

## At a Glance

### Weekly report on Human Rights Violation in Iran 18 February 2018

#### World loses a 'human rights giant,' says UN chief on death of rights expert Asma Jahangir

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=58566#.WoGWt-cxmMp>



Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Iran Asma Jahangir. UN Photo/Jean-Marc Ferré

11 February 2018 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres on Sunday expressed his sorrow at the demise of prominent human rights defender and UN Special Rapporteur Asma Jahangir, who passed away at the age of 66.

“We have lost a human rights giant,” said Mr. Guterres in a [statement](#).

“Asma was brilliant, deeply principled, courageous and kind [...] She will not be forgotten,” he added, expressing his condolences to Ms. Jahangir's family, friends and colleagues, including in the UN and civil society.

She reportedly suffered a cardiac arrest and was taken to hospital, where she passed away.

Ms. Jahangir was the current UN [Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran](#), having assumed the position on 1 November 2016. Earlier, from 1998 to July 2004, she was the [Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions](#), and from August 2004 to July 2010, the [Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief](#).

A national of Pakistan, Ms. Jahangir, was recognized both nationally and internationally for her contribution to human rights and was the recipient of major human rights awards. She worked extensively in the field of women's rights, protection of religious minorities and in eliminating bonded labour.

She was also elected as the President of the Supreme Court Bar Association of Pakistan and as Chairperson of the country's Human Rights Commission.

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)), which supports [Special Rapporteurs and independent experts](#) in the discharge of their mandate, also expressed its sadness at Ms. Jahangir's passing.

“She was a legendary human rights defender: pioneering, determined, calm, courageous – and a lovely human being,” the office said in a tweet posted on its official account.

UN Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the Geneva-based [Human Rights Council](#) – the highest UN intergovernmental body on all matters related to human rights – to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation.

The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.

## **International Condemnation of Violation of Human Rights in Iran**

### **Canada Presses Iran for Details on Death of Iranian-Canadian in Tehran Jail**

By REUTERS/FEB. 13, 2018, 8:51 P.M. E.S.T.

<https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2018/02/13/world/middleeast/13reuters-iran-canada-death.html?smid=tw-share>

(Reuters) - The Canadian government said on Tuesday it was "seriously concerned" with the circumstances surrounding the death of an Iranian-Canadian dual citizen in a Tehran prison, and that it was pressing Iran to provide details on what happened.

Kavous Seyed-Emami, an environmental activist and sociology professor, was arrested on Jan. 24 and died in prison, his son wrote on Twitter last week. Iran's judiciary said on Sunday that Seyed-Emami, 63, had committed suicide.

"We are seriously concerned by the situation surrounding the detention and death of Mr. Seyed-Emami," Canada's foreign minister, Chrystia Freeland, said in a statement.

"We expect the Government of Iran to provide information and answers into the circumstances surrounding this tragedy. We will continue to use every means at Canada's disposal to seek further information."

Seyed-Emami was the managing director of the Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation, an organization aimed at protecting Iran's rare animals, and a U.S.-trained scholar in sociology.

He was arrested the same day as at least nine other staff members at his organization, according to the Center for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI), a non-profit group based in New York.

Iran's judiciary said Seyed-Emami was a defendant in a spying case and had committed suicide because of the weight of evidence against him, an Iranian news agency reported on Sunday.

He died in Tehran's Evin prison, his son said.

Canada does not have an embassy in Iran. Diplomatic relations between the two countries have been tense since an Iranian-Canadian photographer, Zahra Kazemi, was beaten to death in prison in 2003 after she was detained while taking pictures.

Dozens of dual nationals are in jail in Iran, mostly on spying charges.

### **Seven-year Anniversary of the House Arrests of Mir Hossein Mousavi, Mehdi Karroubi and Zahra Rahnava**

Press Statement  
Heather Nauert  
Department Spokesperson  
Washington, DC

February 15, 2018

<https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2018/02/278373.htm>

---



This week marks the seven-year anniversary of the detention of 2009 Iranian presidential election candidates Mehdi Karroubi and Mir Hossein Mousavi, as well as Mousavi's wife and women's rights advocate Zahra Rahnava. The continued house arrest of these three individuals contradicts Iran's international obligations including those under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to provide minimum fair trial guarantees and not to subject citizens to arbitrary arrest or detention.

The United States calls on Iran to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all individuals in Iran consistent with its international obligations, including ensuring the fundamental right of peaceful freedom of expression and the right to participate in civil society and in the political process without fear of arbitrary arrest and detention or denial of fair trials. We join the international community in condemning the continued arbitrary detention of these three individuals without charges or fair trials and in calling for their immediate release and for the release of all prisoners of conscience unjustly detained in Iran.

## Juvenile Execution

### UN rights chief urges Iran to halt executions of juveniles on death row

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/02/1002891>



High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein.

16 February 2018

Expressing concern over a "surge" in the number of juvenile offenders being executed in Iran, the United Nations top human rights official called on the country to abide by its obligations under international law and immediately halt all executions of people sentenced to death for crimes committed when they were under the age of eighteen.

"The execution of juvenile offenders is unequivocally prohibited under international law, regardless of the circumstances and nature of the crime committed," the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, said in a [news release](#) Friday.

"The imposition of the death penalty on people who committed crimes when they were under 18 is in clear violation of Iran's obligations under two international treaties that it has ratified and is obliged to uphold – namely the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) and the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)."

[According](#) to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in January, three people – two male and one female – were executed for crimes they committed when they were 15 or 16 years old. A fourth juvenile offender, who was believed to be on the point of being executed on Wednesday, has reportedly received a temporary reprieve of two months.

In addition, a number of other juvenile offenders are also believed to be in danger of imminent execution, with a total of some 80 such individuals reported to be currently on death row, after being sentenced to death for crimes they committed when they were under eighteen.

“I am sad to say that Iran violates this absolute prohibition under international human rights law far more often than any other State,” expressed the UN rights chief, stressing that no other State “comes even remotely close” to the total number of juveniles who have been executed in Iran over the past couple of decades.

Mr. Zeid also said that Iran assigns criminal responsibility to girls as young as nine years old, whereas boys are not considered criminally responsible until they reach the age of 15.

This discrepancy between the two genders is “wholly unjustifiable on every level,” he stressed, adding that the application of the death penalty to any person, female or male, under 18 is “illegal and unacceptable.”

### **Some partial improvements in application of death penalty in drugs crime**

Also in the release, the High Commissioner noted that there had been some “partial” improvements in relation to other aspects of the application of the death penalty in Iran, most notably a bill amending the drug-trafficking law that was approved by the Guardian Council in October 2017.

As a result of the amendment, some drug offences that were previously punishable by the death penalty are now subject to a prison term, although the mandatory death sentence is retained for a wide range of drug-related offences.

According to OHCHR, the amendment provides for retroactive applicability, which means that all people currently on death row for drug-related offences which are no longer punishable by the death penalty should see their sentence commuted.

In this context, Mr. Zeid urged Iran to swiftly establish the modalities for the review of all individual cases sentenced to death under the drug-trafficking law, following the principles of transparency, due process and to ensure effective legal representation of all those sentenced.

At present, there are about 5,300 inmates on death row for drugs crimes in the country.

### **Hamze Noorzehi; Death Row Juvenile Offender in Zahedan Prison**

*Posted on: 8th February, 2018*

<https://www.en-hrana.org/hamze-noorzehi-death-row-juvenile-offender-zahedan-prison#more-19734>

HRANA News Agency – Two Afghan juvenile offenders who were born and grew up in Iran, were tried for drug possession while they were under the age of 18 and eventually one of them was sentenced to death in Zahedan. They claim that they have been tortured and the officers hung them from the ceiling using the rope, took their clothes off and plun-



dered them with wood and cable for the purpose of obtaining untrue confessions.

According to the report of Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA), Hamze Noorzehi, juvenile offender from Afghanistan was arrested by security forces when was 17 years old and was sentenced to death by the Revolutionary Court of Zahedan.

HRANA had previously released the letter of Hamze Noorzehi's cousin and partner in case, in which he described the charges and details of the case.

Hamze Noorzehi, son of AbdulKhaleq, 20, was 17 years old when he was arrested in 2014. He received his death sentence at first stage in 2016 and was informed about the confirmation of the verdict by the Supreme Court in 2017.

The prisoner who is born in Zahedan, does not currently have the first-degree relative to pursue his situation because his family returned to Afghanistan.

He, who was charged with maintenance of one kilogram of crack-like (crystal-morphine) drug, claims that the agents arrested initially him and his partner in the case for alleged theft, but after a while, the charge of drug possession was added to the case.

According to Mr. Noorzehi, agents tortured him for 21 days in various ways at the police station in Zahedan to force him to accept the drug possession charge. Including "hanging him from the roof with the rope, putting his clothes in full tension, taking off his clothes and plundering him with wood and cable."

He eventually accepted and signed the confession dictated by agents due to physical weakness.

The Afghan juvenile offender was sentenced to death on charge of drug possession by branch one of the Revolutionary Court headed by Judge Mahgeli in 2016. His protests and the statement that he was tortured was not considered by the court.

## **Iran Executions: Another Juvenile Offender on Death Row**

<https://iranhr.net/en/articles/3226/>

It seems that Article 91 of the Islamic Penal Code regarding the prosecution of juvenile offenders, has not been successful at reducing the number of executions of juveniles.



**Iran Human Rights (Feb 12, 2018): Pouria Tabaei, who is sentenced to death on the charge of murdering his step-father, is scheduled to be executed at Rajai Shahr Prison.**

According to a close source, Pouria Tabaei who was only 16 at the time of committing the crime, is currently on the death row at Rajai Shahr Prison.

He was born on July 17, 1992, and committed the crime on July 17, 2009.

Neither Branch 113 of the Criminal Court of Tehran -which issued Tabaei's sentence-, nor the Supreme Court, agreed to send the juvenile offender to the forensics to estimate his full men-



tal development. The mental development estimation is possible under Article 91 of the Islamic Penal Code and can potentially save a juvenile offender's life.

It should be noted that two other juvenile offenders, Ali Kazemi and Mahbubeh Mofidi, who were executed in the last month, were not sent to the forensics to establish their full mental development either.

Iran has signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which bans the execution of juveniles. Moreover, based on Article 37 the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Iran has signed, execution and life imprisonment of juveniles is banned.

Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam, the spokesperson for IHR, says, "It seems that Article 91 of the Islamic Penal Code regarding the prosecution of juvenile offenders, has not been successful at reducing the number of executions of juveniles and some of the courts' judges still issue sentences as they please. Iranian authorities must stop death sentence for juveniles unconditionally.

## **Iran Execution: Six prisoners, Including a Juvenile Offender, Facing Execution In Days**

<https://iranhr.net/en/articles/3227/>

Omid Rostami is reportedly sentenced to death on the charge of murder before the age of 18.



**Iran Human Rights (Feb 12, 2018): At least six prisoners from different wards were transferred to solitary confinement at Rajai Shahr Prison to be executed. Omid Rostami, a juvenile offender, is one of the prisoners.**

According to a close source, on the morning of Monday, February 12, at least six prisoners from different wards were transferred to solitary confinement at Rajai Shahr Prison to be executed. Most of them were sentenced to death on murder charges.

Some of them are identified as: Masoud Taghipour from ward 6, Mohammad Saleh Dolatabadi from ward 10, Morteza Shafiq from ward 10, Saeed Ranjbar from ward 10, and Omid Rostami from ward 5.

Omid Rostami is reportedly sentenced to death on the charge of murder before the age of 18. However, Iran Human Rights (IHR) has not been able to access his documents so far. The prisoners will be certainly executed on Wednesday if they fail to gain the consent of the plaintiffs.

It is worth mentioning that at least three juvenile offenders were hanged at Rajai Shahr, Noshahr, and Bushehr prisons in January. These sentences prove that the Article 91 of the Islamic Penal Code (2013), as well as other articles related to protection of children at risk of retaliation, cannot effectively protect juvenile-offenders from execution.

"European nations, especially those who have good political and economic relations with Iranian government should not be silent about the execution of juveniles," Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam, the spokesperson for IHR says, "We urge European Union and other nations to

immediately force Iranian authorities to annul these executions and stop the execution of juveniles."

Iran has signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which bans the execution of juveniles. Moreover, based on Article 37 the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Iran has signed, execution and life imprisonment of juveniles is banned.

## Execution

### Iran: Authorities refuse to release Canadian-Iranian academic's body for independent autopsy in "callous cover-up"

12 February 2018, 19:09 UTC

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/02/iran-authorities-refuse-to-release-canadian-iranian-academics-body-for-independent-autopsy-in-callous-coverup/>



In response to reports that the Iranian authorities have said they will refuse to release the body of the Canadian-Iranian academic Kavous Seyed-Emami to his family unless there is an immediate burial and no attempt to conduct an independent autopsy, Magdalena Mughrabi, Amnesty international's Deputy Director for the Middle East and Africa said:



"The authorities' refusal to allow an independent investigation into the extremely suspicious death of Dr Seyed-Emami smacks of a deliberately orchestrated attempt to cover up any evidence of torture and possible murder. He was detained in Evin prison where detainees are held under constant surveillance and stripped of all personal possessions. It would have been near impossible for him to commit suicide.

"We are deeply concerned that Dr Seyed-Emami's body bears incriminating signs of torture and other clues to the reasons for his death. We call on the Canadian government and the international community to continue to place pressure on the Iranian authorities to allow an independent investigation into the circumstances of Dr Seyed-Emami's death in accordance with international standards. Those responsible, including any individual with command responsibility, must be brought to justice."

Kavous Seyed-Emami's death is the third to be hastily declared a suicide in detention by Iranian authorities since the December 2017 protests. A fourth death, also confirmed in detention, remains unexplained by the authorities.

"The mounting deaths in custody and the authorities' refusal to allow independent and transparent investigations are deeply troubling illustrations of the utter contempt for human life and accountability that exists in the Iranian criminal justice system today," said Magdalena Mughrabi.

In a statement on 11 February, Tehran's Chief Prosecutor stated that Kavous Seyed-Emami was driven to suicide by "confessions" that he had made and the incriminating statements others had made against him. Remarks about his "confessions" heighten concerns that he was subjected to torture.

He had been arrested on 24 January 2018 and was under interrogations for national-security related charges stemming from his peaceful environmental activism, making him a prisoner of conscience.

## Iran: Investigate Suspicious Deaths in Detention, Release Activists

Authorities Crack Down on Environmentalists

February 13, 2018 12:00AM EST

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/02/13/iran-investigate-suspicious-deaths-detention-release-activists>



(Beirut) – A third suspicious death in [Iranian](#) prisons since early January 2018 underscores the need for an immediate independent inquiry, Human Rights Watch said today. On February 10, the family of a well-known Iranian environmentalist, Dr. Kavous Seyed Emami, who had been in detention for two weeks on bogus charges, reported that he had died under unknown circumstances.



Ramin Seyed Emami (Kingraam)

On January 24 and 25, security forces reportedly arrested seven environmental activists on January 24 and 25, including Seyed Emami, a well-known Iranian-Canadian academic and a faculty member of Imam Sadegh University. On February 10, Ramin Seyed Emami, his son, [wrote on social media](#) that authorities had summoned his mother the day before to inform her that her husband had “committed suicide” in detention.

“Iranian judicial authorities think they can get away with claiming that Seyed Emami, a well-known professor, simply committed suicide while being detained in one of the highest-security wards of Evin prison,” said [Sarah Leah Whitson](#), Middle East director at Human Rights Watch. “The Iranian judiciary long ago lost its credibility after failing to investigate repeated incidents of torture and mistreatment in detention.”

Seyed Emami’s death is the third case of alleged suicide in detention reported by the authorities since early January. On January 7 and 8, in the aftermath of mass arrests that followed protests across the country, activists reported at least two deaths, in the cities of Tehran and Arak.

On the morning of February 10, Abbas Jafari Dolat Abadi, the Tehran prosecutor, [said at a news conference](#) that intelligence authorities had arrested a number of activists whom they allege were using environmental projects as a cover to collect classified strategic information. The [Iran International News website reported](#) that Houman Jokar, Sepideh Kashani, Niloufar Bayani, Amirhossein Khaleghi, Sam Rajabi, and Taher Ghadriain were the activists arrested on January 24 and 24. They were all members of a local environmental group, [the Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation](#). The conservation organization works on protecting Iran’s flora and fauna, including the Asiatic Cheetahs, an endangered species found in Iran.

Leili Hooshmand Afshar, Sam Rajabi’s mother, strongly rejected allegations of her son being a “spy” in [an interview with Center for Human Rights in Iran](#) on February 12. “My son was an environmental activist who chose to serve his country,” said Hooshmand Afshar. “I have



no information about his condition at this moment, and he has not contacted his family since the time of his arrest.”

On February 11, Mahmoud Sadeghi, a parliamentarian from Tehran, [tweeted that when he inquired with authorities about Seyed Emami’s death](#), he discovered authorities had also arrested Kaveh Madani, the deputy head of Iran’s Department of Environment and a faculty member at Imperial College London. Madani recently moved to Tehran to join the administration. On February 12, Madani [published a video on his Instagram account](#) saying that he had “returned” to his office without providing any details about whether he was arrested or not.

“This seems to be yet another wave of crackdown against people who want to help with solving the country’s chronic problems. The Iranian judiciary should immediately and unconditionally release these activists unless they have credible evidence to charge them promptly with a recognizable crime and guarantee their rights,” said Whitson.

Following Seyed Emami’s death, four independent Iranian scientific associations, the Political Science Society, the Social Science Society, the Peace Studies Society, and the Cultural Studies Society, asked president Rouhani in an [open letter](#) to investigate Seyed Emami’s death and ensure that the authorities involved will provide a satisfactory response. Several members of parliament also have asked judicial authorities to clarify the nature of his death.

