



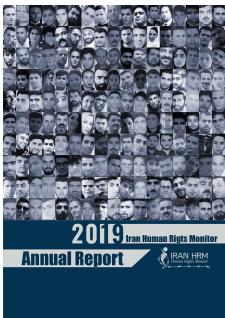
2019 Iran Human Rights Monitor

Annual Report



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Overview of Iran's human rights situation in 2019

Introduction

Year 2019 was marked by brutal clampdown on Iranian society. Beset by a whole host of economic, social and political crises, the clerical regime has tried to rein in simmering social discontent by use of brute force.

Hundreds of people have been rounded up for expressing their views or taking part in peaceful demonstrations.

Vindictive crackdown against human rights defenders as well as the heavy-handed treatment of political prisoners also stark indications of mounting repression in Iran.

Human rights defenders, members of minority communities, lawyers, journalists, labour and teacher's rights activists and women have continued to be intimidated, harassed, arrested and detained.

Iran's deliberate use of the capital punishment has remained a constant source of international outrage and condemnation. According to several independent international bodies including the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Iran and Amnesty International, Iran is the leading state in number of executions per capita. Iran also tops the charts in the number of executions of minors and juvenile offenders.

Torture and corporal punishment remained common practice in Iran's prisons.

Accounts from former prisoners reveal the use of rape, beatings, mock executions and other forms of torture in Iran's prisons, especially against dissidents. Prisoners dying under torture is a common happening.

As the year was ending, the simmering wave of discontent took on a sharp turn and erupted into radical anti-government protests which swept across some 172 cities and towns.

Iranian regime responded to the protests over gasoline prices rising with violence

Authorities have yet to give any overall figures for how many people were injured, arrested or killed during the several days of protests.

They shut down the internet in a bid to hide the extent of their suppression and lethal crackdown on protests in the longest blackout the country has ever seen.

Investigative reports by Iran Human Rights Monitor put the number of those arrested since November 15, at over 12,000, adding that at least 1,500 protesters have been killed by the state security forces during the protests. At least 4,000 have been injured, some with life threatening wounds.

Iran Human Rights Monitor Annual report 2019

The death penalty

The Iranian regime is the world's top record holder of per capita executions. At least 273 people including nine juvenile offenders and 17 women were executed in 2019. 36 were executed for drug related charges.

The actual numbers are higher because most executions in Iran are carried out secretly, away from the public eye where only the masterminds and perpetrators are witness to them.

Execution of children

According to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is illegal to execute someone for crimes committed under the age of 18.

The Iranian regime executed at least nine people who were minors at the time of their alleged crime in 2019, violating both treaties.

► Farhad Akbari was executed on January 18, in Ilam Central Prison. He was sentenced to death on the charge of murder when he was 15.

► Kaveh and Habib were executed on April 26, in Shiraz Central Prison. They were charged with rape and theft in 2017 when both were under the age of 18.

► Amir Ali Shadabi was executed on June 14, in Minab Prison. He was sentenced to death for murder as a juvenile.

► Touraj Azizi, was executed on June 28, in a prison in the northern city of Nour. He was sentenced to death on the charge of murder five years ago when he was 16.

► [Mehdi Sohrabifar and Amin Sedaghat](#), two cousins, were executed on April 25, in Adelabad prison in Shiraz, Fars province, southern Iran. Both were arrested aged 15 and convicted on multiple rape charges following an unfair trial. Iranian authorities flogged and secretly executed the two minors, according to [Amnesty International](#). The teenagers were unaware that they had been sentenced to death until shortly before their executions and bore lash marks on their bodies, indicating that they had been flogged before their deaths. Their families and lawyers were not informed about the executions in advance and were shocked to learn of the news.



Mehdi Sohrabifar and Amin Sedaghat were flogged and secretly executed in Adelabad prison in Iran

► Hamid Osati was executed on August 4, in Dizel Abad Prison of Kermanshah. He was sentenced to death on the charge of murder when he was 17.

► Saeid Mohammadi was executed on October 25, in Karaj Central Prison. He was sentenced to death on the charge of murder when he was 16.



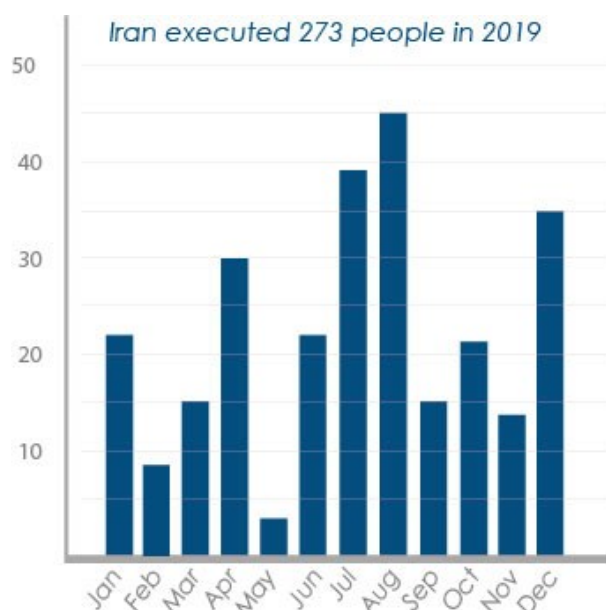
A poster announcing funeral ceremony for Touraj Azizi

Execution of women

The Iranian regime is the world's top executioner of women. Since the beginning of 2019, it has executed at least 17 women which is an escalation in the number of executions of women compared to the 9 women executed during the entire year 2016, ten women in 2017, and 6 women in 2018.

