

ANNEX 1

Letters

Letter from Human Rights Watch to the Ministry of Healthcare of Iran, February 20, 2017

Letter from Human Rights Watch to the National Headquarters to Coordinate and Follow-Up on Accessibility, February 20, 2017

Letter from Human Rights Watch to the State Welfare Organization of Iran, February 20, 2017

Response from the Director General for Public Relations and International Affairs of the State Welfare Organization of Iran, March 2017

Letter from Human Rights Watch to Ministry of Healthcare of Iran, May 8, 2018

Letter from Human Rights Watch to the National Headquarters to Coordinate and Follow-Up on Accessibility, May 8, 2018

Letter from Human Rights Watch to State Welfare Organization of Iran, May 8, 2018

ANNEX 2

Agreement Between State Welfare Organization Rehabilitation Director and Representatives of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Disabled Persons Organizations, March 2016

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James Ross, *Legal & Policy Director*
Hassan Elmasry, *Co-Chair*
Robert Kissane, *Co-Chair*

February 20, 2017

Ministry of Health Care, Treatment and Medical Education, Block A, Central building, Eivanak Boulevard, Farahzadi Boulevard, Shahrak Ghods, Tehran, Iran

CC: Dr. Seyed Hassan Ghazizadeh Hashemi, Minister of Health Care, Treatment and Medical Education

Dr. Mohsen Asadi Lari, Director of International Affairs of the Ministry of Health Care, Treatment and Medical Education

Dr. Seyed Mohammad Hadi Ayazi, Director of Social Affairs of the Ministry of Health Care, Treatment and Medical Education

Dr. Abbas Zarehnezhad, Minister's Advisor and Head of Public Relations and Information Center of the Ministry of Health Care, Treatment and Medical Education

Your Excellency,

Human Rights Watch is an international, non-governmental, and independent organization that works in over ninety countries, without accepting funds from any government, to defend the rights of people worldwide. The Disability Rights Division of Human Rights Watch actively promotes the human rights of persons with disabilities through research and advocacy projects in many countries across the globe, including on accessibility of public facilities and services in Russia, access to education in China, and the situation of children living in institutions in Serbia.

The Disability Rights Division has recently initiated research aiming to promote the rights of persons with disabilities in the Middle East region. Given the significance of Iran in the region, the Disability Rights Division is interested in learning more about how the government of Iran ensures that persons with disabilities have equal access to health care and medical services. We are particularly interested in better understanding how Iran's Ministry of Health, Treatment, and Medical Education fulfills the standards established by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to which we are pleased that the government of Iran is a State Party.

Accordingly, appreciating the open attitude shown by your excellencies' and the Ministry of Health to provide appropriate services to persons with disabilities, we would be grateful if you could respond with answers to our questions on the following issues:

- What barriers do persons with disabilities face in equal access to health care and medical services? What plans does the Ministry of Health have to overcome these barriers?
- What is the status of physical access to hospitals and other facilities providing health care and medical services? Are there available statistics on the number of inaccessible medical facilities?
- To what degree do deaf persons have access to sign language interpreters in medical and health care facilities?
- What training do health care and medical personnel receive on how to interact with and provide appropriate services to persons with disabilities including deaf, deafblind, people with intellectual and psycho-social disabilities, and people with autism?
- Is there any regulation or effective mechanism to ensure the free and informed consent of people with disabilities, in particular deaf and deafblind persons and persons with intellectual and psycho-social disabilities prior to any medical test or treatment?

With appreciation to your commitment to people with disabilities, we would be glad to engage in mutual discussions and an exchange of ideas regarding the improvement of access to health care and medical services for persons with disabilities in Iran. We will be also delighted to arrange a meeting with you in Tehran or Brussels.

