

## Extra-Judicial Executions of Kurdish Citizens known as Kolbaran (border couriers) in 2020

This is an overview about the situation of *Kolbaran* in Iranian Kurdistan in 2020 for detailed information, see also the annual report. *Kolbaran* are border couriers who transport goods across the Iran-Iraq border, often, but not always, as part of the informal economy. *Kolbaran* is mainly practiced in the Kurdish-region of Iran where poverty and economic disparity are among the highest in the country. Although *Kolbaran* face myriads of challenges and human rights violations on a daily basis.

Even though successive Islamic Republic administrations pledge to change its security approach toward Iranian Kurdistan, the extrajudicial executions of Kurdish citizens known as Kolbaran (border couriers or tradesmen) is dramatically increasing in the recent years and proves the opposite. The indiscriminate and blind killing of Kurdish Kolbaran (plural for Kolbar) takes place in blatant violation of international obligations. Border security forces involved in indiscriminate and blind killings do not even respect the Iranian domestic laws, which authorize the use of lethal force only as a last resort.

### Year in Review (2020)

The Indiscriminate killing of Kurdish “Kolbaran” increased in 2020. The KMMK-G received reports of the extra-judicial killings of 251 Kolbaran in 2020. 72 kolbar died and 179 wounded. Of this number, 202 were victims of direct shootings of the security forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, of which 59 died and 143 were wounded. Fifteen (15) of this number died or injured after falling from the mountains when they were followed by Iranian security forces. Three (3) died or were injured as a result of stepping on landmines. Six (6) died or injured due to the cold weather conditions and snowy roads. Two (2) fell off mountains into rivers. Eight (8) were wounded after being beaten by security forces and thirteen were killed or injured after being chased and targeted in their cars by security forces. It should be mentioned that Eighteen (18) of the victims were aged under 18 years old. Four (4) of them were aged between 14 and 15 years old.

As an example, Anshar Sayadniazi, who worked as a kolbar, was only 15 years old when he lost his life. Afshar was from a poor family from Mariwan and he was forced to work as a Kolbar to earn a living and support his family. On 14th of March 2019, after being chased by the Iranian security forces, he fell down from Tata mountain in Uraman Takht, a highly risky mountainous path and died. Moreover, many kolbaran (tradesmen) were arrested and their goods were confiscated by the authorities thus far in 2020. In addition, hundreds of horses belonging to them were shot dead.

The above data shows the sad trend of increasing of killing of Kurdish citizens who choose risky jobs of kolbaran due to discriminative policies of Iranian government and lack of investment in Kurdistan. Every year, hundreds of Kurdish citizens are

killed and injured by direct shootings of Iranian border officials without any respect for Iran's internal or international legal obligations. For more details, see also this link :[https://kmmk-ge.org/sd/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/KMMK-G-2020\\_Annual\\_Report-for-the-Attention-of-the-OHCHR-Desk-of-the-UN-Special-Rapporteur-on-the-Situation-of-Human-Rights-in-Iran-4.pdf](https://kmmk-ge.org/sd/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/KMMK-G-2020_Annual_Report-for-the-Attention-of-the-OHCHR-Desk-of-the-UN-Special-Rapporteur-on-the-Situation-of-Human-Rights-in-Iran-4.pdf) ) and the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, 18 July 2019, para. 87, available at: <https://undocs.org/A/74/188>.