The woman executed in 2019 are:

- ▶ M. A., executed on January 30, 2019, in Nowshahr Prison
- ▶ Fatemeh Nassiri executed on June 19, 2019, in Rajaei Shahr Prison, Karaj
- ▶ Fariba, executed on June 19, 2019, in Rajaei Shahr Prison, Karaj
- ▶ Zahra Safari Moghaddam 43, executed on July 17, 2019, in Nowshahr Prison, IRNA official news agency reported.
- ▶ Maliheh Salehian executed on July 16, 2019, in Mahabad Central Prison
- ▶ Arasteh Ranjbar executed on July 23, 2019, in Urmia Central Prison, ROKNA semi-official news agency reported.
- ▶ Nazdar Vatankhah, executed on July 23, 2019, in Urmia Central Prison, ROKNA semi-official news agency reported.
- ▶ Unnamed woman 38, executed on August 25, 2019, in Mashhad Central Prison, State-run Khorasan Daily reported.
- ▶ Unnamed woman executed on September 25, 2019, in Rajaei Shahr Prison, Karaj
- ▶ Leila Zarafshan executed on September 26, 2019, in Sanandaj Central Prison.
- ▶ Unnamed woman executed in October, in Rajaei Shahr Prison
- ▶ Somayyeh Shahbazi Jahruyi, 33, executed on December 4, 2019, in Sepidar Prison of Ahvaz
- ▶ Maryam, 32, executed on December 11, 2019, in Mashhad Central Prison, ROKNA semi-official news agency reported.
- ▶ Fatemeh R. executed in December, Rajaei Shahr Prison, Karaj
- ▶ Fatemeh Ghezel Safarlou, executed on December 4, Rajaei Shahr Prison, Karaj
- ▶ Narges-o-Sadat Tabaei, executed on December 4, Rajaei Shahr Prison, Karaj
- ▶ Eshrat Nazari. executed on December 18, Rajaei Shahr Prison, Karaj



Cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment

Torture and corporal punishment are a common practice in Iran's prisons and is also mandated by law. One such example is flogging, used for more than 100 offenses in Iran, which has been institutionalized by the regime in its Islamic Penal Code.

Flogging

- An 80-year-old woman was flogged in the Khoy Judiciary in northwestern Iran and was then immediately taken to prison despite her poor condition on November 28, 2019.
- Peyman Mirzazadeh, a Kurdish singer held at Urmia Prison in northwestern Iran, was flogged with 100 strokes of lashes on July 28. He went on hunger strike after he was flogged in the 4th Branch of the Sentence Implementation Department.
- The public flogging sentence for a man was carried out on July 4, in the city of Ahvaz, the capital of southwestern Khuzestan province.
- In February, the Chief Justice of North Khorasan Province said that five people were sentenced to flogging for negligence and that the flogging sentences had been carried out. The men were administrators in the North Khorasan Medical Sciences University.
- The public flogging sentence for a man was carried out on January 6, in southeastern Iran. The man was identified as Esmail Arbabi and was flogged for the second time in Iranshahr on charges of robbery. According to eyewitnesses, the lashing was so violent that the victim passed out and was taken to the hospital unconscious.

Iran's courts continued to hand journalists, labour rights activists, lawyers and human rights advocates lashes on bogus national security charges.

At least 80 rights activists and human rights lawyers were sentenced to flogging.

Meanwhile, 90 citizens were sentenced to flogging for taking part in peaceful gatherings or protesting the regime's policies.

Close to 100 people were sentenced to flogging for charges that include robbery, relations outside of marriage, child abuse, kidnaping, and, not observing Islamic hijab.

In July, an unknown number of men and women were each sentenced to 74 lashes for not observing compulsory veil.

Amputation

In late October, Iranian regime authorities in Mazandaran Province, northern Iran, amputated the hand of a man charged with theft. The unidentified man has reportedly confessed to 28 cases of robbery from homes, and was punished based on the regime's laws, according to a statement issued by the local Justice Department. It is worth noting that Iran's regime is known for its method of obtaining forced confessions from prisoners.

Despite the significant number of such horrific sentences, a senior judicial official criticized the lower rates of these cruel punishments.

Iran's General Prosecutor expressed regret that a number of "divine punishments" are set aside to save Iran from being condemned by international bodies.

In comments carried by the Fars News Agency, Mohammad Jafar Montazeri said that the hands of thieves had to be amputated but that "unfortunately, so as not be condemned on human rights issues in the United Nations, we have abandoned some of the divine laws."

Twenty-three prisoners convicted of theft are now languishing in the Greater Tehran Prison, Fashafeyeh, awaiting hand amputation. Investigations show that prisoners are sentenced to amputation on charges of petty crimes. Most of them have stolen property which amounts to 5-10 million tomans (Around 300-600 USD).

In August, seven people charged with robbery were sentenced to hand amputation, finger amputation, and flogging in Tehran.

According to the state-run Khorasan daily, the 8th Branch of the Tehran Criminal Court sentenced the head of the "robbery" gang, identified as Ali to hand amputation while his accomplice identified as Shahin was sentenced to the amputation of four of his fingers in his right hand.



Deaths under torture

Deaths in prison are not investigated in a transparent manner and relatives or defense lawyers are usually kept in the dark. Iranian prosecutors and prison authorities have either no accountability, especially when it comes to cases of political detainees. At least 15 people died in custody in 2019. In September, Iranian authorities tortured a young man identified as Javad Khosravanian to death in Fars Province, southwest Iran. A video clip on the Internet shows clear signs of torture on the victim's head and neck. During the nationwide Iran protests that erupted in November, there were several reports of deaths under torture of detained protesters.