Sincerely,



Shantha Rau Barriga
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February 20, 2017

Dr. Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli, Interior Minister and Head of the National Headquarters to Coordinate and Follow-Up on Accessibility

Dr. Anooshiravan Mohseni Bandpei, Head of State Welfare Organization and Secretary-General of the National Headquarters to Coordinate and Follow-Up on Accessibility

CC: Mr. Hooshang Khandandel, Director of Renovation, and Rural and Urban Development of the Interior Ministry

Mr. Seyed Ramezan Shojaie Kiasari, Director of Information and International Affairs Center of the Interior Ministry

Mr. Ebrahim Kazemi Momensaraie, Head of the Secretariat of the National Headquarters to Coordinate and Follow-Up on Accessibility

Mr. Seyed Mahdi Mirshahvalad, Director of International Affairs and Public Relations of State Welfare Organization

Your Excellency,

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The Disability Rights Division has recently initiated research aiming to promote the rights of persons with disabilities in the Middle East region. Given the significance of Iran in the region, the Disability Rights Division is interested in learning more about how the government of Iran ensures that persons with disabilities have equal access to public buildings, roads, transportation, and information. We are particularly interested in a better understanding of how Iran's National Headquarters to Coordinate and Follow-Up on Accessibility fulfills the standards established by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to which we are pleased that the government of Iran is a State Party.



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Accordingly, acknowledging and appreciating the efforts by your excellencies' and the National Accessibility's Headquarters to provide appropriate services to persons with disabilities, we would be grateful if you could respond with answers to our questions on the following issues:

- Are there statistics available on the number of accessible public facilities, including public offices and organizations, hospitals, schools, and other buildings providing public services? What plans does the National Accessibility's Headquarters on accessibility have to improve this situation? What are the barriers they face in achieving their goals?
- What percentage of public roads and transportation (including inter-city and subway trains, buses, and taxis) are accessible for persons with disabilities, including blind, deaf, deafblind and persons with physical disabilities? How are the Headquarters planning to improve the current situation?
- What measures have been adopted to ensure that persons with intellectual disabilities can access public information and content on an equal basis with others? Do they have access to the easy-to-read versions of such information and content?
- How can blind, deaf, and deafblind people access public websites and national media on an equal basis with others? To what degree do deaf persons have access to sign language interpreters to use public services, including public authorities, hospitals and the judiciary, and what shortcomings exist in this regard?
- Is there a mechanism in place to identify cases of inaccessibility and ensure the relevant public organization or authority address this issue to enable accessibility? Providing an example, if possible, would be helpful and may be used as a model.

We appreciate your commitment to ensuring equal access to public buildings, roads, transportation, and information to persons with disabilities, and we would welcome the opportunity to engage in a mutual discussion and exchange of ideas regarding ways to improve equal accessibility for people with disabilities in Iran. We will be also delighted to arrange a meeting with you in Tehran or Brussels.

Sincerely,



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February 20, 2017

Dr. Anooshiravan Mohseni Bandpej, Head of the State Welfare Organization of Islamic Republic of Iran

CC: Dr. Pahbod Poorshaban, Vice-Director and head of the directory office of the State Welfare Organization

Mr. Hossein Nahvinezhad, Rehabilitation Director of the State Welfare Organization

Mr. Seyed Mahdi Mirshahvalad, Director of International Affairs and Public Relations of the State Welfare Organization

Your Excellency,

Human Rights Watch is an international, non-governmental, and independent organization that works in over ninety countries, without accepting funds from any government, to defend the rights of people worldwide. The Disability Rights Division of Human Rights Watch actively promotes the human rights of persons with disabilities through research and advocacy projects in many countries across the globe, including on accessibility of public facilities and services in Russia, access to education in China, and the situation of children living in institutions in Serbia.

The Disability Rights Division has recently initiated research aiming to promote the rights of persons with disabilities in the Middle East region. Given the significance of Iran in the region, the Disability Rights Division is interested in learning more about how the government of Iran ensures the promotion and protection of disability rights. We are particularly interested in better understanding how Iran's State Welfare Organization fulfills the standards established by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to which we are pleased that the government of Iran is a State Party.

Accordingly, appreciating your excellencies' and the State Welfare Organization's valuable efforts to provide appropriate services to persons with disabilities, we would be grateful if you could share any information on the following issues:

- What are the most recent official statistics on the number of persons with disabilities living in Iran, disaggregated by the type of disability? What criteria and procedures are used to identify and categorize persons with disabilities in Iran?

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- How many persons with disabilities in Iran live in Institutions? How many of them are children with disabilities with a living parent?
- What are the main barriers impeding the full implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Iran, and what are the steps taken by State Welfare Organization to overcome these barriers?
- How are the living conditions of persons with disabilities in Iran? How many persons with disabilities, disaggregated by the type of disability, currently have jobs, and what kind of support is provided to disabled individuals who are unemployed?
- What are the measures and mechanisms employed by the State Welfare Organization to ensure more active participation from persons with disabilities in the adoption, implementation, and monitoring of public decisions that affect them?

