



2013

Annual Report



**INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN**

2013 Annual Report

The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran (ICHRI) is one of the leading global organizations committed to the defense of human rights in Iran. We support the work of human rights defenders in Iran and seek to amplify the voice of Iranian civil society on the international stage. We research and document rights violations throughout the country, relying on an extensive network of relationships inside Iran to expose abuses that would otherwise go unreported. We bring these violations to the attention of the international community, and work to forge strategic coalitions that will hold Iran accountable to its international obligations. We advocate worldwide for policies that will support the fundamental rights of all Iranians.

A message from Executive Director Hadi Ghaemi:

It is with great humility and admiration that I dedicate the work of the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran to the brave individuals in Iran who continue to stand up for the basic rights, freedoms, and dignity of all Iranians at great cost to themselves and their families. It is the responsibility of every citizen of the world to note their struggle, and support it in every way we can. Silence is the ally of human rights violations; light and voice are their ultimate nemesis. The Campaign will continue to shed light on, and amplify the voice of, those who defend human rights in Iran.





INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR **HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN**

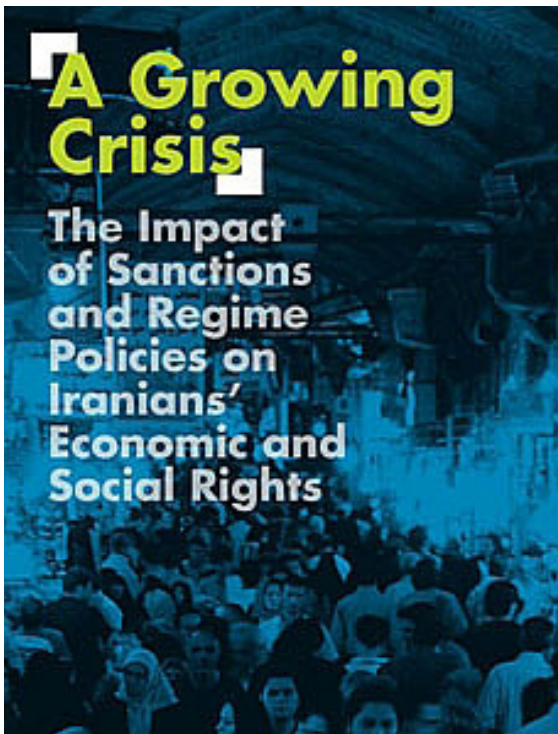
2013 Major Activities

Advocacy for Targeted Sanctions

The Campaign played a central role in the **successful campaign to lift US tech sanctions on Iran**: after two years of intensive advocacy and meetings with US Administration officials, on May 30, 2013, the Treasury Department issued a [general license](#) for the export of personal communication hardware, software, and services to Iran, providing Iranian civil society with access to critical information and communication tools.

We also worked in concert with other organizations on the successful campaign to establish [legal payment channels](#) for humanitarian and personal communications technology exports to Iran, which had been blocked by banking sanctions.

Throughout 2013, we advocated directly with EU and US government officials to **facilitate the export of humanitarian goods to Iran**, focusing on the need to enable and expedite medicines and medical equipment exports and other essential items to Iran.



In April the Campaign published an **in-depth report on the effect of international sanctions** on Iranian society: [A Growing Crisis: The Impact of Sanctions and Regime Policies on Iranians' Economic and Social Rights](#). The report detailed the toll that both economic mismanagement and sanctions have taken on the Iranian economy and highlighted the growing hardships faced by ordinary Iranians as they labor under shortages of critical goods, including life-saving medicines and other essential items. The report was circulated widely on the Hill and among US Administration officials.

Advocacy against Iran's Capital Punishment Policies



The Campaign worked throughout the year to raise awareness of the inhumanity of Iran's capital punishment policies. Our efforts focused on increasing international pressure on Iran to end public executions, the execution of juveniles, and death sentences for crimes that do not meet international standards for "most serious" crimes.

We also sought to raise awareness *inside* Iran of international norms regarding capital punishment, and to encourage the Iranian citizenry's repudiation of the Islamic Republic's capital punishment policies through the Persian-language music video [Execution](#), which has had **some 840,000 listens and downloads** between the Campaign's site and views and re-postings on other websites.