On February 12, Ali Motahari, a parliamentarian from Tehran, [told](#) ISNA news agency that Iran’s Revolutionary Guard’s Intelligence Unit held a meeting with several members of parliament in which they provided some explanations about Seyed Emami’s death. Motahari added that authorities presented them a video that purports to show Seyed Emami preparing to commit suicide, but offers no clarity on what happens afterwards.

On February 11, a confidential source confirmed in correspondence to Human Rights Watch that Seyed Emami did not have any contact with his family after he was detained. “Authorities summoned his wife and interrogated her for four hours before telling her that Seyed Emami committed suicide in prison,” the source said.

The source also provided Human Rights Watch with a statement Seyed Emami’s family issued calling for an independent, transparent autopsy so that the family and the public could learn how he died. The statement says that:

The judiciary has told the family to receive the body on Tuesday morning from Kahrizak prison on the condition that they immediately and quietly bury him. They have said they will conduct their own autopsy but have not informed the family of the result yet. A funeral is planned for Tuesday morning in the village of Amameh in the mountains north of Tehran. The family has been banned from holding a funeral service or memorial service for Mr. Seyed-Emami but a steady procession of friends, family members, students, and colleagues visited his home on Monday under the surveillance of police officers stationed near the house.

The [authorities claimed](#), in reporting the other two deaths, that Sina Ghanbari committed suicide in Evin prison and Vahid Heidari in Arak prison. However, the government has failed to conduct an independent inquiry into their deaths and has harassed lawyers working on Heidari’s case. On January 15, [authorities arrested Mohammad Najafi](#), a human rights lawyer from Arak who was following Heidari’s case and detained him for several weeks. On January

9, Najafi told Human Rights Watch that “the people who saw Heidari’s body told us that there were cuts and bruises on the left side of his forehead that could be a sign of being beaten by a baton.” Najafi also said that he had “received numerous reports from people who were detained by authorities that they were harshly beaten during their arrest and detention in Arak.”

On January 30, a parliamentary delegation visited Evin prison following allegations of abuse by prisoners’ families, but it has not released a report. Members of parliament who spoke to the media after the visit provided conflicting information about Ghanbari’s alleged suicide.

Allahyar Malekshahi, the head of the parliamentary judiciary commission, [told IRNA news](#) agency on January 30 that prison authorities showed the delegation a video of Ghanbari’s suicide. But Alireza Rahimi, a parliament member from Tehran, [wrote on his Telegram channel](#) that the video was taken from security cameras in prison and only shows Ghanbari walking into one of the bathrooms, where another inmate discovered his body behind the door two hours later.

Rahimi said the authorities arrested 4,972 people during the recent protests, a significantly higher number than the 3,700 previously announced by Mahmoud Sadeghi, another parliament member from Tehran. Rahimi also confirmed that as of January 30, 438 were still in detention, and another 50 were being held by the Intelligence Ministry.

Human Rights Watch and other groups have documented abuses and torture in Iranian prisons, as well as persistent impunity for these serious violations. Zahra Kazemi, an Iranian-Canadian photo journalist, [died in July 2003](#), a few days after Iranian security forces detained her at Evin prison for photographing in a restricted area in front of the prison. Authorities have still not released information on the circumstances of her death.

On January 10, 2010, a parliamentary panel investigating detentions after the disputed 2009 presidential election determined that Saeed Mortazavi, the former Tehran prosecutor general, was directly responsible for the ill-treatment of detainees in Kahrizak prison. On November 26, 2017, the Appeals Court of Tehran sentenced Mortazavi [to two years in prison](#) for complicity in the murder of Mohsen Ruholamini in Kahrizak detention center after the 2009 crackdown.

“The international community should push for an independent investigation into these deaths without further delay,” Whitson said. “Iranian authorities are failing the victims and their families.”

## **Clear Signs of State Cover-Up in Prison Death of Iranian-Canadian Academic in Iran**

February 12, 2018

<https://www.iranhumanrights.org/2018/02/clear-signs-of-state-cover-up-in-prison-death-of-iranian-canadian-academic-in-iran/>



***Distraught Family Under Enormous Pressure to Bury Body Quickly and Not Speak Publicly About the Death***

February 12, 2018—The family of the Iranian-Canadian academic, [Kavous Seyed-Emami](#), whose

death in custody in Iran was announced on February 9, is under intense pressure to immediately bury Seyed-Emami in a private funeral—without receiving any independent and medically corroborated information on the cause of his death—and to remain silent regarding the death.

Seyed-Emami died under highly suspicious circumstances while in detention in Evin Prison. The authorities are calling his death a suicide—the [third death](#) in prison that has been labelled a suicide in recent days despite near universal doubts regarding the veracity of such claims.

“Iran’s judiciary must allow an independent and transparent autopsy of Kavous Seyed-Emami’s body in order for the family and the public to know how he died,” said Hadi Ghaemi, executive director of the Center for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI).

A relative living abroad who is aware of the details of the case told CHRI that Seyed-Emami’s family told the authorities that they wanted an independent autopsy. The authorities reportedly told the family that they would do an autopsy, but as of the evening of February 11, it is not clear that one has been done and no results providing any information on the cause of death have been released to the family.

“You cannot be both the accused and the investigator and expect people to believe your conclusion,” said the relative.

CHRI calls upon the authorities in Iran to:

- Allow an independent autopsy to be conducted, the results of which will be made public.
- Carry out any request for a full and independent investigation into Seyed-Emami’s death.
- Allow the family to conduct funeral and memorial services as per its own wishes.
- Immediately end all pressure on the family to remain silent.
- Cease all other intimidation tactics which include police surveillance of the family.

“Claims that Seyed-Emami’s death was a suicide have no credibility whatsoever. This is a prison system out of control and a Judiciary that is actively colluding in a massive cover-up,” said Hadi Ghaemi, executive director of CHRI.

“The authorities’ remarks about the case from start to finish and the pressure they are putting on the family leaves no doubt that there is a concerted state cover up,” Ghaemi added.

Sources close to the family have said that Seyed-Emami’s family is under constant surveillance, with police posted at the house and that the family is under enormous pressure not to speak to anyone about the case and to quickly bury the body without any public funeral or memorial service.

There are worries that people close to the case will be subjected to forced statements that confirm the state narrative of the events surrounding Seyed-Emami’s death. Iran has a long and [documented](#) history of forcing individuals to make false statements and confessions.

In a statement earlier on February 11, Tehran’s [chief prosecutor said](#) that Seyed-Emami committed suicide due to confessions made against him: “This person was one of the accused

[environmental activists] and given he knew that there is a torrent of confessions against him and he confessed himself, unfortunately he committed suicide in prison.”

The prosecutor’s incredulous claim of knowing the reason for an individual’s alleged suicide casts further doubt on what can only be described as the state’s increasingly desperate attempts to cover up the events leading to the death of Seyed-Emami.

The Judiciary has told the family they will receive the body on Tuesday morning on the condition that they immediately and quietly bury him, according to the relative abroad. A funeral is planned for Tuesday morning in the village of Amameh in the mountains north of Tehran.

A steady procession of friends, family, students and colleagues visited the family home on Monday under the surveillance of police officers stationed near the house.

## **MP: “More Details Necessary” To Determine Cause of Iranian-Canadian’s Death in Custody**

February 13, 2018

<https://www.iranhumanrights.org/2018/02/mp-more-details-necessary-to-determine-cause-of-iranian-canadians-death-in-custody/>



### ***Tehran Prosecutor Claims Autopsy Conducted But Still No Medical Examiner’s Report***

Iran’s deputy parliamentary speaker has stated that, based on a video produced by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), it’s not clear whether Iranian-Canadian academic [Kavous Seyed-Emami](#) committed [suicide](#) in Tehran’s Evin Prison on February 9, 2018, as officials have claimed.

Tehran Prosecutor Abbas Jafari Dowlatbadi [told](#) reporters on February 13 that an autopsy was conducted on Seyed-Emami’s body before it was delivered to the family on February 13, but no medical examiner’s report has been released to the public. Seyed-Emami was buried in Amaneh Cemetery near Tehran on February 13.

A source with knowledge about the case told the Center for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI) on February 12 that his family had requested an autopsy to determine the cause of death after seeing the film provided by the IRGC.

“We didn’t see the act of suicide in the 2-3 hour film [from inside his cell],” said the source, who requested anonymity for security reasons. “We are hoping that the investigation will clarify why he was detained and interrogated.”

It is unknown whether the family has received a medical examiner’s report.

An Iranian-Canadian [dual national](#), Seyed-Emami, 63, was the managing director of the Persian Heritage Wildlife Foundation (PHWF) and taught sociology at Tehran’s Imam Sadeq University. He was arrested on January 24 and his wife was told he committed suicide in Evin Prison on February 9. Officials also claimed that [two other detainees](#) (one in Tehran and one in Arak) committed suicide in late December and early January respectively.

## MPs React to IRGC Film of Seyed-Emami's Last Moments

On February 12, the IRGC asked for a meeting with an unknown number of members of Parliament (MPs) to show them a film of Seyed-Emami's last moments.

After viewing the film, Deputy Parliamentary Speaker Ali Motahhari said he did not see the moment of the suicide but did not discount the possibility that Seyed-Emami had killed himself. Motahhari added that "more details are necessary" to determine the cause of death.

"The moment of suicide is not clear in this film," the conservative MP [told](#) the semi-official Iranian Labor News Agency (ILNA) on February 12. But for seven or eight minutes, he was doing things that could possibly suggest he had the intention to commit suicide."

"It is obvious that the [camera] operator did not notice it," added Motahhari. "He should have noticed and stopped it. It appears there has been a failure in this regard and they, too, accept this."

He continued: "I believe the explanations regarding the death of Mr. Seyed-Emami's death are insufficient and more details are necessary to clarify all aspects of this case."

The family's lawyer in Tehran told a reporter that the film did not show Seyed-Emami committing suicide.

"I just spoke to Mr. Kavous Seyed-Emami's lawyer. There's no clear sign in the film that he committed suicide," Shargh newspaper reporter Amene Shirafkan [tweeted](#) on February 12.

Reformist MP Mohammad Reza Tabesh said that the circumstances surrounding Seyed-Emami's death have aroused suspicions.

"The arrest of a group of environmental activists and holding them for more than 20 days have raised some suspicions," Tabesh [told](#) the semi-official Iranian Students News Agency (ISNA) on February 11.

"The death of a well-respected sociologist like Dr. Seyed-Emami is unfortunate and raises questions about the accusations leveled against the detainees... They are not political activists and did not have access to classified information," he added.

Parvaneh Salahshouri, the leader of the Parliament's reformist Women's Faction, also stated that the judiciary should investigate the death.

"As the authority directly responsible for the death of Professor Seyed-Emami, the judiciary is expected to investigate the various aspects of this suspicious death as soon as possible," she [said](#) in an open parliamentary session on February 11.

But some MPs said they felt convinced by the film that Seyed-Emami had killed himself.

Hossein Naghavi, the conservative spokesman for the Parliamentary Committee for National Security Affairs, told ISNA that the film presented by the IRGC showed Seyed-Emami placing pillows under the blanket to trick guards into thinking that he was sleeping before he hung himself.



Seyed-Emami is the second Iranian-Canadian who has died in custody in Iran. In July 2003, photographer Zahra Kazemi also died under suspicious circumstances while being interrogated in Evin Prison. Her case remains unsolved despite calls for justice by lawyers and Canadian officials.

Mostafa Tajzadeh, an adviser (2004-05) to former President Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005), tweeted on February 10 that President Hassan Rouhani should demand an investigation “so that the truth about Dr. Seyed-Emami becomes clear for the public.” Although his demand was never met, Khatami called for an investigation after Kazemi died.

### **Officials Accuse NGO Workers of Espionage**

A number of other current and former PHWF staff members were also [arrested](#) between January 24 and 25. Officials have accused them of engaging in espionage.

The secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council [said](#) on February 11 that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in the fields of health, women’s issues and the environment were being investigated, alleging they’re operating under a “cloud of ambiguity.”

In his comments to the press, the Tehran prosecutor claimed Seyed-Emami and the remaining detainees were carrying out an elaborate “mission” directed by the US and Israel.

“On January 9, 2018, based on a report by one of the security organizations sent to the Shahid Moghaddas Court... it was determined that the suspects were directed by CIA and Mossad intelligence officers to carry out a three-pronged mission in environmental issues, penetration into Iran’s scientific community and gathering information from sensitive and vital places in the country, including missile bases,” said Dowlatabadi.

On February 11, Dowlatabadi had [claimed](#) that Seyed-Emami “knew that many had confessed against him and he himself had made some confessions, too. But unfortunately, he committed suicide.”

Dowlatabadi added that Seyed-Emami was one of several former and current PHWF staff members arrested for “espionage under the guise of research.”

On February 11, the Fars News Agency, which is affiliated with the IRGC, published a [report](#) with the headline, “Details of a suspected spy’s suicide in prison,” claiming that Seyed-Emami “admitted handing over a large volume of classified information to foreign intelligence services.”

### **Lawyer: IRGC Film of Seyed-Emami’s Prison Cell Does Not Show Act of Suicide**

February 14, 2018

<https://www.iranhumanrights.org/2018/02/lawyer-irgc-film-of-seyed-emamis-prison-cell-does-not-show-act-of-suicide/>



*Film Shows Detainee Visibly Agitated Before Disappearing From Camera’s View*

A lawyer representing the family of [Kavous Seyed-Emami](#), who died under [interrogation](#) in Evin Prison on February 9, 2018, said a film of the detainee's last living hours does not show him committing suicide.

Payam Dorafshan also told the Center for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI) that he and another lawyer hired by the family are investigating the case to determine the cause of death and reason Seyed-Emami was visibly agitated before he died.

“An autopsy was carried out and a burial permit was issued when Mr. Seyed-Emami was buried but for the cause of death, we have to wait for the medical examiner's final report, which usually takes a month,” Dorafshan told CHRI on February 13.

He added: “What does the medical report say about what was in his blood? Did he take medications? We will ask the family if he was taking any medications or not. Unfortunately, the family is not in a suitable mental state right now. We have to do some investigations ourselves and seek help from judicial officials.”

“So far, Mr. Shahriari, the Criminal Court investigator in this case, has been acting well and in our presence, he spoke firmly to some organization and told them that they must hand over the [interrogation] film or else the family would not take the body,” he added. “Mr. Shahriari said he would study the interrogations to see what state Seyed-Emami was in.”

On February 12, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) requested a meeting with an unknown number of lawmakers to show them a film of Seyed-Emami's last moments.

“The fact that the film was shown to members of Parliament by the IRGC indicates that they were the ones holding him,” Dorafshan told CHRI. “They claim the incident happened in Evin Prison. Lawmakers claim that he was being held under good conditions because he was a professor but he could not tolerate it and committed suicide.”

He continued: “However, in the film, we see that he is very anxious and disheveled in his cell. This is the part we are interested in and we want to know what you did to him for him to act that way? From a legal standpoint, if something goes wrong, responsibility lies with the detaining authority and the [State] Prisons Organization. I hope if some people are at fault, they won't hide behind the state.”

The film does not show the actual act of suicide, Dorafshan told CHRI.

“There used to be a hidden camera in his cell which had hygienic services [a toilet] but apparently the [State] Prisons Organization had complained and said that there was no need for the camera to show the toilet. Or maybe their cameras cannot cover the whole area in these kinds of cells,”

He continued: “In the film, he enters the hygienic services' area. The next day, someone brings breakfast and leaves. The film shows that this person comes back and sees that the breakfast has not been picked up. He opens the door and then calls out for others to come. When they take the body out there is a shirt around the neck. They had to cut the shirt because it had become too tight.”

Dorafshan and another lawyer, Arash Keykhosravi, are jointly representing the Seyed-Emami family to seek answers about the death of the 63-year-old Iranian-Canadian, who [died in Evin Prison](#) on February 9.

A sociology professor at Tehran's Imam Sadeq University, Seyed-Emami was also the managing director of the [Persian Heritage Wildlife Foundation](#) (PHWF) when he was arrested on January 24, 2018, along with other current and former staff members at the non-governmental organization (NGO).

When the body was delivered to his family on February 9, the authorities claimed he had committed suicide. He was [buried](#) near Amaneh Cemetery near Tehran on February 13.

“The moment of suicide is not clear in this film,” said Deputy Parliamentary Speaker Ali Motahari after viewing the film of Seyed-Emami's cell. “But for seven or eight minutes, he was doing things that could possibly suggest he had the intention to commit suicide.”

The conservative MP said that “more details are necessary” to determine the cause of death.

On February 13, Tehran Prosecutor Abbas Jafari Dowlatabadi [accused](#) Seyed-Emami and other current and former PHWF staff members arrested at the same time as the university professor of gathering classified information for US and Israeli intelligence agencies under the guise of research.

Seyed-Emami's family attorney countered that Dowlatabadi broke the law by making unsubstantiated accusations to the press.

“The prosecutor's statements are in violation of the law,” Dorafshan told CHRI. “The accused should go to court and face charges in a trial before a ruling is made. The law prohibits anyone from accusing people of committing crimes.”

The exact number of people who were detained when Seyed-Emami was arrested is not known but in addition to Seyed-Emami, so far seven other names have been mentioned by Iranian news media: Amir-Hossein Khaleghi, Niloufar Bayani, Sam Rajabi, [Morad Tahbaz](#), Taher Ghadirian, Houman Jowkar and his wife, Sepideh Kashani.

Kaveh Madani, the deputy head of Iran's [Department of Environment](#) (DOE) in charge of international affairs who had reportedly also been detained, posted a [video](#) on Twitter on February 12 saying that he had returned to work and thanking people for expressing concern.

But a BBC Persian reporter, Mehdi Parpanchi, [said](#) he had information that Madani had recorded the video in his office in the presence, of security agents who then returned him to custody.

## **Seyed-Emami's Son Reveals Threats Against Family**

February 14, 2018

<https://www.iranhumanrights.org/2018/02/statement-by-seyed-emamis-son-reveals-threats-against-family-calls-for-independent-investigation/>



Kavous Seyed Emami and his son, Ramin.

