Intelligence Interrogation Center in Tabriz & 4 months and 20 days in Tabriz Central Prison; sentenced to 6 months in prison; accused of propaganda against the regime; attendance in Babak Castle assemblies & popular protests against Iran Newspaper that published cartoon containing insults to the Turks in Iran in June 2006, membership in ethnically-driven groups, organizing Turkic language classes at university and connections to the outside Iran, including with Israel.

Summary of the main experienced physical tortures	
Blunt force trauma	
Experienced by other inmates	
1) Beating; 2) punching on parts of body; 3) hitting the head on the wall; 4) sudden pushes from back to lose balance; 5) hitting with pen harshly on the head.	1) One inmate was suspended from the ceiling; 2) Many (in relation to the popular protests to Iran Newspaper insulting the Turks in Iran) were beaten severely by the RGC Intelligence.

Summary of the main experienced psychological tortures									
Humiliation	Solitary confinement	Harsh verbal abuses including insults to ethno-political views	Threats (of death/threats to family/threats of rape, etc.)	Forced confessions	Harsh & abusive questioning of ethnic/identity and political values	Other psychological techniques such as forced betrayals	Exposed to others being tortured	Extended psychological torture/abuse outside prison	Experienced by other inmates
1) Humiliation of ethno-political views.	1) 5 days in solitary confinement.	1) Harsh verbal abuses including sexual insults to close family members; 2) insults to ethno-political views/stands; 3) insults targeting Turkic ethno-political characters; 4) insults by the prison guards.	1) Threatening to submit detainee's wife to the RGC's Intelligence for forced rape if the detainee does not accept video interview for confessions (this caused the detainee to threaten interrogators for burning himself in front of the UN building in Tehran; 2) Threatening the detainee to cooperate and give info and confess; 3) threatening the detainee to accept (or be accused of involvement (fake) in armed opposition; 4) threatening to sign repentance letter; 5) threatening family members not to speak to anybody about the detainee.	1) Forcing the detainee to write and sign as much as possible (false confessions); 2) forced signing of repentance letter.	1) Harsh and deep questioning of ethno-political and ideological views and thoughts; 2) forcibly inducing that detainee's thoughts and values are wrong.	1) Lengthy interrogations (8-9 hours a day); 2) forced betrayals ( <i>tok nevisi</i> ); 3) forcing the other arrested friends to accuse the detainee with fake claims.	1) An 18 years old boy in the next cell was raped by two interrogators several times violently, terrible voices and cries of the victim was very disturbing and destructive to the interviewee.	1) Militia ( <i>basisji</i> ) demonstrating threatening show motorcycle-rides in front of personal house for a month; 2) threatening the detainee's father and mother; 3) threatening the detainee's business partner; 4) questioning father-in-law about why his daughter has married the interviewee.	1) threatening to rape an inmates' 8 years old daughter had made the detainee mad; 2) forced video-recorded confessions for some other inmates.

## Interviewee 5: Ramazan Naseri

Belonging to the Arab populations in Iran, 48 years old; arrested, detained, and interrogated in 2006 by the Ministry of Intelligence in Ahvaz; was university staff; converted from Shia to Sunni; religious/ethnic/cultural rights activist; over 4 months detained in the Intelligence Interrogation Center in Ahvaz, spent 20 months in Karun-e-Ahvaz Prison and 6 years in Eghlid Prison; sentenced to 30 years in prison and exile; accused of waging war with God and acting against national security.

### Summary of the main experienced physical tortures

Blunt force trauma	Pharmacological torture	Harsh physical/ environmental conditions	Experienced by other inmates
<p>1) Beating with thick cable/hard pipe-like device on the sole of the foot, back and legs that caused long-lasting blisters on the sole of the foot;</p> <p>2) Transferred from Karun prison to Ahvaz Intelligence Center (because of found complaint letter that was written by the interviewee at the prison) and was so beaten hardly, also using devices such as thick cables;</p> <p>3) Disciplinary group punishment of all prisoners in Karun prison (Hell Tunnel Method) forcing prisoners go through a humane made tunnel in which guards beat prisoners with baton and plastic hoses/those who go through the tunnel faster get relatively less beaten.</p>	<p>1) Detainee experienced periods of disturbing visual hallucinations while being kept in complete isolation (prolonged solitary confinement) causing insomnia and constipation (no excretion) for two weeks (suspected contaminated food).</p>	<p>1) Karun Prison was contaminated with large amounts of lice insects;</p> <p>2) high rate of sexually transmitted diseases;</p> <p>3) religiously-driven violence/tension among prisoners; 4) three full months eating only potatoes at Eghlid Prison.</p>	<p>1) One inmate (friend) was forcibly put inside a plastic barrel for 24 hours; 2) another inmate (friend) was hanged from his hands /suspended from a frame standing on foot for three days; 3) One inmate (friend) was beaten with cable and on belly and head causing him to faint (after finding complaint letter written at Karun prison).</p>

### Summary of the main experienced psychological tortures

Humiliation	Solitary confinement	Harsh verbal abuses including insults to religion, ethnic/language or political identities/ values	Threats (of death/threats to family/ threats of rape, etc.)	Harmful deprivations such as sleep deprivation	Forced confessions	Harsh & abusive questioning of religious, ethnic/identity and political values	Exposed to others being tortured	Experienced by other inmates
<p>1) Weekly inspection of cells for political inmates (degrading and humiliating) searching with dogs and boots on all the belongings (to find any possible written pieces of paper).</p>	<p>1) 80 days solitary confinement (3 *1.8 meters) empty cell with no facility at Ahvaz Intelligence Interrogation Center/ complete isolation (no visits), including 40 days with long interrogations, with window without artificial light;</p> <p>2) a week solitary confinement as group disciplinary punishment at Karun Prison;</p> <p>3) 10 days solitary confinement another time at Karun Prison for confiscated complaint letter.</p>	<p>1) Harsh verbal abuses at the interrogation center and in the prison;</p> <p>2) insults to religious views/stands;</p> <p>3) sexually-contained insults.</p>	<p>1) Threats to execution;</p> <p>2) threats to disturb family members;</p> <p>3) threats to bring all members of the family into the interrogation center.</p>	<p>1) Sleep deprivation with mid-night interrogations</p>	<p>1) Forcing to write, sign and finger-print as much as possible for at least over 40 days (false confessions)</p>	<p>1) Harsh, deep and confusing questioning of religious and ethno-political views;</p> <p>2) forcibly inducing that the detainee's thoughts and values are wrong.</p>	<p>1) Hearing voices and cries of others being under severe tortures</p>	<p>1) one inmate was given diarrhea-causing medicine during interrogation and was banned from using the toilet resulted in unwanted excretion in front of the interrogators that caused huge humiliation by interrogators.</p>

## Interviewee 6: Majid Tutunchi

Belonging to the Azerbaijani Turkic populations in Iran; 39 years old; arrested, detained, and interrogated in 2010 by the Ministry of Intelligence in Tabriz; was computer expert; civil/social rights activist (focused activity on a popular website for the fans of Tractor Football Team and other news websites such as Oyan News); 20 days detained in the Intelligence Interrogation Center in Tabriz in 2010 & later 5 months in Tabriz Central Prison in 2011; sentenced to 9 months in prison; accused of propaganda against the regime and insult to the Iran's leader.

65

### Summary of the main experienced physical tortures

#### Blunt force trauma

1) Slapping; 2) beating 3) kicking harshly with the knee to the legs (could not walk correctly for a month); 4) punching on the head and on the sides of body.

