



HANA HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATION

ANNUAL REPORT

2025

Human Rights Situation in Iranian Kurdistan

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Human Rights Situation in Iranian Kurdistan

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Executive Summary

This report documents a year of intensified coercion, lethal enforcement, and widening legal insecurity in Iranian Kurdistan. In 2025, Hana documented a sharp escalation in the use of the death penalty, persistent lethal violence at militarized borders, and worsening detention conditions, including denial of medical care, suspicious deaths in custody, and corporal punishment.

Hana verified 205 executions carried out in Kurdistan in 2025. National monitoring reported 1,922 executions across Iran, meaning 9.6 percent of all executions occurred in Kurdistan. Executions in Kurdistan increased by 65 percent compared to 2024. In addition to this geographic pattern, ethnicity-based monitoring recorded at least 260 Kurdish prisoners executed nationwide in 2025, reinforcing concerns that Kurdish communities face disproportionate exposure to capital punishment.

In border regions, Hana documented 61 kolbars and border traders killed or injured. Among those killed, 20 were shot dead by Iranian border and security forces. Landmines remain a persistent civilian hazard. In Kurdistan, Hana recorded 13 landmine casualties, including four injured children. Nationwide monitoring reported at least 43 victims of landmines or explosive remnants of war in 2025.

Arbitrary detention continued at scale. Hana documented 827 arrests of Kurdish citizens, including 56 women and 29 children. Complementary monitoring recorded at least 40 detained children nationwide in 2025, with more than 98 percent reportedly Kurdish, Baloch, and Lor children. Twenty-five cases involved Kurdish children.

At the end of the reporting year, a new wave of unrest began. Protests started on 28 December 2025 following acute economic strain and currency collapse. Reports describe the protest trigger as shopkeepers in Tehran's Grand Bazaar closing their shops, with demonstrations spreading to other provinces. Because these events began at the end of the reporting period and continued into 2026, Hana treats them as an evolving human rights situation and will document protest-related killings, arrests, prosecutions, and detention practices as a central component of its 2026 reporting.

1. Preface

Hana Human Rights Organization publishes this annual report to document and legally assess the human rights situation in Iranian Kurdistan in 2025. The report is written for victims and their families, civil society actors, legal practitioners, journalists, and international institutions seeking credible documentation grounded in applicable international standards.

The patterns documented here indicate that violations in Kurdistan are not episodic. They reflect a sustained form of security-based governance in which punitive enforcement and weak accountability mechanisms systematically narrow legal protections, particularly for minorities and those engaged in civic activity. In many cases, safeguards that should restrain state power operate as procedural formality, while coercive tools expand under broad claims of security and public order.

2. Methodology and Verification Standards

This report is based on field documentation and verification conducted through Hana's networks, interviews with affected families and witnesses, and cross-checking with available detention and case information where feasible. Hana applies a conservative verification approach. Where incidents cannot be confirmed to a minimum standard of credibility, they are not included in statistical totals.

Due to security risks, identifying details of sources are withheld unless already public and independently verified. Hana prioritises the safety of victims, families, and informants in all stages of documentation. This includes careful handling of sensitive material and cautious publication practices designed to prevent retaliation.

3. Applicable International Human Rights Framework

Iran is a State Party to core international human rights treaties that bind its conduct in law and practice, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the Convention

on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Accordingly, the standards in these instruments provide the legal baseline for assessment throughout this report.

This report also relies on widely accepted United Nations standards that clarify treaty obligations in operational terms, including the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Mandela Rules), the Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death, and guidance associated with the Istanbul Protocol on the documentation of torture and ill-treatment. These instruments are used to interpret how treaty duties apply in practice, particularly in contexts of lethal force, custodial death, and allegations of torture or coercion.

4. Findings

The following findings summaries the principal patterns documented by Hana in 2025. Each subsection presents verified data and links it to the relevant international legal standards.

4.1 Right to Life and the Death Penalty

Relevant standards: ICCPR Articles 6 and 14. Hana verified 205 executions carried out in Kurdistan in 2025. National monitoring reported 1,922 executions across Iran, placing Kurdistan at 9.6 percent of all executions nationwide. Executions in Kurdistan increased by 65 percent compared to 2024. Breakdown of executions in Kurdistan (205 total): 106 for intentional murder; 86 for drug-related offences; 3 for rape; 4 for armed robbery; 4 political prisoners accused of espionage for Israel; and 2 prisoners of conscience.

