**Re: Human Rights Council Resolution 37/22**

**Study for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)**

**on Article 8 of the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**

**Submission by the Center for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI)**

The New York-based Center for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI) is an independent, nonpartisan and nonprofit organization that protects and promotes human rights in Iran. Founded in 2008, CHRI researches human rights violations occurring throughout Iran, documents and spreads its findings via articles, reports, videos and briefings, engages in media outreach globally, and advocates with the UN and governments worldwide to hold Iran accountable to its rights obligations.

*Question 1(a). Does your country have laws, policies, plans, strategies or guidelines at any level of government relating to raising awareness about persons with disabilities, in particular initiatives to: foster respect for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities; combat stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices relating to persons with disabilities; or promote awareness of the contributions of persons with disabilities?*

Answer 1(a). There are several laws and regulations in Iran mandating relevant public bodies to take action on raising awareness on disability rights.

* Legislation

1) The 2018 Law to Protect the Rights of the Disabled allocates a separate chapter, Chapter Seven, to “Cultural Improvement and Awareness Raising.” Article 20 of the legislation states, “the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, the Islamic Development Organization, the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting organization, municipalities, and other organizations and institutions with movie theatres are required to provide, free of charge, showings of educational videos approved by State Welfare Organization about the rights of people with disabilities and how to interact with them.” (IRIB’s implementation of this remains limited, however, to occasion-based activities, see for example the Strategies section below.) The State Welfare Organization (SWO) is the main governmental body under the Ministry of Social Welfare, which is mandated to serve people with disabilities in Iran. The organization is also designated as the main implementing body for the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) Convention.

2) Article 21 of the same law requires “the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting organization to dedicate at least five hours per week to broadcasting the programs prepared by the State Welfare Organization and NGOs supporting the rights of people with disabilities (DPOs), free of charge and with appropriate timing, in order to raise awareness among the public about the rights, capabilities, and issues of people with disabilities….”

* Regulations

1) Paragraphs 21 and 22 of the 2015 [Executive rules](http://rooznamehrasmi.ir/laws/ShowLaw.aspx?Code=5834) on the Establishment of the National Accessibility Headquarters include some key obligations regarding disability rights training and awareness raising. In order to familiarize students with the capabilities and rights of people with disabilities, Paragraph 21 requires the Ministry of Education to “include in the curricula for various school levels appropriate content about the rights of people with disabilities, the signs and symbols of different types of disabilities, and the city signs regarding people with disabilities.”

2) According to the subsequent paragraph, (Paragraph 22), executive organizations subject to this regulation are mandated, based on their area of work, to train and educate their staff about the appropriate ways of providing service to people with disabilities, seeking advice and consultation from the SWO and from disability rights NGOs.

