

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
22th session (25 February 2013 -22 March 2013)
Item 4: General debate

**Oral statement delivered by The World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT),
a non-governmental organisation in general consultative status in conjunction with the
International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran**

Thank you, Mr. President,

Our organisations would like to express our deep concerns about the deteriorating situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, particularly with regards to the continued large numbers of execution sentences implemented as well as widespread practice of torture in Iranian detention centers and prisons against peaceful dissidents and civil society activists.

We are also extremely concerned at the rampant culture of impunity and lack of accountability that protects and encourages acts of torture.

Mr. President, the Islamic Republic of Iran is one of the leading countries implementing execution sentences. According to the latest report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran, Mr. Ahmed Shaheed, the Iranian judiciary carried out at least 493 hangings in 2012 alone. There are serious concerns regarding lack of due process and fair trial standards leading to such large scale executions. The implementation of execution sentences against juveniles is also of particular concern and is a blatant violation of Iran's international obligations.

Moreover, many executions are taking place in public and are widely publicized by the state media. According to OHCHR, at least 55 public hangings took place in Iran in 2012. We call on the Iranian government to immediately institute a moratorium on death penalty, as a first step towards abolition of the death penalty.

Iranian authorities are also sanctioning use of torture against detainees and prisoners on a wide-scale. According to Dr. Shaheed's report, 78% of witness interviewed by him reported having been tortured. In one stark example, confirmed by Iranian authorities, Sattar Beheshti, a dissident blogger was detained, tortured, and murdered under torture within four days of his detention in October 2012. No one has been held accountable or charged for his torture leading to his death.

Furthermore, Iran has been implementing an increased number of limb amputations, many in public spaces, which constitute acts of torture and are considered cruel and inhumane punishment under international law. With great disbelief and regret, we note the amputation of fingers of an alleged convict in city of Shiraz on 24 January 2013 in public which the Iranian state media widely distributed graphic pictures of it.

We are also deeply concerned that dozens of human rights defenders remain jailed as a means to prevent their human rights activities, including Mr. Abdolfattah Soltani, Ms. Nasrin Soutoudeh, Mr. Mohammad Seifzadeh and Mr. Mohammad Ali Dadkha.

Mr. President,

We call on the members of the Council to strongly support Dr. Shaheed's mandate and to use all available means to hold the Iranian government accountable for its gross violations of international law, particularly with regards to executions, torture, and limb imputations.

Thank you.