Hana recorded the execution of the following political prisoners in 2025: Hamid Hosseinnejad Heydarloo (21 April); Idris Aali, Azad Shojaei, and Rasoul Ahmad Rasoul (25 June); Mahdi Asgharzadeh (6 August); and Saman Mohammadi Khiara (4 October). Ethnicity-based monitoring further recorded at least 260 Kurdish prisoners executed nationwide in 2025. This figure captures Kurdish ethnicity across Iran, including executions carried out outside Kurdistan provinces. Read together, the geographic and identity-based data indicate heightened exposure of Kurdish communities to capital punishment.

Under ICCPR Article 6, capital punishment is subject to strict substantive and procedural

constraints. The right to life must be read together with fair trial guarantees in ICCPR Article 14. Any execution following a conviction obtained through systematic due process violations constitutes a grave breach of international obligations. Where access to counsel is denied, where proceedings rely on coercion, or where security-driven courts operate without transparency, the resulting executions raise severe concerns under international law.

4.2 Border Violence Against Kolbars and Border Traders

Relevant standards: ICCPR Articles 6 and 9; UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms. Hana documented 61 Kolbars and border traders killed or injured in 2025. Twenty-seven were killed and thirty-four were injured. Killed (27): 20 by direct gunfire from Iranian border and security forces; 4 due to freezing and snowstorms; and 3 due to traffic accidents.

Injured (34): 30 by direct gunfire; 3 by landmine explosions resulting in disability or amputation; and 1 by a fall resulting in disability. Hana also documented the arrest and imprisonment of five kolbars. International standards governing policing require strict necessity and proportionality in the use of force. Recurrent shootings against kolbars raise serious concerns under the right to life and the prohibition of arbitrary violence, particularly where independent investigations and accountability are absent. The documented pattern also suggests a broader failure to treat economic survival activity as a rights issue requiring protection, rather than a security issue answered through lethal deterrence.

4.3 Landmines and Explosive Remnants of War

Relevant standards: ICCPR Article 6; CRC Article 3. In Kurdistan, Hana recorded 13 casualties caused by landmine explosions in 2025. Four people were killed and nine were injured, including four children. Nationwide monitoring recorded at least 43 victims of landmines or explosive remnants of war in 2025. Such incidents engage the State's positive obligation to protect life against foreseeable threats. Where children are affected, the best interest's principle requires heightened preventive and protective measures, including mapping, clearance, public warning, and victim assistance. The recurrence of incidents points to an ongoing protection deficit rather than a closed historical legacy.

4.4 Arbitrary Arrests, Sentencing, and Child Detention

Relevant standards: ICCPR Articles 9, 14, 24, and 26; CRC Articles 3, 37, and 40. Hana documented 827 arrests of Kurdish citizens in 2025, including 56 women and 29 children under 18. Hana also recorded nine Kurdish citizens sentenced to death and 88 individuals, including six clerics, sentenced collectively to 265 years of imprisonment. Arrests increased by 29 percent compared to 2024. Complementary monitoring recorded at least 40 children detained nationwide in 2025, with more than 98 percent reportedly Kurdish, Baloch, and Lor children. Three detained children were Kurdish girls and 37 were boys. Twenty-five cases involved Kurdish children.

International law prohibits arbitrary detention and requires prompt access to judicial review. The CRC sets a higher threshold for children: deprivation of liberty must be a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period, with child-specific safeguards and a rehabilitative approach. Where detention is used as an instrument of deterrence or intimidation, especially against minorities, it also raises serious concerns under the ICCPR's protections against discrimination.

4.5 Detention Conditions, Deaths in Custody, and Corporal Punishment

Relevant standards: ICCPR Articles 7 and 10; Mandela Rules; Minnesota Protocol. Hana documented nine deaths in custody in 2025. Four deaths were attributed to lack of medical care, one to suicide, and four were recorded as suspicious deaths. Hana also documented hunger strikes by 11 prisoners in protest at medical neglect and poor detention conditions.

In Urmia Prison, four prisoners convicted of theft were subjected to amputation of four fingers of the right hand. Such corporal punishment violates the absolute prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading punishment. Where deaths occur in custody, international standards require prompt, effective, independent, and transparent investigations capable of establishing responsibility and enabling remedy. The combination of custodial deaths, medical neglect, and corporal punishment reflects a serious collapse of safeguards meant to protect human dignity inside detention settings.