* Strategies
1. On occasions such as the International Day of People with Disabilities, International White Cane Safety Day, International Down Syndrome Day, International Day for Autism Awareness, International Sign Language Day and other disability rights days, some radio and television programs and news reports broadcast by the state-run Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) invite people with relevant disabilities to talk about their achievements and contributions. Yet these programs often reflect a medical or charity view and approach to disability rather than portraying disability as a social construct and/or human rights issue. Furthermore, these programs are not equally available to all people with disabilities. Firstly, deaf people and people with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities are rarely interviewed; rather their parents or caregivers are often asked to speak on their behalf. Blind people or those with physical disabilities are often given the chance to speak about their achievements or challenges themselves. Secondly, even for those groups of people with disabilities directly interviewed, only well-known figures tend to be invited. Therefore, people with disabilities often describe the content of IRIB’s disability-related programs as repetitive, shallow and lacking.
2. Exhibitions that showcase the work of artists with disabilities are common in Iran. However, such exhibitions are often organized by the SWO with charity-based, fund-raising goals in mind. In the most recent example in July 2019, SWO organized [a local exhibition in Amol](http://www.iribnews.ir/fa/news/2476789/%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%BE%D8%A7%DB%8C%DB%8C-%D9%86%D9%85%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%B4%DA%AF%D8%A7%D9%87-%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%85%D9%86%D8%AF%DB%8C%E2%80%8C%D9%87%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A2%D9%85%D9%84), the northern province of Mazandaran, showcasing the work of 30 artists who either had physical disabilities or were single women without guardians registered at the SWO. [Another exhibition opened](http://www.behzisti.ir/news/1726/%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%BE%D8%A7%DB%8C%DB%8C-%D9%86%D9%85%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%B4%DA%AF%D8%A7%D9%87-%D8%AF%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%87%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86-%DA%A9%D8%B1%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%87%DB%8C-%D8%A8%D9%87-%D9%85%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A8%D8%AA-%D9%87%D9%81%D8%AA%D9%87-%D8%A8%D9%87%D8%B2%DB%8C%D8%B3%D8%AA%DB%8C) in the same month in the central province of Kermanshah, commemorating SWO week. This exhibition portrayed traditional handicrafts such as paintings and leatherwork. The eastern province of Khorasan Jonoobi where, according to the SWO, the highest number of Iranian people with disabilities reside, [hosted a series of exhibitions in July this year.](http://shamdani.com/content/556/%D9%86%D9%85%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%B4%DA%AF%D8%A7%D9%87-%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%85%D9%86%D8%AF%DB%8C%D9%87%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A8%D9%87%D8%B2%DB%8C%D8%B3%D8%AA%DB%8C-%D8%AE%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%AC%D9%86%D9%88%D8%A8%DB%8C) In this event, 42 booths showcased the works of people with disabilities, including handmade carpets, clothing, sculpture, and mirror work. The Mehr-e Honar Gallery in Tehran also curated an [independent exhibition of professional work](https://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/6979883/%D8%A2%D8%AB%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%87%D9%86%D8%B1%DB%8C-%D8%AE%DB%8C%D8%B1%D9%87-%DA%A9%D9%86%D9%86%D8%AF%D9%87-%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%DB%8C%DA%A9-%D9%86%D9%85%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%B4%DA%AF%D8%A7%D9%87-%D9%85%D8%AA%D9%81%D8%A7%D9%88%D8%AA-%D9%81%DB%8C%D9%84%D9%85) by 33 artists who had various physical disabilities in July 2019. The most significant recent example was a two-day [exhibition](https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1397/09/15/1892246/%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%AA%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%AD-%D9%86%D9%85%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%B4%DA%AF%D8%A7%D9%87-%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%85%D9%86%D8%AF%DB%8C-%D9%87%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B4%D9%87%D8%B1-%D8%AA%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%AC-%D9%85%DB%8C%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AF) hosted in Milad Tower in December 2018. Although the artists and exhibition were not publicized, promotion was helped due to the fact that the location of the exhibition was Iran’s tallest tower and an influential cultural site in the country. This event was sponsored by the SWO and said to showcase local artists with disabilities from the city.

 *Question 1(b). What are the challenges to implementing the above?*

Answer 1(b). Based on CHRI’s in-depth research and numerous interviews with people with disabilities and disability rights advocates based in Iran over the past four years, the following can be mentioned as some of the major challenges hindering the implementation of the above-mentioned laws and regulations:

