



High Council for Human Rights of
the Islamic Republic of Iran

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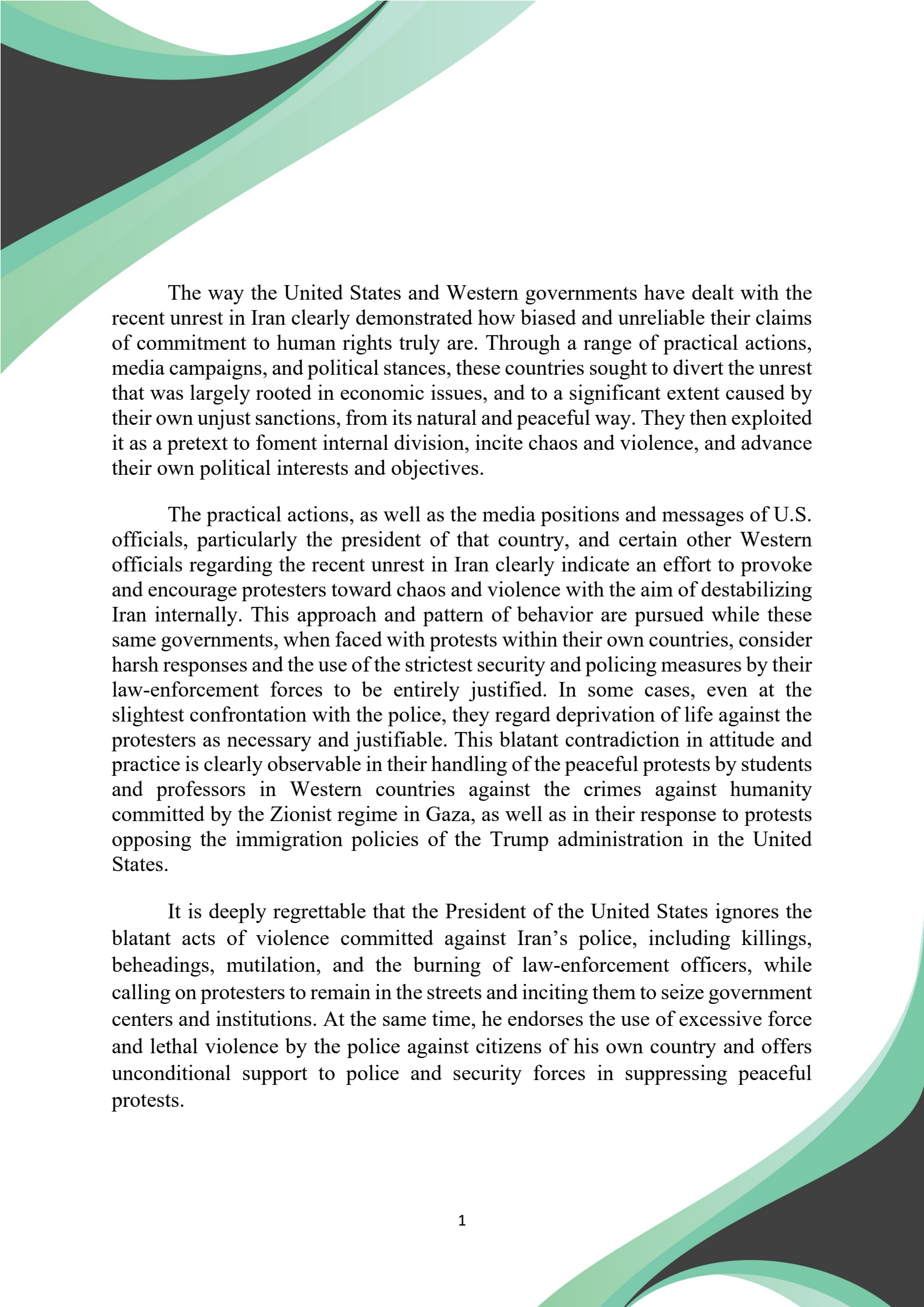
An Elucidating Report on: The Double Standards of Some Western Countries toward Assemblies and Protests

**The High Council for Human Rights
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(February 2026)

In the Name of GOD


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The way the United States and Western governments have dealt with the recent unrest in Iran clearly demonstrated how biased and unreliable their claims of commitment to human rights truly are. Through a range of practical actions, media campaigns, and political stances, these countries sought to divert the unrest that was largely rooted in economic issues, and to a significant extent caused by their own unjust sanctions, from its natural and peaceful way. They then exploited it as a pretext to foment internal division, incite chaos and violence, and advance their own political interests and objectives.