## ***Ramin Seyed-Emami Says Family is Seeking Independent Investigation***

February 14, 2018 — The son of [Kavous Seyed-Emami](#), an Iranian-Canadian academic and environmentalist who [died while he was detained in Evin Prison for interrogations](#) in early February 2018, has broken his family’s silence on the case and issued a statement on his personal [blog](#). In it, Ramin Seyed-Emami said a [film](#) of his father’s last hours in his cell does not show him committing the act of suicide, and that the family will be using “every legal channel” to launch an independent investigation.

Ramin Seyed-Emami also wrote that his mother was “interrogated and threatened” for three hours and told not to speak to the media before she was informed that her husband had died on February 9.

The full English statement as it appeared on Ramin Seyed-Emami’s blog on February 14, 2018, follows.

### **OFFICIAL STATEMENT FROM RAMIN SEYED EMAMI (FEB 14)**

Before anything else, I want to thank those who in the past few days have given their love and support to the Seyed Emami family. Your presence has given life to Kavous’ absence. I also want to thank those — lawyers, MPs, journalists, and friends — who have tried to shine light on the ambiguities of this case.

We have a right to know why my father was arrested and the circumstances that led to his passing. In the laws of Iran, this right has been secured. We will use every legal channel at our disposal towards an independent investigation.

In the morning of 12 February 2018 we went to the Coroner’s office in Kahrizak, south of Tehran, in the presence of two lawyers, Mr. Keykhosravi and Mr. Derafshan. At the Coroner’s, our lawyers were not allowed to accompany us inside to see the body and the autopsy report. We met with three gentlemen. They told us that an autopsy will automatically take place when a death occurs in prison. We were told that even an expedited autopsy report takes 4-6 weeks to release. Also, these gentlemen told us that should we insist on the presence of our lawyers, we need to go to the 27th District Court and obtain permission. This was the same court that three days earlier, on Friday 9th of February 2018, had summoned my mother purportedly to “meet with her husband.” Instead, they had interrogated and threatened her for three hours before announcing the death of his husband and having her sign a paper not to speak to the media, otherwise she would be put in prison. Similar threats of harming my dad had previously been issued from authorities and forced us to keep silent during the time he was in custody. From this Court, she had been taken to the Coroner to see the body of her husband.

In the 27th District Court, my brother and I met with a gentleman in the presence of our lawyers for 2 hours. The lawyers asked to see all documents — including the case file and closed-circuit video showing inside of the cell. I was the only member of the family to see the video. I want to stress this point because rumors have spread that my uncle has also seen it. None of my uncles have spoken to the media and any statement to this effect is null and void.

I won’t speak of the pain of seeing this video, but I will say that nothing in it is conclusive. The actual death is not recorded. All I could see is that my dad is nervous and restless. He is not himself. He paces the cell to and fro. I can say the man in the video (my dad) who goes

into a different room, which we were told was the “bathroom,” by himself, is not in a sound psychological condition. Seven hours later a body is carried out of that room. The lawyers’ request to see the cell was refused. We filed a complaint right there. Also at the Court, I was shown pictures of a body during autopsy.

In the morning of 13 February 2018, my brother and I, along with several family members went to the Coroner’s and having met with the director, received the body. The death certificate we received states that the autopsy report is “pending.”

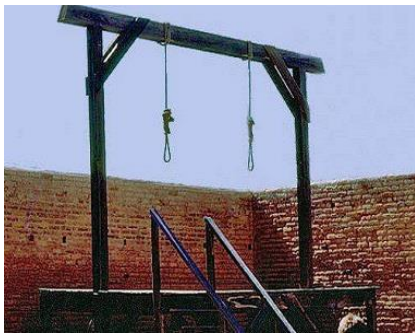
Our family’s wish, first and foremost, is to know why my father was arrested, the details of his interrogation, and to see any files associated with this case.

*\*This article was modified on February 15, 2018, to reflect that Seyed-Emami died in custody while he was being held in Evin Prison for interrogations.*

## **Five Prisoners Executed in Kermanshah and Sari**

*Posted on:* 13th February, 2018

<https://www.en-hrana.org/five-prisoners-executed-kermanshah-sari>



HRANA News Agency – Five inmates who were mostly charged with “murder” were executed at Dizelabad Prison in Kermanshah on Monday, December 11, 2017.

According to the report of Human Rights Activists News Agency in Iran (HRANA), five inmates who were mostly charged with “murder” were executed at Dizelabad Prison in Kermanshah on Monday, December 11, 2017.

The identity of one of these executed prisoners was confirmed by HRANA to be “Kavous Ashouri”, who was sentenced to death on charges of “murder.”

The identities of other executed prisoners is still under investigation by HRANA.

It should be mentioned that another prisoner was executed on charges of “murder” in the prison of Sari on December 11, 2017.

## **Seven Death Row Sunni Prisoners Awaiting New Trial**

*Posted on:* 13th February, 2018

<https://www.en-hrana.org/seven-death-row-sunni-prisoners-awaiting-new-trial>



HRANA News Agency – Seven Sunni prisoners in Rajai Shahr prison in Karaj who had formerly been sentenced to death by the Supreme Court, are still in a state of uncertainty on the eve of the ninth year of their imprisonment.

According to the report of Human Rights Activists News Agency in Iran (HRANA), seven Sunni prisoners, including Davoud Abdollahi, Kamran Sheikheh, Farhad Salimi, Anvar Khezri, Khosrow Besharat, Qasim Abesteh, and Ayoub



Karimi, are detained since December 7, 2009 and were sentenced to death by judge Moghiseh of Branch no. 28 of the Revolutionary Court, in March of 2015. The sentences were not approved by Judge Razini in the Supreme Court; however, after eight years of imprisonment, they remain in a state of uncertainty.

An informed source told HRANA's reporter: "Following the death sentences' rejection in the Supreme Court by Judge Razini, the cases of Farhad Salimi, Ayoub Karimi, Davoud Abdollahi, Qasem Abesteh, and Anwar Khezri were referred to Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court, chaired by Judge Salavati, and the prosecution of the case with three other defendants was referred to Urmia for reconsideration."

In September 2017, Anvar Khezri, Kamran Shikheh and Khosro Basharat were transferred to the Urmia Prison for trial, and no court hearings have been held for them yet.

These Sunni prisoners were accused by the security forces of charges such as acting against national security, "propaganda against the regime", "membership in the Salafist groups", "Corruption" and "Moharebeh", although the details of their activities have not been clarified by the authorities and judicial bodies.

According to the information provided to HRANA, the defendants have denied the charge of engaging in violent struggles and argued that they were arrested only because of their beliefs and activities, such as attending religious meetings and broadcasting religious material.

These inmates claim that they were tortured mentally and physically during the interrogation.

## **Iran hangs at least 6 inmates of Gohardasht Prison**

By IranHRM On Feb 14, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/02/14/7691/>



At least six inmates were executed today in Gohardasht Prison of Karaj.

The victims included Farnam Farinam and Mor-teza Shafaghi. One victim was an Afghan national.

Three were tortured and taken to the execution scene, but temporarily returned. They include: Saeed Ranjbar, Mohammad Omrani and Mohammad Saleh Dowlat-abadi. Nooses were

placed around their necks and then returned to their wards. All three were so terrified they couldn't speak.

Mohammad Salehi was sentenced to death while every piece of evidence collected pointed to his innocence, reports indicate. He had been charged with murder based on confessions he had made under pressure.

Reports indicate 15 inmates had been transferred to solitary confinement on Monday in preparation for their executions scheduled for Wednesday, Feb 14th.

Omid Rostami who was under the age of 18 at the time of committing the crime, was among those transferred to solitary confinement on Monday. There is no news of his fate at the time of publishing this report.

At least three juvenile offenders were executed in January including [Amirhossein Pourjafar](#), [Ali Kazemi](#) and [Mahboubeh Mofidi](#). They were executed for crimes they allegedly committed when they were 16, 15 and 17 years old respectively.

Amnesty International has indicated that between 2014 and 2017, there have been at least 25 individuals executed in Iran for crimes that they committed when they were minors.

As well as carrying out executions, Iran continues to use medieval methods of punishment such as the amputation of limbs and lashing. There is no place for such cruelty and the Iranian regime must be held accountable for its actions.

### **Holder of Ph.D. from Strasburg University and law degree from Tehran University hanged in Rajaie Shahr Prison amidst media silence**

By [IranHRM](#) On Feb 15, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/02/15/holder-ph-d-strasburg-university-law-degree-tehran-university-hanged-rajaie-shahr-prison-amidst-media-silence/>



State run media announced the execution of a person they described as “a middle aged man who was charged with establishing a mysticism institution in Tehran” on February 12.

The man was actually Karim Zargar, the head of the Path to Wisdom (Eckankar) Institute, the former head of the Seda and Sima College, law graduate from Tehran

University and holder of a maritime law Ph.D. from Strasburg University in France. He was hanged on January 30 in Rajaie Shahr (Gohardasht) Prison in Karaj.

The 64 year old also had a history in cinematic activities. He was the Chief Executive Officer of TV Abroad, the Director of Broadcasting for Channel One, the head of the Seda and Sima (Iranian national TV) College, and the Editor in Chief of Film Report Monthly Journal.

Karimi was arrested on October 2015 after the closure of and arrest of the directors of the Path of Wisdom Institution along with [Marjan Davari](#). He was transferred to Section 209 in Evin Prison. Before this, Erfanian, [Marjan Davari's lawyer](#) had said that Mr. Karim Zargar was the head of the institution who was sentenced to death and that his death sentence had been confirmed.

Finally, amidst media silence, Karim Zargar's death sentence was carried out on January 30. *Eckankar (meaning Co-worker with God), called “the Path of Spiritual Freedom”, is a new religious movement founded by Paul Twitchell in 1965. It is a non-profit religious group with members in over one hundred countries.*

### **Iran: The fourth inmate murdered in Sanandaj Prison**

By [IranHRM](#) On Feb 16, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/02/16/iran-fourth-inmate-murdered-sanandaj-prison/>

Authorities in Sanandaj Prison murdered an inmate by the name of Hossein Gholizadeh on Feb 13, reports indicate. His body was found in the jail's bathroom. Prison authorities said he committed suicide, a claim rejected by his cell-mates.

Hossein Gholizadeh is the fourth inmate who has been murdered in this facility in recent month. Sarou Ghahremani, Kianoush Zandi and Hossein Ghaderi were also killed under torture. Authorities claimed they committed suicide.

## Special Court for the Clerics

### Four Decades of Special Court for the Clerics; A Special Report

Posted on: 13th February, 2018

<https://www.en-hrana.org/four-decades-special-court-clerics-special-report>



HRANA News Agency – Four decades after the establishment of the Special Court for the Clerics, the structure, activities and procedures of the court are still unclear. This report briefly examines the Special Court for the Clerics in its 4 decades of establishment, and with explaining the process of these courts, this report will attend to various issues such as the right to an attorney, the attitude, and the legitimacy of these courts.

After about four decades of the establishment of the Special

Court for the Clerics, the activities of this particular judicial institution continue to address issues related to clerics and graduates of the theology seminaries throughout the country. This institution was established, following the message of the founder of Islamic Republic of Iran on 24th May 1979. Ayatollah Khomeini in that message says: "... Although in Islam for the punishment of offenders, there is no difference between the groups, and everyone is equal before the law, the offenders who with wearing the clergy outfit have put themselves in this queue, should be Punished. However, as informed, some opponents of Islam and the cleric seek to crush the clergy in the name of purification ... Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to the following points.

Noting that the Clerics are more aware of the Mullahs issues, In the cities by the announced first-degree scholars, Committees consisting of three people from the field of science and two trusted locals, the structure and mandate to deal with individual cases to be given to them if the individual clerics or preacher, and after the charges have been proven true, they shall be punished under provisions of Islamic Revolutionary court. 2- No one or any group has the right to protest or object against the Mullahs or Clerics. In case of violation, the Revolutionary Court is obligated to prosecute and punish him..." (SAHIFE-Ye Imam, vol. 7, 466).

In the wake of the establishment of this court, in most of Iran's cities, boards of delegations were formed that punished some clergies, under charges such as dependence on the Former Royal Court, the praising the Pahlavi dynasty, or the cooperation with SAVAK. These Clergies some were condemned to lose their clergy status, and were banned from preaching and sermons.

In the second phase, and from the beginning of 1980, the Clerical court pursued its work with more discipline and in the late 1980s, the court was officially established in Qom.

Attorney General of the time, Hossein Mousavi Tabrizi, in a memorandum urged all courts to submit all Cleric cases to the special Clerical Court of Qom Clerical Court. However, due to lack of facilities and resources, later it was announced that the judicial judges have the inherent jurisdiction to handle clerical cases, but any case that the Clerical Court request must be sent to this court. At this stage –due to high volume of work and complaints made by the offenders– the Clerical Court of Qom was dissolved in 1985.

In 1986, by the order of the supreme leader of the time, the Clerical Court recommenced its operations. The reason for the recommencement of operations of this court was announced to be for the handling of the case of Mehdi Hashemi, the brother of the son in law of the deputy to Supreme Leader of the time, Ayatollah Hussein-Ali Montazeri. At this stage, Ali Fallahian was appointed by the supreme leader of the time, to the Prosecutor's Office of the Special Clerical Court. In this regard, Ayatollah Khomeini writes in a letter: "In order to preserve the necessity of the dignity of clergies and the seminaries, I am appointing you in the position of the prosecutor of the Special Clerical Court, so that in accordance with the standards of the holy law, to attend to the crimes of those disguised as clerics, whom sell religion to profit in world. In addition, all courts and public prosecutors are required to assist you with forwarding all cases and documents that are within this courts jurisdiction, to this court...".

Moreover, the leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran through an order, appoints Ali Razini as the head ruler/judge of the Special Clerical Court. According to the website of the Islamic Encyclopedia, "[T]he Prosecutor's Office and the Special Clerical Court at this stage [is] an organization independent of the judiciary and its jurisdiction [is] extended beyond the judicial jurisdiction of Qom and Tehran, at the request of the head of the special court."

Furthermore, this court has jurisdiction has widen to all crimes committed by clerics, including aides and accessories to the crime, where the main culprit is a cleric.

In addition, a letter from the President of the Special Court, it was stated that this court shall act in accordance to religious laws. In other words, the documentation and the basis of the rules and procedure in this court, should not follow the general rule of the law, but instead it should follow religious rules.

According to the mentioned website, the next step in the consolidation of the special Clerical court was the enactment of the by-law of the Procuracy and Special Clerical Courts in July 1990. In this by-law, the procedure, the organization and structure of the Special Court was determined. Following the approval of the Supreme Leader, this by-law, which was set up by the Clerical Court's Prosecution office, was legislated, and the special Clerical Court found a legal basis.

On November 7, 1990, Mohammad Salimi was appointed the head of the Second Branch of the Special Court for the Clerics, and this court expanded into two branches.

Article 1 of the by-law of the Special Courts of the Clerics declares, the purpose of the establishment of the Special prosecutor's office and the special court for the cleric "to prevent the influence of corrupt and criminal individuals in the seminaries, preserve the dignity of clergy, and punish the cleric offenders."

Article 2 declares the functions of the court and the special court as follows:

Measures to Prevent Offenses and Crimes against the law

Guidance on offences against dignity

The investigation of clerical crimes and cases that are related to the purposes of this procuracy.

Article 13 of the by-law also declared the jurisdiction of the Prosecutors and the Special Clerical Courts as follows:

All general offences committed by clerics

All acts contrary to the clergy's dignity

All local disputes are detrimental to public safety

All matters that the supreme leader assigns to be addressed

Article 9 of the bylaw, divides the extension and distribution of Special Clerical Court to the following ten jurisdictions:

Tehran, Qom, Mashhad, Isfahan, Shiraz, Tabriz, Sari, Ahvaz, Kerman and Hamedan

In terms of legal status, the Special Clerical Court in terms of need for permanence and survival, supervision, and the appointment and dismissal of officials, is headed by the Supreme Leader.

Article 528 of the Civil Procedure Law, adopted in 2000, stipulates:

"The Special Prosecutor's Office and the Special Clerical Court, was formed on the instructions of the supreme leader, the Supreme Leader of the Revolution, Imam Khomeini. According to Principles 5 and 57 of the Constitution, until the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution continues to consider these courts purposeful and expedient, they shall continue to attend to offences committed by the clerics, and the payment of the salaries and benefits of judges and their employees is in accordance to the relevant provisions of the judiciary."

Article 1 of the bylaw adopted in 1390 also considered the organization of the prosecutor's office and the Special Court of Clerics under the supervision of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic, which consists of various aspects. The appointment and dismissal of the prosecutor and the court is the responsibility of the Supreme Leader.

Article 3 of the aforementioned bylaw stipulates: "The Special Clerical Attorney will be appointed by the Supreme Leader. He also has the authority to dismissal and appointment of prosecutors and staff of the Special Cleric prosecution office." Article 10 of this bylaw man-



dates: “The head ruler/judge of the first branch of the Special Court for the Clerics must be appointed by the Supreme Leader.”

And according to the article 11 of this bylaw: “Other judges of this court are appointed according to the Supreme Leader’s opinion”

Heads of the Clerical Court since its inception:

Ali Fallahian, Mohammad Mohammadi Reyshahri, Ali Raazini, Gholam-Hossein Mohseni eje’i, mohammad Salimi and currently in office is Mohammad Jaffar Montazeri.

In addition to the head of the Special Court for the Clerics, the Special prosecutor for the clerics is also appointed by the Supreme Leader. The current prosecutor and chairman of the Clerical Court is Ebrahim Raisi, who was appointed by the supreme leader in 2012.