* Lack of effective enforcing and monitoring mechanisms and appropriate remedies.
Article 32 of the 2018 Law to Protect the Rights of the Disabled provides that all organizations subject to this law must submit annual reports regarding the implementation of this law and the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) adopted on 3 December 2008, to the Coordination and Monitoring Committee. Established under Article 31 of the law, the Committee is mandated to monitor the implementation of this law and any other legislation concerning or affecting people with disabilities. It should be noted that the non-governmental members of the Committee, including representatives of different groups of people with disabilities and disability experts, are deprived of voting and may join the Committee only as observers. At the time of the drafting this submission, the Committee is yet to be established, while the law has come into force since May 2018. Therefore, no report on the implementation of Articles 20 and 21 (Question 1A) has been provided so far. Even if the Committee officially starts working and receives reports from the responsible bodies, there is not much it can do to enforce implementation and/or issue penalties against failing bodies. The only penalty provided in the law is the publication of the summary of the Committee’s findings in terms of violating disability laws by the Parliament and after various bureaucratic steps. In addition, because the Committee is solely governmental with only an observatory presence of people with disabilities as a small minority, this composition and voting system severely mitigates the efficacy and efficiency of the Committee.
* Dearth of disability rights experts. Due to the strong prevalence of a medical and charity-based approach to disability in Iran, there are a few disability rights experts with the capacity to provide adequate training to public staff and to service providers across the country. The shortage of competent trainers and consultants needed to facilitate trainings and awareness raising campaigns in various locations and for various audience results in the poor quality of any trainings and workshops held. It should be noted that the government does not invest in capacity building for disability rights advocates, nor does it facilitate international training for them. This causes even the most passionate disability rights advocates to lack the required knowledge and expertise.
* Inadequate attention to awareness raising activities by organizations of people with disabilities. Most disabled people’s organizations in Iran are charity-based and focus on the daily needs of their members such as providing discounted assistive equipment or organizing short leisure trips for people with disabilities and their family members. Those engaging in training activities typically organize courses for people with disabilities on computer skills or mobility training. Our research indicates that cases where disability NGOs organize or advocate for non-disabled training on disability rights are quite rare.
* Prevalent stigma among the most senior authorities. Due to the systematic lack of education on the rights and dignity of people with disabilities, the use of derogatory language is very common both in Iran’s legislation and among State officials. Governmental authorities in Iran including the Supreme Leader, the Prosecutor-General and the President, frequently [use references to disability as a means of insult](https://iranhumanrights.org/2019/07/iranian-state-officials-use-derogatory-language-against-people-with-disabilities/). In addition to top-level officials, such stereotypical and discriminatory views of people with disabilities are common among those who are officially responsible for protecting and promoting disability rights including State Welfare Organization’s officials. Reviewing the Islamic Republic’s implementation of the Convention, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [expressed](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRPD/C/IRN/CO/1&Lang=En) concerns that Iran’s relevant legislation “contains derogatory language such as the terms ‘mentally ill’, ‘insane’ and/or ‘retarded’” and recommended that the government “bring its legislation… into line with the Convention” and “repeal derogatory terminology against persons with disabilities, including in the New Criminal Code.”

 *Question 2(a). What legislative and policy measures are taken to address hate crimes, hate speech and harmful practices against persons with disabilities?*

Answer 2(a). Hate crimes and hate speech against protected groups, including people with disabilities, are not defined in the Iranian legal system. Although Iran is a State Party to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), no legislation, including the 2018 Law to Protect the Rights of the Disabled, define hate crimes or speech or provide for any civil or criminal remedy for such crimes or speech. To the contrary, Iranian state officials frequently use derogatory language against people with disabilities, and frequently [use references to disability as a means of insult](https://iranhumanrights.org/2019/07/iranian-state-officials-use-derogatory-language-against-people-with-disabilities/).

*Question 2(b). In particular, are there legal remedies available for persons with disabilities seeking compensation and reparation? Are there legal provisions to sanction perpetrators, including through criminal law? Please provide information on their application in practice (e.g. cases of persons condemned for hate crimes against persons with disabilities).*

Answer 2 (b). There are no specifically designated legal remedies available in Iran’s legal system for persons with disabilities subjected to hate crimes and/or hate speech and seeking compensation and reparation. However, there are a number of legal provisions that people with disabilities may use in the case of hate speech or hate crimes:

* Insulting in general is punishable under the Iranian criminal system. According to Article 608 of the [Islamic Penal Code](http://law.dotic.ir/AIPLaw/lawview.do?reqCode=lawView&lawId=198907&stateNo=18&phaseNo=2&type=all), insulting any person through the expression of offensive or obscene words may entail lashes or fines.
* Article 23 of the Law to Protect the Rights of the Disabled allows the State Welfare Organization (SWO) to appear in court as the representative of a person with disabilities, in instances of violations of their rights because of their disability. However, during CHRI’s research, we could access only one case where a person with disability who was insulted (referring to her disability) filed a complaint. The case was declared inadmissible due to procedural reasons.