The practical actions, as well as the media positions and messages of U.S. officials, particularly the president of that country, and certain other Western officials regarding the recent unrest in Iran clearly indicate an effort to provoke and encourage protesters toward chaos and violence with the aim of destabilizing Iran internally. This approach and pattern of behavior are pursued while these same governments, when faced with protests within their own countries, consider harsh responses and the use of the strictest security and policing measures by their law-enforcement forces to be entirely justified. In some cases, even at the slightest confrontation with the police, they regard deprivation of life against the protesters as necessary and justifiable. This blatant contradiction in attitude and practice is clearly observable in their handling of the peaceful protests by students and professors in Western countries against the crimes against humanity committed by the Zionist regime in Gaza, as well as in their response to protests opposing the immigration policies of the Trump administration in the United States.

It is deeply regrettable that the President of the United States ignores the blatant acts of violence committed against Iran's police, including killings, beheadings, mutilation, and the burning of law-enforcement officers, while calling on protesters to remain in the streets and inciting them to seize government centers and institutions. At the same time, he endorses the use of excessive force and lethal violence by the police against citizens of his own country and offers unconditional support to police and security forces in suppressing peaceful protests.

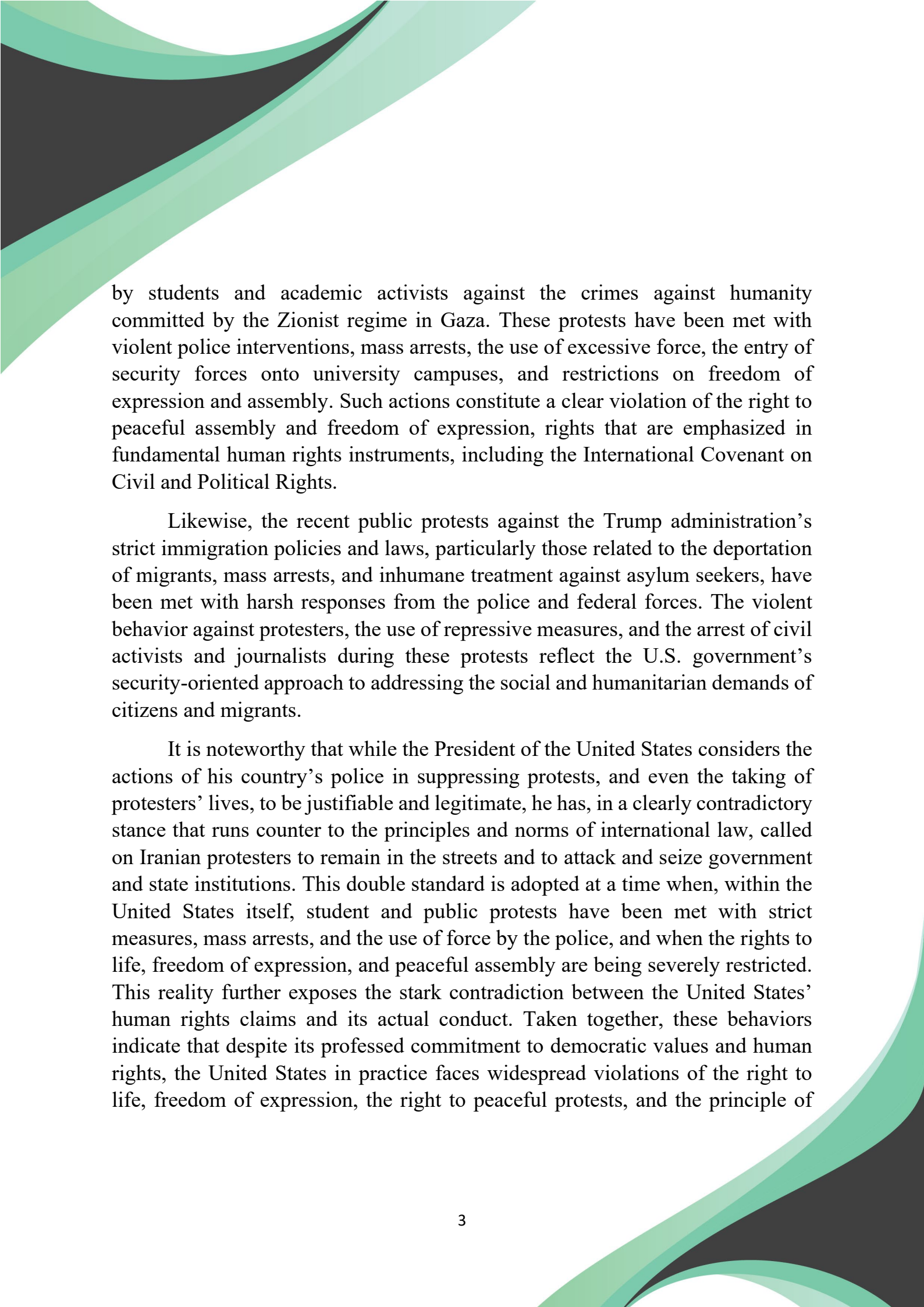


It is evident that the killing of Alex Perti, an American nurse, during an operation by Federal Immigration Forces in the city of Minneapolis was not merely a single incident or an individual mistake, but rather a serious indication of a broader pattern of behavior by security institutions and the federal government's lack of accountability with regard to the fundamental right to life. The White House's official narrative claiming that the victim was armed and that the officers acted in "self-defense" is inconsistent with the available visual evidence and released documents. The existing footage shows that the victim was unarmed and, at a time when he posed no immediate threat, was first subjected to physical violence and then shot. This new example once again reveals the reality that, in the policies of the U.S. government, human rights are not treated as a binding principle but rather as a selective and instrumental concept, subordinated to political interests, one that is met with repression at home but used as a tool for intervention, pressure, and the destabilization of other countries. What follows are some examples of the treatment of protesters in certain countries and the West's double standards in this regard.

Killing of Individuals Suspected of Potentially Attacking Police in the United States

In the United States, assaulting police or security forces carries severe penalties. Each year, U.S. police kill hundreds of individuals merely on the suspicion or perceived intent to attack, even in cases where no actual attack has taken place, and most police officers responsible for such killings are acquitted in court. Moreover, the violent behavior of U.S. Police toward children, students, and African Americans, as well as racism and discriminatory treatment between Black and white citizens, is a common and ongoing phenomenon in the United States.