### Summary of the main experienced psychological tortures

Humiliation	Solitary confinement	Harsh verbal abuses including insults to political values	Threats (of death/threats to family/threats of rape, etc.)	Harmful deprivations such as sleep deprivation	Forced confessions	Harsh & abusive questioning of ethnic/identity and political values	Other psychological techniques such as forced betrayals
1) Total naked inspection, including sexual organs; 2) disrespect at the Tabriz Central Prison (slapping the detainee harsh in front of other prisoners by the Tabriz Central Prisons Chief of Staff).	1) 9 days solitary confinement (2*3 meters empty cell with no facility/complete isolation (no visits), including 10 days with lengthy interrogations, exposed to constant artificial light even at nights with no sense of time.	1) Other insults at Tabriz Central Prisons.	1) Threatening to longer imprisonments; 2) threatening to rape	1) Detainee was sick and could not eat food and was denied medical care and so fainted at solitary confinement (pain killer pills were given only after the detainee got unconscious because of sickness; 2) the detainee was taken to interrogations at mid-night (could not sleep); 3) denial of toilet access for diarrhea caused lots of suffering; 4) Denial of medical care (for body infection) for 20 days at Tabriz Central Prison.	1) Forcing to write and sign as much as possible for 10 days (false confessions); 2) forced signing of repentance letter.	1) Harsh and deep questioning of ethno-political and ideological views and thoughts.	1) Very lengthy interrogations (8-9 hours/day); 2) sleeping at interrogation room; 3) forcing to cooperate and open fake manipulated websites to be available for Tabriz Intelligence Department; 4) Forced by the guard to pray ( <i>Namaz</i> );



## Interviewee 7: Anonymous

47 years old; arrested, detained and interrogated in 2012 by the Revolutionary Guardian Corps (RGC) Intelligence Service at Evin prison in Tehran for a month; was media expert, radio producer and speaker, film-producer and director and human rights activist and NGO worker/volunteer; converted from Islam to Christianity; 30 days detained at the RGC's Interrogation Center at Evin Prison (2 *alef sepah*) & later spent 3 years and 2 months in Evin Prison (Section 350/political prisoners); sentenced to 5 years and 6 months in prison; accused of propaganda against the regime, blasphemy, assembly and collusion under a human rights NGO, and acting against national security.

### Summary of the main experienced physical tortures

#### Harsh physical/ environmental conditions

- 1) Strong artificial white light at solitary confinement with hot temperature (at summer) made it not possible to sleep at nights;
- 2) Very strange and annoying high screams (possibly made by guards) made it more difficult to sleep.

### Summary of the main experienced psychological tortures

Humiliation	Solitary confinement	Verbal abuses	Threats (of death/threats to family/threats of rape, etc.)	Harmful deprivations such as sleep deprivation	Forced confessions	Abusive questioning about political/civil activities	Other psychological techniques such as forced betrayals	Extended psychological torture/ abuse outside prison	Experienced by other inmates
1) Very few times squeezing the neck not too hard; slapping the neck and the head not hard (just for humiliation), all not amounting to pain	1) 21 days solitary confinement (1*2 meters cell with strong artificial white light, very hot; difficult to breath).	1) Verbal abuse happened twice.	1) Threatening to write otherwise family in danger; 2) threatening family members.	1) Very lengthy and continuous interrogations accompanied with forced sleep deprivations caused lack of concentration and high stress (the detainee was promised if he could write what he was asked then he could be let sleep); 2) very restricted access to toilet during interrogations made the detainee cry (interrogators promised to give access to toilet only if the detainee could write what it was asked about); 3) Very harmful denial of medical care regardless of long-lasting sickness, difficult health conditions and days under hunger strike caused 50% loss of vision and brain stroke.	1) Forcing to write and sign as much as possible for a month (had to write about 700 pages. It took 2-3 days to sign all the pages; 2) was forced to confess and write it down that the detainee and his colleagues had planned to topple down the regime.	1) Harsh and deep questioning of political/social views and thoughts.	1) Forced betrayals	1) Interrogator called the interviewee to submit to him educational papers personally at an open public space in Tehran (suspected of video-recording for future intelligence manipulations); 2) Forced dismissal of the interviewee's sister from her post as university professor.	1) An interrogator had invited an inmate to dinner at a restaurant in Tehran for a meeting (suspected of video-recording for future intelligence manipulations).

### Interviewee 8: Saleh Hamid

Belonging to the Arab populations in Iran, 36 years old; arrested, detained and interrogated in 2008 by the Ministry of Intelligence in Tehran for 4 days; later in the same year was arrested, detained and interrogated for 2 months in the Ahvaz Interrogation Center (Ministry of Intelligence); was university student in Damascus & administrator of Ahvazi Students Association in Syria; sentenced to a year in prison; accused of propaganda against the regime, acting against national security, and illegal establishment of Ahvazi Students Association in Syria.

#### Summary of the main experienced physical tortures

##### Blunt force trauma

1) Repeated harsh and violent slapping on face and on ears (caused 50% hearing loss and bleeding once); 2) punching; 3) kicking at the time of arrest

#### Summary of the main experienced psychological tortures

<p><b>Solitary confinement</b></p> <p>1) 4 days solitary confinement in Tehran (Ministry of Intelligence) and 2 months solitary confinement (2 * 1.5 meter with hot temperatures felling lack of oxygen) at Ahvaz Interrogation Center.</p>	<p><b>Verbal abuses</b></p> <p>1) Harsh verbal abuses at Ahvaz Interrogation Center (Ministry of Intelligence).</p>	<p><b>Threats (of death/threats to family/threats of rape, etc.)</b></p> <p>1) Threatening to do the worst; 2) Threats to beating and longer imprisonment (15 years in prison) if not cooperated; 3) threatening to bring family members for interrogation.</p>	<p><b>Harmful deprivations such as sleep deprivation</b></p> <p>1) Denial of medical care (prevented care for bleeding ears after torture that caused infection and later loss of hearing).</p>	<p><b>Forced confessions</b></p> <p>1) Forcing to write and sign as much as possible for over 100 pages.</p>	<p><b>Harsh &amp; abusive questioning of ethnic/identity and political values</b></p> <p>1) Harsh and deep questioning of ethnopolitical views, 2) Forcibly inducing that the detainee's thoughts and values are wrong, 3) Forced ideological arguments, 4) inducing hopelessness about civil activities.</p>	<p><b>Other psychological techniques such as forced betrayals</b></p> <p>1) Forced for betrayals.</p>	<p><b>Exposed to others being tortured</b></p> <p>1) Hearing screams and cries of others being severely tortured.</p>	<p><b>Extended psychological torture/abuse outside prison</b></p> <p>1) Repeated in calls to the interrogation center after release continues for weeks and months (to annoy and disturb the detainee psychologically; accompanied with intelligence advices to abandon social/political activities and continue a normal life); 2) Confiscated all documents; was not permitted to work after detention; could not travel.</p>
---	---	---	---	--	---	---	---	---

**Interviewee 9:** (Due to sensitive information, the interviewee's name is not given, even though he wanted to be named.)

Belonging to the Arab populations in Iran, 36 years old, detained and interrogated in 2012 by the Ministry of Intelligence in Tehran for 4 days; later between 2012-2015 was detained/interrogated about 20 times (each time lasting between 1-5 days/varied in length) in the Ahvaz Interrogation Center (Ministry of Intelligence); journalist & check-user of Arabic Wikipedia; sentenced to a year in prison; accused of propaganda against the regime, acting against national security.

#### Summary of the main experienced physical tortures

Blunt force trauma		Positional torture	
1) Hitting the head with keys to give commands; 2) very high use of slapping; 3) pushing the interrogation chair to throw down the detainee;		1) While hands were tied to each other, the detainee was hanged from the ceiling fan (feet were not touching the ground)/suspended for an hour.	
4) While the detainee was forced to lay down on the ground, his face was pressed by boots of the interrogator; 5) Kicking the belly; 6) sudden pushes forward from back.			