With great appreciation for your commitment to people with disabilities, we would be glad to engage in mutual discussions and an exchange of ideas with regard to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Iran. We will be also delighted to arrange a meeting with you in Tehran or Brussels.

Sincerely,



Shantha Rau Barriga
Director, Disability Rights Division
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Distinguished Shantha Rau Barriga

Director, Disability Rights Division

Human Rights Watch

Pursuant your request to respond the questions about accessibility of public facilities in I.R. Iran, we are pleased inform you that the answers of your questions are as follows?

About the **first question** (statistics available on the number of accessible public facilities) inform you that in 2016, a research was conducted among approximately 1200 executive entities' building with aim of study of accessibility in these building and other services for the people with disability which the results showed that in all of these building has been provided pertinent accessibility for these people as well as ongoing plan including:

- Producing educational programs in order to social awareness with emphasis on accessibility and public participation
- Implementing monitoring plans in order to quality assessment of services of entities equal to regulation duty in this regard.
- Implementing coordination plans for effective cooperation of related entities in the affairs of accessibility.
- Providing research plans in order to get more acquaintance and utilizing of successful experience of other countries in the field of accessibility and public's accessibility

Current barriers

- Lack of pertinent awareness among citizen and executive mangers with emphasis on accessibility.
- Lack of appropriate credit to run accessibilities plans
- Lack of sanction to run current regulation
- Lack of recognizing comprehensive management in collecting and implementing of awareness plans.

About the second question, based on non-scientific estimation and only according to evidences less than 25% public transportation have the capacity to provide services to the people with disabilities. Headquarter of coordination and following up of accessibility based on adjusted strategic plan is responsible for monitoring and coordination of related entities and move forward in this way.

About the question of 3 and 4 inform you that based on the paragraph of 13, approved on 15/9/2016 No 49130/77303, the ministry of

communication and information technology is obliged to implement and take adopt measures and in this regard performed numerous measures. About the question of 5, along with accessibility and receive complaints and the problems of citizen, for accessibility in passing way has been designed an intelligent system based this system all of citizens via sending a message (SMS) to system state their problems. This system with connecting related executive organization reflexes all of people with disabilities complaints. This system is called MABAR.

It should be noted that to show the capacities of Sate welfare organization of Iran on 252/2016 was held a scientific seminar to address the subject of accessibility in throughout the country, in this regard approximately 200 articles were sent to the secretariat of this seminar and after meticulous reviews, about 51 articles were selected as superior articles and published in a specific booklet and certainly in following days a volume of this booklet will send for you.

As well as it should be noted that to review and exchange bilateral knowledge about the latest conditions of accessibility in the society and how to promote it , the head of SWO expressed his acknowledgment for more cooperation in this regard consideration the request and his interest for expanding bilateral relation we would be grateful have a meeting in Brussels on 15-20th of April (2017) with you and my colleagues at there to extend more cooperation and you are kindly requested that take appropriate measures to pay the way and facilitating this process to have a visit at there.

Seyed Mehdi Mirshahvalad

Sincerely yours

Director General for public relations and international affairs of SWOI

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May 8, 2018

Dr. Seyed Hassan Ghazizadeh Hashemi,
Minister
Ministry of Healthcare, Treatment, and Medical
Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran



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Your Excellency,

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Upon our previous communication with you in February 2017, Human Rights Watch in collaboration with a partner organization have conducted research on the situation of persons with disabilities in Iran. Based on our interviews with dozens of persons with disabilities, advocates, and other relevant professionals including medical professionals, as well as analysis of the Iranian government's laws and policies and media interviews with your excellency, we have identified a number of concerns that we would like to share with you.

We would welcome any information on the Ministry of Healthcare, Treatment and Medical Education (Ministry of Healthcare) efforts to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy their rights. We would like to reflect this information and perspectives in our reporting.

We have also written to other government agencies and ministries regarding concerns that relate directly to issues within their competencies.