We published many [articles](#) on the issue based on extensive research and interviews with primary sources in Iran—particularly on the [acceleration of executions](#) under the new Rouhani administration, the continuation of public executions, and the routine carrying out of executions after convictions in trials that did not maintain even minimum standards of due process—which were cited by major Persian-language and international media such as [The New York Times](#), the [Los Angeles Times](#), and [The Guardian](#).

Our research, including reporting on and documenting the disproportionate convictions (without due process) in capital cases for ethnic and religious minorities, was also cited by numerous UN human rights bodies and reports.

Reaching out to inform and inspire Iranian civil society with the Persian-language human rights podcast, “Five in the Afternoon”



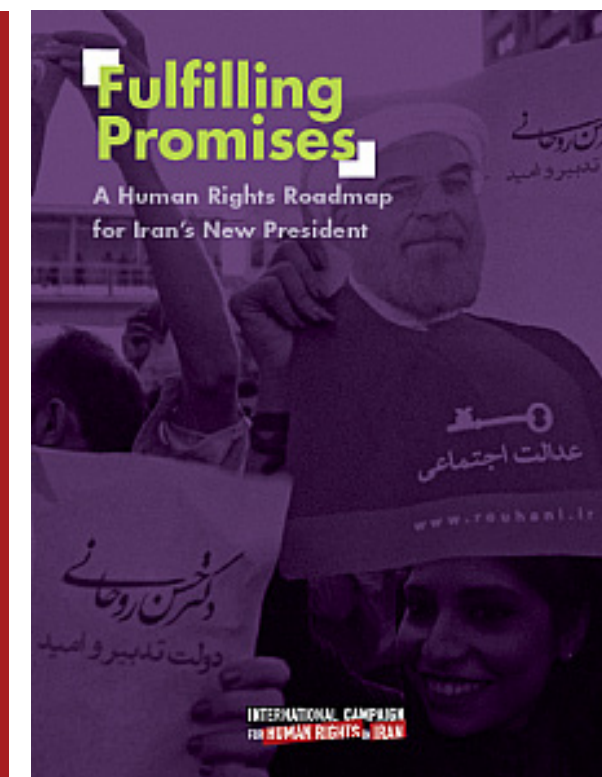
“[Five in the Afternoon](#),” the Campaign’s groundbreaking weekly Persian-language podcast featuring acclaimed Iranian satirist [Kambiz Hosseini](#), provides vital information to the citizens of Iran on human rights.

Delivered through the language of political satire, an art form with deep resonance in Iranian culture, the show addresses issues that would never be allowed under the state-controlled media in Iran, such as the continued imprisonment of individuals for exercising their fundamental rights, women’s rights, and censorship. It includes a review of the week’s news, analysis, satirical social commentary, and interviews with prominent Iranians. In addition, with its integration of audience feedback, it is a unique forum for ordinary Iranians to voice and share their concerns, and challenge the Iranian government’s narrative on human rights. The podcasts are central to the Campaign’s efforts to reach Iranians inside Iran, informing and supporting civil society in order to advance human rights from the ground up.

First launched in January 2013, the series is broadcast online every Thursday at 5:00 pm Iran-time and has **reached over 2 million listeners** since its inception on the Campaign’s SoundCloud page. This number under-represents the listeners since the podcasts have been re-posted on many Persian-language websites and social media sites, and we also have reports of people downloading the podcast onto CDs and distributing them on the streets in Iran, and sharing them through Bluetooth-enabled devices.

Advocating for human rights with the new Rouhani administration in Iran

With the June 2013 election of President Hassan Rouhani, who campaigned on a platform of elevating human rights issues in Iran, the Campaign responded to requests by key members of civil society inside Iran to reach out directly to advisers to and members of the new administration and recommend specific and feasible measures—executive directives, policies, and legislation—that can be undertaken by the president’s office to immediately and tangibly improve the state of human rights in Iran. The major premise of the report was that although Iran’s judiciary is independent from Iran’s executive branch, a wide range of human rights violations occur within ministries under the authority of the administration and therefore can be directly and effectively addressed by President Rouhani. Our recommendations were detailed in our August 2013 report, [Fulfilling Promises: A Human Rights Roadmap for Iran’s New President](#), which was circulated widely among administration officials and advisers in Tehran.