#### Summary of the main experienced psychological tortures

Humiliation	Solitary confinement	Harsh verbal abuses including insults to ethnic/language or political identities/values	Threats (of death/threats to family/threats of rape, etc.)	Forced confessions	Harsh & abusive questioning of ethnic/identity and political values	Exposed to others being tortured	Extended psychological torture/ abuse outside prison
1) Interrogators showed the detainee record of very personal telephone communications by the detainee's friends that caused mistrust and later dismantling of group civil activities; 2) water/tea thrown on face; 3) sexual humiliation of close family member; 4) Bringing humiliating examples on how the intelligence officers had cracked down other co-thinkers.	1) Solitary confinement at Ahvaz Intelligence Interrogation Center many times during (2012-2015), with interrogations lasting between 1-5 days (varied).	1) Very harsh verbal abuses targeting close family members, sometimes sexual insults; 2) clear harsh and degrading insults to the Arabs.	1) Threats to death; 2) Threatening to heavier accusations if not cooperated; 3) Imminent threats to rape close family members; 4) threatened for forced penetration of bottles.	1) Forcing to write and sign as much as possible; 1) forced also to sign blank papers.	1) Harsh and deep questioning of ethno-political views; 2) forcibly inducing thoughts and values are wrong; 3) forced arguments, inducing hopelessness about civil activities.	1) Intelligence officers took the detainee's father to an open area in Ahvaz City, commanding him to sit on the ground (not to go anywhere while he was left alone without medicines, later being under rain, had to sleep on the grass alone). After 12 hours, his father was taken back to home. This caused his father to get cold and resulted in operation on kidneys (2 weeks at hospital). All this was to force the detainee for what interrogators had asked for.	1) Between 2012-2015, the detainee was interrogated many times (about 20 times), leaving him with the fear of arrest and torture for a long period.

## Interviewee 10: Habibollah Sarbazi

Belonging to the Balochi populations in Iran, 32 years old, Sunni Muslim; arrested, detained and interrogated in 2008 by the Ministry of Intelligence in Iranshahr City for 3 days and 47 days in Zahedan Intelligence Interrogation Center; was student in Sunni religious school; sentenced to 5 years in prison (suspended), accused of propaganda against the regime and cooperation with armed groups.

### Summary of the main experienced physical tortures

Blunt force trauma		Positional torture		Electric shocks		Experienced by other inmates	
1) Kicking and punching on all parts of the body at the time of arrest, transfer, arrival and while interrogating at the Iranshahr Interrogation Center; 2) pressing and squeezing the head with boots; 3) slapping; 4) pinching the skin of several body parts and ears very painfully; 5) grabbing and squeezing the neck; 6) hitting the detainee towards wall or doors; 7) interrogators fastened the detainee on a metal bed (named by detainees as "The Miracle Bed") on his belly and whipped him harshly with thick cable on the back, buttocks and on the sole of the feet. This caused bleeding several times; 8) Many times, whipping without reason that caused bleeding, using water before or after whipping on body parts; 9) pair kicking, punching and slapping by two torturers.	1) Forced squat mode (handcuffed from back very tight and painfully) in a pressed tight space at a car with the head down for 4.5 hours while being transferred from Iranshahr to Zahedan Interrogation Center caused very annoying and senseless legs and feet (could not walk afterwards).	1) Electric shocks on the neck that caused feelings such as burns and senselessness of the body.	1) A group arrest and transfer (incl. the detainee himself) by the Ministry of Intelligence in Iranshahr City was accompanied by the beatings (kicking and punching on all parts of the body) and harsh verbal abuses of other arrestees.				

### Summary of the main experienced physical tortures

Solitary confinement	Harsh verbal abuses including insults to religion, ethnic or political identities/values	Threats (of death/threats to family/threats of rape, etc.)	Harmful deprivations such as sleep deprivation	Forced confessions	Harsh & abusive questioning of religious values	Other psychological techniques such as forced betrayals	Exposed to others being tortured	Extended psychological torture/abuse outside prison
1) Solitary confinement (1.5 *1.5 meters empty cell with no sleeping facility) for 3 days in Iranshahr Interrogation Center & 10 days in Zahedan Intelligence Interrogation Center.	1) Very harsh verbal abuses and insults targeting religion (Sunni) and ethnicity (Balochi) of the detainee; 2) sexual insults to the close family members and other harsh insults repeatedly.	1) Threatened to be hanged; 2) Threatened to be suspended; 3) Threatened to death; 4) threats to the family members.	1) Not letting the detainee sleep for longer time.	1) Forced recorded false confessions in front of video camera (later was broadcasted from the Iranian official TV channel as part of a documentary; 2) Forcing to write as much as possible for hundreds of pages (it took almost one day to sign all pages).	1) Harsh and deep questioning of religious views; 2) forcibly inducing that detainees' thoughts and values are wrong; 3) forced arguments to change belief from Sunni to Shia.	1) Very loud and annoying shouts and screaming by interrogators while interrogating; 2) planned video-recorded scenes from the release moments from prison; 3) Forced betrayals and induced acts of fellow activists against the detainee.	1) Very loud sounds of others being tortured was annoying at Iranshahr Interrogation Center.	1) Forced signing sessions at the Intelligence Department every day after the release (later after objection, it became less, but lasted for a longer time).

## Interviewee 11: Danyal Babayani

Belonging to the Turkmen populations in Iran, 24 years old, Sunni Muslim, arrested, detained and interrogated in 2013 by the Revolutionary Guardian Corps Intelligence Organization (SAS) in Gonbad Kavus City (*Ettelaate Sepah Neynovā*) for 10 days and imprisoned in Gonbad Prison for 8 days, later was imprisoned in 2014 in Gonbad Prison again for over 7 months; was university student and human rights activist, sentenced to 5 years in prison, later decreased to 23 months, 15 months and at last to 6 month in prison; accused of propaganda against the regime and insulting the Iran's Leader and the Founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Summary of the main experienced physical tortures							
Blunt force trauma	Positional torture		Burns	Crush injuries	Harmful stretches	Experienced by other inmates	
1) Kicking and beating at the time of arrest by the Revolutionary Guardian Corps Intelligence Organization (SAS) officers; 2) hitting the head on the interrogation table; 3) kicking; 4) whipping 5) beating and punching; 6) sudden physical assaults and pushes from back 7) harsh frequent slapping caused facial swelling; 8) beating with the thick plastic hose.	1) While hands were tied to each other, the detainee was hanged from the ceiling fan (feet were shackled/stretched to the ground)/suspended for over 3 hours (while beaten with a thick plastic hose); 2) The detainee's hands and feet were tied and his body was laid down on the ground while being beaten with plastic hose to the sole of his feet (could not walk afterwards).	1) Hitting the hand skin with the freshly burnt matchsticks.	1) Interrogators put pen between fingers and so pressed them hardly towards the pen causing very high crush pains; 2) hitting the fingers with a ruler so hardly caused feeling like crushes in the finger bones.	1) Grabbing and pulling/stretching the head hair harshly and painfully.	1) Disciplinary group punishment at Gonbad Prison with guards beating the prisoners with batons.		