Hundreds of protesters detained in Tehran and Alborz province, were transferred to Section 8 of Raja'i Shahr Prison, controlled by the Intelligence Ministry. They were forced to take off their clothes and were then beaten for hours with cables, whips and batons. Protesters were also soaked with water at nights before being brutally flogged and beaten.

There were other reports that Iranian protesters were tortured in Adel Abad Prison of Shiraz, southern Iran. Many protesters arrested in Shiraz were temporarily transferred to Adel Abad Prison, where reached its full capacity. The families of the jailed protesters were not been given answers as to the condition of their loved ones.

Several protesters were reportedly killed under torture.

Halimeh Samiri a protester arrested in Abadan was tortured to death by the regime's revolutionary guards who later threw her lifeless body outside her father's residence. Also, in November tortured body of an Iranian protester was found on December 15, in Garan Dam in the western city of Marivan. The family of the Iranian protester, Ershad Rahmanian, said he had been arrested on November 17 during the protests in Kurdistan province. Eyewitnesses have said that signs of torture were evident on the body of the young man.

There were also horrific reports and footage of dead bodies being found in rivers and near dams, especially close to Ahvaz, southwest of Iran.

Torture to obtain forced confession

According to Article 38 of the regime's own Constitution, "All forms of torture for the purpose of extracting confession or acquiring information are forbidden. Compulsion of individuals to testify, confess, or take an oath is not permissible; and any testimony, confession, or oath obtained under duress is devoid of value and credence. Violation of this article is liable to punishment in accordance with the law."

But, Iranian authorities routinely air prisoner confessions; a practice condemned by international human rights organizations. The victims were often subjected to torture and threats against themselves and their families in order to extract these statements.

Iranian state TV IRIB (Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting) January 19 aired prison confessions of two labor activists and a civil activist who were arrested in November during labor protests in southwestern, oil-rich Khuzestan province. The civil activist tweeted that the forced confessions broadcast is evidence of torture against the detainees. Before this, the activists, had publicly complained that they were both tortured in custody. This led to days of controversy among parliamentarians and government officials.

However, the regime's officials rallied to reject their accusations of labor activist Esmail Bakhshi, who said that the intelligence agency of the south province of Khuzestan had tortured him "to the brink of death" during his 30-day incarceration.

A presidential official even said that the state and the Ministry of Intelligence reserved the right to press charges against the labor activist for "undermining the state" and that his claims were nothing more than "propaganda". In November, the Iranian regime made all its efforts to intimidate the public through the broadcasting of forced confessions from protesters arrested during the November uprisings. A number of detainees were showcased on state-run TV while a few, including minors, were forced to "confess" to their "crimes" while sobbing for forgiveness. Iranian regime's Interior Minister even ordered the broadcast of forced "confessions" by those arrested.

Rights to Peaceful Assembly and Association

The Iranian regime intensified restrictions on the rights to freedom of assembly and association. Thousands were detained during the peaceful protests since the beginning of 2019. Rights activists, lawyers and journalists who challenged the authorities and expressed opposing views were also targeted.

On May 1, 2019, which is International Labor Day, plainclothes police arrested at least 35 activists who had gathered in front of the Iranian parliament in a peaceful demonstration organized by 20 independent labor organizations. Iran's Labor Code does not grant citizens the right to form independent unions, despite Iran's ratification of the UN's International Convention on Civil and Political Rights and membership in the International Labor Organization.

Iranian security forces beat and arrested dozens of workers during two consecutive days of peaceful protests in the western city of Arak in October. The workers were all from AzarAb Industries, a large manufacturing and construction company located in the western province of Markaz. Security forces shot tear gas at the protesters to disperse them. The state-run ILNA news agency confirmed the arrest of a "number" of workers though unofficial reports indicate that around 40 workers were detained. The prosecutor of Arak confirmed that 21 AzarAb workers were detained.

Before this in September, workers from the Heavy Equipment Production Company (HEPCO) in Arak were brutally attacked for demanding an end to privatization in weeks long protests. According to Amnesty International, "independent unions in Iran are banned, workers have few legal rights or protections, and union activists are regularly beaten, arrested, jailed and tortured."

In October, the State Security Force attacked and detained villagers in the Kordmir Village of Chardangeh, protesting a 14-year-old landfill in the northern village of Chahardangeh. Residents of the village located in the city of Sari, Mazandaran Province were violently beaten and detained during Tuesday's Chahardangeh landfill protests. Local sources said that security forces used tear gas to disperse the angry protesters.

Around the same time, security forces in southwest Iran made widespread arrests following large protests over the HIV infection of

more than 300 villagers by a local health clinic. The arrests in the village of Chenar Mahmoud in the town of Lordegan, Chahar Mahal and Bakhtiari Province, started on October 8, three days after hundreds of Iranians in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province, took to the streets and clashed with riot police.

The Iranian regime brutally cracked down on nationwide protests that erupted on November 16 after the regime tripled the price of gasoline.

Very little is known about what is happening in Iran because of the severe control the regime is exerting on all communication channels. But the limited information that has trickled out of the country thanks to the brave efforts of activists has shocked the world.

Videos obtained from inside Iran show security forces shooting at protesters from helicopters. Several videos show security forces directly aiming their rifles and handguns at the demonstrators and shooting them from point-blank range.

Several Iranian officials threatened to torture and execute the prisoners to intimidate anyone else who is harboring thoughts to raise their voice against the regime.

Iranian security forces inspected hospitals, rounding up injured protesters and the bodies of the dead. They refrained from handing over the dead bodies to the families and only did so on the condition that they do not hold a funeral and bury their loved ones in silence and solitude.

Iranian authorities imposed a near-total shutdown on internet services on November 17, cutting off all communications to prevent news of the protests from reaching the world. They also used the internet blackout to be able to give free rein to their security forces to brutally slaughter Iranian protesters. The regime has continued to implement a plan to put indefinite limits on access to internet services with the main purpose of preventing protests from taking place.