*Question 3(a). What steps have been taken to establish standards and/or good practices on the representation and portrayal of persons with disabilities in broadcast media, including codes, guidelines and other measures (legal, co-regulatory or self-regulatory)?*

Answer 3(a). Broadcasting is limited to the government in Iran, specifically, to the state-run Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), which operates under the authority of the Supreme Leader. No private broadcasting company is permitted in the country. CHRI did not access any formal standards, guidelines or code by the IRIB regarding the presentation of people with disabilities. It should be noted that the organization does not publicize its internal guidelines and regulations. However, there are occasional programs that IRIB broadcasts, which could be said to promote good practices. For example, we refer to the [weekly program on Radio Iran, Six Dots](http://radiotehran.ir/sr/?chid=2&term=%D8%B4%D8%B4+%D9%86%D9%82%D8%B7%D9%87), which is announced by a blind person and which invites blind people to discuss their experiences and the challenges they face.

*Question 3(b). In addition, what legal framework, measures or good practices exist to regulate social media in accordance with Article 8 and human rights standards on freedom of expression?*

Answer 3(b). Social media is highly filtered in Iran and, as such, many social media platforms are officially banned and blocked and thus citizens can access them only through the use of censorship circumvention tools. The state’s Working Group to Determine Instances of Criminal Content has been established to identify cases of criminal content distributed on social media, but the Committee is primarily oriented toward supporting the state’s (political) censorship and it has not used its authority to determine unauthorized content regarding people with disabilities. Nevertheless and despite these state policies, civil society in Iran—including NGOs for people with disabilities, disability rights advocates and citizens with disabilities–continues to robustly employ social media to raise public awareness of disability rights. As a human rights organization outside Iran, CHRI itself has also extensively used social media, including Twitter, Telegram, Facebook and Instagram, to disseminate its material aiming at raising public awareness of the rights and potential of people with disabilities in various formats, including videos, GIFs, infographics and fact sheets.

*Question 4(a). Please provide information on the existence and implementation of the programmes and activities, including successful examples of campaigns, related to raising awareness about persons with disabilities and their rights, and combating negative attitudes including through initiatives of: training, including human rights education; research, including studies on perception and attitudes; surveys and data collection.*

Answer 4(a). There are some public campaigns, which include awareness raising and relevant trainings as detailed below, but research and data collection on societal perceptions and attitudes toward people with disabilities and their rights is significantly lacking in Iran.

* Campaigns. Public campaigns for educating the public on people with disabilities and their rights and combatting negative attitudes is not common in Iran, but there are intermittent campaigns focused on raising awareness on accessibility issues (see below, in the answer to 4(b)). The State Welfare Organization (SWO), the main government body responsible for protecting and promoting disability rights, organizes fundraising campaigns (Labkhande Mehrabani, or “smile of kindness”), but these campaigns promote the view of people with disabilities as subjects of charity.
* Trainings. There are intermittent workshops and courses held that are focused on societal perceptions and attitudes toward people with disabilities as well as on raising awareness on the part of service providers, examples of which are detailed below in Answer 4(b).
* Research. Research, including studies on perceptions and attitudes toward people with disabilities is not supported by the government. There is academic research undertaken in this regard by Iranian scholars in universities in Iran, but this research is not commissioned or supported by the government and it is not effectively incorporated into the national debate or policies regarding people with disabilities, their rights, and societal attitudes toward them.
* Data collection. In the most recent National Census (in 2016), no information on disability was collected, including regarding societal perceptions or attitudes toward people with disabilities. The SWO has not implemented any such public survey as of this writing.