The cases and procedures before the Clerical Court are generally secret and confidential. According to available reports, the complaint is initially addressed in the provincial Clerical Court and then with the prosecutor’s order are referred to other courts. And again, referred to the special prosecutor for issuing an indictment. Following the issuance of the indictment, the case is moved to the first court that is in the same court. After the first verdict, in the case of any parties’ objection, the case moves forward to the Clerical Court of Appeal, which is only in Tehran. The appeal courts verdict is final, and only the accused cleric may request a retrial. In such cases, the plaintiff does not have the right to receive any of the documents and the written verdict.

### The Right to an Attorney

Based on HRANA’s research, there has been disagreements regarding the right to an attorney up to 1991, however on 23 September 1991 and with approval of the Expediency Discernment Council, the parties were granted the right to attorney. According to reports, the lawyer of this court must be an approved Cleric and who is included in the list of attorneys approved by the Special Clerical Court.

### A Glance at The Cases in the Special Clerical Court

There are not many stories about the encounters of the trials at the Special Clerical Court. Many of the cases in this court have been kept secret and even those convicted by this court have not spoken about it. However, there are some specific narratives of people who have been tried or convicted by this court. Issues raised regarding this court could be found in books such as Ayatollah Montazeries Memoirs, or writings such as the, prison notes written by Hassan Yousefi Eshkevari, dating from year 2000 to 2004, titled as “From Berlin to Evin” and published in Stockholm, Sweden by Baran publication.

In the history of the Islamic Republic many clerics have been trialed, imprisoned and even executed by the Clerical Court, at the behest of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran who is the head of this court. Seyyed Hassan Tabatabai Qomi is a Marja who at the behest of Ayatollah Khomeini was sent to confinement that lasted many years. Seyyid Mohammad Kazem Shariatmadari the famous and well known Marja who had many followers, was also confined with the orders of the founder of the Islamic Republic and eventually died in confinement. Seyyid Reza Sadr –son of Seyyid Sadraldin sadr and brother of Seyyid Mousavi Sadr—under charge of reverence for Ayattolah Shariatmadari was confined after his death, he

documented the confinement in notes named “in the prison of Vali-ye Faqih [supreme leader]”. Many Clerics in the initial decade of the Islamic republic, after the 1979 revolution, were confined with behest of Ayatollah Khomeini, for instance, Seyyid Rez Zanjani and Seyyid Abolfazl Zanjani who were well known clerics and founders and activists of the National Resistance Movement of Iran after the coup of August 19, 1953.

Mehdi Haeri Yazdi – son of the founder of the Qom Seminary—who had doctorate in philosophy and was a Marja, after returning to Iran in 1980, and after 2 years of confinement and limitations, left the country. Seyyid Mohammad Sadeq Rohani is another Marja who was confined from 1984 to 2001. Mohammad Hosseini Shirazi is another Marja, who because of his opposition during the Iran-Iraq war, was held at under house arrest in Qom for 20 years and eventually died in while under house arrest.

Ahmad Azari Qomi, Hossein-Ali Montazeri, Yousef Saanei, Abdolkarim Mousavi Ardebili, Asadallah Bayat and Abdolhamid Masoumi Tehrani are also amongs known Clerics who have been dealt with in the Islamic Republic. Azari Qomi passed away in confinement and Montazeri spent 5 years in confinement. Abdolhamid Masoumi Tehrani, also at least in two occasions was sentenced to prison in the Clerical Court.

Hassan Saanei, Hadi Ghafari, Ali Tehrani, Abdolmajid MAedikhoh, Morteza Fahim Kermani, Hadi Ghabel, Ahmad Ghabel and Hadi Khamenei are amongst others who have spent sometimes in the prisons of the Clerical Court.

Gholam-Hussein Daneshi, Mehdi Hashemi and Abdolreza Hejazi are of Clerics who have been executed in the Clerical Court, for dependence on the former regime or activities that are not permitted by the Islamic republic.

Fattallah Omid Najafabadi and Mir-Ali Naghi Seyyid Khavari Langeroudi, are amongst those who have been sentenced to death and were executed by the Clerical Court, for indecent behavior –adultery.

Many Clerics have been charged and convicted of the indecent behavior (Adultery) in the Special Clerical Court. Some of the offenders in this court have spoken of a charge titled “Failure to comply to dignity of Clergy”, and they have mentioned this charge could receive any sentence from very light to very harsh, and that is up to the case judge.

In the years following June 1997 and the beginning of the reform era in Iran, the cases of some reformist clerics were trialed in this court. Among those are Abdollah Nouri, Mohsen Kadivar and Mohammad Mousavi Khoeini.

The followings are some of the cases being processed in the Special Clerical Court currently: Ahmad Montazeri, Mohammad-Reza Nekounam, Majid Jafaritarbar , and Seyyed Mohammad-Hossein Kazemeyni Borougerdi. Given the lack of transparency of the Clerical Court and the lack of precise knowledge of its cases, only when a case is brought up in the public it could be realized that it is under process in this court.

Hassan Yousefi Eshkevari writes in his book about his house phone being monitored, he states the Judge telling him that he must have a lawyer as a decoration! Eshkevari also mentions twice the judge has requested death sentence for him. He also has mentioned of the prison guards asking him to write a letter to the supreme leader asking for “repentance and pardon”. Reza Alijani in an article titled “A direct narration from behind the walls of the Special

court and the clerics' special prison" that was published in the "Zeytoun" website, with reference to Yousef Eshkevari and his book writes: "for instance he recalls he person called Ghaem Maghami who was known as the Rasul Ajam [Iranian messenger]. He claimed to be a prophet that continues the path of the prophet of Islam. Except for this claim, Yousefi strongly defends and support him throughout the book, and mentions him as a 'good friend': 'If you didn't have this one issue; you were perfect!'. Yousefi says 'he was a decent person in terms of curtesy and self-esteem and serving others and acting according to the Sharia law; if there was one real Muslim in this ward that was him.' He also recalls the corrupt clerics in the prison harassing and even attempting to murder him, that seem to be led by the officials of the Clerical Court. Once because he walked in the prison pool –as they knew him as Najis[unclean]– they make a spectacle that its details are mentioned in the book. Yousefi also mentions a memory where Ghaem Maghami warned him of an error himself was about to make, and agrees that due to his honesty and integrity he had some revelations"

Eshkevari also mentions that at least half of the imprisoned Clerics have temporary wives. In another point in his book he mentions the story of a cleric, who was being stoned but was able to pull him self out of the ground during the stoning procedure and run way.

He also writes in this book that some of the offenders were in prison under financial charges.

Yousefi Eshkevari was sentenced to loosing his cleric status and prison by the Special Clerical Court.

"moral corruption" is a common allegation against clerics who have been arrested and trailed by Special Clerical Court, for instance Mohammad-Reza Nekounam, a Shia Marja, has been alleged to be morally corrupt. He was reportedly, initially alleged to be morally corrupt on the grounds that he was arrested for his criticizing the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Some Clerics have told HRANA, that such allegations are based on a hadith called "Mubahala". Based on the Hadith studies they consider this Hadith to be unauthentic.

Majid Jafaritarabar is another cleric who was known for his Istikharah. He along his wife were initially accused of moral corruption, but it has been said that in his case he was sentenced to loosing cleric status and death for charges such as, "fellowship and followers", "financial", "being in contact with Jinns", and "claiming to be in contact with Imam Zaman", this is while the judicial sources have not made official announcements regarding his charges.

### Legal Criticism of the Clerical Court

The first issue is the lack of mention of this court in the constitution, and that it is not approved by the Islamic Consultative Assembly as a legislative body. In the Constitution of the Islamic Republic, in Principles 19, 20 and 107 of the Constitution, it is stipulated that: "The people of Iran, from every tribe to which they belong, enjoy equal rights, and color, race, language and such, do not bestow any privileges. The Supreme Leader in front of the law is equal to everyone else." Every exception in this principle needs legal clarification. The Special Court for the Clergy is completely contrary to these principles. The point is that, according to the constitution, as the country's highest legal document, except for cases involving military courts, all offences should be investigated in the judiciary. Also, in Article 110 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, no reference has been made to such courts regarding the duties and authority of the Supreme Leader.

The Special Clerical Court is an institution to address the charges against mullahs and clerics who are involved in cases where their main offender is a cleric. The court was established, according to Article I of the bylaw on Special Clerical Courts and procuracy, in order to “prevent the influence of corrupt and criminal individuals in the seminaries, preserve the dignity of clergy, and punish the cleric offenders.” But following its establishment, it has been used against the opposing and critical clerics. The Special Court is a court that when we speak with some clerics who have been trialed in it, we can tell that they are afraid of this court more than any ordinary or even revolutionary courts. This has no other reason but the attitude of this court, lack of transparency and the freedom of the system to do as wish in this court. A court that, create a fear that makes the opposing clerics to not allow themselves to criticize or do anything that might lead them to this court.

## Prisoners of Conscience

### Exclusive Interview With Attorney Of U.S. Permanent Resident Jailed In Iran

February 10, 2018

<https://en.radiofarda.com/a/Exclusive-Interview-with-Nizar-Zakka-attorney/29032328.html>



Nizar Zakka speaks at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2015

The White House on Wednesday warned Iran that it will be held responsible for the health of 81-year-old American citizen Baquer Namazi, who was recently sent back to prison after medical treatment.

"He remains in urgent need of sustained medical care, and the United States government holds Iran fully accountable for his well-being," a statement from the White House read.

"The Trump administration again calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all unjustly detained and missing United States citizens in Iran, including Baquer Namazi, his son Siamak Namazi, Xiyue Wang, and Robert Levinson."

The Namazis were sentenced to 10 years in prison for "espionage and collaboration with the American government" in October -- a charge denied by the family and dismissed by US authorities.

In addition to US citizens, Nizar Zakka, a Lebanese national and permanent resident of the U.S. is also imprisoned in Iran since September 2015.

In an exclusive interview with Nader Sadighi, Radio Farda Senior Correspondent in Washington, Attorney of Mr. Zakka said that his client has been diagnosed for Cancer and needs immediate medical treatment.

In response to first question regarding his client's condition in prison, Attorney Jason Poblete says Iranian authorities refuse to provide any medical treatment to Nizar:

<https://en.radiofarda.com/a/Exclusive-Interview-with-Nizar-Zakka-attorney/29032328.html>

## Mother Denies Espionage Charges Against Son Detained in Crackdown on Environmental NGO in Iran

February 12, 2018

<https://www.iranhumanrights.org/2018/02/mother-denies-espionage-charges-against-son-detained-in-crackdown-on-environmental-ngo-in-iran/>



Sam Rajabi was detained on January 25, 2018.

The mother of Sam Rajabi, who was arrested in a state-led crackdown on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Iran including the one managed by [Kavous Seyed-Emami](#), who [died in custody](#), said her son has been focused on his career and would never betray his country.

“My son was not a spy,” Rajabi’s mother, Lili Houshmand Afshar, told the Center for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI) on February 11, 2018. “He had the opportunity to live abroad but he preferred to stay and serve his own country. My son is instinctively honorable. He’s not a spy.”

Rajabi and several other people including Seyed-Emami were arrested in late January. The day after Seyed-Emami’s death, which officials claim was a suicide, Tehran Prosecutor Abbas Jafari Dowlatabadi announced that an Iranian security agency had arrested a number of people for alleged espionage.

“These individuals were gathering classified information in strategic fields under the guise of scientific and environmental projects,” [Dowlatabadi](#) claimed on February 10, without providing further details.

A day later, the secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council [said](#) NGOs working in sectors including health, women’s issues and the environment were being investigated, alleging they’re operating under a “cloud of ambiguity.”

Rajabi is one of several current and former staff members at the [Persian Heritage Wildlife Foundation](#) (PHWF) who were arrested on January 24 and 25, 2018. Others include Seyed-Emami, Houman Jowkar, Niloufar Bayani, Morad Tahbaz, Taher Ghadirian, Amir-Hossein Khaleghi and Sepideh Kashani.

Seyed-Emami was PHWF’s managing director. News of his death was announced on February 10 on [Twitter](#) by his son, Ramin, who said his mother was told by judicial authorities that Seyed-Emami had taken his own life.

“This individual [Seyed-Emami] knew that many had confessed against him and he himself had made some confessions, too. But unfortunately, he committed suicide,” [said](#) Tehran Prosecutor Abbas Jafari Dowlatabadi on February 11.

Rajabi’s mother told CHRI that the authorities have not allowed her to contact her son.

“I have absolutely no news about my son situation,” she said. “He has not made any contact since he was detained. I went to Evin Prison twice. First, the authorities didn’t tell me any-



thing convincing. They said, if your son does a bad thing, wouldn't you punish him? I said, I wouldn't punish him; I'd talk to him. The second time I went there they wouldn't let me in. They said they would contact me.”

Rajabi's late father, [Parviz Rajabi](#) (1939-2010), was a prominent scholar of Iranian history.

Afshar added: “Sam stopped working for PHWF three and a half years ago. For two years he worked for an international Japanese company on environmental projects, the most important of which was the Anzali Lagoon [in northern Iran]. When his contract ran out, he was doing some translations for a short while until he could find a more permanent job.”

“Agents came to our house at 10 at night on January 24 and took Sam away at 5 in the morning along with some papers and books, including articles he and his father had written. The agents didn't tell us which agency they were from,” she said.

[Kaveh Madani](#), the deputy head of Iran's [Department of Environment](#) (DOE) in charge of international affairs, has also been arrested according to reformist MP Mahmoud Sadeghi.

Masoumeh Ebtekar, the former head of the DOE and current vice president for women and family affairs, expressed concern about the recent events but refused to comment.

“I prefer not to make any statements at this time but we are very worried,” she [said](#) on February 11.

Hossein Vahabzadeh, the founder of the [Kavi Kong](#), which runs nature appreciation classes for children in Iran, called on the current head of the DOE, Isa Kalantari, to act quickly to prevent further harm to the department and the detainees.

“Mr. Kalantari, since when is information about the Persian cheetah classified?” [wrote](#) Vahabzadeh on his Facebook page on February 11.

He continued: “These detainees are some of the best and brightest children of this land who were concerned with nothing but plants and animals. Amir-Hossein Khaleghi, Sam Rajabi, Taher Ghadirian and Houman Jowkar were constantly running around mountains and fields to try to protect the disjointed natural lands of the country. They don't deserve the accusations against them.”

“Do something before it's too late, before we hear more terrible news like that of dear Dr. Seyed-Emami's death,” he added.

## **A Report about the Situation of Rajai Shahr Prison in Karaj**

*Posted on:* 12th February, 2018

<https://www.en-hrana.org/report-situation-rajai-shahr-prison-karaj>



*Rajai-Shahr Prison in Karaj, Tehran, Iran*

HRANA News Agency – Rajai Shahr prison in Karaj where has been classified as whereabouts of inmates with violent crimes, has been used as an exile area of political and non-political prisoners for many years by

the Iranian government. In recent years, numerous reports of illegal behavior of officials of this prison have been published by human rights organizations.

According to the report of Human Rights Activists News Agency in Iran (HRANA), for many years, Rajai Shahr prison in Karaj has become the local for exile to put pressure on political prisoners or non-political prisoners. Rajai Shahr prison in Karaj is the whereabouts of a large number of political prisoners such as Majid Asadi, Ahmad Karimi, Arash Sadeghi, Navid Khanjani and Hamid Babaei and so on. That is why the continuous monitoring of this prison is too important.

Rajai Shahr prison in Karaj has 10 wards and each ward has three halls and its own yard. Usually political prisoners are held in hall 10 and Sunni religious prisoners at another place.

The rooms of Rajai Shahr prison in Karaj are 6 m<sup>2</sup>, and there are two prisoners in a room and there are 4 to 5 prisoners detained in larger rooms. Often, ward 4, hall 11 is the whereabouts of the prisoners with financial crimes, however, suicide has been reported in this ward more than other wards for some unknown reasons.

An old prisoner with the confidential identity, who is detained in ward 7 of the prison, told HRANA's reporter about the situation of various prison wards that ward 10 has two floors, jail suites are located in this ward and is the whereabouts of detainees who were sentenced to solitary confinement. There are Sunni prisoners at the end of ward 7, hall 12.

The source added that "the head of prison is "Ziaiee" who is a former military man and has experience in the police force, the head of protection of prison is "Seyedsadat" and the head of inspection is "Darzi" also head of guard is "Bagheri" who is known as the Hangman among the prisoners, this person throws the rope to the neck of prisoners on death row, prison interior manager is "Ghobadi" who is known as the executive director, he harasses the detainees and also opens up the way of suicide and strike in order to put more pressure on prisoners and also has the power to influence prison personnel. If he slips with someone, he can transfer him to the worst places in the prison."

According to field research of HRANA, the conditions of this prison have been described more precarious. In this regarding, the lack of separation of prisoners based on the crimes and the age of the prisoners, sending of teenager detainees to the ward of dangerous prisoners and the threat of rape can be noted.

Another prisoner told HRANA by confirming the previous statements that "they transferred thirty individuals to solitary to execute them in the month of Muharram when the execution is not custom, as well as they transfer teenager detainees to the ward of adults and keep them in extreme conditions, to the extent that the prisoner is forced to commit suicide."

The prisoner told as a witness to the rape inside the prison, "we all had a history of suicide in the past because of sexual harassment," he explains that they raped a prisoner born in the 90th by force and beatings and the person commits suicide because of severity of shame.

The prisoner explains how a prisoner who has been sentenced to death on charge of Muharebeh and was raped, did not complain due to his fear of being killed in prison.

Another prisoner told HRANA's reporter about another young prisoner that "Abbas Taheri, son of Gholam Reza, born in 1995, charged with murder, was held in ward 7, hall 19. Howev-

er, they transferred Abbas to ward 1, hall 1 as punishment, he might commit suicide or be sexually assaulted in this dangerous ward. He had been sexually assaulted for several times, and we had begged to stop this. He is now held in this ward for about a month.”

Also, the environment of ward 7 is very inappropriate, the prisoners of this ward often have certain diseases, such as hepatitis, AIDS, tuberculosis etc. and self-mutilation with a common razor and sex are normal this ward.