We would appreciate your response to the following concerns:

Kenneth Roth, Executive Director

Deputy Executive Directors

Michele Alexander, Development and Global Initiatives
Nicholas Dawes, Media
Iain Levine, Program
Chuck Lustig, Operations
Bruno Stagno Ugarte, Advocacy

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Shantha Rau Barriga, Disability Rights
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Zama Neff, Children's Rights
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Arvind Ganesan, Business and Human Rights
Liesl Gernholtz, Women's Rights
Steve Goose, Arms
Diederik Lohman, Health and Human Rights
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Equal Access to Medical Care

Based on interviews with people with disabilities, many hospitals, clinics, and other medical facilities are not physically accessible for people with disabilities. Interviewees also described discriminatory attitudes and lack of awareness among some doctors and medical staff. Lack of sign language interpreters and lack of awareness among health care professionals particularly impedes deaf and hard of hearing people from accessing medical care. We are particularly interested to receive any information on the following:

- What training is provided to medical professionals to ensure that they have the knowledge and awareness to provide equal and dignified treatment to people with disabilities? What monitoring exists to ensure their compliance with such standards?
- Does the Ministry of Healthcare have any plans, in cooperation with other government bodies and in consultation with organizations of deaf and hard of hearing persons, to ensure that deaf and hard of hearing persons have access to professional sign language interpretation when referring to medical facilities?
- Does the Ministry of Healthcare have data on the physical accessibility of medical care facilities in the country? And if such data is available, is it published regularly in accessible formats to facilitate access to health care for people with disabilities?

Accessing sexual and reproductive health care and information.

Persons with disabilities experience particular difficulties accessing sexual and reproductive health care services and information. Women with physical disabilities told us that they rarely visit gynecologists or undergo sexual health preventative care due to financial and mobility restrictions, lack of professional assistance to facilitate doctors' visits, or lack of information about the importance of this care. Information about sexual rights and how to identify and react to sexual violence and abuse is not available in formats accessible to deaf people and people with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities. We would particularly welcome any information on the following:

- Does the Ministry of Healthcare have any plans to facilitate physical access to sexual and reproductive health care facilities, for example by including and monitoring accessibility requirements in processes for procurement of medical devices, to ensure that women and girls with physical disabilities have equal access to those services?

- Does the Ministry of Healthcare have any plans to ensure that information and public education on sexual rights and health, including information on how to identify and react to sexual violence, is available in accessible formats, including for blind people, deaf people and persons with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities?

Ensuring Informed Consent

In interviews with people with disabilities and their family members, we learned of many cases in which doctors and other healthcare professionals did not seek or obtain the informed consent of their patients or did not provide them with comprehensive information about the treatment or potential side-effects in a fully understandable format, or both.

For adults with disabilities, medicine and treatment should be delivered with the consent of the individual being treated. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which Iran has ratified, requires health professionals to provide care of the same quality to persons with disabilities as to others, including on the basis of free and informed consent. For example, according to mental health professionals in Iran whom we interviewed, Electroconvulsive Therapy [ECT] is often carried out unnecessarily, or for conditions in which ECT is not likely to be helpful, and without the informed consent of the person receiving the treatment. Persons with psychosocial disabilities interviewed said that they learned about ECT by experiencing it several times.

- What training does the Ministry of Healthcare provide for healthcare professionals to ensure that healthcare professionals, including those who serve persons with psychosocial disabilities, have the knowledge and skills to obtain free and informed consent in prescribing any medication or treatment?
- How does the Ministry of Healthcare monitor the conduct of healthcare professionals with regard to free and informed consent as well as whether medical treatment is only performed consistent with clear treatment objectives?
- What complaint mechanisms regarding concerns about treatment in healthcare facilities does the Ministry of Healthcare maintain? Can you please describe an accessibility features of these mechanisms to make them available to people with disabilities?

Thank you for your attention to this letter. We would be grateful to receive your reply by June 7, 2018. If received by this date your response will be reflected in our published report. Your office should not hesitate to respond to us via email at barrigs@hrw.org or by fax at +1 212 377 9455. You are welcome to send your reply in Persian or English.

We look forward to learning about your ministry's work and perspectives regarding people with disabilities in Iran and working with you to ensure their full rights.

