

International Association of Justice Watch

Executive Summary:

1. This report reviews the subject of development in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Since the end of the Iraq-Iran Enforced war, the Iranian government has implemented 4 five year development plans. In continuing its efforts on the path to reaching development, from 2010 Iran implemented a developmental economic plan, the removal of subsidies programme and implementation of the Mehr Housing Projects, and action towards eradication of poverty, and the MDG. Meanwhile the negative effects of economic sanctions imposed on Iran have caused problems in the income environment of the people, where as well as economic pressures, the imports of drugs and medicines have also been greatly affected. These sanctions have also slowed down the development process in Iran.

2. Another part of this report reviews the human rights education situation in Iran. In continuation of its efforts on the path of reaching development, from 2010 by increasing the capacity of human rights and humanitarian law education, and holding of workshops and technical education courses, the Islamic Republic of Iran has taken positive steps towards education and expansion of human rights. Meanwhile not enough attention towards the quality of education and some structural problems, have slowed down satisfactory accomplishment.

3. On this basis some of the recommendations are as follows:

a) To make transparency in economic processes, the Iranian government must set banking and financial policies and adopt them so that the hidden hands are cut off from the economy.

b) More than anything, the economic sanctions against Iran have affected the people more than the government, in such way that in some instances fundamental human rights principles have been violated. Because imposing economic sanctions without consideration of their repercussions such as the effects of the cutting of the import of medicines to the country under sanction, is in fact a blatant violation of human rights. On this basis, international organizations must review and reconsider the sanctions.

c) Reduction of the government's interference in the economy and amendment of the tax system towards the realisation objectives such as the fight against money laundering and the removal of the invisible hands from the economy.

d) The preparation of mechanisms needed for human rights education in universities and their expansion through holding education workshops, and international courses.

e) Holding of human rights education courses for judges and the police, and also launching of a police human rights deputy, and a human rights advisory unit in law enforcement and judicial centres.

About Justice Watch:

4. Justice Watch Association is a nongovernmental, nonpolitical, nonprofit association which began its activities in 2012 to fight oppression, discrimination and injustice. The association has conducted numerous national and international activities towards the realisation of its own objectives, and has cooperated with domestic and international organizations and institutions. Participation in the Annual Civil Society Organizations Conference (2012), participation in the World Social Conference in 2013 and holding 2 technical panels, also attending the Human Rights Council Session in 2013, meetings with justice seeking associations and human rights activists at the international level were all some of the activities of Justice Watch. Participation in the drafting and ratification of the UN Security Council Right to Peace Document, scientific participation in Asian Ombudsman Association conference, the National Inspector General's Organization, the writing of the students competition project on the subject of justice at Tehran school students level with the participation of Tehran Education and Training Organization, participation in the implementation of the Distributive Justice Project in Tehran with Tehran Municipality's Studies and Planning Deputy, holding of dozens of research and study projects on citizen's rights, public rights, justice and racism; production of dozens of technical articles on the subject of justice by the association's scientific consultants, participation in social activists conferences and sittings at the academia level and NGOs in Tehran and provincial towns, participation in refugees workshop humanitarian aid and efforts towards peaceful living, participation in the education workshop on the introduction to UN human rights mechanism and report writing for the UPR on Iran, are all some of the other activities of this Association.

Pivotal recommendations:

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

- a) Continuation of efforts for the implementation of the MDG with regards to access to medical services (Qatar).
- b) Continuation of actions regarding the 20 year development perspective plan to reach inclusive and sustainable development (Lebanon).
- c) Continuation of the notable efforts for cooperation with developing countries for the realisation of the right to development (Venezuela).
- d) Continuation of efforts for the promotion of human rights in the economic, social and cultural fields (Sudan).
- e) Continuation of innovative actions to guarantee attention of social, economic and cultural rights in the political development process (Bolivia).
- f) Coordination of efforts for the effective promotion of the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights (Libya).
- g) Continuation of efforts for raising living standards through furthering people's access to economic, social and cultural rights and the expansion of the coverage of social services especially to the rural areas (Kuwait).
- h) Continuation of programmes related to the realisation of social, economic and cultural rights, and fighting problems caused by illegitimate and unjust economic sanctions (Zimbabwe).