Alongside these cases, the United States in recent years has witnessed widespread suppression of peaceful student protests, particularly demonstrations



by students and academic activists against the crimes against humanity committed by the Zionist regime in Gaza. These protests have been met with violent police interventions, mass arrests, the use of excessive force, the entry of security forces onto university campuses, and restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly. Such actions constitute a clear violation of the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression, rights that are emphasized in fundamental human rights instruments, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Likewise, the recent public protests against the Trump administration's strict immigration policies and laws, particularly those related to the deportation of migrants, mass arrests, and inhumane treatment against asylum seekers, have been met with harsh responses from the police and federal forces. The violent behavior against protesters, the use of repressive measures, and the arrest of civil activists and journalists during these protests reflect the U.S. government's security-oriented approach to addressing the social and humanitarian demands of citizens and migrants.

It is noteworthy that while the President of the United States considers the actions of his country's police in suppressing protests, and even the taking of protesters' lives, to be justifiable and legitimate, he has, in a clearly contradictory stance that runs counter to the principles and norms of international law, called on Iranian protesters to remain in the streets and to attack and seize government and state institutions. This double standard is adopted at a time when, within the United States itself, student and public protests have been met with strict measures, mass arrests, and the use of force by the police, and when the rights to life, freedom of expression, and peaceful assembly are being severely restricted. This reality further exposes the stark contradiction between the United States' human rights claims and its actual conduct. Taken together, these behaviors indicate that despite its professed commitment to democratic values and human rights, the United States in practice faces widespread violations of the right to life, freedom of expression, the right to peaceful protests, and the principle of




non-discrimination, and remains at a significant distance from international human rights standards.

Suppression of Protests and Threats against Protesters in the United Kingdom

In recent years, following the introduction of extensive changes to laws related to public order and police powers in the United Kingdom, the space for peaceful protests has been noticeably restricted and the treatment towards protesters has intensified significantly. New legislation, using vague definitions such as “serious disruption” or “deprivation of public peace,” has granted police broad authority for preventive intervention, banning assemblies, and arresting protesters even before any violence occurs. Within this framework, the strict policing measures, particularly against protests related to political and international issues, including student demonstrations condemning crimes against humanity in Gaza, have increased significantly. As a result, many of these protests, despite their peaceful nature, have faced mass arrests, severe restrictions, political accusations, and disproportionate use of force. This trend represents a serious regression in safeguarding the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly in the United Kingdom.