Thousands of protesters were arrested during the November protests. The Spokesperson for National Security Committee of the regime's Majlis acknowledged that at least 7,000 protesters were detained during the November 2019 Iran protests.

But according to information received from inside Iran, 12,000 protesters were arrested since the beginning of the protests. According to Amnesty International, children as young as 15 were arrested and detained alongside adults in prisons notorious for torture.

Detainees were subjected to torture and other ill-treatment; they were beaten, punched, kicked and flogged by security forces. Many were being denied access to their families and lawyers.

Iranian security forces and intelligence officers went to hospitals to look for wounded protesters. According to hospital staff the officers were removing bandages to check whether they were covering bullet wounds and arresting anyone who had them. They took away many injured people from hospitals.

An eye-witness from Tehran said, "I was speaking to one of my friends who works at Tehran's Labbafinejd Hospital. He said a very

very large number of persons being brought to the hospital on the nights of November 16 and 17, had been shot in the eye. They were mostly from Karaj. Security forces took most of them on the same night or the day after before their treatment was completed."

There have been several reports of protesters being tortured in prisons across Iran.

There are several reports on the "grave condition" of detained protesters, especially underage and child prisoners.

The chairman of Shahr-e Rey city council, Hassan Khalilabadi, had disclosed on Monday, November 25, that Fashafouyeh prison, or the Greater Tehran Central Penitentiary (GTCP) is overcrowded.

● Regime kills at least 1,500 during 2019 Iran protests



Right to freedom of expression and opinion

The year 2019 has seen the stepping up of pressure by Iranian authorities against rights activists. They were routinely intimidated, arrested and charged with offences ranging from “spreading propaganda against the state” to “disrupting public order and peace by participating in illegal gatherings”, resulting in sentences of prison terms and flogging.

Tehran's Revolutionary Court sentenced five journalists and two labour activists to a total of 117 years in prison and 74 lashes over Haft Tappeh Sugarcane workers' protests last November in the southwestern city of Shush. Sepideh Qoliyan, the editor-in-chief of the Gam independent Telegram app news channel, Amir Hossein Mohammadifard, his colleague and wife Sanaz Allahyari, and two staff reporters, Ali Amirgholi and Asal Mohammadi, as well as worker's rights activists Esmail Bakhshi and Ali Nejati have been charged with “assembly and collusion against national security”, “forming groups with the intention to disturb national security” and “contacts with anti-state organizations”.

The cases of Yasaman Aryani, Monireh Arabshahi and Mojgan Keshavarz are emblematic of the repression of Iranian women who peacefully advocate their rights. In April 2019, the three women were arrested after they had appeared in an online video on International Women's Day protesting against the compulsory veiling laws. In the video, the three women are seen without their headscarves, embracing commuters and handing out flowers on the Tehran metro. In August, the three women were sentenced to a total of 55 years in prison.

Ms. Aryani, Ms. Arabshahi and Ms. Keshavarz are still in detention.

Saba Kord Afshari, a civil rights activist to was sentenced to 24 years behind bars for protesting compulsory veiling. Her sentence was commuted to 9 years on judicial review.

Four women's rights activists, Nahid Shaghaei, Akram Nasirian, Maryam Mohammadi, and Esrin Derkaleh, members of the Voice of Iran Women's Association have each been sentenced to four years and two months in prison.



A court in Tehran upheld the seven-year prison term and 74 lashes for a Tehran University student activist, detained for taking part in student protests. The 36th Branch of the Tehran Court of Review confirmed the sentence for 21-year-old Parisa Rafiei. She was also sentenced to a two-year travel ban and a ban on membership in political groups. A Tehran appeals court confirmed the three-year prison sentence for jailed Twitter activist Mehrdad Mohammadnejad. The 23-year-old economy student was charged with “insulting officials and agents” and “spreading propaganda against” the regime.

The Tehran Revolutionary Court sentenced labor activist Nahid Khodaju to six years of prison and 74 lashes. Nahid Khodaju was detained during a Labor Day gathering outside the regime's parliament in Tehran along with dozens of other protesters.

A court in Tehran has condemned Atefeh Rangriz, a researcher arrested during Labor Day demonstrations on May 1, to 11 years in jail and 74 lashes. The sentence was issued by notorious Judge Mohammad Mogheiseh at bench 28 of Iran's Revolutionary Court and was handed to Rangriz's defense lawyer.

Marzieh Amiri, a journalist and student activist was sentenced to 10 years and 6 months in prison and 147 lashes. The trial of Marzieh Amiri was held in Tehran on August 13, 2019, presided by the notorious judge, Mohammad Mogheiseh.

Nasrin Sotoudeh, an internationally renowned human rights lawyer jailed in Iran, was sentenced to 38 years in prison and 148 lashes. Sotoudeh was arrested in June and charged with spying, spreading propaganda and insulting Iran's supreme leader.

Iran's Judiciary sentenced a teacher to three years of prison, 74 lashes in public and a fine in the central province of Isfahan for holding a sit in. According to the sentence issued by the 103rd branch of the Shahreza Penal Court, Hamidreza Rahmati, who is member of the Isfahan Teachers' Association, was sentenced to 18 months of prison and 74 public lashes on charges of “disrupting public order by carrying out an abnormal act outside the Education Department building”. He was sentenced to another 18 months of prison and a 20 million toman fine (around \$600) for “sending messages on social media that encouraged violence”.

Labor activist Nasrin Javadi, a member of the Iran Workers' Free Union who was detained during a Labor Day demonstration was sentenced to seven years of prison and 74 lashes. She was also banned from using a smartphone and similar devices.