 *Question 4(b). Please indicate their objective, scope, target audience, impact (including available data), partners and participants, particularly the participation of, and role of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations, and any key factors of success.*

Answer 4(b). Based on CHRI’s research over the past four years, we have found the following regarding the scope of the above items:

* Campaigns. While public campaigns remain quite limited in Iran, it has become a popular demand by disability rights campaigners, politicians and journalists to ask city officials across Iran to traverse cities in wheelchairs in order to experience the level of inaccessibility first hand, and expedite relevant city projects. For instance, Mohammad Shariatmadari, Minister of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare, announced publicly on the International Day of Disabled Persons in December 2019 that he believes Tehran's mayor must explore the city using a wheelchair. Although this demand did not meet an official response, there have been other cases in which similar public demands have witnessed major reactions, at least on the media level. In the winter of 2016, a select number of city officials in Fardis town in the central province of Alborz accepted the invitation of the local (Fardis) SWO head and navigated a portion of the town using wheelchairs. Similarly, in the summer of 2018, Ghorveh city officials in Kurdistan province responded to disability rights protesters by visiting a number of government buildings in wheelchairs to assess their accessibility level. In the winter of the same year, the Member of Parliament (MP) Mohammadreza Heidari from Mashhad, Iran's second most populous city, appeared among a group of people with disabilities in a wheelchair, in a publicized attempt to encourage city officials to examine the city's public accessibility.
* Trainings. The following are examples of trainings undertaken in Iran to promote awareness of people with disabilities, their rights and the challenges they face.
1) The [Islamic Human Rights Commission](http://www.ihrc.ir/images/Upload/ihrcataglance.pdf), which was established to serve as the National Human Rights Institute of Iran in 1994, has been hosting somewhat consistent workshops on the rights of people with disabilities throughout the years. In the summer of 2018, for instance, the Commission organized a one-month workshop titled “[An Introduction to the Potentials of the New Law to Protect Rights of the Disabled from the Perspective of Iran’s Judiciary System and International Norms](http://www.ihrc.ir/Page.aspx?ID=4325&Group=Pages&Title=%D8%A2%D8%B4%D9%86%D8%A7%DB%8C%DB%8C%20%D8%A8%D8%A7%20%D8%B8%D8%B1%D9%81%DB%8C%D8%AA%20%D9%87%D8%A7%DB%8C%20%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%88%D9%86%20%D8%AC%D8%AF%DB%8C%D8%AF%20%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%AA%20%D8%A7%D8%B2%20%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82%20%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AF%20%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C%20%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%88%D9%84%DB%8C%D8%AA%20%D8%A7%D8%B2%20%D9%85%D9%86%D8%B8%D8%B1%20%D9%86%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%85%20%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82%DB%8C%20%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86%20%D9%88%20%D9%87%D9%86%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7%DB%8C%20%D8%A8%DB%8C%D9%86%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%84%D9%84%DB%8C).” The workshop was led by two lawyers, one of whom was a member of the Iranian Parliament's Research Center.
2) Another similar three-hour course was taught at Tehran University’s Institution for Legal Studies and publicized by the Islamic Human Rights Commission in the winter of 2017. The course “[Citizenry Rights and Disability](http://www.ihrc.ir/Page.aspx?ID=4278&Group=Pages&Title=%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82%20%D8%B4%D9%87%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86%D8%AF%DB%8C%20%D9%88%20%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%88%D9%84%DB%8C%D8%AA%20%D8%A8%D8%A7%20%D8%AA%D8%A7%DA%A9%DB%8C%D8%AF%20%D8%A8%D8%B1%20%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%B3%DB%8C%20%D9%84%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%AD%D9%87%20%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82%20%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AF%20%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C%20%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%88%D9%84%DB%8C%D8%AA),” which emphasized “studying the bill on the rights of people with disabilities,” featured several speakers, including the former Rehabilitation director of the State Welfare Organization (SWO) Dr. Hossein Nahvinejad, disability rights advocate Naser Sargeran, Member of Parliament Dr. Homayoun Hashemi, and several other lawyers and academics. Both courses offered certificates to their attendees.