Forced Confessions

In 2013 the Campaign launched screenings in major cities across the US documenting the Iranian government’s routine practice of forcing its political detainees to publicly “confess” crimes. These confessions are typically extracted under torture during interrogations, and are often used to convict individuals of vague national security-related crimes. The screenings were followed by panel discussions on censorship and repression in Iran and question and answer sessions. The sold-out NYC screening and panel discussion was hosted by the renowned political satirist Jon Stewart.

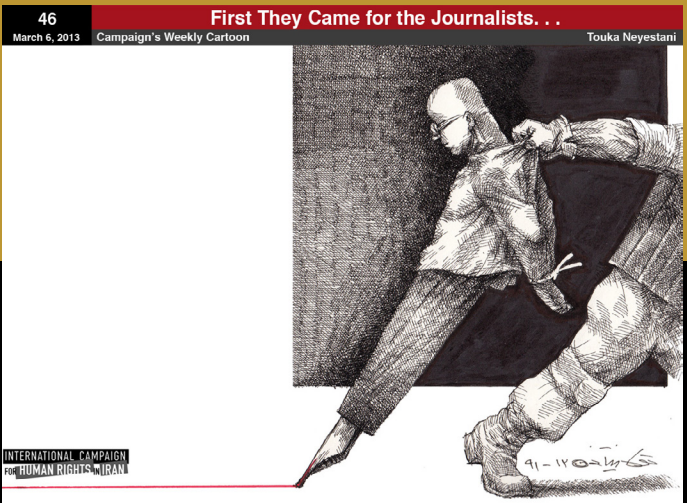
Promoting Internet access inside Iran

The Campaign worked throughout the year to promote Internet access in Iran and raise awareness of the pervasive digital censorship imposed by the authorities in Iran.

We **worked directly with leading technology firms** such as Google, Yahoo Email and Messenger, Facebook, and others to **develop Persian-language services and social networking platforms**, successfully advocated with them to **encrypt their services and implement security protocols SSL and HTTPS service by default**, and assisted with obtaining OFAC licenses.

We successfully advocated with Google and Apple to **allow users in Iran to have access to their online stores**, making critical communications software and applications available to Iranian civil society.

We also encouraged private satellite companies to provide **wireless services** for Internet access inside Iran.





Reaching out to new audiences with artistic and cultural human rights projects

The Campaign initiated a variety of artistic and cultural projects throughout 2013 designed to broaden the community of rights supporters outside traditional human rights circles. We drew upon the talents of Iranian artists, musicians, and other cultural figures, and typically used multimedia platforms accessible to social media dissemination in order to reach Iranian civil society as well as the international community.

Maintaining international attention on the continued house arrest of opposition leaders Mir Hossein Mousavi, Mehdi Karroubi, and Zahra Rahnavard

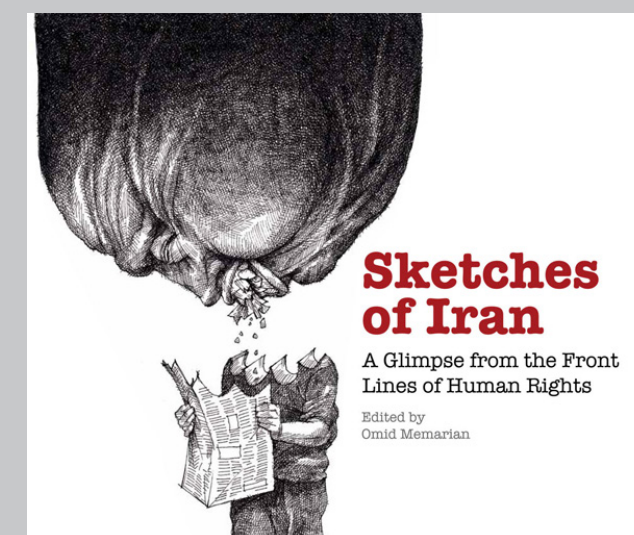
The Campaign worked throughout 2013—as it has for the past three years—to draw attention to the illegal house arrest of the opposition leaders and galvanize international pressure for their release. We published numerous [articles](#) that were distributed to government and UN officials throughout the world, including one which broke the news of the deterioration of [Mehdi Karroubi's health](#), information that was picked up and carried as the top news story on major Persian-language media; produced a [video](#) on the two-year anniversary of the leaders' detention in February in both English and Persian (viewed by over ten thousand individuals); and launched a detailed interactive [time-line](#) in English <http://www.iranhumanrights.org/2012/02/house-arrest-timeline/> and Persian <http://persian.iranhumanrights.org/1390/11/house-arrest-timeline/> which allows users to chart the key developments in the case.