However, the suppression of peaceful protests in the United Kingdom has a longstanding precedent. For example, in 2019, under the orders of the London police, all assemblies related to environmental issues in London were halted, and the police subsequently banned all further protests by these groups. Following this violent crackdown on protests, a law concerning police duties was passed by the UK Parliament, which grants police broad authority to use force in connection with peaceful assemblies.

In fact, the Police Duties Act, criticized by opponents as the “Repression Bill”, has, on the one hand, significantly and unprecedentedly expanded police powers to impose restrictions or unjust limitations on peaceful protests, and on




the other hand, criminalizes any act deemed to cause public nuisance, providing for penalties of up to 10 years' imprisonment for actions that commonly occur during peaceful assemblies.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association has repeatedly expressed concern regarding the Police Duties Act as well as the courts proposed in the UK Parliament in response to climate protests. According to the Special Rapporteur, this law criminalizes lawful forms of protest and increases police powers to disrupt demonstrations. She noted that following the enactment of this law, orders against assemblies related to environmental protests, particularly peaceful protests, can be issued with much greater ease.

Following the enactment of such anti-human-rights laws, police in 2020 prevented any attempts to hold peaceful assemblies in the United Kingdom, including protests on racial justice and memorial events for Sarah Everard, who had been abducted and disappeared on her way home. On May 16, 2021, the police also arrested four young Muslim residents of Blackburn while they were participating in a pro-Palestine march in North London, on charges of antisemitism. This occurred despite the fact that the Crown Prosecution Service of the UK dismissed the antisemitism charges against two of the four Muslims. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, numerous anti-lockdown protests in London were also halted by police, and during the second national lockdown, the Metropolitan Police arrested over 150 anti-lockdown protesters. According to Home Office statistics, more than 350 environmental protesters opposing oil and gas projects have been arrested in London since the beginning of October 2022.

Peaceful Protests in Germany and Violent Crackdowns

In Germany, there are also numerous instances of the suppression of peaceful assemblies, where despite the nonviolent nature of these protests, security forces have responded with extensive coercive and restrictive measures. Reports from international organizations and the media indicate that pro-



Palestinian protests, including assemblies condemning crimes against humanity committed by the Zionist regime in Gaza or opposing government policies against asylum seekers, have repeatedly faced arrests of participants, prevention of assemblies, and the use of excessive force by the police. Human rights experts from the United Nations and the Council of Europe have explicitly warned against the “criminalization and suppression” of peaceful activities supporting Palestinians in Germany, urging the German government to respect its obligations regarding freedom of assembly and freedom of expression. They noted that measures such as preventing the use of cultural symbols, restricting language during protests, and disproportionate police intervention can violate fundamental rights.

These cases demonstrate that although Germany claims to support human rights and is ostensibly a country with a culture of peaceful protest, in practice it faces serious challenges in respecting the rights to peaceful assembly, a matter that has drawn criticism from civil society and human rights organizations. There are numerous examples of suppression in the German government. For instance, following a group protest in Germany where participants sat down in the streets, the then-German Interior Minister reacted by stating: “This action is illegal in Germany, and the protesters consider themselves above the law. By blocking the streets, they are committing a crime that exceeds the bounds of lawful protest.” He added: “The police have my full support in suppressing these protesters”.