On the other hand, it is reported that Rajai Shahr Prison’s stores lack rich food like fruits and vegetables, but on the contrary, drugs are found in abundance, according to prisoners, heroin, glass and opium can be founded with the minimum price of 4 million IRR and up to the maximum of 10 million IRR per grams. Old prisoners claim that these drugs are mainly supplied by the personnel themselves from outside the prison.

The latest witness who was interviewed in this field report, told about prison staffing that “they break all of our personal belongings during inspections, if the prisoner acts in contravention of the rules, they will beat the prisoner by baton and hold him in solitary for one week.”

It should be noted, the number of smokers is very high, and cigarettes such as Winston are sold for 600 thousand IRR, Kent for 450 thousand IRR and Bahman and Monte Carlo for 200 thousand IRR per a box.

The prisoners who were interviewed in the report and are kept in various wards of this large prison, told HRANA that the prison clinic has no stitch yarns, it can help prisoners just through wound dressing and prisoners are forced to be transferred to Imam Khomeini Hospital in Tehran during the clashes and self-immolations, which is at least an hour away from prison, and this distance can cause the death of the injured person.

One of the prisoners added, “we have dentistry, but we do not have radiology. The clinic is located in front of ward 1 and is a two-floor building located on the mother corridor, the lower floor of clinic which is the whereabouts of the prisoners released from the hospital, is a very dirty and polluted area. The clinic has 10 personnel and their behavior is violent to inmates.”

It is said, the legal visiting are scheduled to be held until 2PM and each prisoner is kept in quarantine for two days after returning from the legal visiting. The time of the cabin’s visit is 20 minutes in Rajai Shahr prison in Karaj and each prisoner can call up to five phone numbers that have been provided to intelligence security before.

### **Political prisoner goes on hunger strike in protest to being charged with “acting against national security”**

By IranHRM On Feb 13, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/02/13/political-prisoner-goes-hunger-strike-protest-charged-acting-national-security/>



On February 1, at least seven civil rights activists were arrested in different cities during a coordinated operation by security systems. They were all transferred to Evin Prison. Despite the passing of nine days, some detainees are still deprived of the right to make phone calls, visits

and access to lawyers and are held in temporary custody.

According to reports, one of detained activists, Nader Afshari, has been charged with acting against national security, without any mention on why he was charged. He started a hunger strike on February 5 in protest to his arrest. He is currently being held at Section 209 in Evin Prison which is under the control of the Ministry of Intelligence.

### **Iran: Baluch blogger in 9th year of detention**

By IranHRM On Feb 14, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/02/14/iran-baluch-blogger-9th-year-detention/>



Political activist and Baluch blogger, Sakhi Rigi, who has been exiled to serve his prison term in Ahwaz Prison, is in his 9th year of incarceration.

He was arrested in 2009 at the age of 31 and has been sentenced to 20 years of prison for charges such as publishing lies and acting against national security.

He received one of the heaviest sentences given to a blogger in a court that did not receive any media attention. He blogged about the condition of Baluch political prisoners. There are no recent details about his condition in Ahwaz Prison.

### **Prisoners of Zahedan Prison Threatened not to Talk to Inspectors**

Posted on: 14th February, 2018

<https://www.en-hrana.org/prisoners-zahedan-prison-threatened-not-talk-inspectors>



HRANA News Agency – Zahedan prison, where there are many political and security detainees, has various problems due to its distance from the central, lack of oversight by the civil society and provincial deprivation, and has witnessed prisoners' protests and their attempts to reach their voices in recent months aiming improvement in their situation in this prison. Eventually some officials were sent from capital to monitor the prisoners' situation, but the prison officials threatened some prisoners who are on death row trying to silence the prisoners, also disconnected the political

prisoners' ward's telephones.

According to the Human Rights Activists News Agency in Iran (HRANA), Zahedan Central Prison suffers from mismanagement, poor facilities, and different manner based on the tastes of its officials.

The state of health, nutrition, management, the presence of drugs and the mafia inside the prison are complex in this prison, and prisoners have been struggling and protesting to change their circumstances.

In addition to numerous reports, HRANA in particular have described the problems of this prison in a recent report.

Following an increase in attention to the problems of the Zahedan Prison, controllers from the capital (Tehran) visited the Zahedan Central Prison and were investigating the complaints of prisoners there.

The expeditionary inspectors, without prior notice, went to the prison and, at the beginning of the visit, went to Ward 3 of the prison, where the political prisoners are kept. They filed prisoners' complaints or problems.

During the inspection, prisoners of Ward 3 discussed their problems and as it was lunch time, prisoners were able to explain the bad quality of the food for inspectors.

In addition to observing the horrible quality of prison food, the inspectors also observed bath problems and breakdowns, toilets, and other problems of the ward.

It is said that at the end of the inspection and leaving the prison by the expeditionary authorities from capital, Mr. Khosravi, head of prison, and Mr. Khajeh, Prison Interior Director cut the telephone in Ward 3 of the prison. The jail deputy, Mahdowi, threatened prisoners in Ward 3, which is the location of the imprisonment of political prisoners, and said "Ward 3 of this prison is a security ward, and we are fully aware that the five prisoners with execution sentences report the prison news to human rights organizations."

He threatened the death row prisoners with imminent execution of their sentences.

This is while; several sources have reported to HRANA that at the time of the prison inspection, Mr. Khajeh had ordered prisoners of Ward 5 and 6 to be transferred to the yard of their wards, so that they could not talk to the inspectors about their problems.

It was reported that the prison authorities tried to prevent the prisoners from discussing their problems so that when a prisoner interviewed the inspectors about the internal problems of the prison, the prison director photographed him and, after inspectors left the prison, prison director threatened him by that photo.

It is to say that the authorities' threats were not limited to Wards 3 and 7 and the prisoners in Ward 1 were also told before the arrival of the inspectors: "If you criticize us and your ward condition, all facilities, visits and phones will be cut off."

However, the expedition inspectors observed the bad situation in Ward 7, to the extent that they found out that not only newly arrived prisoners would not be given any blanket, but because of lack of carpet in the Qur'an class, blankets and carpets of other prisoners are also forcefully taken from them.

At the end, the prison authorities, while threatening political prisoners in Ward 3 who had no illegal action other than claiming their human and legal rights, said that "as long as the news of this Ward are sent to out of this prison, we will still keep your phones cut to insure that there is no contact to report your problems."

## **A Political Prisoner in Difficult Health Condition in Zahedan Prison**



Posted on: 14th February, 2018

<https://www.en-hrana.org/political-prisoner-difficult-health-condition-zahedan-prison>



HRANA News Agency – Mohammad Azar, political prisoner who had been arrested by the Intelligence Office on charge of acting against national security, and held in solitary confinement for several months and then transferred to Zahedan prison has got infectious diseases in the jaw and mouth area since his detention at the Intelligence Office detention center. The infectious disease has led to his inadequate nutrition, but prison authorities have been indifferent to his health condition.

According to the Human Rights Activists News Agency in Iran (HRANA), Mohammad Ali Azar, political prisoner at Zahedan Prison, suffers from an infectious disease in the jaw and mouth, while his case status is in an uncertain situation.

This detainee who was arrested in Qasr Qand on charge of acting against the security of the country, claims to be tortured during the interrogations.

He was transferred to Ward 5 of Zahedan Central Prison about two months ago after being held for 4 months in solitary confinement of the Intelligence Office.

The prisoner claims that his infectious disease is due to being held at the detention center of Intelligence Office.

Mohammad Ali Azar claims to have been subjected to torture during 4 months of interrogation at the Intelligence Office. He told his family that Intelligence agents had used inhumane methods such as blaring, hanging, and threatening him with sexual harassment to get confessions.

Mohammad Ali Azar was born in 1996.

## **Iran: Political prisoner insists on continuing hunger strike**

By IranHRM On Feb 14, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/02/14/iran-political-prisoner-insists-continuing-hunger-strike/>



In a February 12 [voice recording](#) sent out from The Great Tehran Penitentiary addressing political and human rights activists who asked Soheil Arabi to end his hunger strike, the political prisoner insisted on continuing his strike. Soheil Arabi stated “Ending my hunger strike means succumbing accepting punishments that I did not deserve, not even one day of it... I have spent more than 1,700 of the best days of my youth detained in Khamenei’s prisons.”

Soheil Arabi, a writer, blogger and activist, went on hunger strike on January 25, 2018, to protest the illegal banishment of Atena Daemi and Golrokh Iraee to the notorious Qarchak Prison in Varamin, outside Tehran.

On Monday, January 29, Arabi was transferred to the Greater Tehran Prison and was severely beaten, according to an informed source.

“When they reached the prison at 15:30, prison officials along with 10-12 soldiers tore off his clothes and severely beat him. The guards used batons and kicked him in his back, face and leg continuously with their boots. Soheil Arabi’s face, nose and feet were injured and his whole body was bruised,” the source added.

## **Mother of Ailing Hunger Striker Atena Daemi Assaulted in Front of Evin Prison**

February 15, 2018

<https://www.iranhumanrights.org/2018/02/mother-of-ailing-hunger-striker-atena-daemi-assaulted-in-front-of-evin-prison/>



Atena Daemi (right) with her mother Masoumeh Nemati.

[Masoumeh Nemati](#), the mother of imprisoned civil rights activist [Atena Daemi](#), was attacked in front of Evin Prison in Tehran on February 13, 2018, after she tried to inquire about her daughter’s hunger strike.

“Atena and [Golrokh Iraee \[Ebrahimi\]](#), who are on a dry hunger strike, are in serious condition. Instead of answering our questions, they beat us up and interrogated us today,” Nemati said in an interview with the Center for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI).

Daemi and Iraee started a hunger strike on January 25 after they were suddenly and violently [transferred](#) from Evin Prison in Tehran to Gharchak Prison in Varamin, south of the capital.

“I went to Evin Prison to ask how Atena was doing. [Prisoner of conscience] [Soheil Arabi’s](#) mother was also there,” said Nemati.

She continued: “In front of the prison was full of agents. I went to the bathroom and when I got back I saw the agents had surrounded my daughter [Hanieh Daemi] and Mrs. Arabi and they were arguing. They ordered us to get into a van. We kept asking, ‘why?’ They didn’t answer us. We resisted. Then more than 10 plainclothes agents, including two women attacked us and threw my daughter into the van. Her hand is severely swollen. One of the agents struck my leg with a taser and kicked and beat me into the van.”

Nemati added: “We didn’t identify ourselves. They took my daughter’s phone and said we had come to protest. I said Atena is on a dry hunger strike and I came to ask about her. They made us wait for four hours and they kept telling us to stand for mug shots. What for? Did we commit a crime? Then they sent us to the investigator.” Nemati said she was told to submit a complaint.

“The investigator talked with me and my daughter and Soheil Arabi’s mother for nearly two hours. He said, ‘Why didn’t you tell us you are Atena’s relatives?’ We explained what had happened and said we want to know about the hunger strike. He said the agents were dispatched in response to a protest. He told us to write a complaint that we were beaten and we did.”

Nemati continued: “At first, the authorities told us that Atena was not on a hunger strike. They said how could she stay alive without eating anything? I said, ‘Go ask the authorities in Gharchak Prison. My daughter is on a dry hunger strike. She isn’t well.’ Then they asked us to talk to Atena and tell her to end her protest. The investigator said he might bring Atena back to Evin in three or four days. I said she will not be alive in three or four days.”

Nemati told CHRI her daughter suffers from high blood pressure and the Gharchak Prison doctors had told her that she could have a seizure. “Her body is also dealing with an outbreak of hives, which means her liver is reacting,” added Nemati. “She’s frothing and throwing up blood.”

“When Atena called us, she said Golrokh had spasms at four in the morning on Tuesday, February 13 and started to talk deliriously,” she said. “She lost consciousness and they poured water on her face and slapped her until she woke up again. But neither of them are willing to go to the clinic to receive serum.”

Since November 2016, Daemi has been serving a [seven-year prison sentence](#) for the charges of meeting the families of political prisoners, criticizing the Islamic Republic of Iran on Facebook and condemning the 1988 [mass executions](#) of political prisoners in Iran.

Iraee, an accountant, began serving a [six-year prison sentence](#) in October 2016 for “insulting the sacred” and “propaganda against the state,” primarily for writing an unpublished story about stoning that was confiscated during a raid of her home by the Revolutionary Guards. The raid was initially organized against Iraee’s husband, civil rights activist [Arash Sadeghi](#), who is serving a [19-year sentence](#).

Iraee and Daemi are demanding to be returned to Evin Prison. They argue that their transfer to Gharchak violates Article 513 of Iran’s [Criminal Procedure Regulations](#), which dictates that convicts should serve their terms in prison facilities in the judicial district where their sentences were issued, or near their city of residence.

The women also said that they are being kept in a ward with non-political prisoners, including potentially violent offenders, in violation of Article 69 of Iran’s [State Prisons Organization’s regulations](#).

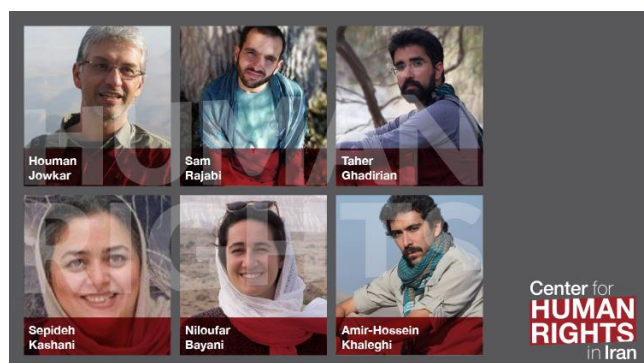
Article 69 states: “All convicts, upon being admitted to walled prisons or rehabilitation centers, will be separated based on the type and duration of their sentence, prior record, character, morals and behavior, in accordance with decisions made by the Prisoners Classification Council.”

Gharchak Prison is believed to hold more than 1,000 female prisoners convicted of various crimes, including violent offenses. The prison has a reputation for poor sanitation, overcrowding and under-resourced medical staff.

## Environmentalists Detained in Iran Denied Legal Counsel Weeks After Arrests

February 15, 2018

<https://www.iranhumanrights.org/2018/02/environmentalists-detained-in-iran-denied-legal-counsel-weeks-after-arrests/>



### *Some Detainees Allowed Brief Contact With Their Families*

Environmental activists who were detained at the same time as [Kavous Seyed-Emami](#)—who recently died in [custody](#)—are being denied access to legal counsel, the Center for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI) has learned.

“We are simple, ordinary people. We are not political. But unfortunately, the authorities are not letting lawyers get involved,” a source who requested anonymity for fear of state reprisals for speaking to the media told CHRI on February 14, 2018.

“Some of the families have retained lawyers but when the lawyers ask questions, no one gives answers and won’t allow them to enter the case,” added the source.

While the right to counsel is ostensibly protected under Article 35 of Iran’s [Constitution](#), the Note to Article 48 of Iran’s Criminal Procedure Regulations states: “If a person is held in custody on suspicion of committing ... a crime against the internal or external security of the country... he shall not meet a lawyer for a week from the time of his arrest.”

The detainees have been held for four weeks since their arrests on January 24 and 25, 2018, without full access to counsel.

Six of the detainees were allowed to briefly contact their families on February 14, 2018.

“They called and they all said the same thing, they are well and there is no need to worry,” said the source who spoke with CHRI. “This has been their first contact, except for a couple of them who called their families a few days after their arrest.”

Continued the source: “At least now we know they are alive and well, so they say. But we don’t know what kind of condition they are in and where they are being held. It’s not fair for the families to be unaware of what’s happening to their children and being prohibited from speaking a few words with them. Any accused person has the right to have a lawyer and be in contact with their family.”

Many of the detained worked for the [Persian Heritage Wildlife Foundation](#) (PHWF), which Seyed-Emami co-managed.

“All he said was, ‘I’m well, don’t be worried,’” Lili Houshmand Afshar, the mother of detainee [Sam Rajabi](#), told CHRI on February 15.

The total number of current and former PHWF staff members arrested on January 24 and 25 is not known, but in addition to Rajabi, so far seven names have been mentioned by Iranian state media: Amir-Hossein Khaleghi, Niloufar Bayani, Morad Tahbaz, Taher Ghadirian, Houman Jowkar and his wife Sepideh Kashani.

In addition to Rajabi, the following detainees made contact with their families: Houman Jowkar, the PHWF director in charge of protecting the endangered Asian cheetah and his wife Sepideh Kashani, a former UN environmental adviser; Taher Ghadirian, who was associated with UNESCO's "[Man and the Biosphere Program](#);" and wildlife conservationists Amir-Hosseini Khaleghi and Niloufar Bayani.

But no contact has been by Morad Tahbaz, an Iranian-American member of the PHWF's board of directors.

On February 9, Seyed-Emami's wife was called to a court in Tehran and "interrogated and threatened" for three hours before she was informed of his death, according to a [statement](#) by their son.

The authorities claim Seyed-Emami, a 63-year-old Iranian-Canadian professor and environmentalist, committed suicide in his cell but a video recording of his last hours alive [does not show](#) the moment of his death.

Without providing evidence, on February 13 Tehran Prosecutor Abbas Jafari Dowlatabadi [accused](#) Seyed-Emami and the other detained environmentalists of espionage.

"On January 9, 2018, based on a report by one of the security organizations sent to the Shahid Moghaddas Court... it was determined that the suspects were directed by CIA and Mossad intelligence officers to carry out a three-pronged mission in environmental issues, penetration into Iran's scientific community and gathering information from sensitive and vital places in the country, including missile bases," he said.

He continued: "The investigations show that some of the suspects traveled to the Occupied Territories [Israel] on several occasions, including to participate in a MENARID conference with attending Mossad intelligence agents, and confessed that the general objective of the joint CIA-Mossad project was to create crises in certain environmental areas in Iran and send collected information through secret agents to the US."

Dowlatabadi provided no evidence for the accusations but specifically pointed at the detainees who have dual citizenship.