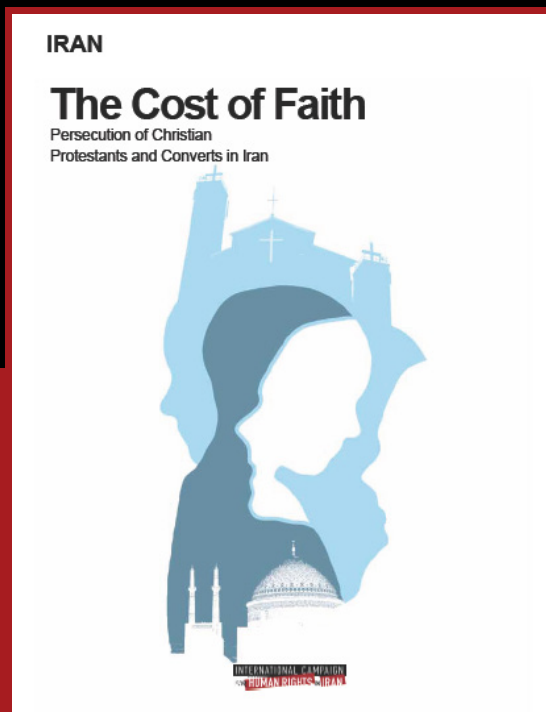
We also met with UN officials in Geneva at the UN HRC and in NY at the UNGA, resulting in calls for their release in the 2013 report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Iran, by the UN HRC, by the UN Secretary-General, and during the UN General Assembly Third Committee discussions in November. We provided background information for press releases by the UN's Special Rapporteur on Iran that condemned the detentions, and engaged in extensive media outreach to publicize their continued detention, giving briefings to and interviews with international and Persian-language media.

In January 2013, the Campaign published a collection of human rights-themed editorial cartoons by leading Iranian artists, accompanied by commentary and personal narratives by Iranian lawyers, activists, human rights defenders, political prisoners and their families, [Sketches of Iran: A Glimpse from the Front Lines of Human Rights](#).

Throughout 2013, we published [editorial cartoons](#) on human rights themes by the renowned Iranian artist Touka Neyestani each week on our website. Many of these cartoons went viral online, becoming powerful vehicles to communicate difficult and complicated human rights issues to a wide audience via the lens of satirical art, which has a long tradition in Iran.

We also co-sponsored the international Hope Concert for human rights in Berlin, which was attended by some 5,000 people and aired live on Radio Farda, which has millions of weekly listeners in Iran. In addition, we highlighted the work of dissident and underground Iranian musicians in Iran, and posted on our website the music of Iranians who have been forced to flee the country.





Religious and ethnic discrimination and persecution

The Campaign published numerous [articles](#), based on extensive research and first-hand interviews with primary sources in Iran, documenting the discrimination against and persecution of [Baha'is](#), [Kurds](#), [Christians](#), [Sunni Arabs](#), and [other](#) ethnic and religious minorities in Iran. This reporting was widely cited by international and Persian-language media and cited by the UN Special Rapporteur on Iran, the UN Secretary-General, and in UNGA Third Committee discussions.

We documented the systematic state persecution of the Protestant and Christian convert community in Iran, through the widely distributed, 73-page report, [The Cost of Faith: Persecution of Christian Protestants and Converts in Iran](#), published in January 2013, which was based on extensive first-hand reporting and interviews. The Campaign also maintained international awareness of this issue through our continued reporting on [Christian prisoners of conscience](#) in Iran.

Providing direct support to activists and civil society

The Campaign provides a broad range of capacity building projects to activists and members of civil society. For example we provide one-on-one training sessions and group workshops via webinar to journalists, activists, and students in human rights research, documentation, and advocacy. We also sponsor the participation of Iranian civil, women's, and students' rights activists at advocacy meetings with government and UN officials and at major international human rights conferences.