Yours sincerely,



Shantha Rau Barriga
Director
Disability Rights Division

CC: Dr Iraj Harirchi, Deputy Director of the Ministry of Health, Treatment and Medical Education

Dr. Mohsen Asadi Lari, Director of International Affairs of the Ministry of Health Care, Treatment and Medical Education

Dr. Seyed Mohammad Hadi Ayazi, Director of Social Affairs of the Ministry of Health Care, Treatment and Medical Education

Dr. Sareh Mohammadi, Minister Advisor in Women Affairs,

Dr. Mohammad Taghi Joghataei, Minister Advisor in Rehabilitation

Dr. Ahmad Ali Noorbala Tafti, Minister Advisor in Mental Health

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May 8, 2018

Dr. Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli
Minister
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Head
National Headquarters to Coordinate and Follow-Up on Accessibility

Dr. Anooshiravan Mohseni Bandpei
Head
State Welfare Organization

Secretary-General
National Headquarters to Coordinate and Follow-Up on Accessibility

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Upon our previous communication with you in February 2017, Human Rights Watch in collaboration with a partner organization have conducted research on the situation of persons with disabilities in Iran. Based on our interviews with dozens of persons with disabilities, advocates, and other relevant professionals including medical professionals, as well as analysis of the Iranian government's laws and policies and media interviews with your excellencies, we have identified a number of concerns that we would like to share with you.

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Darian W. Swig
Makoto Takano
Marie Warburg

We would welcome any information from the National Headquarters to Coordinate and Follow-Up on Accessibility efforts to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy their rights. We would like to reflect this information and perspectives in our reporting.

We have also written to other government agencies and ministries regarding concerns that relate directly to issues within their competencies.

We welcome the establishment and activities of the National Headquarters on Accessibility in investigating and urging public bodies to make public buildings, transportation, and information more accessible for persons with disabilities. Based on our research we have some concerns regarding the continued lack of accessibility for many people with disabilities, in different spheres of life:

Transportation

Despite some improvements in making public transportation more accessible, particularly in large cities, as a result of poor accessibility of transportation, roads, and buildings, many people with disabilities in Iran we interviewed remain trapped in their homes, unable to live independently and participate in society on an equal basis with others. For example, although there are some buses with ramps accessible for people who use wheelchairs or walkers, some people said that drivers often do not know how to open the ramp. In larger cities with metro systems, while there are elevators in some stations, they are often out of service. Some wheelchair users resorted to using escalators, despite the dangers.

For people who are blind, bus travel can be inaccessible because bus stops are not consistently announced, and regular buses may stop outside of designated stops, hindering the ability of a blind person to count stops as a means of orienting in the absence of announcements.

Deaf and hard of hearing persons experience barriers driving due to lack of any standard sign to notify other drivers not to use the car horn for communication.

Low quality and lack of signs in metros and bus lines, and lack of awareness among taxi drivers hinder deaf people's equal use of public transportation.

People living in smaller cities and rural areas often face particular difficulties in accessing transportation, since there is typically very minimal or no public transportation in these locations, and where it does exist, it is overwhelmingly inaccessible.

We would particularly appreciate any information regarding the following:

- What measures the headquarters on accessibility have taken, are planning to take to ensure that within a limited and announced period of time, public transportation would become equally accessible for persons with disabilities?
- While working on overcoming accessibility shortcomings, what interim measures are taken, planned to be taken, to facilitate access to transportation for all persons with disabilities in order to ensure their social inclusion and exercise of other basic rights?
- What training is provided to public transportation staff including drivers as well as the general public regarding how to support persons with disabilities in daily navigation while respecting their dignity and autonomy?
- What measures the accessibility headquarters have taken, are planning to take to ensure that people with disabilities in rural and remote areas can access transportation on an equal basis with others?

Public Buildings

According to the State Welfare Organization, only 30 percent of public buildings in Iran are accessible for persons with disabilities. Even State Welfare Organization offices, which many people with disabilities visit to receive services, are often inaccessible.

Persons with disabilities interviewed, especially those who use wheelchairs, said that they find the entrances of most public buildings inaccessible, due the lack of ramps or elevators. Even when an elevator is available, interviewees shared that many elevators were too small to fit most wheelchairs.

Blind persons or persons with low vision reported inaccessible elevators in many public buildings. In some cases, elevator call and floor designation buttons are not accessible because they do not have braille or voice controls.

We are aware of the initiative taken in 2016 to assess the accessibility level of public agencies in Iran. We are also aware of the introduction of a text messaging system “mabar” through which people can report accessibility barriers in public facilities and roads. We would welcome your response to the following questions:

- Are there any official accessibility standards for buildings based on universal design standards in Iran? If such standards do exist, are they accessible and publicly available for all citizens including people with disabilities?
- Can you share results of the “marbar” text messaging system to date?
- What are the results of the 2016 initiative to assess accessibility of public agencies in Iran?

