

At a Glance

Weekly report on Human Rights Violation in Iran

27 May 2018

Execution

URGENT ACTION

Execution looms for iranian kurdish prisoner

Further Information on UA: 171/17 Index: MDE 13/8457/2018 Iran Date: 21 May 2018

<https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/MDE1384572018ENGLISH.pdf>



Iranian Kurdish prisoner Ramin Hossein Panahi, sentenced to death in January 2018, is at imminent risk of execution. The Office for Implementation of Sentences has said that his execution will be carried out soon after the end of the Muslim month of Ramadan on 15 June.

He was convicted and sentenced to death after a grossly unfair trial. Ramin Hossein Panahi's lawyer learned on 17 May that his case had been referred to Branch Four of the Office for Implementation of Sentences in Sanandaj, Kurdistan province, for his death sentence to be carried out. Prison officials subsequently told Ramin Hossein Panahi on 19 May that his execution would be carried out after 15 June, when the Muslim month of Ramadan ends.

Ramin Hossein Panahi's execution was previously scheduled for 3 May and he was transferred to solitary confinement in preparation for it. However, following a public outcry, the authorities postponed the execution and returned him to the prison's general ward. Ramin Hossein Panahi, a 22-year-old man from Iran's Kurdish minority, was convicted and sentenced to death after a grossly unfair trial on 16 January that lasted less than an hour. His family told Amnesty International that he appeared before the Revolutionary Court in Sanandaj with torture marks on his body, but that the court failed to order an investigation into his claims that he had been forced to "confess" to the crime. According to his lawyer, the court convicted and sentenced him to death for "taking up arms against the state" (baqi) merely based on his membership of the banned Kurdish opposition group Komala. No specific evidence was provided linking him to activities involving intentional killing, which is the required threshold defining the "most serious crimes" to which the use of the death penalty must be restricted under international law. Between his arrest and trial, he was allowed one brief meeting with his lawyer, which took place with intelligence officials present. The Supreme Court upheld the conviction and death sentence in March 2018.

Ramin Hossein Panahi was first arrested on 23 June 2017. Following his arrest, he was forcibly disappeared for four months. According to him, during this period and a further two months of solitary confinement, Ministry of Intelligence and Revolutionary Guard officials repeatedly tortured him, including through beating him with cables, kicking and punching him in the stomach and hitting his head against the wall. They also deliberately denied him adequate medical care for the injuries he sustained from being shot at the time of his arrest.

Please write immediately in English, Persian or your own language calling on Iranian authorities to: v Halt plans to carry out the execution of Ramin Hossein Panahi immediately;

Ensure that his conviction and death sentence are quashed and that he is released unless there is sufficient evidence not obtained through torture or other ill-treatment to charge him with a recognizable criminal offence and grant him a fair trial, without recourse to the death penalty;

Order a prompt, independent and impartial investigation into his enforced disappearance, prolonged solitary confinement and allegations of torture and other ill-treatment, bringing to justice anyone found responsible in fair trials.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 02 JULY 2018 TO: High Council for Human Rights
Mohammad Javad Larijani Esfandiari Boulevard, Niayesh Intersection Vali Asr Avenue,
Tehran, Iran Head of Sanandaj's Central Prison Aziz Heidary Ershad Street Sanandaj,
Kurdistan province, Iran Deputy for Human Rights and International Affairs, Ministry of
Justice Mahmoud Abbasi Number 1638, Below Vali Asr Square Vali Asr Avenue, Tehran,
Iran Email: dr.abbasi@sbmu.ac.ir Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to
your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below: Name Address 1 Address 2
Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation Please check with your
section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the third update of UA 171/17.
Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde13/7827/2018/en

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Article 287 of the Islamic Penal Code states: "Any group that takes up arms against the foundations of the Islamic Republic of Iran is considered *baghi* and in the event of resorting to the use of arms, its members shall be sentenced to the death penalty." However, Article 288 notes, that if members of the group are arrested before using arms, they shall be sentenced to imprisonment. The circumstances around Ramin Hossein Panahi's arrest are unclear to Amnesty International. Komala initially issued a statement noting that he and three other Komala members had engaged in an armed clash with the Revolutionary Guards in the neighbourhood of Shalman in Sanandaj. Komala is an armed Kurdish opposition group which has been engaged in armed activities against the Islamic Republic of Iran since the 1980s.

During the incident, Ramin Hossein Panahi was severely injured and the other three men were shot dead. However, Ramin Hossein Panahi and his lawyer have since claimed that shots were only fired by the Revolutionary Guards. This claim is supported by a report published on 17 July 2017 by Akam News, a media outlet affiliated with the Ministry of Intelligence, which stated that the Revolutionary Guards ambushed the men and opened fire on them, and that the men were not able to fire any shots back. In an official statement issued on 23 June 2017, the Revolutionary Guards said that they had not suffered any casualties in the incident.

Ramin Hossein Panahi was held in solitary confinement in detention centres run by the Revolutionary Guards and Ministry of Intelligence from his arrest on 23 June 2017 until 9 January 2018, when he was transferred to Sanandaj's Central Prison. During the four months in which he was forcibly disappeared, his elderly parents reported making strenuous efforts to locate him by visiting various government offices in the cities of Sanandaj and Qorveh, and the village of Dehgolan, all in Kurdistan province, but said that officials refused to disclose his fate or whereabouts. Instead, officials threatened and insulted them, describing their son as a "terrorist". On 31 October 2017, the branch of the Ministry of Intelligence in Sanandaj contacted Ramin Hossein Panahi's mother and instructed her to go to Sanandaj's bus terminal. From there, Ministry of Intelligence officials took her to an undisclosed location to meet with her son. His mother said that the intelligence officials initially wanted to take photos and videos of the family visit but removed the cameras after Ramin Hossein Panahi

objected. His family has also reported that, on several occasions, Ministry of Intelligence officials visited him in prison and said that his death sentence would be commuted to imprisonment if he agreed to make televised “confessions” denouncing Kurdish opposition groups as “terrorists”. Hours after Ramin Hossein Panahi’s arrest on 23 June 2017, the Revolutionary Guards stormed his parents’ house and arrested his brother, Afshin Hossein Panahi. They raided the house again on 24 June and arrested three other members of his family: Ahmad Hossein Panahi (his brother-in-law); Zobeyr Hossein Panahi (a distant relative); and Anvar Hossein Panahi (a cousin). Information received by Amnesty International suggests that none of these men had any involvement with the armed clashes and were instead arrested apparently to exact retribution. In October 2017, Afshin Hossein Panahi was sentenced to eight and a half years in prison, which he is currently serving in Sanandaj’s Central Prison. Ahmad Hossein Panahi and Zobeyr Hossein Panahi were sentenced to five and six years in prison respectively. They were all convicted of national security offences connected to their involvement with Komala. On 1 May, Ahmad Hossein Panahi was arrested to begin serving his sentence. Zobeyr Hossein Panahi has not yet been summoned to begin serving his sentence.

Under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Iran is a state party, all people brought to trial have the right to fair proceedings. Given the irreversible nature of the death penalty, international human rights law requires that proceedings in capital cases scrupulously observe all relevant international standards protecting the right to a fair trial. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception, regardless of the nature of the crime, the characteristics of the offender, or the method used by the state to kill the prisoner. The death penalty is a violation of the right to life and the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

Political Prisoner Ramin Hossein Panahi One Step Closer To The Gallows

By IranHRM Last updated May 21, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/05/21/political-prisoner-ramin-hossein-panahi/>



The case of Ramin Hossein Panahi, political prisoner in death row at Sanandaj Central Prison, has been sent to the Bureau for Execution of Decrees and he is now one step closer to the gallows.

His lawyer and family were informed on Thursday, May 17, 2018 that his file has been sent to branch four of this bureau in Sanandaj’s Revolution Court after it has been sent back from branch 39 of Supreme Court, to be

carried out.

Prison officials summoned Ramin Hossein Panahi on 19 May informing him that his execution will be carried out after 15 June, when the Muslim month of Ramadan ends.

Ramin Hossein Panahi’s execution was previously scheduled for 3 May and he was transferred to solitary confinement in preparation for it. However, following a public outcry, the authorities postponed the execution and returned him to the prison’s general ward.

Amnesty International [issued an urgent action](#) today, May 21, calling on Iranian authorities to immediately halt plans to carry out the execution of Ramin Hossein Panahi. The statement reads in part; “Iranian Kurdish prisoner Ramin Hossein Panahi, sentenced to death in January

2018, is at imminent risk of execution. The Office for Implementation of Sentences has said that his execution will be carried out soon after the end of the Muslim month of Ramadan on 15 June. He was convicted and sentenced to death after a grossly unfair trial.”

Amnesty International further added; “Ramin Hossein Panahi, a 22-year-old man from Iran’s Kurdish minority, was convicted and sentenced to death after a grossly unfair trial on 16 January that lasted less than an hour. His family told Amnesty International that he appeared before the Revolutionary Court in Sanandaj with torture marks on his body, but that the court failed to order an investigation into his claims that he had been forced to “confess” to the crime. According to his lawyer, the court convicted and sentenced him to death for “taking up arms against the state” (baqi) merely based on his membership of the banned Kurdish opposition group Komala. No specific evidence was provided linking him to activities involving intentional killing, which is the required threshold defining the “most serious crimes” to which the use of the death penalty must be restricted under international law. Between his arrest and trial, he was allowed one brief meeting with his lawyer, which took place with intelligence officials present. The Supreme Court upheld the conviction and death sentence in March 2018.”

Iran Executions: Prisoner Hanged in Isfahan

<https://iranhr.net/en/articles/3324/>



Iran Human Rights (May 21, 2018): A prisoner was hanged at Isfahan Central Prison on murder charges last week.

According to IHR sources, on the morning of Sunday, May 13, a prisoner was hanged at Isfahan Central Prison. The prisoner, identified as Jafar Firouzkhani from Hashtrud city, was sentenced to death on murder charges.

A close source told IHR, “Jafar Firouzkhani was arrested and sentenced to death on the charge of murdering a car dealer in Najafabad, Isfahan in 2014.” He also added, “The defendant murdered the victim over the financial dispute. He was unable to win the consent of the plaintiffs.”

The prisoner was transferred to Isfahan Central Prison from Najafabad Prison a few days before his execution.

The execution of this prisoner has not been announced by the state-run media so far.

According to Iran Human Rights annual report on the death penalty, 240 of the 517 execution sentences in 2017 were implemented due to murder charges. There is a lack of a classification of murder by degree in Iran which results in issuing a death sentence for any kind of murder regardless of intensity and intent.

Sufi Bus Driver on Death Row in Iran Denies Killing Policemen in Audio File Released by Lawyer

MAY 25, 2018

<https://www.iranhumanrights.org/2018/05/sufi-bus-driver-on-death-row-in-iran-denies-killing-policemen-in-audio-file-released-by-lawyer/>



Mohammad Salas’ Attorney Zeynab Taheri Summoned to Court to Face Charges

The lawyer of Tehran-based death row prisoner **Mohammad Salas** has released an audio file in which he denies driving

the bus that killed three policemen in Tehran in February 2018.

Salas, a member of the Sufi Gonabadi Order in Iran known as the Gonabadi Dervishes also claimed there was a second bus involved.

“I am innocent. There were two buses. I was not the driver of the bus that killed those people. I am not a killer. I cannot even kill an ant. My bus was not damaged and did not have any bullet marks. The police have fabricated all of this. I was not behind the wheel of the bus that killed those people. That was another bus,” [said](#) the voice of the man identified as Salas by his lawyer.

Salas’ attorney Zeynab Taheri posted the audio on her Twitter account on May 22, 2018.

On April 24, Iran’s Supreme Court upheld the death sentence against Salas, 51, for allegedly driving a public bus through a narrow street during clashes between security forces and the dervishes in Tehran on February 19, killing the policemen.

Taheri previously told CHRI that Salas was [tortured](#) while being interrogated and submitted a coerced confession as a result.

“If I had defended myself in court, they would have killed me,” said the voice in the audio file. “I was too afraid to talk. They had beaten me for two hours in the police station but all I said was: ‘It wasn’t me.’ They said ‘beat him until he dies and we’ll say he died during the clashes.’ I tried to confuse the police so that they wouldn’t kill me.”

