

I am writing this letter to express my grave concern for the families of political dissidents who have been forcibly disappeared and extrajudicially killed in Ahvaz, southern Iran, in the 1980s. They are suffering untold mental anguish and distress as the authorities are destroying the individual and mass graves of their loved ones for constructing a boulevard and a park. The authorities are denying families the right to receive and bury the remains of their loved ones according to their traditions, desecrating the grave site by turning it into a rubbish dump, forbidding mourning rituals, and cracking down on any critical public discussion about the killings. These acts amount a form of torture or other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment against the families, prohibited under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

I urge you to immediately stop the destruction of individual and mass graves belonging to the victims of the mass killings of 1980s and respect families' right to bury their relatives in dignity.

I call on you to stop the harassment of families seeking truth, justice and reparation, and conduct a thorough, independent and effective criminal investigation of the enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings of 1980s, including efforts to cover up the crimes, and bring to justice those suspected of criminal responsibility in fair trials, without recourse to the death penalty.

Please recognize that mass graves are crime scenes that require forensic expertise to undertake exhumations to determine the identity of the remains and the circumstances of what happened and enable families to receive the remains of their loved ones.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Sincerely yours,