



17 March 2026

Joint Open Letter / Official Statement

On the Reported Torture and Sexual Violence Against Two Nurses in Iran

From:

International Independent Physicians and Health Care Providers Association (IIPHA)
Medical Alliance for Health Services Abroad (MAHSA Medical)
Patriotic Doctors of Iran (PDI)
RAZI National Health Association (RNHA)
ParsiMed
Medical Professionals for Human Rights in Iran – Austria
Canadian Iranian Doctors for Human Rights (CIDHR)
Association of Iranian Human Rights & Allies (AIHRA)
KIAN Foundation

To:

- **United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Iran**
- **United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)**
- **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)**
- **World Health Organization (WHO)**
- **World Medical Association (WMA)**
- **International Council of Nurses (ICN)**
- **Physicians for Human Rights (PHR)**
- **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)**
- **Amnesty International**

We, physicians and healthcare professionals represented by the above organizations, express our profound shock and strongest condemnation regarding credible reports that **two Iranian nurses from Rajaei Heart Center were arrested after attempting to provide medical care to wounded protesters and were subsequently subjected to torture and repeated sexual violence while in detention.**

According to credible eyewitness accounts reported by international media, the nurses had provided medical care to individuals injured during recent protests in Tehran. They were reportedly later **detained by security forces and subjected to severe abuse and sexual assault while in custody.**

Reports indicate that the violence inflicted upon these healthcare professionals resulted in **catastrophic physical injuries requiring major surgical interventions and leaving them with permanent disabilities**. Such acts constitute **grave violations of international human rights law, medical neutrality, and fundamental principles of medical ethics**.

These actions violate internationally recognized legal standards, including the prohibitions against torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment under international human rights law. Sexual violence in detention represents a particularly serious violation of human dignity and may constitute torture under international law.

Targeting healthcare workers for providing medical care represents a direct breach of the internationally recognized principle of **medical neutrality**, which protects healthcare professionals who treat the injured regardless of political affiliation or circumstance. Punishing healthcare workers for fulfilling their ethical duties undermines the integrity of the medical profession and threatens the fundamental right to health.

We emphasize that these two nurses are **not isolated victims**. Their case likely represents only a small fraction of abuses experienced by healthcare workers in Iran. Many additional cases of intimidation, torture, sexual violence, and harassment remain unreported due to fear, coercion, and systemic repression.

Healthcare professionals worldwide are bound by a universal ethical duty to treat the sick and injured **without discrimination**. Punishing medical personnel for fulfilling this duty is an assault on both healthcare workers and the foundations of global medical ethics and humanitarian principles.

We therefore call upon the United Nations, international medical organizations, and human rights institutions to:

- **Demand an immediate, independent, and transparent international investigation** into these allegations.
- **Ensure accountability for those responsible** through appropriate international legal mechanisms.
- **Provide urgent protection and support for healthcare workers in Iran**, including protection from intimidation and retaliation.
- **Ensure access to medical and psychological care for the victims and guarantee their safety and dignity.**
- **Support documentation of abuses against healthcare professionals** for potential international legal accountability.

Torture and sexual violence against healthcare professionals are **crimes that shock the conscience of humanity**. Silence in the face of such atrocities enables impunity. The global medical community must stand in solidarity with these nurses and with all healthcare workers who risk their lives to uphold the ethics of medicine and the dignity of human life.

Signed

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References and Relevant International Standards

Iran International – Eyewitness report regarding the detention and sexual assault of two nurses following treatment of injured protesters. <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202603102323>

Daily Mail – Report on the alleged torture and gang-rape of Iranian nurses detained after treating wounded protesters. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15650113/Horrific-gang-rape-torture-ordeal-Iranian-nurses-Medics-subjected-brutal-sex-attacks-revenge-caring-wounded-rioters-one-victim-begging-surgeons-let-die.html>

United Nations (UN) – Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984).

World Medical Association (WMA) – Declaration of Geneva; WMA Regulations in Times of Armed Conflict and Other Situations of Violence.

International Council of Nurses (ICN) – ICN Code of Ethics for Nurses and international advocacy for the protection, dignity, and safety of nurses and healthcare workers.

Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) – Documentation and advocacy regarding attacks on healthcare workers and violations of medical neutrality.

International humanitarian law and medical neutrality principles protecting healthcare workers and ensuring that medical personnel can provide care without interference, intimidation, or punishment.