3) In a more recent example, the Judiciary’s Education Center hosted a workshop on “[The Rights of People with Disabilities in [Legal and Judicial] Proceedings](https://www.mizanonline.com/fa/news/488616/%DA%A9%D8%A7%D8%B1%DA%AF%D8%A7%D9%87-%D8%A2%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B2%D8%B4%DB%8C-%D8%A2%D8%B4%D9%86%D8%A7%DB%8C%DB%8C-%D8%A8%D8%A7-%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%88%D9%84%DB%8C%D8%AA-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86%D8%AF-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%B3%DB%8C-%D8%A8%D8%B1%DA%AF%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%B4%D8%AF).” This two-day workshop took place in collaboration with the International Office of the Judiciary and the SWO, hosting 50 judges from across the country with the goal of “educating teachers for the Judiciary.” [According to Mizan Online](https://www.mizanonline.com/fa/news/488616/%DA%A9%D8%A7%D8%B1%DA%AF%D8%A7%D9%87-%D8%A2%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B2%D8%B4%DB%8C-%D8%A2%D8%B4%D9%86%D8%A7%DB%8C%DB%8C-%D8%A8%D8%A7-%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A7%DB%8C-%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%88%D9%84%DB%8C%D8%AA-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86%D8%AF-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%B3%DB%8C-%D8%A8%D8%B1%DA%AF%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%B4%D8%AF), the Judiciary’s official news agency, this workshop referred to the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) as a catalyst to compare national and international laws.

4) In an example of trainings for service providers, in November 2018, the Office of Education and Human Resources at the Fars Province Power Distribution Company [organized](http://www.edca.ir/View_News.aspx?newsid=8371) a training session on methods of communication and providing service to clients with disabilities, in order to educate its staff and employees about accessibility standards in the workplace. In this meeting, Ahmadreza Khosravi, the chairman of the administrative committee on client rights, emphasized the need for the appropriate treatment of clients with disabilities. Following Khosravi’s remarks, the Director of the Rehabilitation Center at Shiraz SWO Dr. Hamidreza Jalali distinguished the difference between “visible” and “invisible” types of disabilities, and highlighted an inclusive understanding of disability that considers the role of the environment in exacerbating disabilities. After defining disability as a first step towards understanding the needs of clients with disabilities, Dr. Jalali emphasized the importance of accessibility and added, “Accessibility should be so widespread that it both enables people with disabilities and prepares the community they live in to offer them the services they need [on an equal basis with others.]” There is no evidence available on the contribution of people with disabilities or their organizations in this workshop.

5) In another example of trainings for service providers, in July 2019, a similar training [was offered](http://www.behzisti.ir/news/746/%D8%AA%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%AA%D8%A8%D9%84%DB%8C%D8%BA-%D8%AD%D9%82%D9%88%D9%82-%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%A8%D8%B1-%D8%B1%D9%88%DB%8C-%D8%A8%D8%AF%D9%86%D9%87-%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A8%D9%88%D8%B3-%D9%87%D8%A7%DB%8C-BRT-%D8%A2%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B2%D8%B4-%DA%A9%D8%A7%D8%B1%DA%A9%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86) to bus rapid transit employees about providing assistance and services to passengers with disabilities. According to the director of the Tehran City Council workgroup for the disabled and elders, Majid Mazji (who has physical disability himself), the workshop was designed to provide training for drivers and other staff to provide passengers with disabilities with the necessary assistance while boarding the bus. Previously in a meeting with the managing director of the City Bus Company, critical steps for providing assistance to passengers with disabilities were identified. Among the methods discussed were the necessity of compensating technical shortcomings with human resources so that staff and drivers are trained in communicating, treating and assisting people with disabilities while boarding and riding the bus. Outlining responsibilities and education about the importance of accessibility was marked as another vital step towards achieving widespread accessibility. Mr. Mazji added that NGO’s play an important role in providing training to Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) staff and invited said organizations to consult and collaborate with the City Council in their training programs. Mr. Mazji also highlighted the possibility of bus advertising as a way to raise awareness about disability rights, and called upon designers and activists to share their ideas and campaign designs with the City Bus Company.