The situation of recommendations in the past, present and satisfactory future:

6. After the end of the Iraq-Iran Enforced War, the Islamic Republic of Iran has paid attention towards development, and this can also be seen in both the legislative and executive branches of the government. The lack of laws and in some instances the failure of the careful and correct application of the law has caused for the appearance of economic and bureaucratic corruption which has created opportunities for invisible hands and exploitations. Over the last four years by implementing the Economic Development Programme, the Iranian government has tried to take steps towards path of reforms, and in some instances has been successful, and in others has shown weak performance. With regards to human rights education the Iranian government has also paid particular attention which can be seen in both the legislative and executive powers, which with the launching of human rights education in the country's universities and also the protection of research work, the Islamic Republic of Iran has taken effective steps.

Information collection method:

7. The collection of the documents on the development situation in Iran over the last 4 years has been based on observations and field studies, the review of the reports of research-scientific institutions, and university centre and NGOs, review of media resources, published statistics of authorised national and international public organizations.

Development

Advancements:

8. According to conducted researches, the hope to life indicator in Iran in 2012 reached 73.2%, whereas a few years ago it was 71%. With the execution of the Mehr Housing Project over 4 million households became home owners, and this cost was eliminated from the spending baskets of some of the poorer groups in Iran; which has been a good step towards the eradication of poverty and housing of mankind.

9. One of the programmes of the Iranian government over the last 4 years towards the fairer distribution of wealth and reduction of the class gap has been the removal of subsidies programme. With the implementation of this programme we witness positive outcomes such as further transparency, and the prices becoming more realistic, a fairer distribution of wealth, reduction in the Gini Index, and reduction of absolute poverty. The distribution of income generated from increased energy supply costs in cash among Iranian families plays a key role in reducing the class gap and improve people's income conditions. The free and competitiveness of the Iranian economy, notable reduction in absolute poverty and reduction in income inequality can be deemed as the outcome of this programme. In Iran seventy-two and a half million people receive subsidies, 60% of which are deemed as people with low incomes. The removal of state subsidies (and turning them into cash subsidies or supplements) has had positive effects on the lives of those with very low incomes (approximately 4.5 million people), who are covered by support institutions.

Challenges and difficulties:

10. The existence of hidden hands and the obstruction of the Iranian economy by exploiters on one hand, and the government's interference in the economy on the other hand, have resulted in corruption, exploitation, exclusivity and impracticality of the economic system. This issue is one of the most serious threats in the way of economic growth and the realisation of development, and in all of this we are witnessing the violation of the rights of the people on the basis of human rights principles. The lack of transparency in financial and banking policies has seen the growth of economic corruption, and inflation.

11. The effects of unfair economic sanctions imposed by the United States, the EU and the UN Security Council has put immense pressure on Iranian merchants, and the increased the trading costs and the final price of goods. This issue has increased the expenses on the weaker sector of society. In line with this, one of the effects of economic sanctions imposed against Iran has been the drop in the value of the Rial. The drop in the value of the Rial resulted in the import of goods and threatened Iran's access to foreign investment and technology.

12. Despite the claims of the countries that have imposed the sanctions that the sanctions do not include medicines, but as stated in the October 2013 report of the Special Rapporteur on Iran¹, sanctions imposed on banks in fact has in a way affected the sanctions on medicines and medical equipments and cast a heavy shadow on the health and medical sector, and as a result the import of drugs that are not produced in Iran and also the raw materials have been affected. This is while disruption in the transfer of medicines is in fact a blatant violation of human rights. The imposing of trade and banking sanctions since 2011 have brought several problems in the supply and preparation of medicinal goods in the country.