### Summary of the main experienced psychological tortures

Humiliation	Solitary confinement	Harsh verbal abuses including insults to religion, ethnic/language or political identities/values	Threats (of death/threats to family/threats of rape)	Harmful deprivations such as sleep deprivation	Mock execution	Forced confessions	Harsh & abusive questioning of religious, ethnic/identity and political values	Other psychological techniques such as forced betrayals	Extended psychological torture/abuse outside prison
1) Kicking on the buttocks as humiliation several times by the interrogators and by the prison officers and by the guard of prison; 2) insulting inspection of the naked body at the prison.	1) Solitary confinement (2 *3.5 meters cell with toilet, exposed to artificial light all the time, equipped with camera) for 10 days at the Revolutionary Guardian Corps Intelligence Organization (SAS) in Gonbad City ( <i>Khareye timiye sepa</i> ).	1) Harsh verbal insults to the ethnicity/identity (Turkmen) and religion (Sunni); 2) sexual insults; 3) insulting and hate looks by the prison guards-	1) Threats to severe tortures, rape and death.	1) Denial of medical care (only bleeding hands were bandaged to stop bleeding).	1) 3 times experienced mock executions while blindfolded (felt severe choking) that forced the detainee to forcibly sign 20-30 interrogation papers.	1) Forcing to write and sign as much as possible; 2) forced signing of repentance letter.	1) Harsh and deep questioning of religious views; 2) forcibly inducing that the detainees' thoughts and values are wrong.	1) Forced betrayals. 2) the detainee could not speak (banned) his mother language (Turkmen that is spoken language in his family) while having family visits.	1) After release, the interviewee was forced to give names of other human rights activists that caused him to flee the home.

## Interviewee 12: Karim Fathipour

Belonging to the Azerbaijani Turkic populations in Iran, 32 years old, arrested, detained, and interrogated three times: first in 2010 in Naghadeh City by the Police Disciplinary Forces, spent 2 nights in the Detention Center of Police in Urmia, then was transferred to the Interrogation Center of the Intelligence Ministry in Urmia where he was detained and interrogated for 2 days; second time was detained and interrogated in 2013 by the Ministry of Intelligence in Naghadeh City for 4 days and spent 10 days in Naghadeh Prison; third time was arrested, detained and interrogated in 2015 by the Revolutionary Guardian Corps Intelligence Organization (SAS) for 48 hours; was a company worker; environmental and ethnic/language/civil rights activist (focused activity on anniversary ceremonies for the killed protesters during the 2006 popular Turkic populations protest against ethnic insults in Iran, saving the Lake Urmia campaigns and distributing posters for the release of Azerbaijani civil rights activists); accused of unlawful protests and disturbing public security.

Summary of the main experienced physical tortures					
Blunt force trauma		Positional torture			
1) Punching; 2) kicking 3) sudden physical assault towards wall	1) At the Revolutionary Guardian Corps Intelligence Interrogation Center in Naghadeh City, the detainee's hands were tied up to a horizontal bar (suspended position) while a heavy car tire was hanged from the neck twice (caused intolerable pains) while being punched onto the belly.	Harsh physical/ environmental conditions	Forced frog jump exercises.		

Summary of the main experienced psychological tortures							
Humiliation	Solitary confinement	Threats (of death/threats to family/threats of rape, etc.)	Harmful deprivations such as sleep deprivation	Forced confessions	Harsh & abusive questioning of ethnic/identity and political values	Extended psychological torture/abuse outside prison	Experienced by other inmates
1) Humiliation of ethnic and political ideas.	1) Solitary confinement for 8 days.	1) Threats to sleep deprivations; 2) threatened for severe tortures if they could continue to read sport exercise numbers in the Azerbaijani Turkic language in prison; 3) threats to death.	1) Detained with his father who fainted in a bad condition because of stress and low blood pressure. His father was denied medical care for hours.	1) Forcing to write, sign and finger print as much as possible; 2) forced to sign unread papers; 3) forced signing of repentance letter;	1) Harsh and deep questioning of ethnic and political rights and views; 2) forcibly inducing that detainees' thoughts and values are wrong.	1) Close surveillance after release; 2) frequent telephone calls by the intelligence officers for prevention of interviewee's participation in ceremonies or any other civil activities; 3) continued threats to the family and the interviewee's father; 4) Basiji militias riding violent motorcycle rides in front of the house for psychological terror to the whole family.	1) Harsh punching on the forehead of co-activist caused the inmate to collapse forcibly.

### Interviewee 13: Anonymous

Belonging to the Kurdish populations in Iran; detained, and interrogated in 1999 by the Ministry of Intelligence in Sanandaj City; was political activist; 93 days detained in the Intelligence Interrogation Center in Sanandaj; sentenced to 5 years in prison (suspended); later was interrogated 10 times at the Sanandaj Intelligence Interrogation each time less than 24 hours and once in Tehran; accused of acts against domestic security, attempts to topple the regime, separatism, and membership in ethnically-driven groups.

#### Summary of the main experienced physical tortures

Blunt force trauma		Positional torture		Crush injuries		Experienced by other inmates	
1) Brutally punching and beating on all parts of the body by several torturers; 2) punching on the mouth (caused a broken tooth); 3) Beating the sole of feet with a thick cable caused the detainee to faint from severe pains; 4) whipping the sole of the feet, the knees and the sides of body caused ruptured skin of the belly side (traces of which remain).		1) The detainee was fastened on his belly on a bed (called by the interrogators as "the Cure Bed", indeed the torture bed) and was beaten with a thick cable on the sole of feet while a recorded voice of Quran was broadcasted, accompanied with hits on the head and face. (repeated twice). After it the detainee was forced to stand on his feet and so torturer pressed detainee's feet fingers with his shoes and hit the sole of feet with sponge sandals. They made the detainee's feet wet after this. The detainee could not walk afterwards.		1) Interrogators put 3 pens between fingers and so pressed them hardly towards each other causing very high crush pains.		1) The detainee's sister and fiancée were also interrogated simultaneously for 24-48 hours.	

#### Summary of the main experienced psychological tortures

Solitary confinement		Harsh verbal abuses including insults to political values		Threats (of death/ threats to family/threats of rape, etc.)		Harmful deprivations such as sleep deprivation		Forced confessions		Harsh & abusive questioning of religious, ethnic/identity and political values		Other psychological techniques such as forced betrayals		Extended psychological torture/ abuse outside prison		Experienced by other inmates	
1) 93 days in solitary confinement at Intelligence Interrogation Center in Sanandaj		1) Harsh verbal insults targeting political ideas; 2) harsh sexual insults targeting close family members.		1) Threats to death; 2) threatened to Islamic punishment such as amputation of hand and leg.		1) Denied medical care.		1) Forcing to write and sign as much as possible.		1) Harsh and deep questioning of ethnic/political/religious rights views; 2) forcibly inducing that detainees' thoughts and values are wrong.		1) Forced betrayals; 2) very high violent voices of torturers.		1) Close surveillance; 2) Intelligence Services cars parked in front of house and working place frequently after the release; 3) Intelligence Services making press on the kindergarten where the interviewee's child was going; 4) excessive press on working place; 5) interrogated 10 times by the Intelligence Service in Sanandaj until he fled the country; 6) Frequent disturbing telephone calls from the Intelligence Services;		One guard had contaminated lemonade juice with his urine and had given it to many inmates to drink. Later he had told that they had drunken his urine (as humiliation)	

**Interviewee 14: Arash Mokaridoust**

Belonging to the Azerbaijani Turkic populations in Iran; 30 years old; arrested, detained, and interrogated first in 2006 by the Ministry of Intelligence and Revolutionary Guardian Corps Intelligence Service (SAS) in Naghadeh City for a month, second time in 2007 by the Ministry of Intelligence in Naghadeh for a week; last time in 2012 by the Ministry of Intelligence in Azershrahr for 2 days; was university student; environmental and ethnic/language/civil rights activist; sentenced to 6 months in prison (suspended); spent 2 weeks in Naghadeh Prison; accused of propaganda against the regime, participation at popular protest of Turkic populations against the ethnic insult by the Iran Newspaper in 2006, and activities on language & ethnic rights.

**Summary of the main experienced physical tortures**

Blunt force trauma		Positional torture	Harsh physical/ environmental conditions	Harmful stretches
1) Beatings, slapping, punching and kicking at the time of arrest by the Revolutionary Guardian Corps Intelligence Service (SAS); 2) beatings at the time of arrival at the Interrogation Center in Naghadeh; 3) Fell down from Interrogation Center's stairs and injured the chin; 4) Frequent hitting on the chest and back by interrogator's elbow; 5) punching.		1) Interrogators fastened the detainee's hands and feet to a metal bed and prevented him from falling asleep.	1) Exposed to very cooling circulated air at a wide place at the Interrogation Center for long time that caused stiff muscles and body.	1) Grabbing ears and pulling them harshly.