6) In a third example of trainings for service providers, on June 18, 2019, the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee (a public body serving the most marginalized populations including people with disabilities) [organized a workshop](https://t.me/dscampaign/6400) on the rights of citizens with disabilities in the administrative system in Saqiz, a town west Iran. The Workshop on the Citizenry Rights of People with Disabilities lasted for four hours and was attended by 35 employees of the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee. It took place in accordance with Article 22 of the Executive Order of the Government passed in September 2015 (Answer 1(a) above), which requires all executive agencies to train their staff on interacting with people with disabilities. The course was taught by Naser Sargeran, an outstanding disability rights advocate who is blind himself, university lecturer and a member of the Board of Directors at the Saqez Welfare Institute for the Blind. In this workshop, Mr. Sargeran not only discussed the challenges and proper ways of interacting with people with disabilities during administrative processes, but also highlighted the inaccessibility of administrative buildings and lack of awareness among staff, all which result in long, costly and difficult administrative experiences and discrimination against people with disabilities. The attendees were also given concrete instructions on how to receive and assist clients with disabilities at this workshop, whose other goal was to encourage more institutions to organize similar training sessions.

*Question 5. Please provide information on the role of persons with disabilities and their representative organisations, including children with disabilities, in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all measures relating to awareness raising. Please provide detail on concrete mechanisms and activities undertaken for consultation and active involvement (e.g. regular meetings, online consultations, etc.).*

Answer 5. Overall, while the measures and initiatives undertaken in Iran to raise public awareness about people with disabilities, their rights, the challenges they face, and societal perceptions and attitudes toward them are insufficient, when such measures and initiatives are undertaken, they do typically include and incorporate people with disabilities. This is especially the case concerning the trainings referenced above in answer 4(b). Specifically, CHRI notes the following:

* If it is established, the Committee to Monitor Implementation of the Law to Protect the Rights of the Disabled would be a mechanism for people with disabilities and disability organizations to become involved in the designation and monitoring of policies and plans concerning people with disabilities, including those on awareness raising and combatting the stigmatized approach to disability. However, the proposed committee is to be comprised of representatives of all the various disability organizations, and there have been delays in the said organizations’ selection of their respective representatives to this committee. While these organizations continue to work on this, it is not clear when the issues causing the delays will be resolved and the committee will be established. Nevertheless, to the extent that measures and initiatives have been undertaken to address public awareness raising on disability issues in Iran, even though such measures have been insufficient, people with disabilities have been included in the process—with the caveat that such inclusion is still hindered by the challenges cited in Answer 1(b), namely the dearth in expertise among the disability community in Iran and the lack of prioritization of awareness raising even among the disability community itself in Iran.
* A limited number of people with disabilities and their organizations were involved in the drafting of the 2018 Law to Protect the Rights of the Disabled, and the Executive Regulations on the Establishment of the National Headquarters on Accessibility (see Answer 1(a)).
* People with disabilities and their organizations also play an active role in the trainings referenced in Answer 4(b), primarily as the actual trainers. For example, the trainings organized for the staff of Imam Khomeini Relief Committee was conducted with the extensive involvement of the blind persons’ NGO in the city of Saqiz, including in the designation and implementation stages. However, no monitoring and evaluation activities have been documented after the trainings.
* CHRI has not identified any public awareness raising initiatives focused specifically on children with disabilities in Iran and thus we cannot speak to the involvement of relevant organizations in such initiatives.

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