Amirsalar Davoudi was sentenced to 30 years in prison and 111 lashes for his human rights work, including publicizing violations through a channel that he had set up on the Telegram mobile messaging app and giving media interviews.

In its comments, the Government noted that Mr. Davoudi had been charged with “insulting the Supreme Leader as well as assembly and collusion for committing a crime against domestic and foreign security and propaganda activity against system of the Islamic Republic”.

On Monday, August 19, 2019, a court sentenced Mohammad Taghi Falahi, the secretary general of the Tehran Teachers' Trade Association, to eight months in prison and 10 lashes on charges of disrupting public order. Security forces arrested Falahi on May 2 (Iran's Teachers' Day) while he was participating a peaceful rally in front of the Ministry of Education in the capital.



Prisoners, Political Prisoners

Iran continued to torture prisoners, especially those convicted of politically motivated charges, and subject them to other ill treatment.

Iran Human Rights Monitor has documented a pattern of prisoners being tortured or ill-treated through the deliberate denial of medical care. Iranian authorities also pressure prisoners by denying them family visits, lock them up with ordinary criminals, and punishing them by prolonged solitary confinement. At least 15 prisoners died in Iran prisons in 2019 due to such inhuman treatments.

Political prisoners are kept alongside dangerous criminals and are regularly beaten and threatened, most times, on orders of prison authorities, by nonpolitical prisoners.

According to Iran's prison laws, prisoners should be separated according to their crimes, a law that is not implemented by the Iranian regime as a way of putting more pressure on political prisoners.

On June 26, a 28-year-old prisoner from the Ahwazi Arab minority died under suspicious circumstances in Ahvaz in southwestern Iran. "Benjamin Alboghbiash was a healthy young adult when he was arrested. His alarming death just over a month later raises serious concerns about his treatment and conditions of detention, including the possible use of torture," said Philip Luther, Research and Advocacy Director for the Middle East and North Africa at Amnesty International.

A 20-year-old female political prisoner detained in a southwestern Iran prison, was severely beaten and mistreated by prison guards in July. Ameneh Zaheri Sari, detained in the Sepidar Prison in Ahvaz, sustained severe injuries to the elbow.

In July, civil rights activist Yasaman Aryani was beaten by a non-political inmate who has the support of an official in Qarchak prison near Tehran. Reports indicate that the activist was attacked by a prisoner detained for a violent crime and was injured in the shoulder blade.

In addition to Yasaman Aryani, women political prisoners Atefeh Rangriz, Neda Najj, and Sepideh Qolian were also brutalized by a deranged prisoner incited by prison authorities

upon return from a mental hospital. Atefeh Rangriz had to be taken to the dispensary due to severe injuries.

Security forces attacked prisoners at the Qarchak detention center in southern Tehran to stop female inmates protesting conditions at the prison. Tear gas canisters were fired into the closed space of the prison on February 7. The attack was resumed on February 8, during which prisoners were beaten by guards. Several severely injured inmates were taken to hospitals following the raid.

Political prisoner, [Alireza Shir Mohammad Ali](#), was only 21-year-old and serving an eight-year sentence when he was stabbed more than thirty times on June 10, in a premeditated assault by two common criminals, while he had protested for being kept next to criminals charged with murder, rape, and burglary.

The 21-year-old political prisoner was sentenced to eight years of prison on charges of "blasphemy", "insulting the founder of the Islamic Republic", "insulting the leader" and "spreading propaganda" against the regime.



Alireza Shir Mohammad Ali



Denial of treatment

Prisoners continue to endure cruel and inhuman conditions of detention.

Denial of medical treatment to political prisoners is one of the most common methods the Iranian regime uses to bring double pressure on them. These measures have caused the death of several prisoners.

In March, an inmate in Mashhad prison died after authorities prevented him from receiving medical care. Asghar Zamani, the prisoner, was suffering from sickle cell disease. Zamani, who was in critical health conditions as a result of an obstruction in medical care, passed away while in the restroom on Sunday night but was only discovered the next morning and his lifeless body was transferred to the prison's medical center. Another prisoner in West Azarbaijan province's Urmia Prison died in July as a result of the prison authorities' medical negligence. Ashkan Mehrivash passed away because the prison's defibrillator was not working. Some political prisoners who have been deliberately denied medical treatment:

Arash Sadeghi

Human rights activist Arash Sadeghi is suffering from a rare form of bone cancer. He received delayed treatment which was left unfinished. Despite removing a tumor in his hand more than five months before, prison officials have banned him from receiving chemotherapy. He is now suffering from a severe infection in his hand where he received surgery and has lost his nerves in his right hand.

Majid Assadi

Iranian regime authorities in Gohardasht Prison of Karaj, west of Tehran, are hindering the medical care that political prisoner Majid Assadi needs by not permitting his transfer to a hospital. This political prisoner is suffering from various illnesses, including his glands and digesting system, eyes and spinal cord.

Saeed Shirzad

Political prisoner Saeed Shirzad is suffering from severe damage to both his kidneys. His right kidney has shrunk by 25%. He needs urgent sophisticated medical treatment but has been banned from going to the hospital despite his family having paid for his treatment. His condition has deteriorated as a result. Shirzad was also denied an operation to treat his vision problems.

Hassan Sadeghi

Political prisoner Hassan Sadeghi was tortured

upon his arrest by intelligence agents. The tortures resulted in several illnesses including glaucoma. He has previously had eye surgery but is in danger of losing his eyesight. Despite this, he is banned from receiving professional medical care. He is also suffering from an infection in his stomach and small intestine and a severe gastric ulcer.