“They smashed my head in 17 places with batons,” continues the voice. “My brain has been smashed. I get dizzy. I’ve lost my memory. I had memorized the poems of Rumi and Hafez but I don’t remember anything.”

Two days after posting the audio file on Twitter, Taheri [tweeted](#) that she had been summoned to the Culture and Media Court to face the charges of “disturbing public opinion” and “spreading falsehoods.”

She has not provided further updates on her case.

On February 19 and 20, 2018, hundreds of dervishes were attacked in front of a police station in Tehran while protesting for the release of a fellow dervish who was being held there.

Websites run by the dervishes reported that 170 people were [hospitalized](#) during the clashes in February.

At least one dervish—[Mohammad Raji](#), a former commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps—died sometime between February 20 when he was detained at the protests and March 4 when his body was identified by a relative.

The Gonabadi Dervishes’ interpretation of Islam differs from that of Iran’s ruling Muslim Shia establishment. The Islamic Republic views any alternative belief system, especially those seeking converts, as a threat to the prevailing Shia establishment and has imprisoned members of the Sufi order and expelled them from university because of their religious beliefs.

Arbitrary Murders

Young Baluch Men Killed In Rock-Throwing Attack By The State Police

By IranHRM On May 25, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/05/25/young-baluch-men-killed-in-rock-throwing-attack-by-the-state-police/>



The state police threw stones at a vehicle on Friday morning which caused a car crash, leaving two young Baluch men killed in Lirdof village in Hormozgan Province (southern Iran).

Locals say the driver, Ramin Gargij, 26, lost control of the vehicle when the state forces hit him in the head by stones. The driver and a passenger, Rashed Baluch, 25, sustained critical wounds and lost their lives on the way to hospital. Eyewitnesses say the state police threw stones at the car without any prior orders to stop and fled the scene when they found out that the car had overturned. Another witness said; “We staged a protest rally outside the checkpoint but the state police sprayed into our eyes and dispersed the crowd.”

More than 100 people, including innocent bystanders, are killed every year in anti-smuggling operations in Iran, according to human rights activists. All the while, most of the judiciary cases involving smuggled goods in Iran see those accused being acquitted to return to their corrupt activities. The widespread aspect of [smuggled goods](#) and currency in Iran confirms this reality that the “small smugglers,” who are constantly arrested and even killed by state police, are actually a very small piece of a very large puzzle.

Defensless Border Porter Shot And Dead By Agents

By IranHRM On May 26, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/05/26/defensless-border-porter-shot-and-dead-by-agents/>



A young border porter from Urmia was killed when Iran’s armed forces shot at him on Sunday morning, May 20, 2018. He is identified as Maysam Karim Ali, 27 and father of three girls. In another event on the evening of May 19, Iran’s armed forces in Piranshahr shot at a group of border porters as a result of which one of them was severely wounded. He is identified as Ali Hasan Zadeh, 47.

In yet another case IRGC forces in Piranshahr Township (in West Azerbaijan Province) barraged at a group of Kurd border porters and sellers on May 23, 2018, as a result of which two border porters were severely injured. One of them is identified as Morad. The forces confiscated the goods of 20 of them.

Torture

Iran: Prison Guards Broke The Knee And Shoulder Of An Inmate

By IranHRM Last updated May 21, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/05/21/iran-prison-guards-broke-the-knee-and-shoulder-of-an-inmate/>

Prison guards of The Great Tehran Penitentiary prison severely beat and broke the knee and shoulder of a young inmate, Morteza Chalehkesh on the pretext of breaking from the prison. The Great Tehran Penitentiary is located in the far south region of Tehran Province at Karaj Old Rd. It is said that this prison is famous as the largest prison in the Middle East.

In yet another case on Tuesday, May 15, 2018, Fazolah Kharoot, a 20 years old inmate at ward one of Zahedan Central Prison beaten by prison’s officials got his teeth broken and his face injured. He is indicted with robbery and confined for one year so far.

A source close to his family explained the prison officials had ignorance about his phone card; his only way to contact his family, and he is confined for one year without his case reaching a

conclusion, so he had a verbal quarrel with the head of the ward; afterwards the prison agents took him to the guards' room and severely beat him.

Iran: Detained Civil Activist Severely Beaten And Sexually Tortured

By IranHRM On May 22, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/05/22/iran-detained-civil-activist-severely-beaten-and-sexually-tortured/>



Taymour Khaledian, a civil activist said on Saturday, May 19, 2018 that he has been “severely beaten and sexually tortured” at a NAJA base during his detention last winter, when he was arrested in protest gatherings. He explained that the agents used shocker, baton and fist to beat him and kicked him. He was so tortured that he didn't have the power to sit for a while.

Mr. Khaledian has been arrested in 2015 and 2016 for sending Malayer prison's news to media defending human rights and the other time he was imprisoned for six months charged with “propagating against the establishment.”

He is supposed to be put on trial in a near future for charges of “gathering and collusion to act against national security” and “propagating against the establishment.”

Arbitrary Arrests

Iran: The Lawyer Reported 20 Environmental Activists Detained

By IranHRM On May 24, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/05/24/iran-the-lawyer-reported-20-environmental-activists-detained/>



In regard to a case known as ‘Environmental Activists,’ Payam Dorfeshan, the lawyer of Kavoos Seyed Imami, explained: “Having in mind the situation of the families of these captives who are tirelessly following their cases, some said that they were able to have a few words with their children but I have been informed based on other information that about 20 other activists have been arrested in south of the country in relation with the same case. The main reason for their arrests is unknown.” The state-run [ISNA](#) news agency reported on May 21, 2018.

Civil Activist Summoned To The Culture & Media Court

By IranHRM On May 26, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/05/26/civil-activist-summoned-culture-media-court/>



Based on a subpoena received by Mehrdad Garivani on May 16, 2018, he must go to branch 2 of interrogation office of Culture & Media Court in five days to offer his last defense. He refused and announced: “I believe that a government that is based on theft, corruption and treason towards its people has no right to judge.”

Mehrdad, civil activist and a physics student at Qom University was first arrested on Jan. 26, 2017 and was freed on Aug. 2, 2017 from Evin prison after five months of interrogation and imprisonment and three times extension of his illegal detention time.

During that time, he was confined at wards 2A and 240 of Evin prison. The reason for his detention is his revelation about Saeed Tooshi's acts.

Saeed Toosi, Khamenei's famous Quran reader has been the subject of complaints of many youths for his mal treatment towards and raping of young Quran readers.

Iran: Zeinab Taheri has been summoned for interrogation

Created: 26 May 2018

<https://women.ncr-iran.org/iran-women-news/5204-iran-zeinab-taheri-has-been-summoned-for-interrogation>



Zeinab Taheri, a lawyer, has been summoned to the Second Branch of the Cultural and Media Court, on the charge of distorting public opinion and disseminating false information.

On May 24, 2018, Zeinab Taheri published part of the summon in her Telegram account, announcing that she has been summoned to court on the abovesaid charges.

Ms. Taheri has been defending death-row victim Mohammad Salas, a Yaresan dervish, Ahmadreza Jalali, and Mohammad Ali Taheri.

She believes the reason for her being summoned to court is her persistence in seeking justice for her clients regarding legitimate freedoms and that the officials are taking revenge from her.

Prisoners of Conscience

Iran: Imprisoned University Student Rouhullah Mardani On Hunger Strike

By IranHRM Last updated May 21, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/05/20/iran-imprisoned-university-student-rouhullah-mardani-on-hunger-strike/>



Rouhullah Mardani, a student of Tehran University and a teacher, has been on hunger strike since April 24, protesting his unlawful detention and being remained in a limbo. "After 26 days of his hunger strike, prison authorities continue to fail in taking action. He has been transferred to prison infirmary and received several IV serums as his health condition deteriorated in recent days," Rouhullah Mardani's relatives say.

Rohollah Mardani, a student from Tehran University and a teacher, was arrested on Feb. 17, 2018 for participating in protest gatherings of Dec. 2017- Jan. 2018 and was transferred to Evin Prison. He started a hunger strike on April 2018.

Iran: A Three-Year Sentence For A Media Activist

By IranHRM On May 21, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/05/21/iran-a-three-year-sentence-for-a-media-activist/>



The second branch of Urmia’s revolution court sentenced Farrokh Abdi, a Kurd media activist to three years imprisonment. He is the admin of a blocked Telegram channel called Amanj. The decree was impart to him yesterday.

According to this decree, Farokh Abdi will be jailed for two years for “offending the leader (Khamenei)” and to one year for “propaganda against the establishment.” He is currently

confined at Urmia Central Prison.

Iran: Political Prisoner Faces A Five-Year Additional Prison Term

By IranHRM Last updated May 22, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/05/21/iran-political-prisoner-faces-additional-prison-term/>



Mohammad Ali Mansouri (Pirouz), political prisoner at Rajaie Shahr Prison who is currently serving his 11th year, is sentenced to an additional five years in a new case, charged with “gathering and collusion against the establishment.”

The Center for Human Rights in Iran ([CHRI](#)) on May 15, 2018 cited a source close to the Mansouri family as saying; “They prosecuted him for going on a hunger

strike, writing statements against capital punishment and even penning an open letter on the occasion of the new year and things of that sort, and although Mr. Mansouri repeatedly denied the charges, the judge gave him the maximum penalty, which is five years.”

Judge Mohammad Moghiseh of Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court prosecuted Mansouri, 50, on May 14 without access to a lawyer, the source said.

Pirouz Mansouri was arrested in 2007 for being in contact with the People’s Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI). He was sentenced to 15 years behind bars on charge of “waging war against God.”

Mansouri went on a [hunger strike](#) along with more than a dozen political prisoners at Rajaie Shahr Prison in August 2017, protesting the inhuman conditions they have been forced to endure at a maximum security ward.

More than a dozen political prisoners, including prisoners of conscience, went on hunger strike in protest at the cruel, inhuman and degrading conditions they were forced to endure at a maximum-security prison in Karaj.

The political prisoners had been abruptly transferred to a security-enhanced ward where condition was described as suffocating. During the transfer to Section 10, prisoners said they were beaten by guards and were also prevented from taking their prescribed medication and personal belongings, including clothes, books and letters with them. hunger striking prisoners made a series of demands which was neglected by the authorities who put the prisoners’ physical and mental well being at serious risk.

(Mohammad Ali Mansouri has been under one-month interrogation last year to appear in a televised confession.)

Iranian VP Refutes Espionage Claims Against Detained Environmentalists, Calls for Their Release

MAY 23, 2018

<https://www.iranhumanrights.org/2018/05/iranian-vp-refutes-espionage-claims-against-detained-environmentalists-calls-for-their-release/>



The head of Iran's Department of Environment (DOE), Vice President Isa Kalantari, has publicly rejected claims by hardline judicial officials and media outlets that environmentalists detained in a crackdown by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) engaged in espionage.

"It has been determined that these individuals were detained without doing anything," Kalantari [said](#) while attending a conference in Tehran on May 22, 2018. "The Intelligence Ministry has concluded that there is no evidence that these individuals were spies."

"The government's fact-finding committee has concluded that the detained activists should be released because there's no evidence to prove the accusations leveled against these individuals," he added.

The Intelligence Ministry operates under President Hassan Rouhani while the IRGC, an elite force of the Iranian military, answers only to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.

The IRGC's Intelligence Organization has arrested dozens of environmentalists in Iran since January 2018 in a widening crackdown on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) throughout the country.

The IRGC's intelligence wing became an official state organization by order of the supreme leader in 2009 and has operated in parallel with the objectives of the Intelligence Ministry [without governmental oversight](#).

The detained environmentalists include 15 former and current staff members of the [Persian Heritage Wildlife Foundation](#) (PHWF), whose managing director, Iranian Canadian academic [Kavous Seyed-Emami](#), died under [suspicious circumstances](#) in Iran's Evin Prison in February.

Rouhani announced that he had assembled a fact-finding [committee](#) in February after the death of Seyed-Emami and the [deaths in custody](#) of two young men arrested in Iran's [December 2017/January 2018 protests](#) made international headlines.

Comprised of the ministers of the interior, intelligence and justice as well as the vice president for legal affairs, the committee has not made its findings public.