13. Unjust economic sanctions cause numerous problems for people with terminal diseases. Furthermore a notable number of injured veterans of the imposed Iraq-Iran war continuously require special medications, because they need treatment throughout their life. To-date there are 48,420 victims of chemical weapons identified in the country, 1120 of which are in serious conditions, 9,700 have medium problems, and 37,600 have mild problems most of whom have faced serious problems in the last 2-3 years. This has been confirmed by the UN Secretary General in such way that in 2012 he said: "The sanctions also appear to be affecting humanitarian operations in the country," Ban wrote in the report, dated August 22, to the 193-member General Assembly on the "Situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran."²

14. The implementation of the removal of subsidies which can solve Iran's economic problems, which requires unison decisions by the parliament and the government, and

¹ Regarding violation of human rights in Iran, Special Rapporteur Ahmed Shaheed says: "The economy of the Islamic Republic of Iran has reportedly been hit hard by the unprecedented sanctions. In this regard, a number of reports indicate that shortages of drugs for the treatment of such diseases as cancer, heart disease, thalassemia, HIV/AIDS, haemophilia and multiple sclerosis, as well as shortages in the materials necessary to repair and maintain medical equipment, are having a profoundly worrisome impact on access to life-saving medical measures in the country." Mr. Shaheed also refers to sanctions on the banking of the Islamic Republic of Iran as the main cause of problems for the people of the country and states that it has resulted in the predictions of the sanctions imposing countries with regards to the prevention of the effects of trade restrictions on the vital needs of the people not to be materialised. <http://shaheedoniran.org>

² <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/10/05/us-iran-sanctions-un-idUSBRE89412Z20121005>

some uncoordinated actions in the implementation of the second phase of the removal of subsidies plan to cause problems for the citizens.

Recommendations and Solutions

15. In view of the right to development principle as stated in UN General Assembly Resolution 41/128 which states: "The human person is the central subject of development and should be the active participant and beneficiary of the right to development." The Iranian government must set and adopt banking and financial policies which is followed by the transparency of economic processes. Also the follow up on the implementation of article 44 of the Iranian Constitution for the reduction of government's interference in the economy and the amendment of the financial system towards realisation of objectives such as fight against money laundering and the removal of invisible hands from the economy.

16. We call upon international bodies to review the sanctions imposed on Iran, because the repercussions of economic sanctions have affected the lives of ordinary citizens more than anything else, and resulted in the undermining of fundamental human rights. Because effects of the cutting of the import of medicines to the country under sanction, is in fact a blatant violation of human rights.

Human Rights Education and Promotion

Basic Recommendations:

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

- a) Continuation of capacity building programmes in the field of human rights (Zimbabwe).
- b) Continuation of human rights education for government officials (Bolivia).
- c) Continuation and improvement of human rights education for judicial officials and law enforcement (Pakistan).

Improvements:

18. In view of conducted studies, since 2010 the number of associations active in the field of human rights and humanitarian rights education have increased noticeably, as well as by visiting the associations websites it can be observed that from 2009 onwards the activities of associations (both newly formed and older ones) have increased which is indicative of the fact that the government has created a suitable environment for the activities of associations.

19. The expansion of human rights chairs in universities, the setting up of human rights institutions and the expansion of human rights education in big universities can be seen as a fundamental approach of the Islamic Republic of Iran towards human rights education and creation of suitable potentials.

20. From 2009 to-date there has been a growth in human rights activities in the education area such as the holding of education workshops, publication of books, articles and students' thesis, although we are still far from reaching a satisfactory point.

Challenges and problems:

21. Some of the existing challenges and problems are as follows:

- a) Lack of enough budget for supporting the activities of associations and organizations active in the field.
- b) Lack of clear mechanisms for the quality and quantity development of human rights education for governmental and nongovernmental organizations, and the failure to adopt a single system in human rights activities for the prevention of parallel work and waste of energy.
- c) From the quality perspective higher education has not had the necessary growth in human rights education.

Recommendations and Solutions:

22. Justice Watch International Association presents the following recommendations for the removal of existing problems and speed of improvements:

- a) Increase the necessary impetus among activists in the field through proper basis and financial support.
- b) Preparation of necessary mechanisms for human rights education in universities and broadcasting and expansion through holding education workshops and international courses.
- c) Holding human rights education for judges and law enforcement authorities (police) and also setting up a police human rights department and human rights advisory units in police and justice centres.
- d) The government should bring about satisfactory basis for social activists and also their empowerment and capacity building.