

Joint Statement on Iran
Human Rights Council 37th Session
Geneva, March 14, 2018
– as prepared for delivery –

Thank you Mr. President,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of a group of 25 states.

We would like to start by paying our respects following the recent sudden passing of Ms Asma Jahangir. Her work as UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran has been tremendously important and she will be sorely missed as a leading global human rights defender.

Our governments remain concerned over Iran's poor human rights record, including most recently the widespread reports that the Iranian authorities unlawfully killed, detained, and abused numerous individuals following nation-wide protests that began on December 28, 2017. We are alarmed that over 20 people have been reported killed and thousands reported arrested amidst the Iranian authorities excessive use of force in response to these protests. We are particularly disturbed by the recent waves of arrests, including women and a group of environmentalists, and the credible reports of human rights violations and abuses, including those involving torture, and of several suicides allegedly committed in Iranian prisons.

We urge Iran to address the poor conditions in its prisons and to establish credible and independent prison oversight authorities to investigate deaths and alleged cases of abuses. We reiterate our call on the authorities to cease the widespread and systematic use of arbitrary detention including the use of such practices to target dual and foreign nationals, and to uphold, in law and in practice, procedural guarantees to ensure fair trial standards.

We further share the views recently expressed by several special rapporteurs in their joint public statement about the Iranian government's use of "communication blackouts" and Internet censorship as a means to contain the recent protests in Iran. Such attempts to restrict the Iranian public's access to information and communications services raise serious concerns regarding Iran's respect for

freedom of expression, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information.

We are also alarmed by Iran's continued use of the death penalty for crimes that do not qualify to be labeled as "the most serious crimes." In this context, we welcome the progress already made and in particular, the amended Anti-Narcotics Law which – if properly implemented – will significantly reduce the application of death penalty for drug offenses. Iran continues to execute individuals convicted of crimes committed before they were eighteen years of age, including three in January 2018 alone.

In its December 2017 resolution on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the General Assembly called upon the government 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." We urge the Iranian government to fully implement its obligations in this regard and to work with the United Nations to uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights and fully cooperate with the Council and its mechanisms.

We reiterate the General Assembly resolution's call for the Iranian government to release prisoners arbitrarily detained for the exercising of their rights to freedom of expression, opinion, association, or peaceful assembly, such as those detained during the recent protests. We urge the Iranian government to cease persecution, including arbitrary arrests and prolonged detentions of members of religious and ethnic minorities, including Baha'is, who face especially severe treatment as the government does not recognize the Baha'i faith and members of the Baha'i leadership remain imprisoned.

We call upon the Government of Iran to work with civil society and the United Nations to promote and protect human rights, including by accepting a visit from the next Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, without preconditions or limitations.

Thank you.