The Iranian government has ignored calls by Seyed-Emami's [family](#) and [UN officials](#) for an independent investigation into his death, which was ruled a suicide prison and judicial officials before there was an [autopsy](#).

The authorities have refused to release the names of and charges against the [more than 40](#) other environmentalists and their associates who were arrested in the southern province of Hormozgan in early May.

On May 8, Member of Parliament Mahmoud Sadeghi [tweeted](#) that the Intelligence Ministry's counter-intelligence experts "had found no evidence at all of their [the environmentalist' alleged] ties to espionage."

The IRGC has made no comment on the detentions but in February Tehran Prosecutor Abbas Jafari Dowlatabadi [accused](#) the environmentalists of providing information about Iran's missile sites to American and Israeli intelligence agencies.

According to the opposition news site Kalame, the environmentalists were targeted by the IRGC for opposing the installation of missile sites on protected lands.

"Kalame has received information that the environmental activists are not spies but in fact had resisted the IRGC's excessive demands to encroach on environmentally protected regions for the installation of missile sites," Kalame [reported on](#) April 16.

The report continued: "Although these regions were registered in the United Nations as protected areas, the IRGC thought it could build military sites there without any problem, thus it went ahead with installing missile silos and equipment. The move met opposition from environmental groups that repeatedly asked the IRGC to evacuate. The groups made it clear that the IRGC was endangering their activities to collect information and take photos of animals and plants for the UN. But the IRGC did not agree and asked these groups to instead submit old photos in their annual reports to the UN. The conflict between the two sides went on for years and eventually, the IRGC's Intelligence Organization used espionage as an excuse to arrest the environmentalists so that it could continue its activities in the protected regions without any problem."

The PHWF members who were arrested in January include Sam Rajabi, Niloufar Bayani, Morad Tahbaz (also holds American citizenship), Amir Hossein Khaleghi, Taher Ghadirian, Houman Jowkar and Sepideh Kashani.

In February, six environmentalists were arrested in the southern Iranian port city of Bandar Abbas and have been identified as Morteza Arianejad, Hassan Ragh, Abdolreza Kouhpayeh, Alireza Farhadzadeh and Aref and Hassan Zare (brothers).

The detainees have been denied access to counsel and have only had limited and brief contact with their family.

President Rouhani has not responded to a [letter](#) by 800 Iranian environmentalists [demanding clarification](#) on the "fate" of the environmentalists.

In April, Kalantari [praised](#) the former deputy head of the DOE, [Kaveh Madani](#), after he left his position and Iran after being arrested by the IRGC's Intelligence Organization.

Madani was also accused of espionage by hardline media outlets. In his [resignation letter](#), Madani, a Western-educated water management expert, said he was subjected to state surveillance from the moment he returned to Iran to join the DOE.

Update on May 24, 2018: Tehran Prosecutor Abbas Jafari Dowlatabadi has condemned Vice President Isa Kalantari and the Rouhani government's fact-finding committee for commenting on the case of the detained environmentalists.

"Mr. Kalantari has based his statements on a report by the committee comprised of a number of cabinet ministers and the president's legal adviser but the committee does not have access to the contents of this case and therefore neither the committee nor Mr. Kalantari... have any right to comment and interfere in this case," he [told](#) reporters on May 24.

The hardline prosecutor added that the judiciary's investigation of the detained environmentalists was nearing an end and "the results will be made public soon."

Who Are the Dual Nationals Imprisoned in Iran?

MAY 24, 2018

<https://www.iranhumanrights.org/2018/05/here-are-the-dual-nationals-imprisoned-in-iran/>



At least 14 dual and foreign nationals, as well as foreign permanent residents, are currently imprisoned in Iran. According to research by the Center for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI), the arrests are followed by a pattern of prolonged solitary confinement and interrogations; lack of due process; denial of consular access or visits by the UN or humanitarian organizations; secretive trials in

which the detainee is given limited access to counsel; and long prison sentences based on vague or unspecified "national security" and "espionage" charges. Iran says it doesn't recognize dual nationality. In November 2017, Reuters [reported](#) that at least 30 dual nationals had been arrested by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) since the signing of the nuclear deal in July 2015.

Iran has used imprisoned dual nationals as bargaining chips in its dealings with other nations. The Iranian judiciary's ongoing imprisonment of these women and men—arrested by the IRGC's Intelligence Organization or the [Intelligence Ministry](#), often while they were visiting Iran—also reflects Iranian hardliners' efforts to prevent Iran's engagement with the West.

No Iranian official has ever been [held accountable](#) for the deaths of some of these detainees in state custody. Iranian judicial officials, including [hardline judges](#), have also never been held accountable for their [collusion](#) with the [arresting authorities](#), which often influence or dictate prison sentences and other forms of punishment.

In February 2018, prominent academic and environmentalist [Kavous Seyed-Emami](#), who had Canadian citizenship, died under [suspicious circumstances](#) in Evin Prison after being arrested a month earlier with several other environmentalists. There are grave concerns for the lives of some of the current prisoners, especially Baquer Namazi, a senior citizen who has been hospitalized several times for heart procedures; Ahmadreza Djalali, who has lost a substantial amount of weight in prison for unknown reasons; and Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, who has been separated from her three-year-old daughter for more than two years and has suffered from depression and contemplated suicide inside the [Women's Ward](#) of Evin Prison.

Dual Nationals



[Siamak Namazi](#)

Citizenship: Iran/US

Iranian American dual national Siamak Namazi was the head of an oil and gas company based in the United Arab Emirates when

the [Revolutionary Guards](#) arrested him in Tehran in October 2015. In October 2016, he and his then 80-year-old Iranian American father were sentenced to 10 years in prison for “collaborating with enemy states” after a trial in which they were denied due process. An appeals court upheld the sentence in August 2017.



Baquer Namazi

Citizenship: Iran/US

Iranian American dual national Baquer Namazi, a former UNICEF representative, was arrested in Tehran in February 2016 after travelling to Iran to gain his son’s release. He was 80-years-old at the time. In October 2016, he and his Iranian American son Siamak Namazi were sentenced to 10 years in prison for “collaborating with enemy states” after a trial in which they were both denied due process. Baquer Namazi underwent heart surgery in September 2017

to receive a pacemaker.



Karan Vafadari

Citizenship: Iran/US

A member of the minority Zoroastrian faith, Iranian American dual national [Karan Vafadari](#) and his wife Afarin Neyssari, an Iranian architect, were managing the [Aun Art Gallery](#) in Tehran when they were arrested by the IRGC’s Intelligence Organization on July 20, 2016—ostensibly for serving alcohol in their home and hosting mixed-gender parties.

In March 2017, [new charges](#) were brought against the couple, based on claims by the IRGC that they had attempted to overthrow the Islamic Republic and recruit spies through foreign embassies. Karan has been sentenced to 15 years in prison and Afarin, a US permanent resident, to 10 years in prison. A [petition](#) set up by their stepson has received more than 10,000 signatures of support.



Morad Tahbaz

Citizenship: Iran/US

Iranian American businessman Morad Tahbaz was detained with at least nine [environmentalists](#) from the Iranian wildlife charity, the Persian Heritage Wildlife Foundation (PHWF), in January 2018 on alleged espionage charges. One of those detainees, Iranian Canadian [Kavous Seyed-Emami](#), died under suspicious circumstances in custody in February. Tahbaz, who reportedly also holds a British passport, was a board member of the PHWF. The

exact charges against him remain unclear.



Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe

Citizenship: Iran/UK

Iranian British dual national Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, a charity worker with the Thomson Reuters Foundation, was arrested by the IRGC in Tehran’s Imam Khomeini Airport while she was on her way back home to London after visiting her parents. Her 22-month-old daughter, who was with her at the time, was placed in the custody of her grandparents in Tehran.

Zaghari-Ratcliffe was sentenced to five years in prison in September

2016 on unspecified “national security charges.” She is currently being held in the [Women’s Ward](#) of Evin Prison and has been diagnosed with advanced depression. In October 2017, one month before she became eligible for early release, she was threatened with 16 more years in prison based on new charges brought by the IRGC.



Ahmadreza Djalali

Citizenship: Iran/Sweden

Ahmadreza Djalali is an Iranian-born Swedish scientist (received Swedish citizenship in February 2018), physician and expert in emergency disaster medicine who has been detained in Evin Prison since he was arrested on April 24, 2016, by Intelligence Ministry agents. In October 2017 he was sentenced to death for espionage charges based on a forced confession. In a [letter](#) from the prison, Djalali wrote that he was imprisoned during a trip to Iran for refusing to spy for the Intelligence Ministry. He has appealed his sentence. Photos of Djalali that surfaced in April 2018 indicate that he has lost a substantial amount of weight for unknown reasons. His family says the authorities are refusing to allow him to receive medical care from outside the prison’s clinic.



Kamal Foroughi

Citizenship: Iran/UK

Iranian British dual national Kamal Foroughi was working as a consultant for an oil and gas company when he was arrested on May 5, 2011, by the IRGC and sentenced to seven years in prison for “espionage” and one year for “possession of alcoholic drinks at home.” The latter sentence was eventually dropped. He is currently eligible for release.



Kamran Ghaderi

Citizenship: Iran/Austria

Kamran Ghaderi was the CEO of an Austrian IT management and consulting company when agents of the Intelligence Ministry arrested him upon his arrival at Tehran’s Imam Khomeini International Airport on January 2, 2016. He was on a routine business trip and had previously traveled to Iran on many occasions for work and business seminars, including as a member of the Austrian delegation to Tehran led by then-President Heinz Fischer in October 2015.

The prosecution used a coerced confession by Ghaderi to gain a 10-year prison sentence against him in the Revolutionary Court where he was tried for the charge of “conducting espionage for enemy states.” The Appeals Court later upheld the sentence.



Abdolrasoul Dorri Esfahani

Citizenship: Iran/Canada

An Appeals Court upheld a five-year prison sentence issued against [Abdolrasoul Dorri Esfahani](#), an Iranian Canadian dual national, on October 8, 2017. The initial sentence, issued against Esfahani by Judge Abolqasem Salavati of Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in May 2017, was for espionage charges including “collaborating with the British secret service.” Esfahani

represented the Central Bank of Iran during the talks on the country's nuclear program between Iran and the six world powers known as the P5+1. After the final deal was struck in July 2015, he advised the Rouhani government on implementing the deal's financial provisions



Abbas Edalat

Citizenship: Iran/UK

London-based Iranian British academic and antiwar activist Abbas Edalat has been detained in Iran since April 15, 2018, after being arrested by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). A professor of computer science and mathematics at the Imperial College in London, Edalat had traveled to Iran from his home in London at an unknown date to attend an academic workshop.

Foreign Nationals/Permanent Residents



Xiyue Wang

Citizenship: China/US

Xiyue Wang, a Princeton University PhD student, was conducting research in Tehran's archive centers for his thesis when he was arrested in August 2016 and sentenced to 10 years in prison in July 2017. An Appeals Court upheld the sentence in August 2017.

Judicial officials have remained mostly silent on Wang's case, but the official news agency of the judiciary, Mizan, printed an article in July 2017 describing Wang as a "spy disguised as a researcher" who

"digitally recorded 4,500 pages of official documents" from libraries in Tehran and Iranian academics.



Nizar Zakka

Citizenship: Lebanese with US permanent residency

Information technology expert Nizar Zakka, a Lebanese-born US permanent resident based in Washington, DC, has been imprisoned in Iran since September 2015. He was arrested in Tehran in September 2015 despite being officially invited by the Rouhani government to attend a conference on women and sustainable development.

In August 2017, Iran's Appeals Court upheld a 10-year prison sentence and \$4.2 million fine against Zakka for unspecified espionage charges.



Saeed Malekpour

Citizenship: Iran with Canadian permanent residency

Saeed Malekpour was a computer programmer and web developer living as a permanent resident in Canada before the Revolutionary Guards arrested while he was visiting Iran in 2008. He was charged with "insulting the sacred" for allegedly creating an online pornographic network. In September 2010, a Revolutionary Court sentenced him to death, but the sentence was ultimately commuted from death to life imprisonment in August

2013.