Helping Iranian refugees and asylum seekers

In 2013, the Campaign advocated directly with the UNHCR, the UN's refugee agency, to approve **over 40 asylum cases** and provided extensive advisory services to numerous asylum seekers, guiding them regarding the required documentation of their case and the services available to them, and serving as a liaison in interactions with various UN bodies, officials, and other organizations.

We also provided **direct emergency grants** for Iranian refugees forced to flee their country, dispensing immediate financial assistance for urgent medical, shelter, and other emergency needs to refugees.



Expanding the human rights community to the Global South

The Campaign believes it is imperative to expand the global constituency for human rights in Iran to emerging powers, since these are countries that will play an increasingly important role on the international stage. As such, we worked throughout 2013 in countries such as Brazil and Turkey, to increase awareness of Iran's human rights record and promote the incorporation of human rights concern into the foreign policy of these countries.

We gave numerous interviews and placed op-eds in leading media outlets, published articles in influential journals, participated in panel discussions and served as keynote speaker for major conferences at leading universities, think tanks, and research organizations. We also gave extensive background briefings and advocated for policies supportive of human rights with key members of the foreign policy establishment.

Raised awareness of the hundreds of political detainees still remaining in Iran and the ill treatment, torture, and denial of due process throughout the judicial system

Throughout 2013, the Campaign worked to raise awareness of the hundreds of political prisoners remaining in Iranian jails, including journalists, lawyers, teachers, students, labor leaders, and activists, all imprisoned for exercising their fundamental rights, by publishing a constant stream of [articles](#) based on extensive research and interviews with primary sources in Iran. We documented the systematic denial of due process in the Iranian judicial system and the ill treatment (especially the lack of medical care) and [torture](#) that is routine in Iranian prisons, frequently incorporating first-hand interviews with the family members and lawyers of the prisoners.

We also gave numerous media interviews, provided background briefings and information on specific cases to the media and other rights organizations, and engaged in sustained advocacy with government and UN officials to maintain pressure on the Iranian government for their release and/or improved treatment. Our documentation was frequently cited by international and Persian-language media and by UN bodies such as the Office of the Special Rapporteur on Iran, the UN HRC, the UN Secretary-General, and the UNGA Third Committee.

Promoting women's rights in law and practice

The Campaign raised awareness of gender issues in Iran by publishing numerous [articles](#) based on first-hand information and extensive interviews with primary sources on such issues as discrimination against women in the Iranian penal code and in the courts, and discrimination against female electoral [candidates](#).

We published [interviews](#) with leading Iranian women's rights activists on such issues as the [Passport Law](#) and the requirement for male guardianship for female travel.

The Campaign also raised awareness through three widely distributed podcasts on the [UN Special Rapporteur's findings](#) regarding women's rights in Iran, [stoning](#) and women's rights, and discrimination against women in [higher education](#).



THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN

The leading source of information on the state of human rights in Iran

In 2013, the Campaign's output was distributed to journalists, government and UN officials, NGOs, and others worldwide. We produced: [three in-depth reports](#); [275 English-language news articles](#), [281 Persian-language news articles](#), 50 press releases, [eight videos](#), [12 English-language audio podcasts](#), and [41 Persian-language podcasts](#) on human rights issues throughout the year.

We were [cited over 300 times](#) in media outlets worldwide in 2013. In particular, our Persian-language media citation was extensive throughout the year; the Campaign has emerged as a **major hub for the dissemination of human rights-related news to the Persian media**, enabling us to be a vital source of information for Iranian civil society. Our articles are frequently picked up and re-posted on Persian media, many gaining front-page coverage on major Persian-language news sites.

Central to our strategic vision, we expanded our reach inside Iran through our online growth and the use of multimedia projects that are amenable to social media dissemination. The Campaign's [Facebook](#) followers increased 250% during 2013. Significantly, **over 50% of the people who "like" our page are located in Iran**. This indicates the large and growing reach we have inside the country. Since many citizens inside Iran access our Facebook page through VPNs, their accounts are re-routed through third countries and not recorded as coming from Iran. Thus the number of our Facebook users inside Iran is far greater than these numbers indicate.