Shahram Mansourpour

Security prisoner Shahram Mansourpour has served 18 years of his life in prison term without a prison leave. He has been suffering from a spinal disk inflammation and problems in his back muscles. He is banned from going to the hospital despite his urgent need of surgery and medical treatment.

Zeinab Jalalian

Despite suffering from serious medical problems, the authorities are denying long-time political prisoner Zeinab Jalalian treatment outside the prison's limited clinic.

The 38-year-old Kurdish political activist is suffering from heart and intestinal problems in the central prison of the city of Khoi, East Azerbaijan Province. Her health issues have been exacerbated by the lack of adequate medical treatment during the past 12 years of her incarceration.

Denial of family visits, Furlough

On October 30, the family of Mohammad Habibi were not allowed to visit him, and they were told that Habibi has been denied family visits since October 21 to November 12. It came after Mohammad Habibi along with another prisoner of conscience Farhad Meysami signed an open letter protesting abuse and inhumane living conditions in prison.

Following additional restrictions imposed on political prisoners in Tehran's Evin Prison by its newly appointed Director Gholamreza Ziaei, Maryam Akbari-Monfared's visits with her family members have been canceled in October. Behind bars for over five years, prisoner of conscience Saeed Shirzad was blocked from attending his mother's funeral in September. His family delayed the funeral to get permission for his furlough so that he could be present at his mother's burial, but the authorities in the prosecutor's office did not agree to release him even for a few hours. Furlough is routinely denied to political prisoners as a form of additional punishment.

Rights to health

The shortage of medicine has turned into a major, widespread social crisis in Iran. Some medicines have become extremely scarce, and prices have risen tremendously.

This situation directly affects the lives of human beings. It is especially serious for families who have members suffering from terminal ailments or rare diseases, and those who are on fixed or low income while in need of special medicine. This has led to cases of irreparable damage, intolerable pain, and even death.

This situation represents the violation of the fundamental human right of medical access.

The regime has extensively argued that the sanctions have caused the pharmaceutical crisis in Iran. But food and medicine have never been the subject of sanctions, and their import to Iran never been blocked.

Annually, a large portion of the country's budget is allocated to pharmaceutical production and imports, but due to widespread state corruption, a major part of the money is stolen or embezzled.

Saied Namaki said on July 15, 2019: "An amount of \$1.3 billion allocated for medical equipment has gone out and no one knows who exactly has taken them and what has been brought in and to whom they were handed over." The task of this organization is to import medicine, medical equipment, milk powder, and other necessary items in the health care domain. But it is not clear that the organization has actually maintained this focus.

Investigations have shown that a computer system was set up by the Health Ministry at the same time as the Food and Medicine Organization, whose server was located outside Iran and was accessible to only a few individuals. It has also been shown that some individuals within the Ministry have used funds based on the exchange rate used to by the government, allocated for the import of medicine and medical equipment, to purchase other items such as power cables.



Women's Rights Enforcing the compulsory veil – case of state-sponsored VAW

Enforcement of the official policy of mandatory veil or Hijab is one of the areas where women are the most vulnerable to violence in Iran. The State Security Force (SSF) implemented a new two-pronged plan in 2019 to ratchet up pressure on women for improper veiling.

In April, the State Security Force implemented the Nazer 1 plan to monitor women who remove their veils inside their own cars. According to this plan, the police uses cameras, spies, and police patrols to identify vehicles whose passengers remove their veils. They record the license plates and send text messages to the car owners and the Moral Security Police holds the owner accountable. Those summoned are released after committing themselves in writing that they would not repeat the offense. Should the offense be repeated, the accused will be charged and put on trial. Tehran's Public Security Police announced that they had sent more than 105,000 text messages to car owners and filed 137 of the cases with judicial authorities.

The Nazer 2 Plan was officially implemented on August 31. The plan is designed to monitor women in all public places, including government offices, shops and malls, beaches, airports, and even apartment complexes.

Hossein Rahimi, Commander of Tehran's State Security Force, announced that "the Greater Tehran has been divided to 12 patrolling blocks for the moral security patrols. Right now, 11 major shopping malls in Tehran are under the SSF surveillance in the context of Nazer 2 Plan." (The state-run ISNA news agency- October 9, 2019)

Acting commander of the State Security Force of Borujerd, Mohammad Qassem Miri said, "The Nazer (Observer) Plan monitors cars and vehicles, persons and shops." (The state-run Tasnim news agency – September 5, 2019)

The State Security Force recruited additional moral security patrols in all provinces, for example 8,000 in Khorasan Razavi Province and 2,000 in Gilan.

Several violent encounters with women were reported in 2019.

On June 26, 2019, a young woman, 15, was violently arrested by SSF plainclothes agents in a park in Tehran for not observing the veil during a water-gun game with her friends.

In late October 2019, a young woman walking without the veil in a park in Shahr-e Ray was brutalized by an SSF agent. The video clip of this

incident was posted on the internet.

Also a young woman by the name of Fatemeh Mohammadi was brutalized on July 9, 2019, for dropping her head scarf while sitting in a bus. A moral security agent called Mrs. Moussavi approached her on the bus, threatened her, and then put her hand on Fatemeh's chest and scratched her face.

The regime also issued heavy prison and flogging sentences for women who had dropped their veils in public, including Yasamin Aryani, Monireh Arabshahi, Mojgan Keshavarz, Saba Kord Afshari, etc.

Tragic death of football fan Sahar Khodayari

A female football fan, Sahar Khodayari, died in hospital on September 9, 2019, one week after she set herself ablaze in protest to a six-month jail sentence for her attempt to enter Azadi Stadium. Sahar Khodayari, 29, was a graduate of English translation. She had disguised herself and attempted to enter Azadi Stadium on March 12, 2019, when she was caught by security forces and detained in the notorious Qarchak Prison for four days. On September 2, 2019, Sahar set herself ablaze upon exiting the courthouse where she learned of her six-month prison sentence for attempting to circumvent the discriminatory ban on women's entrance to stadiums.