Afarin Neyssari

Citizenship: Iran with US permanent residency

Iran-based art gallery owner and US permanent resident Afarin Neyssari has been imprisoned in Iran since July 20, 2016, after being arrested by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in Tehran's International Airport. Her husband, Iranian American dual national Karan Vafadari, was arrested the same day after she called him while she was detained in the airport. He was ultimately sentenced to 15 years in prison on a variety of trumped-up charges without due process according to his family.

In January 2018, Neyssari's family posted an unusually high bail amount set for her by Judge Abolghasem Salavati, the head of the 15th branch of the Islamic Revolutionary Court in Tehran. But according to her stepson, Cyrus Vafadari, Salavati refused to let her go, stating, "If I wanted her released, I wouldn't have set bail so high." Neyssari was sentenced to 10 years in prison in Iran that same month without due process. The exact charges she was convicted of remain unclear.

Hardline Judge Orders Zaghari-Ratcliffe to Hire Different Lawyer After Issuing New Charge

MAY 24, 2018

<https://www.iranhumanrights.org/2018/05/hardline-judge-orders-zaghari-ratcliffe-to-hire-different-lawyer-after-issuing-new-charge/>



Imprisoned Dual National Allowed to Speak to UK Ambassador for First Time

After being told she is facing the charge of "propaganda against the state," imprisoned Iranian British charity worker Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe was told by Judge Abolqasem Salavati of Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran on May 19, 2018, that she must also hire a new lawyer.

Zaghari-Ratcliffe, 40, was forced to appear in the court presided over by Judge Salavati without the presence of her current lawyer.

"She was shown a file with 200 pages of documents, which she did not have time to look at and it seemed it contained the same evidence presented in her previous trial," Richard Ratcliffe told the Center for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI) on May 21.

"Nazanin called her lawyer and asked him to come to court but when he arrived at the courthouse he was not allowed to be present at the trial and the judge told Nazanin she has 10 days to get a new lawyer," he added.

Zaghari-Ratcliffe is already serving a [five-year](#) prison sentence for unspecified espionage charges. A Thomson Reuters Foundation employee, she was sentenced by Judge Salavati—known for issuing harsh sentences in politically sensitive cases especially involving dual nationals.

She was arrested in Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Intelligence Organization in April 2016 on her way home to London after visiting family in Iran.

Her 22-month-old daughter, Gabriella, who was with her at the time was taken from her and placed in the care of Zaghari-Ratcliffe's parents in Tehran.

Ratcliffe, who works as an accountant, has been separated from his family for more than two years. He told CHRI that he will be submitting a new visa application to travel to Iran to see his family even though his previous requests have been denied.

Telephone Conversation With British Ambassador

Ratcliffe also said that his wife was allowed to speak to the British ambassador to Iran, Rob Macaire, on the phone, marking her first contact with a British official in more than two years. “About two weeks ago, Nazanin went to see Judge Abbasi [in charge of Judicial Affairs in Evin Prison] and complained about her case,” he said. “The judge said, ‘listen, I can’t do much because your case is very political, but I suggest you speak to the British ambassador.’” He continued: “Nazanin got permission to call him and found his number. It was very unexpected to us and the embassy that they gave her permission. She called the ambassador and it was good. Now she has asked for a meeting in person. We have to see if they will allow it or not.”

In a statement published on February 22, 2018, the Free Nazanin campaign revealed that Zaghari-Ratcliffe has been kept in prison because of a governmental dispute over the interest rate of an old debt owed by the UK to Iran.

According to a May 21 [report](#) by the Iranian judiciary’s official news agency, Mizan, Judge Salavati has postponed the proceeding on the new charge until Zaghari-Ratcliffe hires a new lawyer.

“Nazanin’s psychiatrist has doubled her prescription pills to help her deal with depression and problems with sleeping but she is only taking the extra pills when she has panic attacks,” Ratcliffe told CHRI.

“She has not complained about her past physical problems but she is very upset because she was expecting to come home.”

Life Of Imprisoned Woman From Gonabadi Dervish Community In Danger

By IranHRM On May 21, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/05/21/life-of-imprisoned-woman-from-gonabadi-dervish-community-in-danger/>



The life of prisoner of conscience Shahnaz Kiani is in danger. She has been deprived of adequate medical treatment despite her critical health condition in [Qarchak Prison of Varamin](#), west of Tehran.

Shahnaz Kiani, was transferred to the prison clinic on May 19, but she was offended and verbally insulted by the doctor and the nurse. She was then returned to the ward without receiving

treatment.

Shahnaz Kiani suffers high blood pressure, diabetes and severe stomach ache and her symptoms have aggravated due to mal-nutrition under harsh prison conditions. Presently, a new mass has appeared in her chest area and she has contracted ulcer and GI inflammation, but has not been cared for at the prison clinic.

Her cellmates say they have repeatedly transferred Ms. Kiani to the dispensary but the staff downplayed or dismissed the seriousness of her problems, offering simple pills and painkillers. Ms. Kiani, a member of Gonabadi Dervish community, is one of the 11 Yaresan women imprisoned under harsh conditions since February 20, 2018. Ms. Kian has declared that protesting to the unlawful and shameful behavior of the doctor and nurse of the dispensary, she will not refer to the prison’s clinic. Her lack of access to medical treatment and the necessary medicines, has put her life in serious danger.

Amnesty International [issued an Urgent Action](#) on March 29, 2018, condemning the arbitrary arrest and ill-treatment of 11 women from Gonabadi Dervish religious minority and calling on the Iranian authorities to release them. AI named the 11 as [Shokoufeh Yadollahi](#), Sepideh Moradi, Maryam Farisani, Nazila Nouri, Sima Entesari, Shima Entesari, Shahnaz Kiani, Maryam Barakouhi, Elham Ahmadi, [Avisha Jalaedin](#) and Sedigheh Safabakht.

Iran's Judiciary Push Harsh Prison Sentences For Gonabadi Dervish Protesters

By IranHRM On May 22, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/05/22/harsh-prison-sentences-gonabadi-dervish-protesters/>



Three human members of Gonabadi Dervish community were sentenced to harsh prison terms after they stood trial in Tehran.

Ahmad Barakuhi, who lost his eye as [security forces quelled](#) the Dervish Gonabadi's February protests in in Seventh Golestan Street in Tehran, received the most severe penalty of seven years behind bars in the poor Sistan and Baluchistan Province in southeastern Iran.

Behnoud Rostami and Ahmad Ashayeri were sentenced to seven and two years behind bars, respectively.

They were charged with “acting against national security through being members of the [Gonabadi Dervish community](#),” “assembly and collusion against the state security” and “disturbing public order.”

A gathering on February 19, 2018, by Dervish Gonabadi protesters turned violent after police intervention. The Dervishes were protesting the detention of a member of their community and the lack of accountability by agents about where he was detained and charges made against him. The State Security Force attacked the protesters, firing tear gas and using batons. [Hundreds of Gonabadi Dervishes](#) including 70 women were arrested.

Iran Sentences Civil Rights Activist To Seven And Half Years In Prison

By IranHRM Last updated May 22, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/05/22/iran-civil-rights-activist-ali-nouri/>



Civil rights activist Ali Nouri, has been sentenced to seven and a half years behind bars after being convicted of “assembly, collusion and spreading propaganda against the state” by the branch 26 of Tehran Court headed by Judge Ahmadzadeh. The activist published the news on his Instagram page, sharing a picture of the verdict.

Ali Nouri, 25, was first arrested on October 8, 2014, in a rally in support of Kobani held in front of the

UN Offices in Tehran. He was then transferred to the Ward 2A of Tehran's Evin Prison which is controlled by the Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). After spending one-third of his conviction, he was conditionally released.

He was arrested again on December 30, 2017, and was taken to a quarantine section of Evin Prison where he suffered a heart attack and only received a quick check-up in the prison clinic. After a few days he was transferred to Rajaie Shahr Prison of Karaj, west of Tehran. Subsequently Mr. Nouri was temporarily released on bail on February 4, 2018 until his trial.

Iran Environmental Activists Sentenced To 18 Months Behind Bars

By IranHRM Last updated May 25, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/05/25/iran-environmental-activists-sentenced-prison/>



Hamed Sepehri and Jafar Ebrahimi, two [environmental activists](#) from Bukan, northwest Iran, were sentenced to 18

months behind bars in the Urmia court on May 5th, on charges of “spreading propaganda against the state.”

The two environmental activists were arrested by the intelligence agents on March 11, 2018, and were temporarily released on bail of 50 million Tomans on April 17.

In a recent security crackdown the state-run ISNA news agency reported on May 21, 2018 that security forces in south of the country have arrested 20 environmental activists, bringing the total number of environmental activists in jail to 75, as one of the lawyers of the case, Payam Dorfeshan, said.

Earlier this month, more than 40 environmentalists, and some of their relatives were arrested May 7-8, 2018, in the southern Iranian harbor city of Bandar Lengeh and surrounding towns Lavaredin, Janah and Bastak in Hormozgan Province.

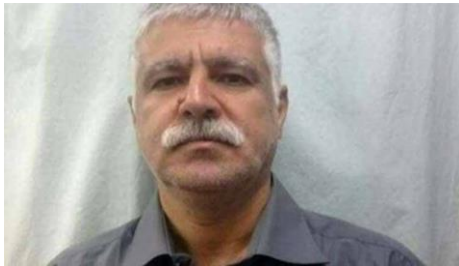
In a May 9 Instagram post that was deleted a few hours later, Iranian environmental activist Azar Sedaghati wrote that the homes of dozens of detained environmentalists and some of their relatives in southern Iran had been searched and that their communication devices had been confiscated.

13 [environmentalists have been in prison](#) for more than four months. They include Houman Jokar who leads the institute’s Asian leopard project, young scientist Taher Ghadirian, environmental expert Sam Rajabi, Niloufar Bayani, Jokar’s wife and a former UN environment adviser, Sepideh Kashani and Morad Tahbaz, an environment and cultural heritage protection activist and a Iranian American dual citizen.

Iran: After 24 Years; Mohammad Nazari’s Freedom Only After Repenting

By IranHRM Last updated May 25, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/05/25/after-24-years-freedom-only-after-repenting/>



IRGC opposed release of one of the oldest political prisoner. An informed source from Urmia Prison said: “When Mohammad Nazari was on hunger strike at Rajaie Shahr Prison, the prosecutor met him and promised that he will free him but IRGC prevented the act.”

The source added: “IRGC has asked for letter of repentant instead of his freedom.” The political prisoner has rejected and announced: “I am in jail for 24 years while innocent,

how can I now repent for the crime I have not committed.”

When he was 23, Nazari was arrested in Bukan, in Iran’s West Azerbaijan province, for allegedly being a member of Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI) and sentenced to death. This sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment.

Iran: Critical Health Situation of Prominent Lady Political Prisoner

Published on 26 March 2018

<https://www.ncr-iran.org/en/news/women/24522-iran-critical-health-situation-of-prominent-lady-political-prisoner>



NCRI - Health of Iranian political prisoner is deteriorating after 50-day hunger strike

The health of Iranian political prisoner Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee has significantly deteriorated now that she has been on hunger strike for 50 days.

Iraee, who is being held in Qarchak Prison in Varamin,

Tehran Province, is now suffering from various ailments as a result of this hunger strike, including kidney dysfunction, a swelling of the legs, and the loss of 20 kilograms in weight.

[Iraee](#) began her hunger strike on February 3, as a protest against her illegal transfer from Evin Prison to Qarchak Prison, on January 24. Under Iranian law, prisoners are separated based on the category of their crimes, but Iraee has been moved from a ward to house political prisoners to a prison for dangerous and violent criminals. This is often used by the Iranian Regime as a type of psychological and physical torture against political prisoners.

On March 19, four UN experts called for the immediate release of Iraee and fellow political prisoner Atena Daemi in a public statement, which expressed concerns at the abuse of these two women and reported that their attempts to talk with the Iranian Regime about this have been less than fruitful.

The statement read: “Their cases are illustrative of a continuing pattern of harassment, intimidation and imprisonment of those undertaking peaceful and legitimate activities in the defence of human rights and prisoners of conscience, often through using vaguely worded or overly broad national security-related charges.”