- What actions have been taken or are planned to be taken to ensure that public bodies remove barriers to accessibility or ensure provision of reasonable accommodation to people with disabilities in a timely manner?
- Have any public agencies faced penalties for non-observance of accessibility requirements? What have those penalties have been? Have the findings and results of published in accessible formats?

Thank you for your attention to this letter. We would be grateful to receive your reply by June 4, 2018 so that we may include your response in our reporting. Your office should not hesitate to respond to us via email at barrigs@hrw.org or by fax at +1 212 377 9455. You are welcome to send your reply in Persian or English.

We look forward to learning about your agency's work and perspectives regarding people with disabilities in Iran and working with you to ensure their full rights.

Yours sincerely,



Shantha Rau Barriga
Director
Disability Rights Division

CC: Mr. Hooshang Khandandel, Director of Renovation, and Rural and Urban Development of the Interior Ministry

Mr. Ebrahim Kazemi Momensaraie, Head of the Secretariat of the National Headquarters to Coordinate and Follow-Up on Accessibility

350 Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor
New York, NY 10118-3299
Tel: +1-212-290-4700
Fax: +1-212-736-1300; 917-591-3452

May 8, 2018

Anooshiravan Mohseni Bandpei
Head
State Welfare Organization of the Islamic
Republic of Iran



[HRW.org](http://hrw.org)

Your Excellency,

Human Rights Watch is an international, non-governmental, and independent organization that works in over ninety countries to defend the rights of people worldwide. Human Rights Watch does not receive funding from any government. The Disability Rights Division of Human Rights Watch actively promotes the human rights of persons with disabilities through research and advocacy projects in many countries across the globe, including on the accessibility of public facilities and services in Russia, access to education in China, and the situation of children living in institutions in Serbia.

Upon our previous communication with you in February 2017, Human Rights Watch in collaboration with a partner organization have conducted research on the situation of persons with disabilities in Iran. Based on our interviews with dozens of persons with disabilities, advocates, and other relevant professionals including medical professionals, as well as analysis of the Iranian government's laws and policies and media interviews with your excellencies, we have identified a number of concerns that we would like to share with you.

We would welcome any information from the State Welfare Organization (SWO)'s efforts to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy their rights. We would like to reflect this information and perspectives in our reporting.

We have also written to other government agencies and ministries regarding concerns that relate directly to issues within their competencies.

We would appreciate your response to the following concerns:

Social Workers and Government Officials' Interactions with Persons with Disabilities

Kenneth Roth, Executive Director

Deputy Executive Directors

Michele Alexander, Development and Global Initiatives
Nicholas Dawes, Media
Iain Levine, Program
Chuck Lustig, Operations
Bruno Stagno Ugarte, Advocacy

Emma Daly, Communications Director
Dinah PoKempner, General Counsel
James Ross, Legal and Policy Director

Division and Program Directors

Brad Adams, Asia
Maria McFarland Sánchez-Moreno, United States
Alison Parker, United States
Mausi Segun, Africa
José Miguel Vivanco, Americas
Sarah Leah Whitson, Middle East and North Africa
Hugh Williamson, Europe and Central Asia

Shantha Rau Barriga, Disability Rights
Peter Bouckaert, Emergencies
Zama Neff, Children's Rights
Richard Dicker, International Justice
Bill Frelick, Refugees' Rights
Arvind Ganesan, Business and Human Rights
Liesl Gernholtz, Women's Rights
Steve Goose, Arms
Diederik Lohman, Health and Human Rights
Marcos Orellana, Environment and Human Rights
Graeme Reid, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights

Advocacy Directors

Maria Laura Canineu, Brazil
Louis Charbonneau, United Nations, New York
Kanae Doi, Japan
John Fisher, United Nations, Geneva
Meenakshi Ganguly, South Asia
Bénédicte Jeannerod, France
Lotte Leicht, European Union
Sarah Margon, Washington, DC
David Mepham, United Kingdom
Wenzel Michalski, Germany
Elaine Pearson, Australia

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Siri Stolt-Nielsen
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Makoto Takano
Marie Warburg

Based on the interviews we conducted with people with disabilities in Iran, many people stated that social workers did not provide them with sufficient information in a timely manner about services and equipment to which they are entitled and the procedures for obtaining them. Some persons with disabilities found some social workers' interaction with them disrespectful, insulting, and humiliating.

