



# UNITED NATIONS

## Press Release

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### **UN HUMAN RIGHTS CHIEF CONCERNED ABOUT MANNER OF ARRESTS, AND POSSIBLE USE OF EXCESSIVE FORCE IN IRAN**

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19 June 2009

GENEVA – The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, said Friday she is concerned about reports of an increasing number of arrests, which may not be in conformity with the law, and the possible illegal use of excessive force and acts of violence by some militia members in the aftermath of the recent presidential elections held in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

"The legal basis of the arrests that have been taking place, especially those of human rights defenders and political activists, is not clear," Ms. Pillay said.

"What are the grounds for the arrests? Have proper warrants been issued in accordance with Iranian law? Why have some of those who have been arrested been denied access to lawyers and members of their families? And why is the whereabouts of others unknown? These are all troubling questions, and I urge the Iranian authorities to ensure that due process is followed, since to do otherwise may fan the feelings of injustice."

The High Commissioner noted that freedom of expression and freedom of assembly were fundamental human rights, and commended the largely peaceful and dignified conduct of the huge demonstrations that have been taking place in the Iranian capital, Teheran.

Ms. Pillay expressed particular concern about reported acts of violence by members of the Basij militia, which may also be in contravention of international and Iranian national law. "I strongly urge the authorities to ensure that official and semi-official forces act strictly in accordance with the law," she said. "It is the responsibility of the government to ensure that militia members and regular law enforcement agencies do not resort to illegal acts of violence. If they are perceived to be acting outside the law, it could provoke a serious deterioration in the security situation, which would be a great tragedy and is in nobody's interests."

The High Commissioner reminded the Iranian authorities of their international obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which

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<http://www.unhchr.ch/hurricane/hurica...>

states that 'no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention' (Article 9), 'everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression' (Article 19), and 'the right of peaceful assembly shall be recognized' (Article 21).

For more information, call OHCHR Spokesperson Rupert Colville at + 41 22 917 9767

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