Just before the release of that statement, Italian MEP Pier [Antonio Panzeri](#), Chair of the Human Rights Subcommittee (DROI) of the European Parliament, also expressed concern about these two female human rights defenders and called for their immediate and unconditional release.

In a March 15 statement, Panzeri said: “I am gravely concerned by the detention and reported cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment of Atena Daemi and Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee at Shahr-e Rey prison. They are regarded as prisoners of conscience by credible human rights organisations. They are serving lengthy and unjust prison sentences that were handed down solely for their peaceful human rights work.”

He also advised that the women should be given the urgent medical care that they need as a result of attacks by other inmates and guards, as well as their hunger strike.

He also advised that the prison authorities allow both political prisoners to resume regular contact with their family and friends, including prison visits and phone calls.

Iraee is serving a sentence for writing a fictional story about the oft-used practice of stoning as a punishment by the Iranian Regime. This story was unpublished and was only visible on Iraee’s private computer, which was seized by the Regime when they arrested her husband for his activism.

In 2013, the Iranian penal code was changed to reflect that membership of the PDKI was no longer considered a crime but Nazari, now 47, remains behind bars.

Political Prisoner Under Pressure Of Intelligence Agents

By IranHRM On May 27, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/05/27/political-prisoner-under-pressure-of-intelligence-agents/>



Political prisoner, Shapour Rashno, 43, is under pressure of intelligence agents. This prisoner has a law degree and is the former head of Mother Library in Andimeshk. Intelligence ministry’s interrogators have charged him with having connection with POMI. They intend to open a new case for him and sentence him again. Mr. Rashnoor is suffering from severe digestive problems and these agents

are using it as a leverage of pressure against him instead of treating him. He has been arrested about 3.5 months ago.

Peaceful Protest's Right

Two Confirmed Killed and 48 Injured in May 2018 Protests in Kazeroon

MAY 25, 2018

<https://www.iranhumanrights.org/2018/05/two-confirmed-killed-and-48-injured-in-may-2018-protests-in-kazeroon/>



Bullets fired by police in the city of Kazeroon, Fars Province, killed two men—Ali Mohammadian and Azad Omid Reza Yousefian—during protests there in May 2018 the Center for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI) has learned.

Yousefian a construction painter. Mohammadian was a welder and

The exact number of fatalities was previously unconfirmed due to the authorities' unwillingness to speak publicly about the cases.

On May 19, Ali Alghasi, the chief prosecutor of Fars Province, said that in addition to the two deaths, 48 people had been injured, one of them seriously, and least 15 people had been arrested.

Hundreds of people protested in the streets of Kazeroon on May 16 after reports spread on social media stating that a controversial plan to divide the city and attach part of it to a nearby village to create a new city had been finalized.

“The part that is supposed to be detached from Kazeroon is a historic area with greater water resources and the people believe the lawmaker who proposed it [the plan] wants to attach it to the village where he was born instead of attending to the people’s real problems,” a local resident told CHRI on May 17.

Following the arrests of several protesters, their relatives gathered outside a local police station to demand their release but the police opened fire on the crowd according to a local resident who spoke to CHRI on the condition of anonymity for security reasons. In his comments to reporters, the chief prosecutor claimed some unruly protesters had caused problems for everyone else.

“A few riff raffs disturbed the peace and security of the people and took advantage of their feelings at a protest gathering and committed mischief,” Alghasi told the semi-official Mehr News Agency. “Their case is completely separate from the pious, honorable and revolutionary people of Kazeroon.”

The chief prosecutor also defended the policemen's actions and claimed they reacted only after some protesters "stormed the police station, destroyed public property... fired weapons and used knives" against the police and the people.

He also said that several policemen were injured, including one who was stabbed. Alghasi added that he had ordered a fact-finding commission to investigate the incidents to apprehend and punish those responsible for disturbing the peace. He made no mention of investigating the conduct of the police and security forces.

On May 17, the Interior Ministry **announced** that the plan to divide the city had been suspended "to take the concerns of the honorable people of Kazeroon into account."

Children's Rights

Iran: Shocking number of early and forced marriages

Created: 26 May 2018

<https://women.ncr-iran.org/iran-women-news/5205-iran-shocking-number-of-early-and-forced-marriages>

East Azerbaijan Province leads the Iranian provinces in early marriages of girl children 10 to 15 years old, ranking second only to Khorassan Razavi Province, NE Iran.

Amir Taghizadeh, cultural and youth affairs deputy in the General Department of Youths and Sports in East Azerbaijan (NW Iran), said, "Parental coercion is the reason for marriage of girl children between 10 and 15 years of age."

3,944 girls between 10 and 14 years old got married in 2015. Most of these marriages took place in villages and rural areas. One year later, in 2016, this number reached 4,165 marriages.

The marriage age for girls in Zainub village is under 10.

Javidnia, the headman of Zeinub village, located 50 km from Tabriz (the capital of East Azerbaijan), says: "Here, girls' marriages are official. For example, the girl gets engaged at the age of 10. A religious contract (*Seigheh*) is written (to sanction contacts between the couple), then when the girl reaches legal age, the same contract is registered. Some girls stay engaged for three years and some go to their new home after they are engaged." (The state-run ISNA news agency- May 24, 2018)

Women's Rights

Iran: Prison doctors abuse and deny treatment to persecuted women

25 May 2018, 11:42 UTC

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/05/iran-prison-doctors-abuse-and-deny-treatment-to-persecuted-women/>



Women prisoners of conscience from Iran's Gonabadi Dervish religious community are being subjected to verbal abuse, including sexual slurs, and denied proper medical treatment by doctors and other health professionals at Shahr-e Rey prison on the outskirts of Tehran, Amnesty International revealed today.

The organization has received testimonies indicating that doctors at the prison, a former industrial chicken farm in Varamin, are routinely dismissing the women's complaints of pain and discomfort as "fake" while refusing to prescribe them medication on a timely basis or carry out thorough diagnostic tests. They are also failing to ensure that medical equipment in the prison clinic is functioning properly and poses no threat to patients' health.

"Deliberately denying medical treatment to any prisoner is unlawful, cruel and inhuman and can amount to torture. These women from Iran's Gonabadi Dervish community should not even be imprisoned in the first place. It is deplorable that the Iranian authorities are seeking to intimidate and torment them further," said Philip Luther, Amnesty International's Research and Advocacy Director for the Middle East and North Africa.

"The Iranian authorities must ensure all individuals in custody receive adequate health care and are treated with respect and dignity. Any prison staff suspected of abusing or withholding medical treatment from detainees must be investigated and prosecuted in trials that meet international standards."

At least 10 women from Iran's Gonabadi Dervish community have been arbitrarily detained in Shahr-e Rey prison in inhuman conditions, without access to their lawyers, since February 2018. They were arrested for their peaceful participation in a protest in Tehran by members of the persecuted minority, which turned violent when security forces used water cannons, firearms and tear gas to disperse the crowds.

As a result of their ill-treatment by security forces, these women have had a range of health problems in custody, including head injuries, broken arms and vaginal bleeding. They also have been denied adequate treatment for pre-existing medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes and high blood pressure.

According to reports received by Amnesty International, the women have been subjected to hostile interrogation-style questions about their court cases and insults over their beliefs by doctors at Shahr-e Rey prison. There are concerns that doctors have also sought to degrade the women by exploiting cultural taboos around sexuality, asking the women intrusive questions about their sexual relations, such as whether they have "boyfriends" or are "sleeping around with men".

A source told Amnesty International that women requesting emergency medical care in the evening or at night have been refused treatment by doctors and nurses until the following day and even berated for purportedly disturbing the medical staff's sleep in the middle of the night.

There are concerns about the reliability of medical equipment at the prison clinic, as, during the last three months, it has shown prisoners as having normal blood pressure even when they were experiencing symptoms of high blood pressure, including severe headaches, vision problems, chest pain, difficulty breathing and an irregular heartbeat. High blood pressure exposes people to the risk of stroke and heart disease.

Detainees also said a lack of stretchers and wheelchairs has resulted in fellow detainees being forced to carry sick prisoners out of their rooms and into the clinic, which has led to falls and other accidents.

“Prisoners’ access to health care is a right enshrined in both international and Iranian law. The international community, including the European Union, must demand that the Iranian authorities urgently grant access to international monitors including the UN special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran, so that they can carry out unannounced inspections of Shahr-e Rey prison, including private interviews with prisoners,” Philip Luther said.

There are concerning reports that in a further deliberate attempt to abuse and degrade the prisoners, the Gonabadi Dervish women have also been forced to pick weeds in the prison yard with their bare hands as a condition for being permitted telephone calls with their families and a couple of hours of fresh air during the day.

Shahr-e Rey prison is a disused chicken farm that holds hundreds of women convicted of violent offences in conditions falling far below the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules). Common complaints include urine-stained floors, lack of ventilation, insufficient and filthy bathroom facilities, prevalence of contagious diseases, poor quality food containing small pieces of stone and salty water.

Background:

The 10 detained women from Iran’s Gonabadi Dervish community are: Shokoufeh Yadollahi, Sepideh Moradi, Maryam Farisani, Nazila Nouri, Sima Entesari, Shima Entesari, Sedigheh Safabakht, Maryam Barakouhi, Elham Ahmadi, and Avisha Jalaledin. An 11th woman, Shahnaz Kiani, who suffers from severe health problems including high blood pressure, abdominal pain and diabetes, was released on 23 May after months of being denied adequate medical care.

In recent weeks, the women have been taken to the Prosecutor’s Office and formally charged with spurious national security charges including “gathering and colluding against national security”, “disrupting public order” and “spreading propaganda against the system”. Their lawyers were not allowed to be present for the session or meet their clients beforehand.

The women have said that they have been threatened with transfer to prisons in remote provinces.

Amnesty International has previously [called on the Iranian authorities](#) to immediately and unconditionally release all the Gonabadi Dervish women held in Shahr-e Rey prison as they have been imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly.

Iran: 10 young women and men arrested at a party

Created: 23 May 2018

<https://women.ncr-iran.org/iran-women-news/5196-iran-10-young-women-and-men-arrested-at-a-party>



The State Security Force (SSF) arrested 10 young women and men at a party in Rasht, capital of Gilan Province in northern Iran.

The SSF raided a party held in a house in Gilan Boulevard of Rasht on May 21, 2018, arresting 10 young women and

men who were subsequently handed over to judicial authorities.

During last year, at least 570 women were arrested in cities across Iran in such raids on private parties.

Iran: More guidance patrols to crack down on women

Created: 25 May 2018

<https://women.ncr-iran.org/iran-women-news/5199-iran-more-guidance-patrols-to-crack-down-on-women>



New groups of guidance patrols will begin their crackdown on women in Ardebil, northwestern Iran.

The General Prosecutor of Ardebil announced that new vice patrols are going to begin their activities in Ardebil.

In an interview on Wednesday, May 23, 2018, with the state-run ISNA news agency, Seyed Nasser Atabati, stated, “In addition to the activities of the patrols of the Prosecutor’s Office, Talayedaran

Patrols in charge of promoting virtue and forbidding from evil are going to guide and issue verbal warnings to women who are improperly veiled and to businessmen who break the laws in various arenas. These teams are obliged to offer their warnings and guidance verbally. Practical measures are needed to further educate people in protecting their covering, chastity and other related matters.” (The state-run Jamaran website – May 23, 2018)

The Women's Committee of the National Council of Resistance of Iran issued a statement on April 19, 2018, on beating of and violence against women under the pretext of improper veiling. In the statement, the NCRI Women's Committee reiterated, “Clamping down on women under the pretext of improper veiling is a means for stepping up suppression throughout the society. This is what Iran’s freedom-loving women have been bravely resisting against over four decades of the clerical regime’s rule.”

Freedom of Expression

On the table: Why now is the time to sway Rouhani to meet his promises for press freedom in Iran

Published May 24, 2018

<https://cpj.org/reports/2018/05/on-the-table-rouhani-iran-press-journalists-jailed-censored-internet-policy.php>



President Hassan Rouhani came to power in 2013 on a platform of pledges to roll back the repressive policies of his predecessor, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who decimated Iran’s once vibrant media. Rouhani, seeking to create space for political reform and end the country’s international isolation, openly backed greater freedom for the press and the internet.