While we appreciate the SWO's efforts to provide quality services to persons with disabilities, we are interested to learn more about:

- What monitoring and complaint systems does the SWO have in place, including to ensure that any case of alleged abuse or negligence is properly investigated, and, if necessary, remedied?
- What training is offered for social workers and any other staff who interact daily with persons with disabilities, including regarding the rights and dignity of people with disabilities?
- What plans does the SWO have to ensure that all persons with disabilities receive information about services available to them in a timely and accessible format?

Professional Personal Assistance

None of the persons with disabilities we interviewed benefited from professional personal assistance (PA). A personal assistant is an individual who supports a person with disabilities in different aspects of daily life – such as personal care, household tasks, assistance at school, university, or the workplace, driving, interpretation and other tasks customized to the individual. A personal assistant can help fulfil the right of people with disabilities to live independently and be included in the community.

We are aware that the SWO provides a “nursing allowance” to persons with spinal cord injuries, but our research indicates that the amount is not adequate to address their needs. The eligibility credibility is based on medical conditions rather than an assessment of an individual's needs.

Some individuals whom we interviewed said that personal assistants whom they hired through private agencies provided poor care or misused their position to steal from people with disabilities or use their homes for personal use.

- What plans does the SWO have to facilitate access for persons with disabilities to personal assistance?
- How does the SWO monitor agencies providing personal care services? We would welcome information on the methodology of the monitoring, including how frequently the SWO undertakes inspections and whether they are announced or

unannounced, the training of the monitors, the types of violations found in recent years, and steps taken to remedy those violations.

- We would also welcome information on the complaint mechanism available to people who allege mistreatment on the part of personal care agencies.

Assistive Devices and Rehabilitation Services

Many persons interviewed said that they encountered excessive waiting time and complex procedures to obtain free or subsidized assistive devices. People who did receive equipment found that it was of low quality and did not facilitate their independence. For example, we are aware that the SWO typically only provides hospital-type wheelchairs. People who cannot independently use manual wheelchairs said that their only choice was to purchase electronic wheelchairs at their own expense, and many could not afford it.

We appreciate implementation of the “Community-based Rehabilitation Program” (CBR) aiming to make services available within communities. However, interviews with people with disabilities in Iran also revealed that many of them face various barriers in accessing essential services such as physiotherapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, and psychotherapy. Often, these services are not available in the communities where they live. Where they do exist, the quality may be low, or services may be cost prohibitive: neither private nor public insurance schemes in Iran cover these services.

- What plans does the SWO have to ensure access to people with disabilities to
- quality assistive devices to facilitate peoples’ rights to live independently in the community?
- What plans does the SWO have to ensure access to people with disabilities to essential services in the communities where they live?

Disability Pension System

Based on interviews with people with disabilities in Iran, we found that the current disability pension program has serious shortcomings both in coverage and in the amount paid. According to the government, 25 percent of persons with disabilities registered with the SWO, or 321,000 people, received “disability pensions” in 2016. However, many persons with disabilities who need financial support do not receive the benefit. Unemployment among people with disabilities is 60 percent. However, only those with disabilities diagnosed to with “severe or very severe” disabilities are eligible. The lack of sufficient funding also limits the number of people who receive the pension. Some people we interviewed said that SWO staff told them that they will remain on waiting lists to receive the pension until another recipient becomes ineligible (finds a job, for example) or passes away.

The amount of the pension in the most recent Persian year 1396 (March 2017 to March 2018), 1,480,000 Iri, is not sufficient to meet basic needs; by contrast, in the same year, the official minimum wage was six times greater, or 9,300,000 Iri (\$), which many members of the parliament, trade union representatives and international bodies have criticized as too low.]

- What plans does the SWO have to ensure that those people with disabilities who need government financial support to meet their most basic needs enjoy that support regardless of medical diagnosis, in order to live a dignified life?
- What plans does the SWO have to increase the amount of the disability pension and the number of people receiving the pension?

Thank you for your attention to this letter. We would be grateful to receive your reply by June 4, 2018 so that we may include your response in our reporting. Your office should not hesitate to respond to us via email at barrigs@hrw.org, or by fax at +1 212 377 9455. You are welcome to send your reply in Persian or English.

We look forward to learning about your agency's work and perspectives regarding people with disabilities in Iran and working with you to ensure their full rights.