Seyed-Emami's family attorney [told](#) CHRI that Dowlatabadi broke the law by making unsubstantiated accusations to the press about the case, which has not gone to trial.

"The prosecutor's statements are in violation of the law," said Payam Dorafshan on February 13. "The accused should go to court and face charges in a trial before a ruling is made. The law prohibits anyone from accusing people of committing crimes."

The family source that spoke to CHRI said they have not been formally informed of any charges.



“No one has told the families what these people are exactly accused of. We only read things in the media and have no other information. The families are certain that their children have done nothing wrong and committed no crime. These accusations have no basis in facts,” said the source.

According to another source close to the families, the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) arrested the environmentalists and they’re being held in Ward 2-A in Tehran’s Evin Prison.

“The families of the detainees continue to be harassed against giving any interviews or information to the media and have been warned that it would hurt their children’s case if they do so,” added the source, who requested anonymity for security reasons.

On February 12, a [video](#) was posted on the Twitter account of Kaveh Madani, the deputy head of Iran’s [Department of Environment](#) (DOE)—who had been arrested around the same time at the environmentalists—saying he had returned to work.

But on February 13, BBC reporter Mehdi Parpanchi [said](#) he had been informed that Madani recorded the video in his office in the presence of security agents who then returned him to custody.

### **Iran: Civil activist Kobra Khalandi taken to Mahabad jail**

Created: 15 February 2018

<http://www.women.ncr-iran.org/iran-women-news/4799-iran-civil-activist-kobra-khalandi-taken-to-mahabad-jail>



Civil rights activist Kobra Khalandi was taken to Mahabad Prison, in Iranian Kurdistan, on February 12, to start serving her prison term.

Ms. Khalandi had been sentenced to [75 days of prison](#) by the Court of Mahabad for participating in a demonstration on September 4, 2017, in protest to the arbitrary killing of two Kurdish porters directly shot by border security forces.

The civil rights activist was [arrested](#) along with a number of other Kurds on September 10, and was temporarily released on bail bond of 50 million toumans.

### **Iran: Kurd female prisoner denied much needed medical leave**

By [IranHRM](#) On Feb 15, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/02/15/iran-kurd-female-prisoner-denied-much-needed-medical-leave/>



Ali Jalalian, the father of political prisoner Zeinab Jalalian, who has been detained since 2008, said that phone calls to Zainab are constantly cut off and that she cannot talk to her family.

“The last time I saw Zainab, her eye condition was very bad. And because of this her sight has been impaired and she needs surgery and other treatment outside of prison. But they have not given her permission as yet. We applied for a medical leave many times. They requested documents, and we provided them but they did not give her a leave. This is while all prisoners are allowed leaves but Zainab has been denied a leave for the past 11 years”, Ali Jalalian said.

Zainab’s lawyer, Amir-Salar Davoudi, had previously stated that her medical leave had been conditioned on a televised interview.

## **Iran: No report on the fate of detained human rights activist**

By IranHRM Last updated Feb 15, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/02/15/iran-no-report-fate-detained-human-rights-activist/>



Concerns are growing about the fate of human rights activist, Behnam Musivand, who was arrested at his house on February 1, 2018.

Musivand suffers from heart disease but he is not taking his medicine which he is supposed to take regularly.

Musivand’s father says “when I went back home on February 1, I found my wife fainted to the ground while eight security agents confiscating my home.” Mr. Musivand underlined the agents introduced themselves as intelligence agents. He further says they do not have any news on their son’s fate and their effort to obtain any information on him had been in vein.

Two weeks after the arrest of seven activists Shima Babaei and her husband Dariush Zand, Saeed Eghbali, Leila Farjami, Mahmoud Masoumi and Behnam Mousivand, there has been no phone contact or family visit and they have not had access to a lawyer. One of the detainees, Nader Afshari is on 11th day of his hunger strike, protesting his arrest. He is currently being held at Section 209 in Evin Prison which is under the control of the Ministry of Intelligence.

Amnesty International [raised grave concerns](#) about the “coordinated arrests” of Iranian activists on the same day, stating “These arrests are only the latest episode in a long crackdown on any form of human rights work in Iran, intended to wipe out the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly in the country. We urge the Iranian authorities to stop this attack on human rights defenders and allow them to work in a safe environment without fear of reprisals.”

## **Iranian Authorities Arrest Lawyer Who Exposed Death of Protester in Police Custody**

February 16, 2018

<https://www.iranhumanrights.org/2018/02/iranian-authorities-arrests-lawyer-who-exposed-death-of-protester-in-police-custody/>



### ***Civil Rights Activists Also Detained***

February 16, 2018 – Attorney [Mohammad Najafi](#) has been held in detention in the Iranian city of Arak since January

15, and is facing eight charges for exposing the death of a young man who died in police custody after being arrested during the recent protests in Iran.

Najafi's own attorney has also been threatened with arrest, the Center for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI) has learned.

"The Iranian authorities should immediately release Najafi and end the practice of intimidating and persecuting lawyers for exposing human rights violations inside the country," said CHRI's Executive Director Hadi Ghaemi.

"There's no justice in a system where lawyers are put in jail for doing their jobs," he added.

Najafi was due to be released on February 14 but the month-long detention order against him was extended, according to his lawyer, Payam Derafshan.

"One of the things the authorities have been very sensitive about is [Vahid Heydari's](#) suspicious death," Derafshan told CHRI on February 15. Heydari was one of the thousands arrested for participating in the protests that swept through Iran in late December 2017. The authorities claimed his death was a suicide. "They asked Najafi a lot of questions about it," said Derafshan.

Najafi [told](#) CHRI on January 8 that Heydari, 22, died in detention at the 12th Police Station in Arak after he was arrested at a protest in the city on December 31.

"I believe that this young man did not take his own life," Najafi said. "This young man was a protester. They arrested him and then they beat and killed him. Now they want to destroy his reputation."

Derafshan said he and fellow attorney [Arash Keykhosravi](#) were also going to be arrested by the Intelligence Ministry's office in Shazand, near Arak in Markazi Province, for giving legal counsel to Najafi, "but the [Intelligence] Ministry in Tehran told us they had blocked it."

Derafshan and Keykhosravi are also [representing](#) the family of [Kavous Seyed-Emami](#), the Iranian-Canadian academic and environmentalist who died in custody in Evin Prison on February 9, 2018. The authorities are similarly claiming that death was a suicide.

According to Derafshan, Najafi has been charged with "organizing with the intention to disturb national security," "membership in opposition groups," "propaganda against the state," "insulting the supreme leader," "spreading falsehoods," "disseminating information and news abroad," "assembly and collusion against national security" and "disturbing public peace and order."

"Many of these charges are one and the same but they don't have any reason or evidence to back them up," he said. "Instead, the authorities have summoned and arrested a number of people and put them under pressure to make statements against Mohammad Najafi and accuse him of inciting protests, but none of them have given in, despite persistent questioning."

In addition to Najafi, five civil rights activities were arrested in Shazand on January 15: Ali Bagheri, Kian Sadeghi, Abbas Safari, Gholamreza Ghasemi and Behzad Alibakhshi, according to Derafshan. All remain in detention except for Safari, who was released on bail at an unknown date.

In the days after Najafi's arrest, 12 civil rights activists were also summoned to the Intelligence Ministry's office in Shazand and questioned: Bijan Niou, Alireza Lak, Neda Yousefi, Davoud Rahimi, Ghodrat Abdi, Davoud Fadaei, Saman Gilani, Borzou Jafarifar, Vahid Moradi, Mehdi Rahimi, Mohammad Abedi and Javad Mahmoudi.

"The common theme in the interrogators' insinuating questions has been whether Mohammad Najafi was organizing the civil rights activists to take part in the protests," Derafshan told CHRI. "But none of them have made any statements against Mr. Najafi, despite the pressures."

On January 8, Bagheri, a civil rights activist in Arak, [told](#) CHRI that one of Heydari's relatives had seen evidence of a severe blow to Heydari's skull before his body was buried.

"Unfortunately, the authorities have behaved badly towards Najafi and Bagheri," said Derafshan. "They have forced them to wear prison uniforms, shaved their heads and put leg cuffs on them. This is against the rules. They have not been convicted of anything. They are only under temporary detention."

He added: "The head of the bar association in Arak has had a meeting with the Markazi Province prosecutor to discuss Najafi's case but for the moment, the situation is that he has been transferred from Arak Prison's quarantine unit to the public ward and we will go there on Saturday [February 17] to check on him and follow up on his case."

### **Pattern of Intimidation**

Najafi was [previously arrested](#) in October 2016 for wearing a T-shirt honoring Iran's [Green Movement](#), which grew out of the protests against the disputed result of the country's 2009 presidential election.

Iran has a documented history of harassing, intimidating and jailing lawyers who have taken on politically sensitive cases.

Well-known human rights lawyer [Abdolfattah Soltani](#) is currently serving a 13-year sentence in Evin Prison for the charges of "being awarded the [2009] [Nuremberg International Human Rights Award](#)," "interviewing with media about his clients' cases," and "co-founding the [Defenders of Human Rights Center](#)."

In 2010, his colleague [Nasrin Sotoudeh](#) was sentenced to 11 years in prison for the charges of "acting against national security," "collusion and propaganda against the regime," and "membership in the Defenders of Human Rights Center. The prominent human rights defender was freed after serving three years but continues to face the [threat of imprisonment](#)."

Human rights attorney Hadi Esmailzadeh was imprisoned twice before he died from a heart attack in [February 2016](#) after being sentenced to four years in prison in July 2014 by a Revolutionary Court for the charges of "propaganda against the state" and "membership in the Center for the Defenders of Human Rights."

"I will never forget that this great man continued to defend us no matter how much the court tried to humiliate him," Esmailzadeh's former client, Baha'i leader Mahvash Sabet, told CHRI after being [freed](#) from Evin Prison in September 2017.



## Iran: Young political prisoner denied much needed medical treatment

By IranHRM On Feb 17, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/02/17/iran-young-political-prisoner-denied-much-needed-medical-treatment/>



Changiz Ghadamkheiri, a political prisoner exiled to Masjed Suleiman Prison in Khuzestan Province, has been denied medical treatment outside of prison despite a severe foot infection and doctors' opinion on treatment and surgery in hospital. The political prisoner has also been told that he is not entitled to a medical leave upon orders of the Ministry of Intelligence.

Changiz Ghadamkheiri, 29, was sentenced to 40 years of prison for his six-month membership in a Kurdish opposition party.

## Iran: Mohammad Ali Taheri on hunger strike in Evin Prison

By IranHRM On Feb 17, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/02/17/iran-detained-leader-mysticism-group-hunger-strike-evin-prison/>



Zeinab Taheri, lawyer of detained leader of mysticism group Mohammad Ali Taheri, the founder of the mysticism Erfan Halgheh group, confirmed that her client was on hunger strike as of February 7, in protest to “the court not accepting his chosen lawyer and his ongoing illegal detention.”

Taheri has not been released from prison despite having served his five-year prison term. Therefore, his ongoing detention does not have any legal basis.

## Arbitrary Arrests

### Some University Students Still Detained a Month After Iran's Protests Despite Officials' Claims

February 13, 2018

<https://www.iranhumanrights.org/2018/02/some-university-students-still-detained-a-month-after-irans-protests-despite-officials-claims/>



Contrary to Iranian official's claims that all the university students who were [detained](#) in connection with Iran's December 2017 protests have been released, some remain in custody without access to legal counsel.

“It is not correct to say that all of them have been freed,” a Tehran University student activist who asked not to be identified told the Center for Human



Rights in Iran (CHRI) on February 9, 2018. “At least five students are still in detention and they don’t have a lawyer.”

According to the source who requested anonymity for security reasons, the student detainees are Farshid Tajmiri and Majid Rahmatabadi of the University of Hamadan’s technical college, and Pouria Ramazanian, Vahid Lanjanzadeh and Zahra Rahimi of the University of Tehran. They were arrested between January 5 and February 5, 2018.

Rahimi was released late on February 9 and Lanjanzadeh on February 10, according to human rights activist Hamidreza Taghipour’s [blog](#).

At least [90 university students](#) were arrested during the nationwide protests in Iran between December 2017 and early January 2018. Most of them have been released, but despite officials’ claims, a few remain in detention.

“All students detained in the recent demonstrations have been freed and none remain in detention,” [said](#) Gholamreza Ghaffari, the Science Ministry’s deputy in charge of cultural and social affairs, in an interview with the semi-official Mehr News Agency on January 24, 2018.

But on February 8, Tehran University Chancellor Mahmoud Nili Ahmadabadi said several students were still in detention “even though they were not involved in any political activities on campus.”

“We didn’t have any problems with these students and they didn’t have any problem with the university. We don’t know why they have been detained. I have asked my colleagues to urgently follow up on the cases concerning these student detainees but the security officials are not providing us all the information,” Ahmadabadi [told](#) the semi-official Iranian Students News Agency (ISNA).

In Hamadan, the head of the technical college, Shahab Kazemi, [said](#) on February 3 that one of the known detainees, Majid Rahmatabadi, was not a student at his college, a claim rejected by the University Trade Unions’ Council of Iran (UTUCI).

“When the authorities make these denials, the families get 10 times more worried because we are hearing a lot of reports about [deaths](#) and [suicides](#) in custody these days,” said the Tehran University student activist who spoke to CHRI.

## **Protesters arrested in Tonekabon were mentally and physically mistreated** By IranHRM On Feb 16, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/02/16/protesters-arrested-tonekabon-mentally-physically-mistreated/>



Thirteen protesters who were arrested in recent nationwide protests by the security forces were summoned to a Tonekabon court. They were charged with “participating in illegal gatherings,” “insulting the Supreme Leader,” “disrupting public opinion,” and “acting against national

security.” The detainees were transferred to Shahsavari Prison after the end of their interrogations. According to an informed source, the detainees were harassed and physically and mentally mistreated.

“The court announced to the arrested persons through a written summons, telephone calls and text messages that they had to go to the 101st Branch of the Tonekabon Penal Court on February 3”, the source added.

The detainees have been identified as Salim Sadeghi, Sina Norouzi, Mahintaj Ahmadpour, Amir Hossein Hesami, Mostafa Janipour, Mohammad Abolghasemi, Isa Bagheri, Sadegh Mehdirudi, Sina (Kamal) Davoudi, Ali Gilych, Hadi Rahmani, Hadi Rahmani Garmaroodi, Paria Dinar Saraie and Fatemeh Dinar Saraie.

### **Iran: Detained civil activist had family visit under tight security measures**

By [IranHRM](#) On Feb 16, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/02/16/iran-detained-civil-activist-family-visit-tight-security-measures/>



Human rights activist Behnam Mousivand, who was arrested on February 1, was allowed a visit with his mother yesterday in Evin Prison.

He was taken to the prison’s yard in a car with tinted windscreens while being accompanied by three guards. Behnam Mousivand was not allowed to talk with his mother in his mother tongue. He has become very thin and told his mother he would have been killed by now if not for reports about him on the Internet. After the visit, he was transferred to an unknown location.

### **Iran: Nine Kermani protesters still in custody months after protest**

By [IranHRM](#) On Feb 17, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/02/17/iran-nine-kermani-protesters-still-custody-months-protest/>

The state-run Alef website on February 15, 2018, quoted Kerman Prosecutor Dadkhoda Salari as saying that there were currently nine people arrested in Kerman for acting against the internal security of the country in recent riots in Kerman, according to the state-run Alef Website. “Decisions have been made in Kerman’s court in relation to all suspects of the recent riots”, he added.

## **Children’s Rights**

### **Female Iranian MPs Demand Action on Stalled Bill Aiming to Preventing Child Abuse**

February 12, 2018

<https://www.iranhumanrights.org/2018/02/female-iranian-mps-demand-action-on-stalled-bill-aiming-to-preventing-child-abuse/>

Some Iranian female lawmakers have called for immediate deliberations on a bill for the protection of children to prevent future cases of child abuse in Iran.

“The increase in incidents of child abuse is not becoming of the Islamic Republic. We cannot deal with child abuse with our current laws,” [said](#) Member of Parliament (MP) Masoumeh Aghapour Alishahi, a member of the Women’s Faction.

“The existing legal vacuum is causing delays in the prosecution of child abusers,” she added in an interview with the official parliamentary news agency, ICANA, on February 7, 2018.

There are 17 female lawmakers in the current parliamentary session, at least 14 of whom (all holding reformist or moderate views) are members of the Women’s Faction. It is not known how many MPs support the call.

“In our letter to the speaker [Ali Larjani], we urged the legislature to begin immediate deliberations on the bill for the protection of children,” Alishahi said.

The letter has not been made public.

The Bill for the Protection of Children and Juveniles was initially drafted by the Judiciary and submitted to then-President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s government in 2009. Two years later, it was handed to Parliament where it has been stalled at the [committee stage](#) ever since.

In September 2017, MP Hassan Norouzi, the spokesman for the Judicial and Legal Affairs Committee, said he [hoped](#) that the bill would be submitted to the full session of Parliament for a vote “in two weeks” but more than four years later, no date has been set.

The bill has not been published but it is believed to contain more than 40 articles dealing with issues such as repeated violence at home, child trafficking and other criminal activities.

The issue received renewed attention following the acquittal of [Saeed Toosi](#), a well-known Quran reciter, of child abuse charges on January 26, 2018.

In July 2017, the rape and murder of seven-year-old [Atena Aslani](#), whose body showed “signs of sexual abuse,” also caused public outrage.

An Iranian attorney told the Center for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI) that the real problem is the lack of enforcement of current laws protecting children in the country.

“I have read the bill,” said Nemat Ahmadi in an interview on October 20, 2017. “It has a clear objective but lacks details. It would be good to write more complete laws, but that isn’t enough. The question is: Does society have the resources to meet the legal requirements?”

Ahmadi, who has worked on many child abuse and discrimination cases, added, “Our current laws are not bad. We can start implementing them until the bill in Parliament is ratified.”