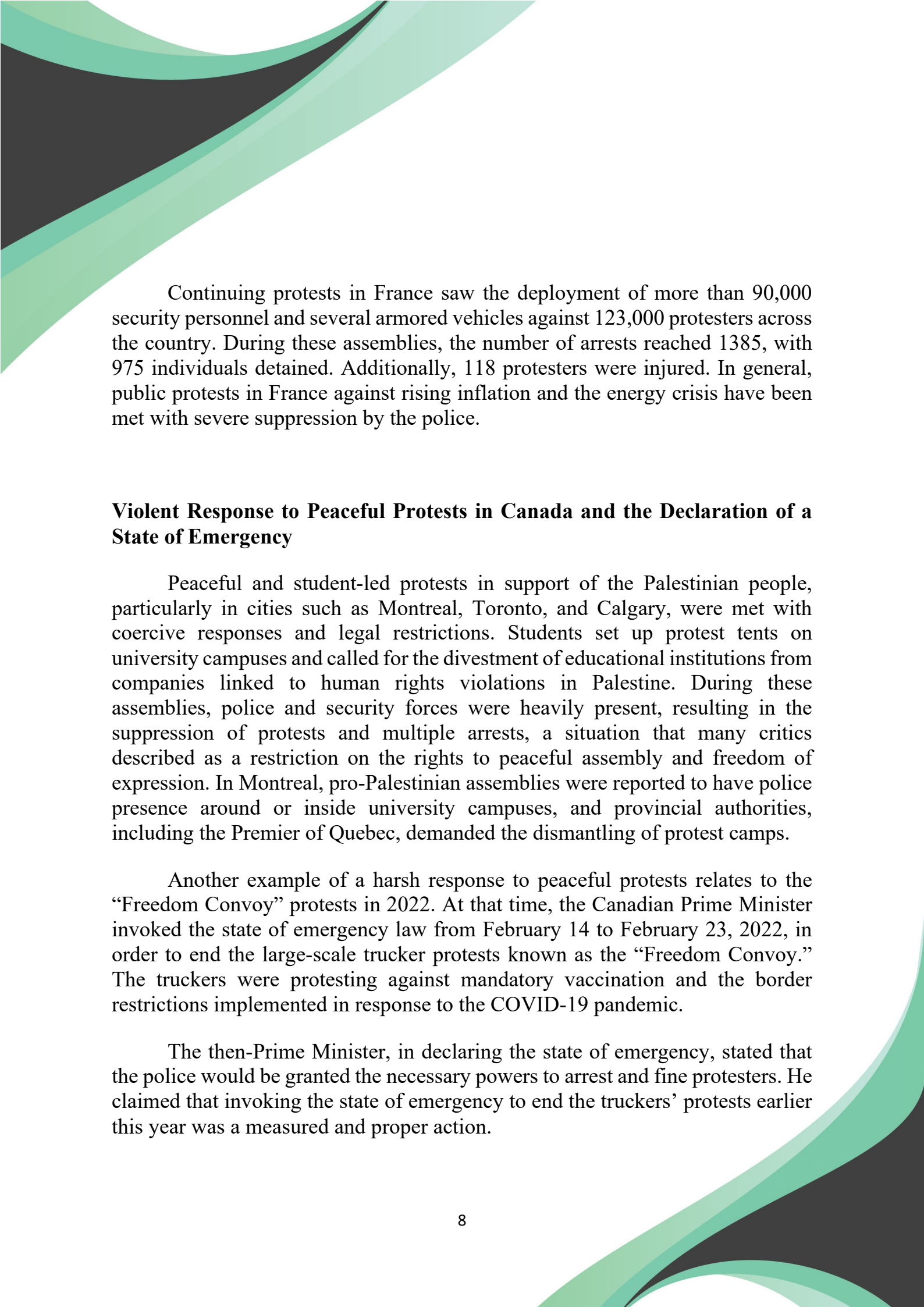
On the other hand, more than 3,000 police and security personnel in Germany, in a large-scale operation, arrested 250 political opponents under the pretext of a planned coup. Among those detained was a 71-year-old man. The arrest of these individuals, who were unarmed, did not block streets, and did not harm any police officers, and were merely seeking political change in Germany, constitutes suppression of freedom of expression and opinion, as they were charged with attempting to overthrow the government and prohibited from receiving support on social media. In another move, the German government is seeking to pass a law that would dismiss its opponents from all public-sector jobs on the grounds of extremism.

Suppression of Peaceful Protests in France

In recent years, widespread protests have taken place across France against budget plans and cuts to social services. These protests were entirely peaceful and organized by labor unions and nonviolent demonstrators. Thousands of people appeared on the streets and squares in Paris and other cities to express their dissatisfaction with government economic policies. Despite their nonviolent objectives and calls for social justice and rights, these assemblies were repeatedly met with large-scale police deployments and coercive methods aimed at dispersing crowds and preventing assemblies, resulting in the arrest of hundreds of participants.

For example, during the large-scale protests known as “Bloquons tout,” organized by labor unions against budget reforms and the government’s austerity policies, hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets. While the majority of these assemblies were peaceful and focused on economic and social demands, security forces and riot police responded harshly, arresting more than 500 participants. Independent monitoring reports also confirmed that the police repeatedly used excessive force against peaceful assemblies, including firing tear gas into crowds, restricting protest routes, and even physically confronting journalists and observers who were merely reporting. These incidents demonstrate that in recent years, even protests with entirely peaceful objectives, organized by labor and social organizations, have been met with severe policing in France, drawing multiple criticisms from human rights bodies and civil society.