**Summary of the main experienced psychological tortures**

Humiliation	Solitary confinement	Harsh verbal abuses including insults to ethnic/ language or political identities/ values	Threats (of death/ threats to family/ threats of rape, etc.)	Harmful deprivations such as sleep deprivation	Forced confessions	Harsh & abusive questioning of ethnic/ identity and political values	Other psychological techniques such as forced betrayals	Exposed to others being tortured	Extended psychological torture/ abuse outside prison
Lots of humiliation.	1) Solitary confinement for two weeks, one week more, and 2 days the third time.	1) Very harsh verbal abuses, incl. sexual insults to the detainee and his close family members; 2) Very harsh verbal insults targeting ethnic-political ideas; 3) Insults to the popular ethnic characters.	1) Threats to beatings with the cable; 2) threatening to torturing of family members; 3) threats to rape; 4) threats to sleep deprivations 5) Threats to interrogate detainee's father; 6) Threats to	1) Sleep deprivations for 2 weeks caused a feeling of madness and confusion.	1) Forcing to finger print as much as 20-30 pages that were not written by the detainee (SAS interrogator pressed detainee's fingers on the papers with excessive force. This caused	1) Harsh and deep questioning of ethnic rights and views; 2) forcibly inducing and arguing that detainees' thoughts and values are wrong and that his ethnic identity and motherland are false.	1) Forced betrayals; 2) Intelligence services officers telling sexual abusive words and phrases to each other loudly to induce uncontrolled immoral interrogation environment; 3) Telling lies about the detainee's mother getting heart attack or the father being tortured at the neighboring cell, the brother not being let attend the school classes or the father being dismissed from his job; 4) Showing grave pictures indicating that the detainee's mother has died; 5) At Naghadeh Prison, the detainee was every day called to family	1) Exposed to prolonged various torture voices coming from other cells (like that somebody's skin is burned or cut) even at nights (could not sleep).	1) Extended interrogations by the same interrogator from Ministry of Intelligence Services car parked at front of the detainee's house for 6-7 months after release from Naghadeh Prison; 2) Frequent control phone calls from the Interrogation Center; 3) close surveillance; 4) prior to any civil protests or gatherings, the interviewee was called to the Interrogation Center/Police Station to sign commitment letter not to go out; 5) violent motorcycle rides by Intelligence Services in front of house before and after any possible protests/civil activities; 6)



			death; 7) Threats to longer imprisonment; 8) Threats to miss university study and job.		severe pains at index finger); 2) Ministry of Intelligence interrogator forced the detainee to finger print about 10 bank pages on both sides.		visit (but every time he met his interrogator from the Interrogation Center in Naghade and so was interrogated and threatened for an hour a day; extended interrogation at Naghade Prison).		continued phone calls from the Intelligence Services persuading the interviewee to work for the Ministry of Intelligence; 7) Pressing the employees not to give job to the interviewee after release from the prison; 8) continued press to the family even now.
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

**Interviewee 15:** (Due to sensitive information, the interviewee's name is not given, even though she wanted to be named.)

Belonging to the Azerbaijani Turkic populations in Tehran; female; 58 years old; arrested, detained, and interrogated in 1981 by the Revolutionary Guardian Corps and their militia in Evin Prison in Tehran; was university student; political activist; close to 5 months detained and interrogated in Evin Prison and spent about 4.5 years in Qezel Hesar Prison; sentenced first to death and later to life imprisonment; accused of membership in MKH organization.

**Summary of the main experienced physical tortures**

<b>Blunt force trauma</b>	<b>Positional torture</b>	<b>Harsh physical/ environmental conditions</b>	<b>Forced exercises</b>	<b>Harmful stretches</b>	<b>Experienced by other inmates</b>
1) At the time of transfer to Evin Prison, the interviewee was beaten violently with wooden sticks, butt stock and other devices; 2) Beating on the head; 3) Pushed forward violently while being transferred caused the interviewee broken jaw and swollen bloody face; 4) Hitting the head to wall; 5) forced to lay down on her belly while two torturers sat on her, then she was beaten with cable on the sole of her feet (torturers put blanket in her mouth to prevent her from screaming). She was then forced to run at the interrogation room with the swollen feet (if not she was beaten with cable on her body). Torturers then stood on her swollen feet (caused terrible pain); 6) Beaten with cable on her hands; 7) Regular prolonged beatings with the cable on the sole of feet and legs while fastened on bed that caused bloody swollen feet for a long period and a permanent damage to the right leg/foot.	1) Forced to stand on one foot for hours (caused the detainee to faint) and if she changed the standing foot, she was hit on head by torturers or her hands were forcibly twisted; 2) Once fastened to a chair and so was beaten with cable on her feet; 3) Later she was regularly (almost for three month each other day) fastened by hands and feet to torture bed (metal) and was beaten with cable on the sole of her feet (many times).	1) Very crowded small cells did not let the detainees sleep because of lack of space.	1) As group disciplinary punishment at Evin Prison and Qezel Hesar Prison, the prisoners were forced to creep faster (those left behind were beaten harshly with batons and whipped). 2) At Evin Prison, she was forced to crawl on stairs or creep on hard level (caused skin injuries).	1) Forcibly twisted arm and hands.	1) Some were forced to sit squatting while being whipped harshly; 2) Many detainees being executed and never seen again.

**Summary of the main experienced psychological tortures**

<b>Humiliation</b>	<b>Threats (of death/threats to family/threats of rape, etc.)</b>	<b>Forced confessions</b>	<b>Other psychological techniques such as forced betrayals</b>	<b>Exposed to others being tortured</b>	<b>Extended psychological torture/ abuse outside prison</b>
Lots of humiliation-	Threatened to execution.	1) forced to confess	1) forced for betrayals; 2) Prisoners could not speak (banned) Azerbaijani Turkic, Kurdish or Arabic languages at Qezel Hesar prison, even while having family visits; 3) The detainee was forced to keep his Hijab and not to scream (because of being female) even while being under severe tortures.	1) Evin prison was like a butchery (the terrible sounds of cries, screams and torture were heard every day). Almost everyone at the cells were tortured brutally.	1) Dismissed from her job; could not work as lawyer for many years; 2) threatened by judges for ban on her legal activities as a lawyer (caused the interviewee to flee the country).

**Interviewee 16:** (Due to sensitive information, the interviewee's name is not given, even though she wanted to be named.)

31 years old female; arrested and interrogated first time in 2010 for 8 hours by the Revolutionary Gaudian Corps Intelligence Organization (SAS) in Qazvin City; was university student, artist and drawing teacher for children; political and human rights activist; was later detained and interrogated by the Ministry of Intelligence at Evin Prison for 65 days followed by imprisonment at Evin Prison for 2 years; sentenced to three years in prison and five years in prison (suspended); accused of propaganda against the regime, insults to the Iran's Leader, the President and governmental authorities, assembly and collusion, and membership in unlawful establishments.

Summary of the main experienced physical tortures			
Blunt force trauma	Sexual violence	Harsh physical/ environmental conditions	
1) Sudden pushing of interrogation chair forward caused hitting of the detainee's head onto the wall several times; 2) Pressing the pen onto the detainee's shoulders; 3) Hitting the interrogation papers onto the head of the detainee;	1) Interrogator rubbing himself against the interviewee's chair while interrogating.	1) Very unhygienic condition of the solitary confinement at Evin Prison (the carpet was polluted with urine, smells of which was so strong and annoying); This caused the detainee to catch severe skin diseases such as scabies and severe infections at the leg (resulted in surgeries, traces of which even now remain); 2) Lack of food materials containing calcium; 3) limited hygiene materials with very low qualities; 4) very poor hygiene at prison causes severe health problems for women.	