Article 5 of the Law for the Protection of Children and Juveniles (2002) [states](#) that “child abuse is a public crime that does not require a private complainant.” Article 4 prohibits “any form of harm, harassment, abuse or physical or mental torture of a child.”

Another Iranian attorney, Farideh Ghierat, pointed out to CHRI that Islamic law protects fathers from being held accountable for child abuse. According to Iran’s [Islamic Penal Code](#), fathers are not punished for taking their children’s lives.

“As long as in theology the father is considered the owner of his children, nothing can be done to deal with fathers who abuse their children,” Gheirat told CHRI.

## **Iran: 36,000 child marriages, 1,200 child divorces in 2015**

Created: 14 February 2018

<http://www.women.ncr-iran.org/iran-women-news/4794-iran-36-000-child-marriages-1-200-child-divorces-in-2015>



An Iranian NGO announced 1,200 girl children under 14 years of age had been added to the country’s [widows](#) in 2015.

Zahra Rahimi, director of Imam Ali Student Society, said the consequences of child marriages are not limited to families but affect the society, in general.

According to Rahimi, most child marriages take place in marginal areas. Rahimi cited statistics on the annual records of the National Registration Bureau (Sabt-e Ahval), saying 179 girl children under 10 and 36,000 girl children between 10 and 14 had married in 2015.

She said a considerable number of girls under 9 had been wedded in the Hormuzgan Province (on the south coast). In the same year, 1,200 girl children have been registered as divorced. (The state-run Iran newspaper – February 12, 2018)

Iranian laws do not allow children under 18 years open a bank account. Ironically, they permit girls get married at 13 and even less with their father’s consent

## **Women’s Rights**

### **Iran: 5 girl students deprived of boarding for protesting restrictions**

Created: 12 February 2018

<http://www.women.ncr-iran.org/iran-women-news/4786-iran-5-girl-students-deprived-of-boarding-for-protesting-restrictions>



The licenses of five young women, students of Tehran University, were not extended to register with Chamran Dormitory for girl students. The students had protested restrictions imposed on women’s entry and exit hours.

Hassan Behnejad, dean of students at Tehran University, confirmed that the licenses for the five girl students had been revoked. He said, “All students of Tehran University have been able to register to use the dormitories, but about five students living in Chamran dormitory of Tehran University who had objected to the dormitory rules on girls’ entry and exit did not succeed to register since security officials have not accepted their applications.” (The state-run Tabnak news website – February 8, 2018)



Girl students residing in Chamran dormitory have [protested](#) on [several occasions](#) so far to the [shortages](#) of the dormitory. Among their demands has been lifting of [restrictions](#) on their entry and exit hours.

### **Iran: 17 nurses die due to work-related stress**

Created: 12 February 2018

<http://www.women.ncr-iran.org/iran-women-news/4788-iran-17-nurses-die-due-to-work-related-stress>



Seventeen nurses have died in Iran since the implementation of the Plan to Change the Health Regime. All of the victims are suspected of dying due to [work-related stress](#).

Ali Mohammad Adabi, president of the Nursing Organization, said, “The 17 nurses working at public and private hospitals, [were between 25 to 45 years old](#). They were considered young forces, but all of them had [endured tremendous pressure](#) at work before they suddenly die. None of their deaths were due to illness or any other parameter.”

Adabi added, “No action has been taken to complete the hospitals’ [nursing staff](#) since the Plan to Change the Health Regime has been implemented. This has forced these people to do heavy overtime work. In addition, economic problems have also compelled nurses to work in other medical centers in addition to their main employer to provide for their living expenses. At any rate, when the number of people referring to a certain public or private medical center increases, it jeopardizes the health of nurses and doctors.” (The state-run ILNA news agency – February 9, 2018)

### **Iran: Another woman commits suicide in Marivan**

Created: 13 February 2018

<http://www.women.ncr-iran.org/iran-women-news/4789-iran-another-woman-commits-suicide-in-marivan>



A woman who had three children committed suicide by setting herself alight.

The woman identified as Lalaw was from Marivan, western Iranian Kurdistan, resorted to suicide because of her husband wedding to a second wife.

Iran ranks first in the Middle East with regards to suicide of women.

### **Iran: Maryam Akbari Monfared speaks out in defense of former inmates**

Created: 13 February 2018

<http://www.women.ncr-iran.org/iran-women-news/4791-iran-maryam-akbari-monfared-speaks-out-in-defense-of-former-inmates>

Political prisoner, Maryam Akbari Monfared, imprisoned in the Women's Ward of Evin, sent out an open letter to protest officials' lack of reaction to the hunger strike of her former inmates, Atena Daemi and Golrokh Iraee. She wrote in her letter:



I am reaching out from Evin Prison, from behind concrete walls to international organizations and human rights institutes to beseech everyone whose heart beats for humanity to hear the cries of the mothers of Golrokh (Iraee) and Atena (Daemi). The mothers' hopes are tied to your assistance.

Everyone knows of the phrase "hunger strike." But it is very different to hear of this phrase or to watch a human being who is on hunger strike suffer. They are under a flurry of pain and the body melts bit by bit. They have no other way but to continue their path. They get physically weaker everyday, but they become ever more determined with every passing day.

### **Fahimeh Isma'ili Released after Serving 12 Years**

*Posted on:* 13th February, 2018

<https://www.en-hrana.org/fahimeh-ismaili-released-serving-12-years>



HRANA News Agency – Fahimeh Isma'ili, an Arab political activist, was released from jail after being imprisoned for 12 years. The husband of this political prisoner who was arrested at the same time was executed on charge of Moharebeh in 2006.

According to the report of Human Rights Activists News Agency in Iran (HRANA), Fahimeh Isma'ili (Badvi), political activist, was released from Yasuj Prison after her serving her sentence.

An informed source told HRANA's reporter: "Mrs Badvi was extremely tortured in the Ahwaz Intelligence Bureau detention center, and was even beaten by the officers in the Yasuj prison, repeatedly and had been transferred to hospital."

Fahimeh Esma'ili (Badvi) was arrested on November 28, 2005, while she was pregnant for eight months, along with her husband, "Ali Motirinejad", an Ahwazi Arab political activist.

A month later, their daughter, "Salmi", was born at the Ministry of Intelligence detention center in Ahwaz. This Arab prisoner was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment by Ahwaz Revolutionary Court and her husband was sentenced to death on charge of "Moharebeh".

The death sentence for her husband, Ali Motirinejad, along with ten other Arab political activists, was executed on December 19, 2006, and Fahimeh Isma'ili was exiled to Yasuj central prison to endure her sentence.

### **Khadijeh Nisi, Arab Activist, Arrested in Ahwaz**

*Posted on:* 13th February, 2018



<https://www.en-hrana.org/khadijeh-nisi-arab-activist-arrested-ahwaz>



HRANA News Agency – Khadijeh Nisi was arrested by security forces after participating in the gathering of Ahwazi protesters to the events of the village of Jalisi Balla in the district of Dehloran in Ahwaz on Friday, December 8, 2017.

According to the report of Human Rights Activists News Agency in Iran (HRANA), the forces of the Ahwaz Intelligence Office arrested Khadijeh Nisi due to participating in the mass gathering of protesters against the events of the village of Jalizei Balla on Friday, December 8, 2017.

The protests of mostly Arab citizens in Ahwaz are in response to claims by the residents of the Arab village of Jalisi Balla in Dehloran based on the usurpation of their farmer lands by Army dependent ETEKA cooperative. Following the protests in the village, a number of people have already been wounded and arrested.

An informed source told HRANA’s reporter, “Khadijeh Nisi was arrested due to participating in the gathering and singing “Yazle” (a popular local music piece of southern Iran) in Arabic. No information is available on her fate after her arrest.”

It should be noted that on Tuesday, December 5, 2017, police forces went to the village of Jalizei Balla in Moassan of Dehloran in Ilam province, by claiming the court ruling in the case of the disputed ownership of the agricultural land of this village in favor of the cooperative of army, and a large number of protesters were injured and arrested.

## **Iran: 65 per cent illiterates in Khuzistan are women**

Created: 15 February 2018

<http://www.women.ncr-iran.org/iran-women-news/4797-iran-65-per-cent-illiterates-in-khuzistan-are-women>



There are 150,000 illiterate women in Khuzistan which is 65 per cent of the total number of illiterates in this southwestern oil-rich province in Iran.

Moussa Sheikh, deputy director for literacy at the Department of Education, said there are 230,000 illiterates between 10 to 49 years of age in Khuzistan 35 per cent of whom, i.e. 80,000, are men and 65 per cent or 150,000 are women. (The state-run ISNA news

agency – February 14, 2018)

According to a recent survey, there are 1.7 million women in Iran between 10 and 49 years who are [absolutely illiterate](#).

Iran ranks 120<sup>th</sup> in the world with a total of 9.5 million illiterates in the country.

## Freedom of Expression

### Revolution anniversary – 39 years of news control and censorship in Iran

February 13, 2018

<https://rsf.org/en/news/revolution-anniversary-39-years-news-control-and-censorship-iran>

**REPORTERS  
WITHOUT BORDERS**  
FOR FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

On the 39th anniversary of the Iranian revolution, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) reiterates its condemnation of the regime's harassment of journalists and citizen-journalists. Thirty-nine years after the revolution, as young men and women protest in the streets, the Islamic Republic is trying to reinforce its news control both at home and internationally.

For the past 39 years, the regime's control of news and information has been implacable and its persecution of media independence has been unparalleled. The exact number of journalists arrested and convicted [during this dark period in Iran's history](#) – especially during the purge years – is still not officially known.



RSF has tallied abuses since [Mohammad Khatami](#) became president in 1997. At least 350 media outlets have been closed, more than 800 journalists and citizen-journalists have been detained and interrogated and around 500 of them have been given prison sentences ranging from three months to 19 years. All have been denied their rights. [Millions of Internet pages of freely](#) and independently reported news and information have been censored.

Citizen-journalists active on social networks are nowadays at the heart of the fight for freedom of news and information and political change in Iran.

In what Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei calls “the freest country in the world,” no independent media has survived the past 39 years of police and judicial harassment. Since 2000, Khamenei has waged a merciless war against the emergent reformist press, calling it the “operational base of foreign enemies within the country.”

Despite having resisted, the pro-reform media have been losing the resources they need to cover developments freely and independently. And to tighten control and censorship even more, a newly proposed law will turn journalists into civil servants who will get their press cards directly from the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

The regime's persecution of the freedom to inform [does not just target domestic media](#). it also targets the international media, even if the regime has always tried to keep up certain appearances.

#### Toeing the official line

According [to a list on the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Orientation's official website](#), a total of 155 media outlets from 32 countries have bureaux in Iran that are staffed by a total of 305 foreign journalists.

Officially, they include 75 radio and TV outlets but the real number is smaller because each of the different language services of media outlets such as France 24 or Al Jazeera are counted separately. Fifteen of them are Lebanese or Iraqi outlets such as *Al-Manar* and *Al-Mayadin* (Hezbollah's two TV channels) and *Al-Tajah* and Al-Fart (Iraq's Shiite TV channels). The latter four outlets are wholly funded by the Iranian regime.

There are 14 foreign news agencies. Aside from AP, AFP and Itar Tass, most are from pro-Iranian Muslim countries. The Islamic Radio and Television Union, created and funded by the Islamic Republic, consists of 210 Muslim media outlets from 35 countries, [its website says](#). Most of these outlets are officially regarded as foreign media, although funded by the regime. As well as relaying propaganda, they constitute a fake news world network that helps to suppress the freedom to inform. They mainly carry the same news reports as the Iranian state media.

Other foreign news agencies in Iran are closely watched and harassed. A former Tehran-based AFP reporter said: *"The regime exercises its control by placing journalists within the agency who can tell the authorities what's going on there, or by threatening the foreign journalists who don't accept the censor's rules. There have been several cases of journalists who have even been [accused of indecent behaviour](#) and have been threatened with imprisonment."*

Since 28 March 2012, when the Iranian authorities withdrew the accreditation of the Reuters journalists in Tehran for "propaganda against the government," Reuters has had no bureau in Iran. As a result, Reuters nowadays often covers Iranian news more freely than the agencies that still have a bureau there, which have to censor themselves to avoid losing their accreditation or to avoid harassment or even prosecution in Iran.

### **Choosing "good" journalists**

Aside from the Muslim countries with a media presence, the foreign journalists in Iran are either correspondents who are based there or visiting reporters. In both cases, the regime prefers them to be of Iranian origin and to have dual nationality (one of them Iranian). Dual nationals can be accused of spying at any time, so it is easier to control them and make them accept that certain subjects are off limits.

It must be pointed out that Iranian law does not permit dual nationality. Dual nationals are regarded as Iranians, and as Iranians alone. Several dual national journalists have been jailed in recent years for "collaborating with foreigners" or "espionage." They include [Roxana Saberi](#) and [Jason Rezaian](#).

On condition of anonymity, a dual national journalist with an international media outlet told RSF: *"Two days after I applied to the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance for accreditation, I received a call to discuss my situation. They asked me to go to a hotel. I asked who I was talking to, knowing full well it was the brothers from intelligence. Two men were waiting for me there. Very politely, they made it clear that I should not cross the red lines, which are covering Khamenei or the opposition and, in general, showing 'the decline in the situation.' Sometimes they sent me phrases to insert in my articles. For them, neutrality and balance meant censorship. I cooperated during the two years I was in Iran."*

A committee consisting of representatives of three ministries – Culture and Islamic Guidance, Foreign Affairs and Intelligence – has a file on each foreign journalist and media outlet. The attitude of the journalists and their media determines whether they get the visas they need.

Reporting critical of the regime leads to negative points in the file. But the committee takes account not only of coverage of Iran but also of international coverage, especially of countries regarded as Iran's enemies, such as Israel and the United States.

According to the information obtained by RSF, several journalists who received visas and are currently in Iran have been prevented from moving about freely in the capital. In particular, they have been prevented from covering protests and from contacting government opponents or the families of political prisoners.

One of the world's most authoritarian regimes, Iran is ranked 165th out of 180 countries [in RSF's 2017 World Press Freedom Index](#).

## **Ethnic Minorities' Rights**

### **Two Death Row Arab Political Prisoners Exiled to Isfahan Prison**

*Posted on: 31st January, 2018*

<https://www.en-hrana.org/two-death-row-arab-political-prisoners-exiled-isfahan-prison>



HRANA News Agency – Two death row Arab political prisoners from Ahwaz were exiled to Isfahan Prison from the Ahwaz intelligence Detention Center.

According to the report of Human Rights Activists News Agency in Iran (HRANA), the families of the two defendants were told that “Qasem Abdollah” and “Abdullah Karmalachab” had been transferred to Isfahan Prison and were in the Quarantine during a phone call from Isfahan Prison On Monday, October 30, 2017.

Qasem Abdollah and Abdullah Karmalachab (Abdullahi) from Shush, were tried along with seven other defendants on charge of Muharebeh and communicating with groups outside the country, as well as propaganda against the regime in 2017. The death sentence was issued for the two defendants and the imprisonment sentence was issued for the other defendants.

All defendants denied the allegations in the court.

Two death row prisoners have not had any contact and meetings with their families after a long period of detention and then conviction.

An informed source told HRANA's reporter that, “Qasem and Abdullah have not had any contact or visits since the day they were arrested until October 31, 2017. Their families do not know the legal process that led to the issuance of the verdict.”

A source close to the defendants of the case, quoted by these prisoners, had previously told HRANA that “we were accused of shooting at Dezful's mourning, a charge that we did not accept, and even Qasim and Abdullah told the judge that the intelligence ministry knows the shooters in Safi Aba of Dezful, and we have no connection with the subject.”

Two years ago, unknown people in Safi Abad in Dezful, attacked the mourning board site of Qamar Bani Hasham by a Peugeot car and killed two people. 15 Arab citizens were arrested in the nearby villages of Shush a day after the incident.



It is said that both prisoners have described the allegations as unfounded and consider it as creating a case against them by the security apparatus because of their religious activities. These two defendants are Sunni Muslims.

On the other hand, relatives of Qasim Bait Abdullah say, he has been the guardian of the heavy machinery of Fatah al-Mubin on the Shawur-Shush route on the night of Friday, October 16, 2015, the Safi Abad Dezful incident, and there are strong evidences about this.

The Islamic Council in the villages of the accused, elders and a number of people in the region, have emphasized in a letter to the judicial and security authorities that these individuals were innocent and committed in the region and had no connection with the accusations.

It should be noted that these people, mostly residents of Shush and its suburbs, were charged with “muharebeh through formation of Chand-ol-Farah group, membership in opposition groups and propaganda against the regime”. The defendants in the first and second row, named Abdullah Abdullahi (33, resident of Shawor) and Qasim Bait Abdullah (resident of Derakhal village) were sentenced to death.

Other defendants in the case were also sentenced to various imprisonment terms.

## **Kavan Mahmoudian and Na'im Ahmadpour Transferred to Sanandaj Prison**

*Posted on:* 14th February, 2018

<https://www.en-hrana.org/kavan-mahmoudian-naim-ahmadpour-transferred-sanandaj-prison>



HRANA News Agency – Kavan Mahmoudian who had been arrested by Kamiaran Intelligence Office earlier on October 10, was transferred to Sanandaj Prison after being detained in a solitary confinement for two months, while another prisoner named Na'im Ahmadpour who had been arrested for unknown reasons by the Intelligence Office was also transferred to Sanandaj Prison after 20 days of detention at the Intelligence Office detention center.

According to the Human Rights Activists News Agency in Iran (HRANA), Kawan Mahmoudian, a farmer from Tangisar village, who had been arrested by Kamyaran Intelligence Office on October 10, was transferred to Sanandaj Prison after two months of being detained in solitary confinement.

An informed source told HRANA's reporter: “Kavan Mahmoudian has told his family on the phone that he had been transferred to Sanandaj prison.”