Our [podcasts](#) had well over **2 million listens** in 2013. There were **115,025 views** of our [videos](#) on the Campaign's YouTube site in 2013, with **over 840,000 additional views** through downloads and re-posting on other sites.



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN

Who We Are

The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit 501(c)3 organization dedicated to the defense of human rights in Iran.

We are comprised of award-winning journalists, researchers, and human rights advocates. Based in New York, our staff collaborates with an extensive team of independent investigators, civil society activists, and human rights defenders inside and outside Iran, allowing the Campaign to report on and document real-time, on-the-ground human rights conditions in Iran. We partner with NGOs and activists around the world to inform the international community on the state of human rights in Iran and build effective coalitions that will advance basic rights and freedoms in the country.

The Campaign is led by Executive Director **Hadi Ghaemi**, an internationally recognized expert on Iran and human rights, who founded the organization in 2008 with international human rights activists in the Netherlands.

INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN

What We Do

Research and Documentation: Our research and documentation provides the verified information that underpins all our work. We conduct extensive research on human rights conditions throughout Iran. Drawing on considerable contacts among all layers of Iranian civil society, the Campaign is able to conduct detailed interviews with primary sources, many of them inside Iran. We use this information to provide timely, verified documentation of rights violations in the form of news articles, press releases, in-depth reports, briefing papers, fact sheets, statements, and multimedia productions including podcasts and videos. Most of the Campaign's work is disseminated in both English and Persian. The Campaign has become one of the leading sources of information on human rights in Iran; we are often the source of breaking news, and are cited hundreds of times a year by major news outlets. In particular, the Campaign has become a hub for the dissemination of human rights news through the Persian-language media. Our reporting is picked up and extensively cited and re-posted by Persian-language news outlets, enabling us to be a vital source of information for Iranian civil society.

Media Outreach: The Campaign focuses media attention on human rights abuses in Iran through close and constant contact with key journalists in media outlets throughout the world. We alert the media to events and issues that might otherwise go unnoticed, furnish verified documentation of developments on the ground in Iran, provide background information and analysis, give frequent in-depth interviews to international print and broadcast media outlets, and place op-eds for publications around the globe. Through our media outreach we seek to expand international awareness of human rights conditions in Iran among the public and key opinion makers.

International Advocacy: The Campaign works around the globe to build strategic coalitions comprised of national governments, international organizations, and NGOs to support human rights. We have an active presence at the United Nations in New York and Geneva; our representatives regularly brief UN diplomats and human rights bodies, speak at the Human Rights Council, and advocate with UN member states and members of the Human Rights Council. In addition, the Campaign advocates with private sector actors to support issues such as freedom of information and Internet access in Iran.

Artistic and Cultural Projects: The Campaign has expanded its work to include artistic and cultural projects that aim to reach and sensitize a broader audience to human rights issues, especially inside Iran. The Campaign is working with a broad spectrum of prominent Iranians from a range of disciplines, including the arts, music, film, and the social sciences, to give voice and support to layers of Iranian society outside the traditional human rights community. Through these projects we aim to reach those who are disinclined to read a human rights report. We've produced music videos by leading Iranian pop stars and Persian language podcasts by a much-beloved Iranian satirist, and we publish editorial cartoons on human rights themes, an art form with a long history and deep resonance in Iran. Many of these projects are in multimedia formats uniquely amenable to social media dissemination. With freedom of association and speech curtailed inside Iran, this allows us to make strategic use of the principal public space available for citizens in Iran. Reaching out to Iranian civil society is central to our vision of building a constituency for human rights inside Iran from the ground up. Our projects have reached millions through downloading and re-postings on Persian-language sites, greatly expanding our reach inside Iran.

Capacity Building: Central to the Campaign's mission is the belief that human rights in Iran can only be implemented in collaboration with Iranian civil society, whose role must be protected and sustained. We train Iranian journalists and activists in research, documentation and advocacy, in one-on-one sessions and in group workshops via webinar, and sponsor Iranian civil, women's, and students' rights activists' attendance at briefings and advocacy meetings with government and UN officials and at international conferences. The Campaign also assists numerous asylum seekers every year and provides Iranian refugees with direct emergency financial grants for medical treatment, shelter, food, and other urgent needs.

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