CENTRE FOR
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مرکز حامیان حقوق بشر

Human Rights
Institute

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada
Item 4: General Debate
16 March 2026
Speaker: Catherine Morris

Oral Statement to the 61st Session of the UN Human Rights Council from Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada and the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute, NGOs in special consultative status, with endorsement by the Centre for Supporters of Human Rights (CSHR), NGO without consultative status

Iran: Grave risks to lawyers and prisoners of conscience amid armed conflict

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada and the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute, endorsed by the Centre for Supporters of Human Rights, are alarmed by the situation in Iran.

Air strikes damaging prison structures are placing detainees at grave risk. Iranian law, including Supreme Judicial Council Resolution No. 211, allows emergency furloughs, temporary release, or transfer of prisoners to safety during conflict, and should be urgently implemented.

At least 20 lawyers remain detained for conducting their professional duties. Seven lawyers were released on heavy bail but remain at risk of re-arrest. They and at least 29 other lawyers face criminal proceedings. The number is likely higher due to fear of reprisals and difficulties monitoring during conflict.

We urge Iran to:

- halt reprisals against lawyers;
- ensure all detainees' prompt and confidential access to counsel of their choice;
- release lawyers detained for conducting their professional duties; and
- protect all prisoners during the armed conflict.

We urge the Council to fully support the Fact-Finding Mission and Special Rapporteur on Iran.

We condemn all unlawful uses of force, including actions by the United States and Israel against Iran and Iran's retaliation across the region. We urge an immediate cessation of hostilities consistent with obligations under the UN Charter and international human rights and humanitarian law.

Thank you.