After domestic and international pressure built up on the regime, they admitted a token number of women into Azadi Stadium on October 10, 2019, under tight security control.

Out of 100,000 seats in Azadi Stadium which basically remained vacant, only 4,000 were allocated to women.



Couples were separated and women were bused to their platform to prevent them from going to other places around the stadium. The women's platform was fenced off. Female State Security forces were stationed on alert. A considerable number of plainclothes agents were sitting among the spectators. Closed circuit cameras also kept every movement under control. Overall, women did not have any freedom of action.

The clerical regime's retreat, however, stopped right there at the end of the 2022 World Cup qualifier soccer match between Iran and Cambodia. The regime's officials subsequently announced that women's admission was limited to Tehran and only for international games, and not for the leagues. (The state-run khabaronline.ir – October 14, 2019)

Total overhaul of the VAW bill

A VAW bill was finalized by the Iranian regime's Judiciary and sent to the government on September 17, 2019. The bill called "Provision of Security for Women (PSW)" had been stalled for eight years in the labyrinths of decision making in the parliament, the Guardian Council and the Judiciary Branch.

The Judiciary changed the bill's name to "Protection, Dignity and Provision of Security for Mesdames Against Violence."

The regime's Judiciary removed at least 41 articles of the original bill ostensibly because they overlapped with the Islamic Punishment Code and the Criminal Procedures Regulations, or because they contradicted the regime's so-called policy of de-imprisonment. The present bill has been re-written in five chapters and 77 articles. (The official IRNA news agency – September 17, 2019)

Some experts say a major deficiency in the new bill is replacing the word "women" with "Mesdames" which refers only to married women. Therefore, girls under 18, single women, victims of social ills and those subjected to such harms, are not covered by this bill.

Neither does the bill criminalize sexual harassment, rape, and sexual exploitation of women and it does not contain any punishment for the assailants.

Another serious problem is the lack of effective and sufficient guarantees in the bill to prevent violence against women or counter it. The bill has totally turned a blind eye on the state-sponsored violence against women to enforce the compulsory veil, as the main systematic form of VAW.

Early marriages, another common form of violence against women

The parliamentary judicial and legal committee rejected the plan to increase the minimum age of marriage for girls in December 2018 for being "contrary to the general policy of the system," and "the teachings of Islam." (The state-run Fars news agency – December 23, 2018)

The Iranian census organization has released new statistics on early marriages in Iran. According to the new data, 234,000 marriages of girl children under 15 years of age were officially registered by this organization from March 2017 to March 2018 (Persian year 1396). 194 of these were marriages of girl children under 10 years old. (The state-run IRNA news agency – January 6, 2019)

Ali Kazemi, advisor to the legal deputy of the Judiciary Branch, announced in March 2019, that between 500 to 600,000 girl children get married every year (in Iran). He acknowledged that this figure relates to officially registered marriages and does not include those which were not officially registered. (The state-run daily Entekhab – March 4, 2019)



Treatment of Religious Minorities

Iran continued to systematically violate the freedom of religion and belief. Members of religious minorities, particularly Baha'is and Christians, faced arbitrary arrest and prison sentences solely for practicing their faith.

Baha'is

Iran's Constitution does not recognize the Baha'i faith as an official religion (such as Islam, Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism). Although Article 23 states that "no one may be molested or taken to task simply for holding a certain belief," followers of the faith are denied many basic rights as one of the most severely persecuted religious minorities in the country. In the past year, dozens of Iranian Baha'i students were banned from higher education due to their faith. Dozens more were sentenced to prison for their religious beliefs. Iranian authorities continue to shut down businesses belonging to the Baha'i faith members. At least 20 members of the Baha'i faith were sentenced to prison while 29 were deprived of higher education. Eight Baha'i owned businesses were shut down by the authorities. Here are some cases: Iran's Ministry of Intelligence confirmed on October 22, that its agents have arrested three followers of the Baha'i faith in Shiraz, southern Iran. The names of those arrested were Soroush Abadi, Farzan Masoumi, and Kiana Shoaie. The Ministry of Intelligence accused the detainees of holding a Baha'i ceremony to overshadow the Shiite annual Arbaeen event. The Revolutionary Court in Iran's Semnan Province sentenced three members of the Bahai religious minority to a total of 20 years in jail on national security charges. The Bahais, Ardeshir Fanaian, Yalda Firoozian and Behnam Eskandarian, were charged with "acting against national security through propagation and organized activities" and "membership in illegal groups acting against national security." Yekta Fahandeh Sa'di was sentenced to 11 years and nine months in prison for her Baha'i religious beliefs by a preliminary court in the city of Shiraz in south-central Iran on December 30, 2018. In September, two Iranian Baha'i women, Kimia Mostafavi and Kiana Rezvani, were sentenced to a total of 12 years in prison. According to the verdict issued by the Revolutionary court of Kerman, the Baha'i women were each sentenced to five years in prison for "membership in Baha'i community" and one year in prison for "spreading propaganda against the state in favor of opposition groups."

Christians

Security officials from Iran's Intelligence Ministry raided the homes of eight Iranians converts to Christianity on July 1, in the southern city of Bushehr, taking them to solitary confinement. Security forces raided and searched their houses and confiscated their Bibles, Christian statues and signs, wooden crosses, paintings, laptops, cellphones, ID cards and credit cards.