Summary of the main experienced psychological tortures									
Humiliation	Solitary confinement	Harsh verbal abuses including insults to political identities/values	Threats (of death/threats to family/threats of rape, etc.)	Harmful deprivations such as sleep deprivation	Forced confessions	Other psychological techniques such as forced betrayals	Exposed to others being tortured	Extended psychological torture/ abuse outside prison	Experienced by other inmates
1) Interrogator claiming that he had called the detainee's sister to speak to her (as humiliation); 2) humiliating insults due to imperfect Hijab at prison.	1) 40 days in solitary confinement.	1) Harsh insulting verbal abuses, including sexual insults to the close family members.	1) Threats to harsh conditions and death; 2) Threats to ban on family visits; 3) Threats to longer imprisonment	1) Denial of medical care for a longer period resulted in later surgeries and severe consequences; 1) Denial of access to bathing, open air, underwear, hygienic items such as sanitary napkins and toothpaste resulted in severe infections and sores in the mouth, skin and legs.	1) Forced confessions 2) forced signing of the "letter on lack of Cooperation by the Detainee" (even though the detainee did not sign them).	1) Interrogators gave false news to the detainee as if the detainee's mother had passed away: This caused the detainee to get fall in paralysis feeling due to high stress (accompanied with denial of medical care).	1) Inmates in the neighboring cells were tortured.	1) Frequent phone calls after release; 2) Interrogators coming to the University to follow the interviewee; 3) The interviewee's mother asking the interviewee to go to the Intelligence Services; 4) Banned from continuation of university studies; 5) Close surveillance by the SAS; 6) Chasing the interviewee with cars in public places; 7) Ban on departure from Iran; 8) Intelligence Services cars parking at front of the house; 9) Controlled telephone calls; 10) Threats to the interviewee's sister at her university.	1) The interviewee's sister was interrogated outside the prison by her interrogators (this was forced to sign confessions (this was shown to the interviewee)); 2) The interrogator confiscated laptop of the interviewee's sister and made disturbing calls for meetings outside; 3) One inmate had got completely mad, screaming and crying frequently (caused the authorities to close her hands and mouth); 4) Another inmate claimed seeing imaginary creatures; 5) Another inmate had frequent irregular heartbeats denied of medical care; 6) Pressing the female inmates with limited visit of their children at the Evin prison.

**Interviewee 17:** (Due to sensitive information, the interviewee's name is not given, even though he wanted to be named.)

Belonging to the Azerbaijani Turkic populations in Iran; 34 years old; arrested and detained in 2006 by the Police Disciplinary Forces in Tabriz and was kept in its headquarter for a week during the popular public protests of Turkic populations against racist insult published at Iran Newspaper. Later in the same year, he was again detained, interrogated and tortured by the Revolutionary Guardian Corps Intelligence Services in Tabriz and spent a week in their interrogation center. After several court sessions, he was sentenced to a year in prison in 2009; was accountant; did not have any civil/political record before (had just participated in popular protests); spent 3 months in prison and 6 months under controlled job outside prison; accused of attempts to topple the regime, insult and humiliation of Iran's leader and martyrs and giving speeches at gatherings.

**Summary of the main experienced physical tortures**

<b>Blunt force trauma</b>	<b>Crush injuries</b>	<b>Sexual violence</b>	<b>Harsh physical/ environmental conditions</b>	<b>Harmful stretches</b>	<b>Penetrating injuries</b>	<b>Experienced by other inmates</b>
1) Kicking harshly on legs; 2) beatings; 3) squeezing the neck with hands harshly.	1) Broken and swollen elbow occurred (its damage is remaining today) after being harshly kicked on the leg, thrown on his hands at the Revolutionary Guardian Corps Intelligence Center in Tabriz. This caused his release without provided medical care.	1) At the Revolutionary Guardian Corps Intelligence Interrogation Center in Tabriz, the detainee was harshly forced a couple of times to perform anal penetrate of a pen and wait while interrogated and after some time to take it out and lick it right after the pen was out (as a lesson not to make mistake again in participating in protests against the regime (experienced also by his other inmates).	1) Very bad conditions and lack of food at the Interrogation Center of the Police Disciplinary Forces Headquarter in Tabriz; 2) lack of bathing or hygiene items at the Revolutionary Guardian Corps Intelligence Center in Tabriz.	1) The detainee's hands were cuffed from behind while sitting on the interrogation chair, then his arms were lifted upwards from back causing very high pain; 2) the interrogator was stretching the detainees' fingers backwards up with his hands, causing harsh pains (at the Revolutionary Guardian Corps Intelligence Center in Tabriz).	1) The interrogator forcibly inserted pen into the detainee's nose while the detainee was blindfolded. This caused huge pain and stress.	1) Anal penetration of pen was experienced by other inmates, also.

**Summary of the main experienced psychological tortures**

<b>Humiliation</b>	<b>Solitary confinement</b>	<b>Harsh verbal abuses including insults to religion values</b>	<b>Threats (of death/threats to family/threats of rape, etc.)</b>	<b>Harmful deprivations such as sleep deprivation</b>	<b>Harsh &amp; abusive questioning of religious, ethnic/identity and political values</b>	<b>Other psychological techniques such as forced betrayals</b>	<b>Extended psychological torture/ abuse outside prison</b>
1) Detainees had to eat garbage, leftovers and bones thrown away by soldiers at Tabriz Police Station; 2) harsh sexual humiliation.	1) Solitary confinement a week at the Revolutionary Guardian Corps Intelligence Center in Tabriz until he got crush injury.	1) Very harsh verbal abuses, including very offensive sexual insults to the detainee and his close family members at the Revolutionary Guardian Corps Intelligence Center in Tabriz; 2) insults by the judge in Tabriz.	1) Threats by the Revolutionary Guardian Corps Intelligence Officer not to speak about crush injury to anybody.	1) Denied medical care after crush injury at the Revolutionary Guardian Corps Intelligence Center in Tabriz.	1) Harsh and deep questioning of ethno-linguistic rights; 2) Including that the detainee's thoughts and values are wrong.	1) Forced construction labor at Tabriz Central Prison (only for political prisoners each day from 09:00 till 16:00); 2) Close surveillance and checks after the release.	1) Forced for dismissal from his job; 2) banned from trips outside Tabriz; 3) many times, were called into the court and was not taken in.

## Interviewee 18: Jahanghir Abdollahi

Belonging to the Kurdish populations in Iran; 32 years old male; was university student and political/civil rights activist; arrested, detained, and interrogated in 2009 by the Ministry of Intelligence in Evin Prison; was political activist; spent over 4 months in Evin Prison; sentenced to 5 years in prison (suspended); accused of act against national security, propaganda against the regime, and membership in Kurdish political parties.

### Summary of the main experienced physical tortures

Blunt force trauma		Positional torture		Forced exercises	
1) Kicking; 2) punching on belly and back; 3) slapping; 4) Beating the head with the bended fingers; 5) Hitting with the knee strongly on the detainee's back caused him to faint.		1) The detainee was forced to squat while facing corner of the interrogation room and an interrogator sat on the detainee's shoulders for 1-2 hours. Interrogators interrogated him in such position. This caused the detainee to fall down after he rose up (could not walk).		1) The detainee was forced to lift up and hold a very heavy bag over his head for some time (the detainee could not tolerate it and so was beaten by the interrogator).	