Yours sincerely,



Shantha Rau Barriga
Director
Disability Rights Division

CC: Dr. Hossein Nahvinezhad, Rehabilitation Director of the State Welfare Organization
Mr. Seyed Mahdi Mirshahvalad, Director of International Affairs and Public Relations of the State Welfare Organization

جلسه مورخ ۹۴/۱۲/۲۲ با حضور نمایندگان تشکلهای فعال در امور ناشنوایان برگزار گردید.

در ابتدای این نشست آقای دکتر نحوی نژاد معاون امور توانبخشی سازمان ضمن اشاره به ضرورت برگزاری جلسات مستمر با NGOهای فعال امور ناشنوایان بر تلاش این نماینده ها جهت طرح مطالبات افراد و اعلام مکتوب این موارد اشاره نمودند:

ایشان در ادامه افزودند با توجه به انجام انتخابات NGO ها در سال ۹۴ و عدم حضور نماینده ای از سوی ناشنوایان و لزوم حضور یکی از فعالان امور ناشنوایان به عنوان نماینده این افراد تاکید شد.

ایشان به شفافیت کامل فعالیتهای توانبخشی و لزوم همکاری تمام تشکلهای در پیشبرد اهداف فراروی تاکید نمودند

دکتر نحوی نژاد از جمع بندی نهایی این نشست، مساله اشتغال را اصلی ترین دغدغه معلولان ناشنوا دانست و در ادامه افزود بحث استخدام راه حل اصلی به شمار نمی رود بلکه ما باید بر روی آموزش حرفه ای معلولان و هنرآموزی این افراد تمرکز نمائیم.

بر همین اساس با صدور مجوزهای لازم این امکان فراهم خواهد شد تا افراد ناشنوا با معرفی به مراکز حرفه آموزی از حیث برخورداری از مهارتهای فنی و هنری مانند تراشکاری، معرق، چرم و مورد ارزیابی قرار گیرند تا در همان راستا فعال نمایند. در غیر اینصورت سایر استعداد های آنان مورد ارزیابی قرار خواهد گرفت.

ایشان تاکید نمودند که سازمان بهزیستی با پرداخت سهم حق کارفرما و جبران عدم کارایی زمینه اشتغال افراد معلول بویژه ناشنوایان را فراهم خواهد نمود.

مضافاً این که سازمان بهزیستی بعنوان متولی امور معلولان و مدافع حقوق این عزیزان، جهت پیگیری مسائل و مشکلات این افراد در محیط کار اقدام خواهد نمود.

- واگذاری فعالیتهای NGOهای ناشنوایان و استفاده از پتانسیل خود ناشنوایان
- پیگیری تخصیص پلاک ویژه به ناشنوایان
- انجام مصاحبه و اطلاع رسانی دقیق در خصوص کاشت حلزون و تاکید بر این نکته که حجم عظیمی از ناشنوایان نیاز به کاشت حلزون ندارند و راه های فراوانی برای توانمندسازی ناشنوانان من جمله آموزش لب خوانی، زبان اشاره و ... وجود دارد

فازده ایران

- برگزاری نکوداشتی برای دکتر باغچه بان با همکاری انجمن ناشنوایان و دفتر توانمندسازی معلولین (کانون ناشنوایان) (ارائه)
- دفتر توانمندسازی در قالب طرح های توانمندسازی معلولان مبلغ ۳۰۰ میلیون تومان برای آموزش رابطین ناشنوا اختصاص دهد.
- مقرر گردید NGOها پیشنهادات خود را برای خرید وسایل تجهیزات در سال ۹۵ به دفتر معاونت ارائه نمایند.

کانون ناشنوایان ایران
 دفتر توانمندسازی
 تهران

محمد باجرا
 (نایب رئیس کانون)

دکتر خدیجه
 معاون کانون ناشنوایان
 در امور توانمندسازی
 ۹۵/۱۲

خدایاری
 مونا قلجی
 ۱۳۹۴/۱۲/۲۲

سینا خداجبسی

مفکره طایفیان (رابط در کمیته ناشنوایان)
 ۲۲/۱۲/۹۴

بهروز لاری
 مدیر

فریاد علی
 کمیته توانمندسازی
 کانون ناشنوایان ایران

ایشی هیت مدیره
 کمیته توانمندسازی کانون ناشنوایان ایران
 نماینده