Rouhani has achieved some notable successes, such as a steep decline in the number of journalists imprisoned—the most visible sign of Iran’s repression. But CPJ interviews with exiled journalists, international correspondents, and tech experts—because it was not possible

to report from inside the country—found that censorship and repression are intact and may have strengthened in recent years.

The ranks of independent and reform-minded journalists remain depleted, as many left the profession or headed into exile. Rouhani has not met his commitment to allow an independent journalists association to reopen. Families of media personnel are increasingly harassed. Efforts to gather and spread news on social media platforms such as Telegram are met with increasing pressure as hardliners move aggressively to control the online space. Furthermore, digital rights activists warn that popular technology puts journalists and their networks at risk.

Even as journalists have pushed the boundaries by reporting on sensitive social issues, some subjects are completely off limits, such as the Guardian Council, the Revolutionary Guards, and the judiciary. The secretive nature of these powerful institutions is particularly vexing now that President Donald Trump has pulled the U.S. out of an agreement to keep Iran from developing nuclear weapons, and European leaders are debating whether and how to save the deal. At the same time, Tehran is engaged in the political and military conflicts of Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen.

Yet the current focus on Iran's intentions may represent an opening to engage with the country over press freedom and other lapsed human rights. Regardless of the fate of the nuclear deal, Rouhani's political legacy depends on boosting the economy, which in turn rests on increased trade with Europe. European Union leaders can use this leverage to insist on a more open and pluralistic media environment. Receptiveness by Rouhani would strengthen his hand against the more hardline elements in Iran. Meanwhile, technology companies could use their influence with Tehran and with the West to ensure that they retain access to the critical Iranian market.

In many ways, Iran's press is still reeling from the crackdowns imposed during the two terms of Rouhani's predecessor, Ahmadinejad. At the worst of his onslaught after the disputed 2009 election, [CPJ documented](#) 52 journalists jailed in retaliation for their work—a figure that excluded over 50 journalists imprisoned and released on bail during the same period. Additionally, authorities ordered numerous critical newspapers to close and barred or expelled foreign journalists from the country. This left a greatly diminished press corps.

“An entire fleet of well-seasoned journalists had to flee Iran and go into exile out of fear. This has had a tremendous impact on the industry,” said Hannah Kaviani, who left the country in 2007 to intern in Berlin and has not returned since for fear of retaliation over her reporting. Kaviani, who works for the U.S. funded Persian-language news service Radio Farda--part of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty--said that many of her colleagues were once the heads of prominent reformist newspapers in Iran.

Rouhani pledged in his 2013 and 2017 election campaigns to confront conservative political forces that equate access to information with threats to national security, such as by implementing his [Citizens' Rights Charter](#) to reinstate rights rolled back under Ahmadinejad. He promised to ease internet censorship restrictions and the jamming of satellites; to provide

affordable and accessible high-speed internet; and to allow the independent Association of Iranian Journalists, which closed in 2009, to reopen.

"We want freedom of the press, freedom of association, and freedom of thought," Rouhani [told a stadium of supporters](#) during an election rally in May 2017. At the same rally, however, he acknowledged that his ability to effect change was restricted. "I often had problems keeping my promises. What I promised in 2013, either I did or wasn't allowed to do," he said.

Iran's revolving-door policy of [jailing critical journalists](#) while temporarily releasing others on furlough continued into Rouhani's presidency, even as the overall number of journalists in prison declined because sentences imposed in the post-2009 crackdown expired. At the time of [CPJ's last prison census](#), the number behind bars in Iran was the lowest in a decade, but journalists say the figure belies the reality that those reporting critically still face harassment and intimidation.

Kambiz Foroohar, a New York-based Iranian-American journalist who left Bloomberg News in March 2018, told CPJ, "Self-censorship among journalists has also increased in the Rouhani era because journalists are convinced that press freedoms are not a priority for his administration." He added that, while fewer journalists have been arrested under Rouhani, the president has done little to free those who do get detained.

As of May 1, CPJ was aware of at least three journalists currently in jail for their work, including [Iraj Jamshidi](#) of *Asia News*, and [Reza Entessari and Kasra Nouri](#), reporters with the Sufi news website *Majzooban-e-Noor*, who were [arrested on February 19](#). Nouri is in poor health, [according to reports](#).

Rouhani's bid for progress is countered by powerful forces in Iran's political system that favor a society limited by Western influence: the judiciary, state TV, and the Guardian Council, whose leaders are chosen by the Supreme Leader.

These institutions often accuse journalists they deem a threat of slander or anti-state activities such as spying or collaboration with the West, CPJ has found.

Siamak Ghaderi, a former journalist for the state-run news agency IRNA who was jailed for four years during the Ahmadinejad administration, said the office of the Supreme Leader and the judiciary see journalists "as enemies."

Journalists with whom CPJ spoke identified three main subjects that cannot be criticized: The Supreme Leader or other high-ranking member of one of Iran's unelected councils or organizations; the judiciary; and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), an elite security institution.

Kaviani told CPJ that navigating the political landscape in Iran requires around-the-clock diligence, which can be challenging even for seasoned foreign correspondents. "There are informal red lines everywhere on what you can and cannot report on. You are under surveillance 24/7 and so is your work," she said.

But journalists told CPJ that they have increased latitude to report on social issues, largely thanks to the combination of smartphones, increased internet bandwidth, and apps such as Telegram that have made it easier to keep in touch with contacts and sources, and to share news and ongoing developments.

“Telegram is basically the internet for Iranians,” said Amir Rashidi, an internet security and digital rights researcher at the New York-based Center for Human Rights in Iran.

Rouhani has largely kept his promise to delay official efforts to permanently block social media platforms such as Telegram and Instagram, and increase Iran’s telecommunications infrastructure. Article 33 of his Citizens’ Rights Charter—a largely symbolic presidential decree—[called for Iranians to](#) “have the right to freely and without discrimination enjoy access to and communicate and obtain information and knowledge from cyberspace.”

Apps like Telegram and a sharp rise in the use of smartphones—from 58 million in 2012 to over [80 million in 2016](#), according to [statistics from the U.N.’s International Telecommunication Union](#)—have forced the government to allow more critical coverage and provided journalists with a layer of protection by spreading news wide and fast.

Kaviani told CPJ that news stories, such as a 2016 report on “[grave sleepers](#),” and reports on climate change or natural disasters, such as the 2017 Kermanshah earthquake, “made really big waves inside the country—waves that we haven’t seen in a long time.” She said the report in reformist paper *Ghanoon* about homeless families and drug addicts sleeping in open graves just outside Tehran [sparked public outrage](#) and nationwide debate on under-reported topics such as homelessness and addiction.

Without the outrage, Kaviani said, *Ghanoon* might have been suspended for printing a story that cast the then conservative-led Tehran Municipality in a poor light. Authorities couldn’t censor the paper because the story went viral. Doing so would have appeared “unjust” and as if government wanted to cover up the mess.

“It illustrates how powerful it was and how challenging it became for authorities to control the narrative and address the issue of homelessness,” Kaviani told CPJ.

Exiled journalist Ghaderi, a recipient of CPJ’s [International Press Freedom Award](#) in 2014, also highlighted the prevalence of social matters making front-page news. “If a private company hikes fees for medical prescriptions, a journalist covering this topic will go to great lengths in their reporting because there is such loud public outcry,” Ghaderi said.

Previously the government would seek to control coverage of natural disasters. However, social media coverage of events—such as a 7.3 magnitude earthquake that rocked the Kurdish-minority region of Kermanshah in November 2017, [killing over 600](#) people and injuring more than 10,000—has made it harder for the government to downplay local impact or cover up critical coverage about its handling of a situation.

Despite this opening, some journalists said self-censorship is ingrained after decades of repression and retaliation against the press. Journalist and filmmaker Maziar Bahari, who was jailed for over 100 days in 2009 for his work, said, “Journalists increasingly resort to self-

censorship and take government restrictions for granted. These journalists are cautious even where and when they are allowed to get close to red lines [and] report more freely on traditionally taboo subjects.”

Bahari acknowledged that social media has helped tackle some issues that traditional media are unable to cover. He said, “What has changed, however, is the power and the spread of unfiltered social networks. The news that the press does not report finds its way to social networks.”

Rouhani has publicly supported the use of social media despite efforts by conservatives who warn the internet is “un-Islamic,” “immoral,” and a danger to national security. In a [state television program](#) in June 2013, he said, “We live in an era in the world in which restricting access to information is no longer possible.”

Rashidi said that these technological advances come at a cost. Higher internet speeds helped the growth of domestic websites such as Aparat, the Iranian version of YouTube, but foreign websites still have slower access speeds. The blocking of sites and apps has become a new battlefield between Iranian political forces.

“President Rouhani has improved Iran’s ICT [Information and Communication Technology] infrastructure and overall internet bandwidth, but the judiciary’s power and surveillance capacity has also increased,” Rashidi said.

The digital rights researcher added, “In previous elected administrations, the Ministry of Culture would have more of a responsibility in regards to filtering, but now the judiciary is increasingly exerting its influence and power over what should or shouldn’t be filtered. As a result, we’ve been witnessing an unprecedented direct attack on data.”

A September 2017 study by the [Open Observatory of Network Interference](#), which is part of The Tor Project, found that 121 of the 886 sites blocked by Iran between September 2014 and 2017 were news related.

Authorities have also ramped up attempts to control, monitor, and ultimately block Telegram. Iran’s Supreme Cyberspace Council, the body primarily responsible for setting internet policy, ruled in December 2016 that any Iranian-owned channel with over 5,000 followers needed to register and obtain a permit, according to the [Center for Human Rights in Iran](#).

A separate committee under the Cyberspace Council was assigned to monitor the content of these channels, [according](#) to former Minister of Culture Reza Salehi Amiri. If the Cyberspace Council disapproved of content in a Telegram channel, it had the power to shut the channel down.

The council’s power was exercised in March 2017, ahead of the elections, when authorities arrested several administrators from 12 reformist news channels, including some voluntarily registered with the committee, according to [the Center for Human Rights in Iran](#). The center reported that in August 2017, a court sentenced six of the administrators to prison terms ranging from two to five years for unspecified charges.

Rouhani's commitment to a freer internet continues to be tested as hardline branches of government call for greater regulation after anti-government protests in December.

Protests sparked when details of the Rouhani administration's budget proposal were leaked to the press. The leaked material was widely reported in both traditional press and social media. The story spread quickly via Twitter and Telegram, which in turn were used to document and disseminate the resulting unrest in real time.

In a January report, *New York Times* Tehran bureau chief [Thomas Erdbrink](#) pointed out that resentment and anger toward authorities quickly spread among Telegram's users. Erdbrink wrote, "The leak intended to tap popular resentment, and it worked."

In response to the protests, the Supreme National Security Council issued a ban on Telegram that stayed in place for two weeks, [according to Slate](#).

Before blocking the app, Iranian authorities attempted to make Telegram remove some channels by filing complaints alleging they were "inciting violence," which is grounds for instant removal under the app's regulations. On December 30, 2017, Iran's Minister of Information and Communications Technology Mohammad-Javad Azari Jahromi, tagged Telegram's founder Pavel Durov in a [tweet](#) that claimed a channel was "encouraging hateful conduct." Durov replied via Twitter to say that Telegram would investigate, and later confirmed that the Telegram channel for pro-opposition news site *Amad News* had broken the app's rules on incitement and been suspended, [according to reports](#).

The following day, however, [Durov claimed in a tweet](#) that authorities blocked access to Telegram after the platform refused other requests to shut down channels.

Telegram did not respond to CPJ's requests for comment or information about the number of takedown requests it receives from the Iranian government. CPJ attempted to seek comment over a period of weeks, including via the app, Twitter, and third parties who have connections with the company.

At [least eight Telegram administrators](#) were arrested or briefly detained between December 28, 2017 and late January for their channels' coverage of the protests, which authorities claimed "fomented chaos," according to reports.