### Summary of the main experienced psychological tortures

Humiliation	Solitary confinement	Harsh verbal abuses including insults to religion, ethnic/ language or political identities/ values	Threats (of death/ threats to family/ threats of rape, etc.)	Harmful deprivations such as sleep deprivation	Forced confessions	Harsh & abusive questioning of religious, ethnic/identity and political values	Other psychological techniques such as forced betrayals	Extended psychological torture/ abuse outside prison	Experienced by other inmates
1) Humiliation; 2) repeated humiliation of the territory with the same ethnic origin.	1) 60 days solitary confinement at Evin Prison (cold and little light), accompanied with 30 days with beatings.	1) Very harsh abusive insults to the detainee, to his identity/ ethnicity/ language/ religion (Sunni); 2) insults to the popular ethnic figures; 3) sexually driven insults to the detainee and his close family members.	1) Threatened to whipping if not cooperated under interrogations ; 2) Threats to death penalty 3) Threats to longer imprisonment	1) Experienced sleep deprivation; 2) denial of medical care; 3) Restricted access to toilet;	1) Forcing the detainee for false confessions in front of camera; 2) forced signing of repentance letter for his release (the detainee resisted and so experienced brutal beatings).	1) Harsh and deep questioning of ethno-political/ ideological views; 2) forcibly inducing that the detainee's thoughts and values are wrong.	1) Forced confessions of other co-activists were shown to the detainee to force him for confessions; 2) prolonged interrogations; 3) detainees were forced to sit and listen to Mullahs' preaches or group Friday prayers; 4) Promises for release (proved to be false); 5) The detainee was encouraged to confess and so be helped, be allowed to speak to the family, and get access to the wished books; 6) Interrogator insisting that the detainee will flee from Iran; 7) Forced for betrayals.	1) After release from Evin Prison, the interviewee was interrogated by the Ministry of Intelligence in Sardasht, and 3 times more in Evin (for control and surveillance); 2) banned to enter the university (once forced to be taken away from the Tehran University back to his hometown).	1) Baha'i inmate was treated by his inmates discriminately and negatively;

### Interviewee 19: Saeed Ben-Mansoor (Abu-Mohir)

Belonging to the Arab populations in Iran, 44 years old; arrested, detained and interrogated in 2006 by the Ministry of intelligence in Ahvaz for over 6 months, spent over 5 months in Karun Prison and over 2 years in Ghaen Prison before he fled Iran; was Mayor of Khalife (Ramshir) City; converted from Shia to Sunni; sentenced to death (decreased to life imprisonment, and at last 20 years in prison); accused of waging war with God and the prophet and acting against national security.

Summary of the main experienced physical tortures				
Blunt force trauma		Positional torture	Pharmacological torture	
1) Very harsh slapping; 2) Severe beatings with cable, plastic hose and electric batons (suspected to be electric) on the back, the head and sole of the feet (several times, caused swollen feet and body, bleeding, ruptured and dried body skin, traces of which remain); 3) Punching the face caused abnormalities in jaw causing difficulties for eating; 4) Kicking and punching hard on all parts of the body;		1) Shackled feet for a long period	1) Suspected of being given contaminated water that caused bloody urination for a period.	1) A friend of the detainee (Abdollah Asaker) was beaten with cable and batons while his mouth was closed (caused him to faint), shackled and fastened to torture bed and was beaten with cable. He was also given contaminated food which caused severe and disturbing visual hallucinations. He had unconscious animal sounds and mad behaviors, who attempted suicide. He was denied medical care at worst situations; 2) Balochi detainees were discriminatorily beaten with electric batons as a disciplinary measure by prison guards at Ghaen Prison;

Summary of the main experienced physical tortures									
Humiliation	Solitary confinement	Harsh verbal abuses incl. insults to religion, ethnic/ language or political identities/values	Threats (of death/ threats to family/ threats of rape, etc.)	Harmful deprivation such as sleep deprivation	Forced confessions	Harsh & abusive questioning of religious, ethnic/ identity and political values	Other psychological techniques such as forced betrayals	Exposed to others being tortured	Experienced by other inmates
1) Humiliations	1) 3 months in isolation (solitary confinement: 3 * 1.5 meters cell) and lack of access to open air caused lack of vitamin D and skin problems.	1) Very harsh abusive insults to the detainee, 2) sexual insults to the detainee and his close family members; 3) Harsh insults to the identity/ ethnicity as Arab.	1) Threatened to death and death penalty;	1) The detainee felt very thirsty because of high stress and severe torture (complete dry mouth and lips) but was denied access to water; 2) restricted access to toilet.	1) Forcing to write and sign as much as possible (false confessions); 2) Forced to false confessions in front of camera (video-recorded while exposed to extreme light and assembled) while the detainee was not in good condition with very poor hygiene). The assembled video was later broadcasted from Press TV; 3) promised not to be executed if cooperated for video-recorded false confessions; 4) Forced to sign repentance letter.	1) Harsh and deep questioning of ethno-political and religious views; 2) forcibly inducing that the detainee's thoughts and values are wrong.	1) Excessive longer interrogations and tortures; 2) false promises for release.	1) Heard harsh tortures that were experienced by his friends; 2) The detainee could hear very disturbing tortured sounds of children and women (the detainee could not understand whether these sounds were recorded or were real).	1) Religious insults and humiliation of Balochi detainees (who were also beaten discriminatorily with electric batons as a disciplinary measure) by prison guards at Ghaen Prison; 2) Insult and humiliation of Afghan prisoners (four of whom were executed after prison riot) at Ghaen Prison; 3) Many of the interviewee's inmates were forced to false confessions in front of camera (video-recorded and assembled) that was broadcasted from Press TV, many of whom were later executed (they were promised not to be executed if cooperated for video-recorded false confessions); 4) Some detainees were exposed to dropping water hitting their head for hours.

## **Appendix II: Interview Guide/Questionnaire:**

### **Primary questions (AGREEMENT):**

- ❖ Actual name:
- ❖ Would you like to remain anonymous or named?
- ❖ Agreed method of research: written answered questionnaire or/and Skype (or face-to-face) interview
- ❖ Clarified purpose of the research:
- ❖ Volunteer participation:
- ❖ Agreed terms of reference and ethics (incl. security, confidentiality & shredding/destruction of recorded materials/use of materials/findings and products, etc.)

### **Background information (WHO General):**

- Age:
- Sex:
- Place of birth:
- Location (while) in Iran:
- Currently living in Iran/abroad:
- Mother language:
- Ethnic and religious background
- Education:
- Occupation:
- Date of exit/fleeing from Iran:
- Holder of Iranian nationality/another nationality/asylum-seeker/refugee

### **Opening questions (WHO Specific):**

- Are you considering yourself as you were a political prisoner/prisoner of conscience?
- Political background:
- Category: active/activist/not active/one-event case
- Primary political view:
- Focus activity related to: women, labour, political, or ethnic/religious rights?
- Date/year of arrest:
- Location of arrest:

- Arresting authority:
- Places of detention:
- Length of imprisonment:
- Verdict/result:

Main questions (HOW; descriptive/detailed):

- ✓ Details of interrogation:
- ✓ Details of torture/ill-treatment:

Desired answers related to:

- Quantity: length (per day/week/month)
- Frequency:
- Perpetrators:
- Methods applied:
- Pattern applied (e.g. mixture of physical & psychological torture, solitary confinement, Incommunicado detention, denial of medical care, and so on)
- Forced confessions:
- Forced writing, signing documents, filming, producing fake documents/confessions:
- Terror/threats (during and after detention)

**Concluding questions (WHY; ideas):**

- Reason(s) claimed by the authorities for your arrest/interrogation (allegations legally claimed by authorities and/or interrogators):
- Reason(s) for the arrest/interrogation (your own idea?!):
- Reason(s) for the torture/ill-treatment (what do you think?):
- Specifically, which part of the torture/ill-treatment do you think was/were more directly related to your political/civil activity or ethnic/religious background?
- Which methods/patterns applied in the torture/ill-treatment do you think that were different for you from those applied to others? Why do you think so?
- Did you feel/notice discriminatory methods/patterns of torture/ill-treatment, behaviours, actions or discourse during interrogations/imprisonment? How? In which ways were they discriminatory? Could you bring concrete examples?



