



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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Agenda item 4

**Human rights situations that require the Council's attention**

**Written statement\* submitted by Association pour la défense  
des droits de l'homme et des revendications  
démocratiques/culturelles du peuple Azerbaïdjanais-Iran - «  
ARC », a non-governmental organization in special  
consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[5 February 2023]

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\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.

## **The Tragedy of the Khoy Earthquake, West Azerbaijan, Inflicted Not by Nature but by the Iranian Authorities**

This Statement documents evidence for inexplicable acts of the Iranian authorities related to Earthquakes in Khoy (West Azerbaijan, Northwest Iran) between September 2022 and February 2023. The Iranian authorities have imposed systematic disinformation and misinformation over the minority nations in the Islamic Republic of Iran, which act as an iron curtain to conceal their brutal racist acts. All the minority nations in Iran can provide streams of evidence to expose racism by Iranian authorities. Below is one evidence, as it exposes how the Iranian authorities failed their duties of care to the Azerbaijani victims:

- The winter 2022/2023 around Khoy earthquake zone, West Azerbaijan, have been harsh under semi-arid climate, where it snows, the temperature is low (-10°C), lots of earthquake rubbles.
- The Iranian authorities did not provide services of Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery, promoted by the United Nations so their training by the UN was in vain .
- The Iranian authorities failed to provide any significant humanitarian aid to the earthquake victims but hampered the fellow Azerbaijani aid caravans in Iran.
- The Iranian government rejected the aid offers by the Turkish Red Crescent and the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Now, the victims of the earthquakes (or possibly one massive explosion, as touched upon the issue later) are left to survive on their own means, their livelihoods are under the rubble, they are at the mercy of the elements; their only real support is coming from well-wishing fellow Azerbaijanis. The account below is their true story.

### Technical Details

The earthquake incidents exceeding Magnitude 4 (Richter scale) are summarised below:

- 21 September 2022: at 22:27 local time, Magnitude 5.0; within the 9 km of Khoy
- 5 October 2022: at 17:21, Magnitude 5.7, with some 30 aftershocks; injured 1,127.
- 18 January 2023: at 13:19 Magnitude 3.6; and at 13:38 Magnitude 5.4; injured 252
- 26 January 2023: Magnitude 5.9; death: 7 ; injuries: 1,750; Damage: 2100 houses
- 28 January 2023: at 21:44 local time; Magnitude 5.9; 17 underground aftershocks
- 29 January 2023: at 18:11 local time; Magnitude 4.5

Injuries: more than 2000

Death: 7 (not sure if this is aggregate)

Carbone Monoxide Poisoned Victims: more than 200, with two fatalities

Destruction: 70 villages, 80% turned into rubble

Medical Operations: 10 successful operations and 24 in critical states

Damage: 2100 houses (not sure if this is the latest figure),

Homeless: More than 3000 (this seems to refer to the figures on 18 Jan 2023)

Scientifically, the above series of earthquakes may exemplify ‘swamp earthquakes,’ where main shocks recur for days, months, or years with different energy releases different than normal earthquakes . The Iranian authorities are demonstrably not bothered by any strategic approach to the Khoy disaster. Instead, we hear that there was a large explosion on 28 January 2023 , see below.

#### Some of International Frameworks for Disaster Management

Some of drivers/frameworks for disaster management at the international level include:

- The PPRR model (Prevention, preparedness, response, recovery) in the 1990s.
- The UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, in which Point 17 recognizes the pivotal role of risk management in strengthening disaster resilience.
- Principle 18 of Annex I of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development requires States to notify other States of any natural disasters and to cooperate with each other .

#### Iranian Legislations on Disaster Management and Risk Reduction

Most relevant legislation on disaster management in Iran are as follows:

- The Act of National Committee for Natural Disaster Reduction (NCNDR) in 1998 , incorporating the 1991 setup of disaster task forces and requiring provisions of plans by provinces. Its salient features include:

- o Disaster management is under the overall supervision of the Ministry of Interior.
- o Mandates allow provisions for safety, preparedness/mitigation plans, analysis/dissemination, reconstruction/rehabilitation activities, monitoring activities (budget forecasting and disbursement), provision of logistical and procurement support for the provinces.

- o Stakeholder collaborations among the police, gendarmerie revolutionary corps.

- The Iranian Crisis Management Law in 2019 , delegates the overall responsibility to the Natural Disaster Research Institute (NDRI) affiliated to the Housing Foundation. Its Article 4 requires the preparation of a range of documents including:

- o Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction
- o Provincial Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan
- o National Reconstruction and Rehabilitation plan

Notwithstanding the above, in Iran, laws are normally showpieces and implementations are normally decisions taken on the hoof, as there is no accountability in the country as a whole.