4.6 Civilian Killings and Armed Clashes

Relevant standards: ICCPR Article 6; UN Basic Principles on Use of Force. Hana documented six military fatalities during clashes with unidentified armed groups in 2025. Hana also documented

twelve civilian deaths caused by direct gunfire from law enforcement forces. Any use of lethal force by State agents engages strict obligations under the right to life and requires independent investigation and accountability. Where investigations are absent or ineffective, unlawful killings risk becoming entrenched as routine enforcement rather than exceptional necessity.

5. Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

5.1 Worker Safety and Labour Repression

Relevant standards: ICESCR Articles 7 and 12. Hana documented 55 worker deaths caused by workplace accidents in 2025. Hana also recorded the arrest of at least 28 workers. These findings reflect failures in workplace safety oversight, prevention, and accountability, and raise concerns regarding the protection of safe and healthy working conditions. Preventable workplace fatalities also implicate the State's duty to regulate and enforce safety standards in practice, not only on paper.

5.2 Mental Health Crisis and Suicide

Relevant standards: ICESCR Article 12. Hana recorded 137 suicides in Kurdistan in 2025, including 48 women, 89 men, and 16 children under 18. While suicide statistics require careful interpretation, the scale of recorded cases indicates severe social distress and underscores the need for accessible mental health support and protective infrastructure. The presence of child cases heightens the urgency of preventive services and family-protection systems.

5.3 Gender-Based Violence and Honour Killings

Relevant standards: ICCPR Articles 6 and 7; CRC Article 19. Hana documented eight killings by relatives connected to domestic disputes and 38 honour killings committed by family members. The honour killing victims included 32 women and six men, and twelve victims were children under 18. International law requires due diligence to prevent, investigate, and punish foreseeable violence by private actors, and to ensure effective protection mechanisms for those at risk. Where protection pathways are absent, the State's failure becomes part of the conditions that allow lethal violence to persist.

5.4 Environmental Defenders and Public Safety Failures

Relevant standards: ICCPR Articles 6 and 9; ICESCR Article 12. Hana documented four environmental activists who died while attempting to extinguish forest fires. Two rangers were injured by armed attacks by unknown persons, and eight environmental activists were arrested. These incidents raise concerns regarding public safety preparedness, protection of life, and the shrinking of civic space for public-interest environmental action. Deaths during emergency response also raise questions about training, equipment, and state preparedness to prevent avoidable loss of life.

6. Emerging Crisis: Protests Beginning 28 December 2025

On 28 December 2025, protests broke out in Iran amid acute economic hardship and rapidly rising prices, following the rial's plunge to record lows against the US dollar in late December. Reporting indicates that the protests began with shopkeepers in Tehran's Grand Bazaar closing their shops and demonstrating and then spread to other provinces. Because these events began at the end of the reporting period and continued into 2026, Hana treats them as an ongoing human rights situation. Hana will document related killings, arrests, prosecutions, and detention conditions in its 2026 reporting cycle, including the legality of restrictions on peaceful assembly and the State response under applicable international standards. This includes monitoring whether enforcement measures meet legality, necessity, and proportionality requirements, and whether those detained receive due process guarantees.

7. Conclusions

The human rights situation in Iranian Kurdistan throughout 2025 reflects a sustained pattern of violations that cannot be explained as isolated incidents or episodic misconduct. Hana's documentation indicates a structural environment in which coercive enforcement, punitive justice, and administrative neglect function together to restrict rights and weaken legal protections for Kurdish communities. The cumulative picture is one of shrinking civic space, intensified security governance, and deepening legal insecurity for ordinary citizens, particularly those in border areas, detention settings, and marginalized social groups.

The most alarming indicator of this trend remains the scale and acceleration of capital punishment. The sharp increase in executions recorded in Kurdistan, combined with nationwide evidence of disproportionate executions of Kurdish prisoners, raises serious concerns under international human rights law, particularly the right to life and fair trial guarantees under the ICCPR. In practice, the death penalty continues to operate not only as a criminal sanction, but also as a tool of political deterrence and social control, especially where security-based accusations are prosecuted through procedures that do not meet minimum due process standards.

Border regions remain a site of predictable and repeated harm. The continued killing and injury of Kolbars and border traders underscores a governance model that treats survival-based economic activity as a security matter rather than a social and economic reality requiring lawful protection. The regular resort to direct gunfire and the absence of transparent accountability mechanisms point to a persistent failure to comply with standards of necessity and proportionality in law enforcement. Alongside this, landmines and explosive remnants of war continue to impose a long-term civilian cost, including injuries to children, reflecting the state's ongoing failure to provide effective prevention, clearance measures, and victim assistance.