- Which methods of torture/ill-treatment do you think that are commonly applied to all categories of detainees? Which methods/patterns do you think are differently applied to specific categories of detainees? Any reasons you can suggest?!

**Ending notes:**

- ✚ Your general/specific idea about torture/ill-treatment of detainees in the Iranian places of detention?!
- ✚ Any suggestion or recommendation?

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Amnesty International. 2015a. "Amnesty International Annual Report 2014/2015." 2015. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2015/02/annual-report-201415/>.

Amnesty International. 2015b. "Iran: Death of Trade Unionist Must Trigger Action to Tackle Appalling Prison Conditions." 2015. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/document/?indexNumber=mde13%2f2508%2f2015&language=en>.

Amnesty International. 2016. "Amnesty International Annual Report 2015/2016." 2016. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2016/02/annual-report-201516/>.

Amnesty International. 2017. "Amnesty International Report: Iran 2016/2017." 2017. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/iran/report-iran/>.

Asia News Monitor. 2012. "Iran: Human Rights Official - Torture Banned in Iran Legally, Religiously." *Asia News Monitor*, 2012.

BBC. 2005. "Official Says There Is No Torture in Iranian Prisons." *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, 1.

FIDH. 2016. "FIDH President Calls for Attention to the Plight of Iranian Prisoners of Conscience." Worldwide Movement for Human Rights. Accessed May 14, 2017. <https://www.fidh.org/en/region/asia/iran/fidh-president-calls-for-attention-to-the-plight-of-iranian-prisoners>.

FIDH. 2016. "Resolution on Iran LDDHI 2016." 2016. Accessed January 22, 2018. [https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/resolution\\_on\\_iran-fidh\\_congress\\_2016-eng.pdf](https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/resolution_on_iran-fidh_congress_2016-eng.pdf).

FIDH. 2016. "Resolution on Iran LDDHI 2016." 2016. Accessed January 22, 2018. [https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/resolution\\_on\\_iran-fidh\\_congress\\_2016-eng.pdf](https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/resolution_on_iran-fidh_congress_2016-eng.pdf).

Freedom from Torture. 2013. "Freedom from Torture Iran Report 2013." 2013. Accessed January 22, 2018. [https://www.freedomfromtorture.org/sites/default/files/documents/iran%20report\\_A4%20-%20FINAL%20web.pdf](https://www.freedomfromtorture.org/sites/default/files/documents/iran%20report_A4%20-%20FINAL%20web.pdf).

Freedom from Torture. 2017. "Freedom from Torture Iran Report 2017." 2017. Accessed January 18, 2018. [https://www.freedomfromtorture.org/sites/default/files/documents/iran\\_report\\_2017\\_a4\\_final\\_web\\_optimised\\_0.pdf](https://www.freedomfromtorture.org/sites/default/files/documents/iran_report_2017_a4_final_web_optimised_0.pdf).

Human Rights Watch. 2004. "Human Rights Watch Report 2004." 2004. Accessed January 22, 2018. <https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/iran0604.pdf>.

Human Rights Watch. 2011. "Human Rights Issues Regarding the Islamic Republic of Iran." Human Rights Watch. August 29, 2011. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2011/08/29/human-rights-issues-regarding-islamic-republic-iran>.

Human Rights Watch. 2014. “World Report 2014: Iran.” Human Rights Watch. January 21, 2014. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/iran>.

Human Rights Watch. 2015. “World Report 2015: Iran.” Human Rights Watch. January 11, 2015. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/iran>.

International Society for Iranian Studies. 2014. “Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran,” 38.

Iran Human Rights Documentation Centre. 2014. “A Framework of Violence: Repression of the Arab Ethnic Minority in the Islamic Republic of Iran.” Accessed May 13, 2017. <http://www.iranhrdc.org/english/publications/reports/1000000528-a-framework-of-violence-repression-of-the-arab-ethnic-minority-in-the-islamic-republic-of-iran.html>.

Iran Human Rights Documentation Centre. 2014. “New Islamic Penal Code of Iran.” 2014. <http://www.iranhrdc.org/english/human-rights-documents/iranian-codes/1000000455-english-translation-of-books-1-and-2-of-the-new-islamic-penal-code.html>.

OHCHR. 2004. *Istanbul Protocol: Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*. Rev. 1. Professional Training Series, no. 8/rev. 1. New York: United Nations.

OHCHR. 2011. “Interpretation of Torture.” 2011. Accessed May 26, 2018. [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Torture/UNVFVT/Interpretation\\_torture\\_2011\\_EN.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Torture/UNVFVT/Interpretation_torture_2011_EN.pdf).

OHCHR. 2016. “OHCHR | Iran: Denial of Adequate Medical Treatment to Political Prisoners Unacceptable – UN Rights Experts.” OHCHR. 2016. <http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=19886&LangID=E>.

OHCHR. 2016a. “OHCHR | Statement by Ms Asma Jahangir, Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.” OHCHR. 2016. <http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21376&LangID=E>.

OHCHR. 2017. “OHCHR | Iran: ‘Prisoners of Conscience at Risk of Dying after Prolonged Hunger Strike’ – UN Expert Warns.” OHCHR. 2017. <http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21071&LangID=E>.

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. 2012. “The Definition of Political Prisoner.” 2012. <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=19150&lang=en>.

United Nations. 1957. “Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.” 1957. <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/TreatmentOfPrisoners.aspx>.

United Nations. 1966. “International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.” 1966. <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>.

United Nations. 1975. "Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture." Accessed May 20, 2018b.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/DeclarationTorture.aspx>.

United Nations. 1975. "Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture." Accessed May 20, 2018b.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/DeclarationTorture.aspx>.

United Nations. 1984. "Convention against Torture." 1984.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CAT.aspx>.

United Nations. 1984. "Convention against Torture." Accessed May 20, 2018a.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CAT.aspx>.

United Nations. 1988. "Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment." 1988.

<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/43/a43r173.htm>.

United Nations. 2014. "Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran April 2014." 2014. Accessed January 18, 2018.

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G14/131/62/PDF/G1413162.pdf?OpenElement>.

United Nations. 2014. "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran March 2014." 2014. Accessed January 18, 2018.

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G14/120/75/PDF/G1412075.pdf?OpenElement>.

United Nations. 2014. "Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran August 2014." 2014. Accessed January 18, 2018.

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N14/518/83/PDF/N1451883.pdf?OpenElement>.

United Nations. 2016. "Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2016." 2016. Accessed January 18, 2018.

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N16/455/67/PDF/N1645567.pdf?OpenElement>.

United Nations. 2016. "Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran September 2016." 2016. Accessed January 18, 2018.

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N16/304/01/PDF/N1630401.pdf?OpenElement>.

United Nations. 2016b. "Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, 30 Sep. 2016." 2016.

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N16/304/01/PDF/N1630401.pdf?OpenElement>.

United Nations. 2017. "Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran August 2017." 2017. Accessed January 18, 2018.

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N17/256/24/PDF/N1725624.pdf?OpenElement>.

United Nations. 2017. "Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran March 2017." 2017. Accessed January 18, 2018. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G17/077/54/PDF/G1707754.pdf?OpenElement>.

United States Department of State. 2010. "2010 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - Iran." Refworld. Accessed May 11, 2017. <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4da56dbd2.html>.

Worldwide Movement for Human Rights. 2014. "Iran: Grave Concern over Lack of Access to Medical Care for Sick Prisoners of Conscience." Worldwide Movement for Human Rights. 2014. <https://www.fidh.org/en/region/asia/iran/14863-iran-grave-concern-over-lack-of-access-to-medical-care-for-sick-prisoners>.