Earlier, on the fourth anniversary of the Yellow Vest movement, hundreds of thousands of people gathered in Paris and other French cities for large-scale demonstrations. These protests escalated into widespread clashes due to interventions by riot police. In one such gathering in Paris, French police used tear gas and batons against approximately 680 Yellow Vest protesters who were demonstrating against the President and demanding better living conditions and improved rights for workers. In some areas, intensified clashes further worsened the situation.



Continuing protests in France saw the deployment of more than 90,000 security personnel and several armored vehicles against 123,000 protesters across the country. During these assemblies, the number of arrests reached 1385, with 975 individuals detained. Additionally, 118 protesters were injured. In general, public protests in France against rising inflation and the energy crisis have been met with severe suppression by the police.

Violent Response to Peaceful Protests in Canada and the Declaration of a State of Emergency

Peaceful and student-led protests in support of the Palestinian people, particularly in cities such as Montreal, Toronto, and Calgary, were met with coercive responses and legal restrictions. Students set up protest tents on university campuses and called for the divestment of educational institutions from companies linked to human rights violations in Palestine. During these assemblies, police and security forces were heavily present, resulting in the suppression of protests and multiple arrests, a situation that many critics described as a restriction on the rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression. In Montreal, pro-Palestinian assemblies were reported to have police presence around or inside university campuses, and provincial authorities, including the Premier of Quebec, demanded the dismantling of protest camps.

Another example of a harsh response to peaceful protests relates to the “Freedom Convoy” protests in 2022. At that time, the Canadian Prime Minister invoked the state of emergency law from February 14 to February 23, 2022, in order to end the large-scale trucker protests known as the “Freedom Convoy.” The truckers were protesting against mandatory vaccination and the border restrictions implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.


The then-Prime Minister, in declaring the state of emergency, stated that the police would be granted the necessary powers to arrest and fine protesters. He claimed that invoking the state of emergency to end the truckers’ protests earlier this year was a measured and proper action.

In justifying the use of force to silence the truckers' protests, the Canadian Prime Minister said: "The issue was that they were not merely seeking to have their grievances heard, but wanted their demands to be obeyed." Trudeau also asserted: "Since there was a serious threat of violence and the local police had no concrete plan to restore order, I had no choice but to resort to the option of declaring a state of emergency".

On the other hand, the then-Prime Minister of Canada recently stated in another remark: "Occupying the streets" is different from protesting. Forcing the government to change public policies under the pretext of public dissatisfaction is *concerning*.

Key Points:

1. Many of the recent assemblies in Iran, in numerous instances, escalated from peaceful protests into riots due to the provocation, encouragement, and support of certain political officials, Western governments, hostile individuals and groups, media outlets, and terrorist organizations. This escalation led to violations of fundamental citizens' rights, including the right to life, the right to personal security and safety, the right to freedom of movement, the right to health and well-being, among others.
2. The United States and certain Western countries, driven by political motives and objectives, sought to steer the protests toward chaos and disorder. In a fully political maneuver, they exploited the Human Rights Council and convened a special session in an attempt to extend the mandate of the so-called "Fact-Finding Mission", which, throughout its activities, has demonstrated a record filled with hostility toward Iran and a lack of integrity and adherence to professional, ethical, and legal standards, for another two years.
3. At the same time, most Western countries and the United States themselves are experiencing widespread protests within their own territories. Currently, large-scale protests involving hundreds of thousands of people



are taking place in the U.S., and they are being met with severe repression. These demonstrations are peaceful, yet they face the harshest responses from law enforcement. The very countries that claim to support Iranian protesters are, in practice, engaging in some of the most egregious violations of the right to peaceful assembly, both legally and in practice.

4. It should be emphasized that a clear distinction must be made between peaceful assemblies and non-peaceful assemblies (involving violence, the carrying of melee or firearms, attacks on public or private property, etc.). Peaceful assemblies should be protected, while non-peaceful assemblies must be addressed in accordance with the law. Countries should also recognize that sooner or later, or under certain circumstances, they may face situations similar to those confronting Iran (as exemplified by some of the countries mentioned in this report). Therefore, they must avoid any contradictory or double-standard behavior. It is not acceptable to support unrest in another country and label it as “peaceful,” based on political motives, while simultaneously suppressing protests in one’s own country with excessive force.