Inside prisons, Hana's findings reveal a particularly severe rights deficit. Deaths in custody, denial of medical care, and reports of suspicious fatalities demonstrate a pattern of institutional neglect and impunity that is incompatible with the basic duty to ensure humane treatment of detainees. The continued use of corporal punishment, including amputations, constitutes a grave breach of the absolute prohibition of cruel, inhuman, and degrading punishment. These practices reflect not

only individual abuses but a wider breakdown of legal restraint, oversight, and accountability within detention systems.

Beyond civil and political rights, the data also reflect acute economic and social vulnerability. Worker fatalities resulting from workplace accidents point to preventable failures of regulatory enforcement and protection, while arrests of workers indicate persistent hostility toward labor organization and demands for safety and dignity. The scale of suicides recorded across Kurdistan, including cases involving children, represents a serious indicator of social distress and the absence of adequate mental health and social protection mechanisms. Likewise, the continued pattern of gender-based violence and honor killings highlights a lethal gap in prevention, protection, and effective access to justice for those at risk, particularly women and children.

Finally, the closing days of 2025 marked the beginning of an emerging national crisis. On 28 December 2025, protests reportedly erupted over soaring prices and economic instability following a sharp fall in the value of the rial. The initial demonstrations, reported to have begun with shopkeepers in Tehran's Grand Bazaar, rapidly spread to other provinces. Hana regards this protest wave, and the state response it triggers, as a legally significant development with immediate implications for the rights to life, liberty, fair trial, and freedom of assembly and expression. Because these events began at the end of the reporting period and continue beyond it, Hana will monitor and document them on an ongoing basis, and they will constitute a central pillar of the organization's Annual Report 2026, including systematic tracking of protest-related killings, arrests, prosecutions, detention conditions, and patterns of violence.

8. Recommendations

A. Recommendations to the Islamic Republic of Iran

Hana Human Rights Organization calls on the Islamic Republic of Iran to take the following urgent steps to bring law, policy, and practice into compliance with international human rights obligations:

1. Impose an immediate moratorium on executions, with a view to abolishing the death penalty, and halt any execution where fair trial guarantees have not been met, including cases involving allegations of coerced confessions or denial of access to legal counsel.
2. Guarantee fair trial rights in all criminal proceedings, including prompt access to a lawyer of one's choosing from the moment of arrest, access to case files, and effective judicial review, and exclude evidence obtained through torture or coercion.
3. End unlawful use of lethal force, particularly against Kolbars and civilians, by enforcing strict necessity and proportionality standards in policing and border enforcement, and ensuring firearms are used only as a last resort to protect life.
4. Ensure prompt, independent, and effective investigations into all killings by state agents, including border shootings and civilian deaths, with accountability measures and meaningful remedies for victims' families.
5. Stop arbitrary arrests and mass detention, including of activists, workers, and protesters, and ensure that all detainees are informed of the reasons for arrest, brought promptly before a judge, and protected from ill-treatment.
6. Bring detention conditions into compliance with international standards, including guaranteed access to adequate healthcare, prevention of deaths in custody, and transparent investigation of any custodial death consistent with the Mandela Rules and the Minnesota Protocol.
7. Abolish corporal punishments, including amputation, and revise penal practices to comply with the absolute prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.
8. Protect children and other vulnerable groups from abusive enforcement practices, ensuring that detention of children is used only as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate period,

with child-specific safeguards, family contact, and legal assistance, and strengthening preventive protection measures against landmines, gender-based violence, and honor killings.

B. Recommendations to International Human Rights Organizations and the International Community

Hana Human Rights Organization calls on international human rights organizations, UN mechanisms, and relevant international actors to take the following steps:

1. Strengthen monitoring and reporting on Iranian Kurdistan, with sustained attention to executions, unlawful killings, child detention, and deaths in custody, including the documentation of developments linked to the protest wave that began on 28 December 2025.
2. Support accountability and evidence-preservation efforts, including independent documentation initiatives, legal assistance for victims and families, and protection of witnesses and human rights defenders at risk of retaliation.
3. Expand protection pathways for individuals at risk, including activists, lawyers, journalists, labor organizers, environmental defenders, and relatives of detainees, through emergency support measures and coordinated protection mechanisms.



Hana Human Rights Organization is an independent, non-governmental, non-profit organization committed to advancing human rights, with a particular focus on the Kurdistan region of Iran. Founded in December 2019 and registered in Geneva in March 2023, and in Canada in August 2024. Hana is driven by the principles of justice, equality, and dignity for all. We are funded solely by members and supporters like you. Our work is free from the influence of any political ideology, economic interest, or religious affiliation.

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