After the protests, many senior conservative political figures discussed implementing a ban on Telegram, similar to those in place on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, which are only accessible via VPN, according to reports. In April, several senior officials, including the [Supreme Leader](#) and a [vice-president](#), announced they were closing their Telegram accounts "to protect the national interests." Iran's judiciary on April 30 [issued an order](#) for internet service providers to block access to the platform to protect national security, and highlighted how the app had been used to mobilize protests, [according to Reuters](#). As of May 1, some Iranians said they were still able to access the app using measures such as VPNs to get around the block, [according to The New York Times](#). A group of Iranian lawyers filed a petition to a Tehran court, in early May, saying the ban contravened the constitution, and calling for the ban to be overturned, the [Center for Human Rights in Iran reported](#).

Even as greater access to smartphones and the internet has helped local journalists push back against what have been considered sensitive issues, digital rights researcher Rashidi warned that these tools have also led to an increased risk of surveillance.

Being hacked and surveilled has become so commonplace, “even Rouhani’s own Cabinet members get hacked and no one says a word or makes a fuss,” Rashidi said, referring to a [Center for Human Rights report](#) on how the vice president for women and family affairs had her Facebook and Gmail accounts hacked.

Nariman Gharib, a social media analyst for Manoto, a Persian-language satellite news channel based in London, told CPJ that many of his colleagues have faced phishing and hacking attacks.

Gharib said hackers whom he believes are affiliated with Iranian intelligence or security agencies, have sent anonymous threatening messages to him and his colleagues or made phishing attempts via their social media accounts to intimidate, harass, and gain information on the journalists. Gharib said hackers focus on family members because the journalists are less inclined to reveal or admit that they are being targeted for fear of further retaliation against their family and friends.

Collin Anderson, an internet-security researcher and co-author of a Carnegie Endowment report “[Iran’s Cyber Threat](#)” that was released in January, told CPJ that many of the groups behind such attacks are affiliated with the Revolutionary Guards.

Iranian malware was found in the computers of Voice of America Persian and reformist journalists, and foreign-based non-governmental organizations that focus on Iranian civil liberties, according to the report.

Anderson said the malware campaign targeted journalists from 2010 to 2016. “The folks that were doing attacks against journalists in the 2016 parliamentary elections, were the same groups doing their attacks in 2011 with online media activists. They’ve always been hacking the same types of targets,” he said.

Despite knowing surveillance is a possibility, Rashidi and another security expert told CPJ that many Iranians don’t know how to protect themselves against malware or phishing attacks. Rashidi told CPJ he regularly receives messages from Iranians whose accounts are being hacked repeatedly, but they don’t take the simple and readily available steps to protect themselves.

Gharib said, “People blow off digital security and tend to think that the authorities have better things to do ... It’s a general lack of awareness. They simply don’t understand that digital networks are like a ring, and if one gets snagged, they all do.”

CPJ advises journalists to use two-factor authentication for social media accounts and to use messaging apps such as Signal that have default end-to-end encryption capabilities.

Gharib said he was aware of several cases where journalists were briefly detained by authorities but, whether through fear or embarrassment, didn't alert anyone in their network. Often by the time they have been released, authorities have accessed the journalist's cell phone, email, and social media accounts.

Gharib added, "The best advice that I can give a journalist is that if at any moment, your email or social media account has become compromised, it's imperative that they let everyone in your network know."

Satellite television is another technology platform that represents an opportunity for information and censorship. Technically, owning satellite equipment is illegal in Iran. But according to April 2018 estimates from local outlet [Tabnak News](#), 60 percent of Iranians own a satellite dish.



An image from the state-run news agency ISNA shows Iranian soldiers using tanks to destroy satellite dishes in 2013. Iran jams satellite signals to prevent citizens from accessing Western news and entertainment channels. (AFP/ISNA/Mohsen Tavarro)

But authorities regularly jam the signals of Western news outlets such as BBC Persian, U.S.-funded Voice of America Persian, and Manoto. The

regime's tactic is two-fold: to prevent broadcasts of foreign-based television and radio news programs based on political opposition, and to curb the socio-cultural influence of Western entertainment programs deemed "morally deviant" by Iran's most conservative ideologues.

Authorities also regularly carry out symbolic "anti-Westernization" displays such as using [a tank](#) or other means to destroy [hundreds of thousands of satellite receivers](#).

Rouhani has long criticized the regime's policy of jamming signals as being regressive and out of date.

Security researcher Gharib told CPJ that although steps were taken early in Rouhani's administration to ease such policies, "Satellite jamming has not only increased in the bigger cities, but it's become automated. Instead of blanket jamming of satellite signals, jamming signals are now deployed once certain programs start, and conclude when the programs end."

Although Rouhani officials have called for revising a law that makes it illegal for Iranians to use, repair, or distribute dishes, their efforts have had little traction. For legislation around

satellite blocking to be changed Rouhani would need the Supreme Cyberspace Council, the country's sole authority over internet and cyberspace policies, to approve amendments.

Still, some Iranians have managed to stay a step ahead of the censors. Gharib told CPJ, "People get around satellite jamming by digitally recording their favorite programs during off-hours when the program is repeated, and then watch it later at their leisure."

The California-based technology nonprofit [Net Freedom Pioneers released](#) a digital tool in 2016 that allows Iranians to use generic satellite dishes to bypass censorship and download news articles, music videos, podcasts, and foreign-based news and entertainment shows.

The ability of foreign-based tech firms like Net Freedom Pioneers to help independent news outlets or Iranians access the internet or evade censorship is hampered by sanctions. European and U.S. policy makers could help Iranians by liberalizing rules that impede access to tools to circumvent censorship and surveillance.

Although the U.S. Treasury Department [reaffirmed in a news release in March](#) its commitment to fostering internet freedom and supporting the Iranian people, President Trump's rhetoric toward Iran has caused "over-compliance of sanctions," according to the director of a U.S.-based non-governmental organization focused on Iranian affairs. The director asked to remain anonymous for security reasons. Last year for instance, Apple removed several Iranian apps from its store, citing the U.S. sanction regulations, according to [The New York Times](#).

[Foreign Policy](#) reported in January that a fear of fines or being penalized for breaking U.S. sanctions on business dealings in Iran means many companies block all Iranians from using their products. The report added that, "U.S. tech companies that offer free or low-cost apps have no practical way of reliably identifying individual users to screen out those who are prohibited."

Even as access to foreign technology and to international broadcasts is limited within Iran, Tehran has taken some steps, led by Rouhani, to project beyond its borders an image of opening to the world.

In addition to officials using social media accounts and giving interviews to, and [writing columns](#) for, major U.S. news outlets during the U.N. General Assembly each year, Iran has provided greater access to international journalists.

This change was flagged early, with a former counselor to Iran's Permanent Mission to the U.N. telling CPJ in 2015 that Iran had doubled the number of journalist visas issued to U.S. press, and planned to continue approving more visa requests.

A reporter who asked to remain unidentified told CPJ, "Under Rouhani, high-ranking government officials have made themselves increasingly accessible across the board, both in foreign embassies abroad and domestically." The journalist added, "They realize how

important it is to have a relationship with the media. This wasn't the case while Ahmadinejad was in power.”

Still, foreign journalists wanting to report in Iran must apply for a visa via the Foreign Ministry website, where they are requested to provide details on what story they plan to cover or whom they plan to interview. International reporters are also required to be accompanied by a government minder during their travels.

Foreign journalists said they can freely ask Iranian officials combative questions about sensitive topics such as human rights abuses and strategic military affairs. This stands in contrast to their domestic counterparts, who would cover such topics at risk of jeopardizing their press credentials [or their freedom](#).

“What doesn't appear to have changed from Ahmadinejad and Rouhani, is that journalists working for foreign media outlets abroad continue to have more access to Iranian officials than those based inside the country,” a local journalist told CPJ.

The 2015 nuclear negotiations in Vienna illustrated the gap between access granted to international and local journalists. Local press freedom group [Journalism Is Not a Crime](#) spoke with Berlin-based exiled Iranian journalist Arash Azizi about how the talks were covered by the roughly 100 members of Iran's press who traveled to Vienna. Azizi said that an absence of critical reporting, or focus on issues such as human rights and political prisoners, suggested that the Iranian press were self-censoring to avoid arrest or retaliation.

The president's office did not respond to CPJ's request for comment for this report, including on claims that journalists are prevented from reporting freely for fear of arrest or retaliation.

Several foreign and local journalists told CPJ that they operate under the premise that authorities monitor their phone calls, email, and social media accounts. One Iranian journalist, who is based abroad and requested to remain unidentified for security reasons, told CPJ, “I would use non-journalist friends to initially reach out and contact politically sensitive Iranian officials to set up discreet interview requests with them. As a dual citizen, I always had a suspicion that my phone calls were being listened to.”

In fact, journalists who have dual citizenship face special risks for working in Iran—as demonstrated most spectacularly in recent years by the imprisonment of U.S.-Iranian journalist Jason Rezaian, a correspondent for *The Washington Post*. Like other dual citizens, Rezaian was used as a political pawn by hardline forces. During his 544 days in prison on charges of espionage, collaborating with hostile environments, and propaganda against the establishment, Rouhani, Foreign Minister [Mohammad Javad Zarif](#), and the government-run regulatory body the Press Oversight Committee, repeatedly deferred to the judiciary when questioned by the press.

The judiciary, in turn, appeared to time updates in Rezaian's case to key political moments, for example announcing charges against Rezaian on the day that Zarif was scheduled to meet then- U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry for talks on Iran's nuclear program, [according to *The New York Times*](#).

Rezaian, now a global opinions writer for the *Post*, told CPJ he sees parallels in his treatment and the current cases of foreign nationals jailed in Iran. (These include [Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe](#), a project manager with the Thomson Reuters Foundation, who is serving a five-year jail sentence for allegedly plotting to overthrow Iran's clerical establishment.) "The notion that dual nationals are tried as Iranians is farcical, especially when Iranian authorities make it abundantly clear—as Zarif did again in his latest CFR [Council on Foreign Relations] appearance—that his government won't release the prisoners until the U.S. engages in a trade on Iran's terms," Rezaian said. "Iran arrests dual nationals as Iranians, denies them all of their rights—the same way they would Iranians—and then dangles them as trade bait to the governments of their other nationality. It's the height of hypocrisy and literally no one is fooled by it."

In October 2016, Rezaian and his family filed a federal suit against the Iranian government, claiming the journalist was targeted for arrest as a means of political leverage. "For nearly 18 months, Iran held and terrorized Jason for the purpose of gaining negotiating leverage and ultimately exchanging him with the United States for something of value to Iran," [The Washington Post](#) cited the suit as saying.

Iran's treatment of dual citizens undermines attempts by the Rouhani administration to encourage those who fled persecution to come home. In October 2013, the president [tweeted](#) that his government wanted to "facilitate" the return of expatriates, but a series of arrests followed in early 2014, including that of journalist Serajeddin Mirdamadi whom, [CPJ reported at the time](#), had only recently returned from exile. As Iranian-American journalist Negar Mortazavi, who lives in self-imposed exile, [tweeted at Rouhani](#) in May 2014 after Mirdamadi was detained, "[Iranians want] The right to return to our homeland without the fear of arrest."

Iran's judiciary also harasses journalists at outlets funded by foreign governments, such as BBC Persian. Dozens of its Iranian staff have been unable to return to the country for fear of reprisal by authorities over their critical news coverage, according to [press reports](#). Since August 2017, the judiciary increased the harassment, including [seizing their domestic-based assets](#) and blocking financial transactions between the BBC journalists, who mainly live in the U.K. or U.S., and their families in Iran.

These intimidation tactics are meant to both silence the journalists and hurt Rouhani's image internationally, several journalists told CPJ. Foroohar said, "Members of the press are seen as tools in Iran, and the manner in which Iranian authorities manipulate journalists is cruel and counterproductive."

The BBC has appealed to the international community for help in fighting the harassment. In March, the broadcaster [filed an appeal](#) to the U.N. in Geneva on behalf of 152 of its employees. In a statement at the time, BBC Director-General Tony Hall said, "In truth, this story is much wider: it is a story about fundamental human rights. We are now asking the community of nations at the U.N. to support the BBC and uphold the right to freedom of expression."

The judiciary did not respond to CPJ's request for comment for this report, including on claims that it harasses and arbitrarily detains journalists who report critically on state institutions, or work for foreign-funded outlets.