#### Actions Taken by the Iranian Authorities

**Disinformation:** The Iranian media (official/opposition, within/outside the country) diffuse the situation by softer tones to mask the racism in Iran. They are now transforming the tragedy in Khoy into the ignorance of the Iranian authorities, see an example in the [Link](#) without exposing the ongoing ‘learned helplessness’ process.

**Misinformation:** The state-sponsored information channels and media magnify the odd number of tents provided by the state to the victims together with a lot of unsubstantiated claims aiming to paint a rosy but a sad picture, see an example in this [link](#) .

Fair Coverages: We do not rule out the exceptions of fair coverage, e.g. by Etemad Newspaper . It starts the article as: "Many men cry out of desperation, and women, wrapped in their chadri (burka), touch affectionately their collapsed walls and furniture of their beloved home. They look like wandering ghosts, walking through the ruins of their house that was, just a week ago, their sweet home and a refuge for their piece." The article then paints a harrowing picture of the city and the victims, their despair, their brutal treatments by the Iranian authorities, and disturbing reality that perhaps the earthquake was of an anthropogenic origin. We did not dare to mention this, as we waited for a written evidence. Now, we regard this as a possible scandal that waits to be pulled out of the rubble of the Iranian intrigue.

#### Actions NOT Taken by the Iranian Authorities

We have been monitoring social media and are inundated with information from individuals and groups, which bear witness to a systematic discriminatory acts of the Iranian authorities. We wish to collate the received information on the intriguing acts of the Iranian authorities, which include:

#### Our Direct Observations

- There may have been some tents distributed to the victims but they are just showpieces and inappropriate; no prefab shelters have been provided to suit sub-zero climatic conditions;
- No preferential treatment is given to the vulnerable (the children and their caring mother, the aged, the ill, the disable ...)
- There are no emergency services of food, water and health for the victims
- Gas supplies have been cut off; there are no gas capsules. So, the victims and residents burn coal and as such carbon-monoxide poisoning is widespread. Hundreds have been poisoned and some fatal.
- No free telephone communication has been offered to the victims.

#### Institutionalised Intriguing Behaviours

- Victims rallied in front of the Disaster Relief Authority office for appropriate aids, but were treated like criminals and dispersed by jets of cold water hoses .
- Plainclothes antiriot forces have been dispersed through the city centre and ready to show their brute force.
- Azerbaijanis have mobilised massive humanitarian aid campaigns and opened bank accounts. However, Iranian authorities hamper their operations, close bank accounts campaigning for funds; but intriguingly, some volunteers have been detained.
- The Iranian authorities rejected the aid offers by the Turkish Red Crescent and the Republic of Azerbaijan, contrary to the UN Sendai Framework and Principle 18 of Annex I .

The intriguing behaviour of the Iranian government towards the Azerbaijani disaster victims have a long shadow, as we have reported to the UN of similar intriguing acts in more than 5 past events.

#### Recommendations

Based on the evidence produced above, there is no recovery for the victims and the region, and we deem this to be the intention of the Iranian authorities. The failures of the Islamic Republic of Iran are systemic, intentional, and evidently stems from racism. We appeal to you to use your mandate and record the sufferings of the Azerbaijani victims of earthquake

in and around Khoy in Winter 2022/2023; issue statements to condemn the Iranian authorities and call upon them to fulfil their obligations.

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- 1- How to Prepare for a Natural Disaster | United Nations in I.R. Iran
  - 2- <https://westobserver.com/news/europe/2-people-died-in-iran-from-carbon-monoxide-poisoning/>
  - 3- Link Horálek, Josef; Fischer, Tomáš; Einarsson, Páll; Jakobsdóttir, Steinunn (2015). "Earthquake swarms". In Encyclopedia of Earthquake Engineering. Berlin: Springer. pp. 871–885. doi:10.1007/978-3-642-35344-4. ISBN 978-3-642-35343-7.
  - 4- Link: <https://www.etemadonline.com/%D8%A8%D8%AE%D8%B4-%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B9%DB%8C-23/595276->
  - 5- <https://nlinton.net/pprr-model-emergencies-disasters/>
  - 6- [https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A\\_CONF.151\\_26\\_Vol.I\\_Declaration.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_CONF.151_26_Vol.I_Declaration.pdf)
  - 7- Microsoft Word - National report of the Islamic Republic of Iran.doc (unisdr.org)
  - 8- Iran – Elaborating Supplementary Documents for the new Disaster Management law | United Nations Association of Iran (unairan.org)  
Documents, plans, regulations and guidelines of the disaster management law of the country (ndri.ac.ir)  
Microsoft Word - National report of the Islamic Republic of Iran.doc (unisdr.org)