In previous reports, quoting a source close to Mr. Mahmoudian's family, HRANA had mentioned that: “After his family went to the Intelligence Office and insisted to visit their son, they were given a letter to get confirmation from the judge. The Mahmoudian family went to Sanandaj Revolutionary Court and told the judge that their son was helping them and farming in the village. But the judicial authorities responded to them saying that their child was cooperating with a Kurdish party, which was why they could not meet him for the moment.”



Along with this transfer, Na'im Ahmadpour, a resident of Tangsiri village, who had been arrested a while ago by the Intelligence Office, has also been transferred to Sanandaj prison.

It should be noted that Mr. Na'im Ahmadpour, who owns a shop in Hassan Abad district of Sanandaj, suffers from heart disease.

## Religious Minorities' Rights

### Baha'i Citizen of Yazd Released from Prison upon Completion of Sentence

February 11, 2018

<http://iranpresswatch.org/post/18764/iman-rashidi-bahai-citizen-yazd-released-prison/>

Source: [www.hra-news.org](http://www.hra-news.org)



Mr. Rashidi with his wife Shabnam Motahhed

HRANA News Agency – [Iman Rashidi](#), a Baha'i citizen living in Yazd, who was sentenced to three years imprisonment and one year suspended imprisonment as one of the 20 Baha'i citizens in a joint case with the Yazd Revolutionary Court, was released today on termination of his term of office.

According to a report from the HRANA News Agency, the Human Rights activists' news agency in Iran, Mr. Rashidi, was released from prison upon the completion of a three-year prison sentence.

Despite the fact that [Mr. Rashidi](#) could have made use of conditional release, he was not provided that option for reasons unknown.

Mr. Rashidi was sentenced to during a [mass trial](#) in the well-known case of "[20 Baha'i Citizens](#)". All were charged with "propaganda against the regime" and "gathering and collusion against the internal security of the country".

Branch 1 of the Revolutionary Court of Yazd condemned all [20 these Baha'i citizens](#) to a combined total of 58 years in prison, 38 years of which is punishable.

The verdict was confirmed on appeal on April 27, 1993, at the Appeal Branch of Yazd province. [Mr. Rashidi](#) and most of the other 20 defendants were [imprisoned immediately](#).

Baha'i citizens in Iran are denied religions freedom. Under Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, everyone has the right to freedom of religion and changing of religion or belief, as well as the freedom to express them individually or collectively, openly or in secret. Despite this, Baha'is are subjected systematic exclusion from many forms of [employment](#), [higher education](#), as well as many other civil rights.

According to unofficial sources in Iran, there are more than three hundred thousand Baha'is. However, the Iranian constitution recognizes only Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism and refuses recognize the Baha'i Faith. For this reason, Baha'is' rights in Iran have been systematically violated throughout the past years.

## Iranian Christian Convert Admitted to Prison to Serve Sentence

February 13, 2018

<http://mohabatnews.com/en/?p=3896>

Naser Navard-Goltapeh, an Iranian Christian Convert was admitted to the notorious Evin prison to serve his 10 year sentence.



**Mohabat News** — Last May, the Iranian Revolutionary Court had sentenced Naser Navard-Goltapeh to 10 years in prison for his faith. He has now been transferred to the infamous Evin prison in Tehran to serve his sentence.

Mr. Navard-Goltapeh had appealed his sentence but an appeals court upheld his sentence on November 12, 2017 in branch 36 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran. The sentence was approved in the appeals court in spite

of Navard-Goltapeh’s attorney providing numerous grounds for his innocence.

The spokesman for the Article 18 organization, a Christian rights advocacy group, Kiarash Alipour told Mohabat News regarding Mr. Navard-Goltapeh’s accusations, “The court based its decision to convict Naser Navard-Goltapeh on a report by the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence, allegedly providing ample evidence that he attempted to undermine national security through establishing an ‘illegal house church network’. However, when asked for the report to be presented to his attorney, the court refused”.

- **Read more:** [Four Christians were sentenced to forty years prison terms in Iran](#)
- **Read more:** [Three Azerbaijani Christians Arrested in Iran Temporarily Released](#)
- **Read more:** [Iranian President Receives Letter for Freedom of Three Christian Prisoners](#)
- **Read more:** [Iranian Intelligence Police Arrested Three Azeri Christians in Tehran](#)

He added, “In the appeals court, the judge surprisingly asked Mr. Navard-Goltapeh to convince the Ministry of Intelligence of his innocence in order to ease his sentence”!

It appears that the plaintiff in Mr. Navar-Goltapeh’s case is the Ministry of Intelligence itself. In earlier cases as well, the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence had asked Christian prisoners to “cooperate” with them in order for their sentences to be eased. It is not clear what the ministry means by “cooperation”.

Mr. Naser Navard-Goltapeh had been arrested on June 24, 2016 in a private gathering along with three Christians from Azerbaijan’s “Word of Life” church in Baku.

All four Christians arrested in that incident were held in solitary confinement for two months and subjected to intense interrogation. They were all charged with “illegal gathering, collusion and evangelism” and eventually released temporarily on a heavy bail. The three Christian citizens of Azerbaijan returned to their home country after being released.

In an interview with the Article 18, Mr. Navard-Goltapeh’s attorney, Hossein Ahmadi Niaz said, “My client has not broken any of the criminal code and is not guilty of his charges. All

other Christians arrested with him also confirmed all of their meetings were strictly focused on their faith and worship and nothing else.”

Earlier this year, four UN human rights experts raised concerns over the Iranian judicial system not providing Christians with a “fair and transparent hearing”.

These experts noted, “Members of the Christian minority in Iran, particularly those who have converted to the faith, are facing severe discrimination and religious persecution.”

Open Doors’ 2017 World Watch List has placed Iran among the top 10 countries where Christians are persecuted the most.

The Islamic regime of Iran systematically shuts down anyone trying to spread Christianity in the country. Christians in Iran are regularly faced with arrests that most often leads to long-term prison sentences.

### **Christian Convert Arrested In Tabriz Still In Jail**

February 14, 2018

<https://en.radiofarda.com/a/iran-christian-convert-arrested/29039465.html>



Ali Amini, a Christian convert arrested in Tabriz, northwestern Iran.

An Iranian man who converted to Christianity is still in custody after being arrested December 10, 2017, a spokesman for human rights group Article 18 confirmed in an interview with Radio Farda.

Article 18 in Defense of Iranian Christians, an NGO that takes its name from the article guaranteeing religious freedom in Iran’s constitution, reported on its website that Ali Amini (also known as Philip Amini) is still behind bars in the northwestern city of Tabriz.

“The agents stormed the shop where Ali Amini worked, arrested him, and seized all his personal belongings, including his cellphone and laptop,” the website reported.

Amini, who reportedly converted to Christianity in October 2017, is married and is the father of two children, a three-year-old and a one-year-old.

While religious minorities, including Christians, are officially protected in Iran, “apostasy” or converting from Islam to another religion is against the law. It is also illegal to publish the Bible in the Persian language and to attend unapproved “home” churches.

Article 18 also reports that a member of an Evangelical Church, Naser Navar-Goltapeh, has been transferred to Tehran’s notorious Evin Prison to serve a ten-year sentence. He was charged with “acts against national security” and running a home church.

“Charges against these Christians are legally unfounded, and their conviction to 10 years’ imprisonment is violating the obvious right of freedom of opinion,” Mansour Borji, an activist affiliated with Article 18 told Radio Farda in a previous interview. “So many Christians in Iran are accused of merely attending Mass and prayer gatherings even in the privacy of their homes. They are all waiting for the Revolutionary Courts’ verdict against them.”

Borji says the persecution of Christians by the Islamic Republic's intelligence and security agents is politically motivated and against respected international laws and standards.

“Tehran is spending millions on Islamic propaganda and orchestrating a religious crackdown targeting the growing population of Christian converts, but a mission group has revealed that these measures have done nothing to stop people from embracing Christianity,” wrote Mohabat News, another news site reporting on Christians in Iran.

Despite harsh treatment by authorities, Christians in Iran are one of the fastest-growing religious communities in the world, according to the research organization Operation World.

## At Least 7 Baha'i Citizens Arrested in Bushehr

February 16, 2018

<http://iranpresswatch.org/post/18773/least-7-bahai-citizens-arrested-bushehr/>

Source: [www.hra-news.org](http://www.hra-news.org)



HRANA News Agency – This morning, At least seven individuals were detained during a coordinated security forces raids to homes and workplaces of several Bahá'i citizens in [Bushehr](#).

According to the HRANA News Agency, the human rights activists' news agency in Iran, on the morning of February 13, 2017, around 7:30 a.m., security forces performing a coordinated operation arrested at least seven Baha'i citizens in Bushehr

province and transferred them to an unknown location.

The detainees are Minoo Riyazati, Asadollah Jaber, Ehteram Shakhi (Asadollah Jaber's wife), Emad Jaber, Farideh Jaber, Legha Faramarzi and Puneh Nasheri.

Most of the arrests occurred out as security forces performed full house searches, confiscating personal belongings such as laptops, books, flash drives, external hard drives, and family.

It is said that Mr. Asadollah Jaber and his wife, Mrs. Ehteram Shakhi were detained at their place of work.

No information is available on the reasons for the arrests or what charges have resulted. No information had been provided by the detaining organization at the time of this report.

Baha'i citizens in Iran are deprived of religious freedoms, and excluded from higher education and many forms of employment. This systematic persecution is carried out in direct violation of Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which states, “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance.”



According to unofficial sources in Iran, there are more than three hundred thousand Baha'is, but the Iranian constitution recognizes only Islam, Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism and does not recognize the Baha'i Faith. The Regime uses this to justify the systematic and ongoing violation of Baha'is rights in Iran.

## Fourth Member of Yaran Released

February 16, 2018

<http://iranpresswatch.org/post/18776/fourth-member-yaran-released/>

Source: [news.bahai.org](http://news.bahai.org)

BIC NEW YORK — After ten years of unjust imprisonment for his beliefs, Saeid Rezaie, one of the seven members of the former leadership group of the Baha'is in Iran, has today completed his wrongful sentence.



Saeid Rezaie completed an unjust 10-year prison sentence today.

Mr. Rezaie and six of his colleagues were arrested in 2008 after an early-morning raid on their homes. They were part of the ad hoc group known as “the Yaran” (the Friends) which tended to the basic spiritual and material needs of the Iranian Baha'i community. The group was formed with the knowledge and tacit approval of authorities after formal Baha'i institutions were declared illegal in Iran in the 1980s. Mr. Rezaie is the fourth individual from among the former Yaran to be released.

Now, after ten years, he returns to a society that has changed little in terms of its treatment of the Baha'i community.

“Although Mr. Rezaie and three other members of the Yaran have been released, the persecution of the Baha'is in Iran continues unabated,” said Diane Ala'i, Representative of the Baha'i International Community to the United Nations in Geneva. “From prison, Mr. Rezaie will go back to a community that is still under immense pressure from the government and faces discrimination and persecution for no other reason than belief in the Baha'i Faith.”

Before he was imprisoned, Mr. Rezaie, who is an agricultural engineer, ran a successful farming equipment business. He is one of the many members of the Baha'i community who has suffered injustice as a result of economic-related persecution. Baha'i-owned shops and businesses are regularly closed by the authorities after owners are harassed. In the last few years, hundreds of such businesses have been closed and scores of families have been deprived of an income. In an open letter to President Hassan Rouhani, the BIC referred to this discrimination as [“economic apartheid.”](#)



The three remaining members of the Yaran are expected to complete their sentences in the coming months. They include Mr. Jamaloddin Khanjani, 84; Mr. Afif Naeimi, 56; and Mr. Vahid Tizfahm, 44.



Friends and family greet Saeid Rezaei after he was released from prison following an unjust 10-year sentence.

## **Freed Baha'i Leader: Jailing Baha'is is Futile and Pointless**

February 18, 2018

<http://iranpresswatch.org/post/18780/freed-bahai-leader-jailing-bahais-futile-pointless/>

Source: [www.iranwire.com](http://www.iranwire.com)

By [AIDA GHAJAR](#)



On the morning of Friday, February 16, Saeid Rezaei, one of the seven members of the former leadership group for Iran's Baha'i community known as the "[Yaran](#)" ("Friends"), was released after serving 10 years in prison. In order to avoid Rezaei's family and friends waiting outside the prison to greet Rezaei, security guards drove him some distance from the prison and released him there.

The seven Baha'i leaders were arrested in early 2008. The most serious charges against them were espionage, propaganda against the regime and founding an illegal organization. The Revolutionary Court initially sentenced them to 20 years in prison, which was reduced to 10 years on appeal.

Saeid Rezaei, 61, is a prominent agricultural engineer and was the CEO of a company of agricultural machinery in Shiraz before his arrest. His release comes just a few days after seven Baha'is [were arrested](#) in the Persian Gulf port of [Bushehr](#).

After his arrest in 2008, Rezaei was taken to Evin Prison's Ward 209, controlled by the Ministry of Intelligence, and spent four months in solitary confinement. He and six other Baha'i leaders spent 27 months in pre-trial detention — in violation of the law that limits detention without sentencing to a short period of time. After standing trial they were transferred to Rajaei Shahr Prison in Karaj near Tehran, and spent six months with ordinary prisoners, until they were moved to Ward 12, where prisoners of conscience and political prisoners are kept.



In an interview with IranWire after being freed, Saeid Rezaei said that his most difficult time in prison was when he was interrogated. During that time he had no access to a lawyer, and was not allowed to talk or meet with his family. The interrogators pressured Baha'i leaders to confess that they were spies. "We strongly denied this accusation," he said.

**Abused Mentally and Physically**

During interrogations, the Baha'i leaders were abused both mentally and physically. Prison guards pushed and insulted them, and threatened them repeatedly. Rezaei told IranWire that some of the Baha'i leaders who remain in prison were also flogged. Authorities threatened to arrest Rezaei's wife and daughters if he refused to cooperate.

Judge Mohammad [Moghiseh](#) conducted the trial of the [Yaran leadership group](#). Over the last several years, human rights organizations and the European Union have singled out Moghiseh and other judges for gross human rights violations. The Nobel Laureate [Shirin Ebadi](#), Abdolfattah [Soltani](#), Mahnaz [Parakand](#) and Hadi [Esmaeilzadeh](#) were the group's lawyers. At the trial, they produced a document proving that the Intelligence Ministry had informed the judiciary that the accused were not spies. Shirin Ebadi and Mahnaz Parakand have now left Iran, Abdolfattah Soltani is currently in prison and [Hadi Esmaeilzadeh](#) lost his job as a university professor.

“The counter-espionage department of the Intelligence Ministry had issued a letter saying that until we were arrested they had found no evidence that we were spies,” Rezaei told IranWire. “It was the Intelligence Ministry that said this. At the trial Mr. Soltani told Judge [Moghiseh](#): ‘you must be impartial in judgment between the indictment by the prosecutor and the defense by the lawyers but, practically, you are even ahead of the prosecution.’”

In addition to the defense presented by the lawyers, the Baha'i leaders had prepared their own statement that they hoped to enter into court proceedings. “The judge would not even allow us to read this statement of defense and constantly interrupted us,” said Rezaei. “It took more than two hours to read something that could have been read in a quarter of an hour. They held three court sessions. They had said that the trial would be open to the public, but they would not allow our families in, who were at the door. We said that either they must hold a public hearing or that they must announce that it was a closed-door trial. The lawyers refused to offer defense. We left the court three times until, at last, they held [the trial in] an open court at the fourth session and allowed our families in. They brought in a camera that apparently belonged to the Intelligence Ministry and the judiciary and they recorded the whole thing.”

During his 10 years in prison, in addition to the harassment he faced, Saeed Rezaei experienced physical problems. He says that 95 percent of his physical suffering started during his incarceration, including heart and knee problems. In 10 years he was not granted any leave of absence, as is customary for Iranian prisoners serving long sentences — not even for one day. He had requested a medical furlough but the authorities and prison officials rejected his request, even though the Legal Medical Organization and specialist doctors had agreed that he needed arthroscopic knee surgery that required three months of recovery in the hospital.

“The prison provides ordinary medical services like general practitioners,” said Rezaei, “or a couple of specialists might pay a visit. But the prison lacks facilities like MRIs or radiology [equipment].” A few times he was sent under guard to the hospital for an angiography. About seven months ago, he required another angiography, but the prison officials told him that he could only go to the hospital if he went in prison uniform. He refused and as a result, his blood vessels went unchecked.

### **Co-existence and Respect in prison**

Now, after 10 years in prison, Rezaei says his best and lasting memories are about the “co-existence” of different beliefs and thoughts he had access to while he was incarcerated. “Both ordinary and political prisoners looked at us as their compatriots,” he told IranWire. “After

spending some time together, a peaceful co-existence among us emerged. Even if some [prisoners] were cold toward us for a few weeks, a friendship developed after we lived together. Their respect for us was very pleasant. In prison, we achieved co-existence with political prisoners who thought differently from us, and this was an extraordinary experience for both sides. Now we have no doubt that if Iranian people were free and if their minds were not poisoned against each other, they could live together. Our experience [in prison] can be realized across the whole of Iran.”

Like other prisoners, Saeed Rezaei received news about what was happening in Iran, and especially about the Baha’is, through his weekly meetings with his family. They told him about the continued [ban on Baha’is](#) from attending institutions of higher education, about closures of their [businesses](#) and about the arrests of Baha’is across Iran. He says that despite these injustices still taking place in Iran, “it is encouraging and morale-boosting that the civil and media activists cover this news and in many cases defend the civil rights that we have been denied. In prison this coverage made us happy. Don’t believe that covering this news is futile.”

In his last moments of incarceration, Rezaei’s conversation with his fellow inmates concerned the futility of the regime’s treatment of the Baha’is. “‘What was the use of this 10 years in prison?’ they asked me. ‘Have you given up your beliefs?’ I answered that I had not. An inmate friend said: ‘This imprisonment did nobody any good, neither you nor them.’ This is a truth that the rulers of the country will realize sooner or later. I have no idea when, but we have to stay in Iran until the misunderstandings are resolved.”