Iran's security officials arrested three Christians who were leading a house church in the absence of their pastor who is serving a ten-year jail sentence. During a raid on a non-Trinitarian "Church of Iran" on Sunday, 10 February, in the northern city of Rasht, Ministry of Intelligence agents arrested Abdolreza Ali Haghnejad. They entered the building shortly after the church service had ended, confiscated mobile phones of church members and took Haghnejad with them. Security agents also visited his home where they confiscated his books and his wife's mobile phone. On 29 January, fellow church members Hossein Kadivar and Khalil Dehghanpour were detained following another raid. The two were arrested when Ministry of Intelligence agents scaled the wall of the property where the "house church" service was being held. While arresting Kadivar and Dehghanpour who were leading the service, agents threatened all other attendees, confiscating their ID cards and mobile phones. The three men had been leading the church in Rasht since its pastor, Youcef Nadarkhani, was sentenced in July 2017 to ten years in prison for "acting against national security" by "promoting Zionist Christianity" and running "house churches." Three other men were arrested on Friday February 15 in a church congregation held in a home. They were identified as Mohammad Vafadar, Mohammad Islamdoust and Kamal No'manian. They were all taken to unknown locations. In yet another case plainclothes agents of the Intelligence Ministry in Shiraz, south-central Iran, arrested 64-year-old Christian convert Esmail Maghrebinejad. The agents raided his home and confiscated his personal belonging. On January 23, 2019, the state security forces violently arrested Sina Moloudian during a raid on his home, physically assaulted him and took him to an unknown location. According to Moloudian's family, eight plainclothes officers who introduced themselves as Ministry of Intelligence officers stormed their residence, arresting Sina without giving any reasons or providing a warrant. They inspected the home, confiscated Sina's computer, mobile phone, Christian scriptures and books. In another development, security forces called the wife of detained pastor Yousef Nadarkhani and threatened that if she left Rasht, she would be detained.

Treatment of ethnic minorities

Ethnic minorities, including Ahwazi Arabs, Azerbaijani Turks, Baluchis, and Kurds have continued to be subjected to violations of their rights, including the violation of the right to freedom of assembly and association and the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

Members of minorities who speak out against violations of their rights face arbitrary arrest, torture, unfair trials and imprisonment.

Arab Ahwazis

Members of the Ahwazi Arab ethnic minority in Iran face discrimination and arbitrary restrictions on their access to education, employment, adequate housing, and their enjoyment of their cultural and linguistic rights.

Arab Ahwazis identifying as Sunnis have also been arrested on charges of "corruption on earth" and "enmity against God".

During the past year, Iranian authorities have arrested at least 800 Ahwazi Arabs in Khuzestan Province on vague security related charges. Labour rights activists and cultural and political activists are among those arrested.

At least 70 Arab Ahwazi flood relief volunteers were arrested and detained in Khuzestan by Iranian security services for unknown reasons after they had attempted to bring food and blankets to flood victims in Khuzestan Province.

On March 20, the Director of the Ahwazi cultural institution "Nasr" was arrested in Ahwaz after directing a musical clip called "Vahdat" that empowered and represented the Arabic culture and unity of the Arab people of Ahwaz. On April 28, another member of Nasr was transferred to Sheiban prison in Ahwaz. Hossein Eshghian is another member of Nasr who was summonsed on March 21 and interrogated.

Hundreds of Arab women are imprisoned under torture in the prisons of Ahvaz, capital of Khuzestan Province. The news was published in December by the Al-Arabiya website. Citing information from a former female prisoner, Al-Arabiya wrote: "Zahra is one of hundreds of Arab women who is detained under torture in Ahvaz. She is imprisoned because she is a woman and because she is an Arab."

Kurds

The members of Iran's Kurdish minority have been discriminated against, exploited or denied their very basic rights due their ethnicity. State schools

do not offer education in Kurdish, which is available only to students through private classes, reducing the accessibility and affordability of Kurdish education. Teachers must obtain State permits to teach the Kurdish language. A young female teacher, Zahra Mohammadi, was arrested and detained by the Iranian authorities on May 23, 2019 for organizing private tuition without a permit in Sanandaj.

Kurdish political prisoners charged with national security offences represent almost half of the total number of political prisoners in Iran and constitute a high number of those who received the death penalty. At least 500 members of Iran's Kurdish minority were arrested for charges relating to membership in Kurdish political parties, their civil activities, organizing Nowruz celebrations, their religious belief and activities and managing social networks such as Telegram.

Azerbaijani Turks

At least 100 Azerbaijani Turks, including minority rights activists, were arrested in 2019. Cultural and political activists are among them. This figure also includes activists and supporters of the East Azerbaijani football club Tiraxtur who were arrested and detained for making pro-Azeri chants during a match between Tiraxtur and Persepolis of Tehran on May 2, 2019 at Sehend stadium in Tebriz.

Baluchis

Iran's Baluchi minority is believed to constitute one to three per cent of the country's total population. Most ethnic Baluchis live in Sistan-Baluchistan, one of the poorest and most deprived provinces in Iran.

In 2019, human rights violations committed against Baluchis continued with members of the minority who spoke out against violations of their rights faced arbitrary arrest, torture and other illtreatment, unfair trials and imprisonment.

At least 200 Baluchis were arrested in 2019 for vague national security charges.

Excessive use of force against and extrajudicial killings of Baluchis and Kurds

Iran's border guards unlawfully shot and killed with impunity at least 62 Kurdish kulbars, porters carrying goods on their backs between Iran and Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

At least 38 Baluchis who make a living smuggling diesel and drugs were shot and killed by the state security forces. Sistan and Baluchestan, mainly populated by Sunnis, is one of the most deprived provinces of Iran where due to increasing poverty, people transport diesel fuel to make a living.