Several local journalists told CPJ that conditions would improve if Rouhani kept the [pledge](#) he made during his first press conference as president-elect in 2013, to reopen the Association of Iranian Journalists, an independent organization that advocated for journalists in legal or employment disputes.

The association has been [closed since August 2009](#), when security forces arrested several of its members and raided its offices after the disputed presidential election.

Instead of allowing the independent association to re-establish itself, authorities are pushing a parliamentary bill that would create a government-sponsored body called the Iranian Media System.

The proposal has faced resistance from Iran's journalists, not least because it would "give security forces and the hardline conservative judiciary tighter control of the media," said exiled Iranian journalist Ghaderi.

[Ghaderi](#) and other critics of the bill warned that if the proposed government body is established, it could spell the end of independent journalism in Iran.

According to the [Center for Human Rights in Iran](#), the body would be made up of journalists from print, radio, television, and web outlets, as well as the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, a member of parliament, a judge, a representative from seminary schools in Qom, a media expert chosen by the Supreme Cultural Revolution Council, a web expert selected by the Supreme Cyberspace Council, and the commission's chairperson. The commission could temporarily or permanently suspend journalists deemed in "violation" of religious principles or professional ethical codes.

In contrast, the independent Journalists Association was set up to protect the press and had no power to penalize or suspend a reporter or outlet.

"This new design will actually harm the journalists more than President Rouhani even knows because such a creation will essentially hand the association over to the security apparatus," Ghaderi said.

In late 2017, the bill was up for a vote in parliament but it was pulled by the Rouhani administration after opposition from key figures in the media community as well as reformist forces in parliament, said Ghaderi, who has followed the status of the bill closely since its inception.

Ghaderi told CPJ, “The Rouhani government isn’t that strong regarding this matter and I think that at some point it will be forced to reintroduce the bill again, because the judiciary and intelligence establishment are some of the main backers of the state-sponsored association.”

Aside from keeping press matters out of the hands of the security forces, several journalists told CPJ that an independent association would provide job security and backing at a time when Iran’s economy is still struggling.

A journalist at a local news outlet in Tehran, who asked to remain unnamed for fear of reprisal, told CPJ that with monthly salaries for journalists around 12 to 28 million Iranian rials (US\$300 to US\$900) a month, it is common for reporters to seek a second job.

Bahari, who leads the [Journalism is not a Crime](#) initiative, told CPJ, “The government in Iran has become much more active in public relations and numerous journalists and media outlets depend on government money.” Bahari added, “The government has absorbed many journalists and media activists into its circle and this goes against their impartiality and independence.”

At a time when the Trump administration is taking a hostile stance toward Iran and Rouhani has to look to European leaders to shore up international support, the country’s lack of press freedom and other lapses in human rights could be a lynchpin.

In Iran, Rouhani is under pressure to save the nuclear deal he helped seal in 2015. The [deal](#), struck with China, France, Germany, Russia, the U.K., and the U.S. in 2015, compelled Iran to limit its nuclear program in exchange for removing sanctions under a preliminary framework that allowed [major](#) trade deals from European countries to flow into Iran’s newly open markets of [energy](#), automobiles, and technology. The deal was a boost for Iran’s economy, with Rouhani travelling to Europe the following year to make an estimated €40 billion in trade deals, [according to reports](#).

However, the U.S. and some European officials demanded early this year that the deal incorporate security interests focusing on Iran’s missile program and regional policies. On May 8, [President Trump announced](#) the U.S. would pull out of the deal and reimpose its sanctions on Iran. As of May 14, European officials and Iranian leaders [said they planned](#) to uphold the agreement.

Trump’s hostility to the nuclear deal comes as the U.N. and EU member states pressure Iran over its politically motivated [trials](#) against [dual nationals](#) and its treatment of [BBC Persian staff](#). U.N. Secretary General António Guterres [called](#) on Iran in March to cease all legal action against the BBC staff and their families, and against "independent journalism, whether affiliated to the BBC or not." Prior to that, David Kaye, special rapporteur on freedom of expression, and Asma Jahangir, former special rapporteur on the human rights situation in Iran, released a joint statement in October that [called](#) on Iran to stop intimidating journalists.

Other EU officials have called for human rights issues to be raised during meetings with Iranian counterparts. Ahead of an [official visit from](#) 12 members of European Parliament

(MEPs) to Tehran in 2016, MEP [Marietje Schaake](#) called for the EU to prioritize human rights issues with the country.

France led attempts to keep the nuclear deal on track, with President Emmanuel Macron in April making a state visit to Washington in an attempt to convince the U.S. to stay in the deal, according to [news reports](#). He has also [vowed](#) to work with Iran and said he will consider making a historic [visit](#) to the country. Such a visit could be a significant opening for Iranian and European policymakers to bring human rights issues to the table. Macron's office issued a statement in January that said the EU response to unrest in Iran should stress the importance of human rights in Iran, [Bloomberg reported](#).

After widespread protests in December, Rouhani [acknowledged](#) that "people had economic, political, and social demands," but it is unclear what power he has to meet them. Fulfillment of the demands rests on many factors, including the fate of Iran's international commitments; greater internet openness that would boost both press freedom and Iran's economy; and the thinking inside Iran's hardline institutions, which journalists cannot currently write about.

As Bahari told CPJ, "The most important issues [facing Iran's press] are censorship and fear. Journalism in Iran is tightly tied to constant fear of arrest and to finding ways to avoid censorship. This shadow hangs over all areas of journalism."

Iran's Telegram Users Back on the Rise Three Weeks After State Banned the App

MAY 22, 2018

<https://www.iranhumanrights.org/2018/05/irans-telegram-users-back-on-the-rise-three-weeks-after-state-banned-the-app/>



Iranian Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi has revealed that the number of Telegram users in Iran was back on the rise three weeks after the state banned the messaging app.

Three weeks after Iran [banned](#) the widely used Telegram messaging app, the telecommunications minister posted a [chart](#) online showing that the number of Iranian users had begun rising to pre-ban levels. The posting marks the first time an Iranian official has presented figures implicitly confirming the failure of state censorship policies.

On May 28, Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi posted a chart on his Instagram account with three lines titled as: "Channels begin to migrate as ordered," "Nine-hour national network disruption" and "Filtering imposed by internet companies and encouragement of widespread use of circumvention tools as well as Iranian versions of Telegram."

In an accompanying caption, Jahromi stated that the number of Telegram users in Iran had initially dropped when the ban was [first imposed](#) on April 30 but the numbers began to rise again from May 13-17.

Telegram had reported 40 million users in Iran before the ban.

Online content and social media apps are heavily censored with some sites and apps completely banned in Iran but Iranians with access to online censorship circumvention tools, such as Virtual Private Networks (VPNs), can use the tools to bypass the bans. State bans on popular apps are usually followed by a surge of downloads of such tools.

After Jahromi posted the chart, Assistant Prosecutor General Abdolsamad Khorramabadi warned Iranian businesses to stop their operations, such as the marketing of their services, on Telegram.

Telecommunications Minister Jahromi also posted a message on the Iran-based messaging app Soroush stating that “commercial activities on Telegram are prohibited. Commercial units and business firms must move their activities over to domestic social networks.” He added: “Last week there was a meeting at the prosecutor general’s office between members of the National Cyberspace Center, the Industries and Mines Ministry’s Commercial Affairs Center, the Center for Electronic Commerce, the Chamber of Commerce, NAJA cyber police force and the Cyberspace Business Union to discuss a decree issued by the police on March 13, 2018, regarding the prohibition of commercial and business activities on foreign social media.”

With Telegram now completely banned in Iran, the authorities hope Iranians will use domestic messaging apps instead, but the citizenry has shown little appetite for domestic versions, which the state can access and monitor.

President Hassan Rouhani was twice voted into office promising to improve access to information and internet freedom in the country. But state officials, including those in his administration, have continued to take actions restricting online content to state-approved content.

For example, the state is expanding and improving the quality of domestic search engines, developed as part of the National Information Network (NIN), in order to block access to foreign search engines.

These domestic Iranian search engines systematically filter keywords and phrases—and send users to sites that deliver only state-approved and sometimes fabricated content. NIN tools and services also facilitate the state’s ability to identify users and access their online communications, deeply compromising user privacy and security.

Dance Teachers’ Instagram Account Blocked In Iran

By IranHRM Last updated May 22, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/05/22/iran-dance-teachers-instagram-account-blocked/>

According to a judiciary decree the Instagram account of some known dance teachers in Iran are blocked, BBC Persian reported on May 30, 2018.



In the accounts belonging to Ms. Shadab, Ms. Elnaz Qhasemi, Ms. Maedeh Hozhabri and some others it’s posted: “This account is blocked on the order of honorable judiciary official for publishing criminal content”.

Almost all dancing clips are omitted from these pages. In Shadab's Telegram you can read: "There will be no dance class today."

NAJA Confronts Café Nets Using Anti-Filters

By IranHRM On May 26, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/05/26/naja-confronts-cafe-nets-using-anti-filters/>



Mehdi Mir-Mehdi the head of Tehran's Computer Techs Guild Union cited the increase in use of anti-filters during these days and said: "The new chief of site-police of NAJA has notified the union about the regulations of prohibition of using VPN and anti-filters in café nets."

Emphasizing that NAJA is the only organ that can inspect guild units, he said: "So all guilds must comply with the announced rules of this organ..."

Regarding as how wrongdoers might be treated, Mir-Mehdi said that as most of the activities of these units are in months of June and July the wrongdoers will not be allowed to have any activity. In other months, their units will be sealed from 15 days to one month.

He emphasized: "As a reminder, I am aware that in addition to inspections by NAJA, there will be a common patrol formed of this union and NAJA during the year which will inspect the guild units. In this patrol all systems in café nets will be inspected".

Answering the question: "So far how many wrongdoers you have confronted?" he said: "For example last year 25 café nets have been sealed." (Tasnim state-run News Agency- May 20, 2018)

Ethnic Minorities' Rights

A Glimpse Into The Situation Of The Recently Detained Ahwazi Arabs

By IranHRM On May 25, 2018

<http://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2018/05/25/situation-recently-detained-ahwazi-arabs/>



The following report speaks of the latest news regarding detainees of the vast demonstrations in Khozestan in March 2018.

Ahwazis staged demonstrations to protest against the offense that one of the state-run TV channels made against them and what they call "racialist behavior."

Method & quantity of arrests

These were all arbitrary arrests. A detainee cited that the agents arrested the whole family even children and transferred them to detention centers.

For example; Jalil Hawaii (Saedi) was arrested along with his wife, son in law, daughter, his 12 years old son; Heydar and his three years old child. They were all transferred to Fajr Prison.

A detainee speaking on condition of anonymity said: “Only in Sheyban Prison we were 500 detainees in one separate ward. More than 25 youths were transferred to Fajr Prison or Youths Center.

Amongst us were disabled people from Mullah Shieh and Eigndou (Seyed Karim) regions. For example; Saeed Nemati was a retard from Mullah Shieh and there was a mentally ill person from Eigndou who has just left a psychiatric hospital...”

Detention and torture centers

The detainees were under pressure, interrogation and torture in these prisons and detention centers:

- Sepidar Prison (men and women wards)
- Sheyban Prison (Ahwaz Professional Training Complex)
- Ahwaz’s intelligence bureau’s detention center at Chahar Shir

The state officials have reopened old and remote detention centers and transferred the detainees there; including:

- Golf Detention Center (belonging to IRGC at Modares Boulevard in Ahwaz)
- Ahwaz’s Corps No. 6 detention center
- Youths Center (previous Fajr Prison)

Conditions of detention

- Men under 18 are jailed at Fajr Prison (Youths Edification Center)
- Women are jailed at Sepidar Prison in Ahwaz. The number reaches 150, 15 of which have been arrested during Ahwaz demonstrations; including:
 - Khadijeh Naysi
 - Ayesheh Naysi
 - Leila Barvayeh
 - Ezat Ka’abi
 - Nadia Mohammadi Poor (Hamidi)

The bails issued are 100 to 500 million tomans. Many families cannot provide such money so their children have remained in jail.

Religious Minorities’ Rights

Baha’is In Iran ‘Face New Wave of Arrests,’ Says Baha’i International Community

May 25, 2018

<https://www.rferl.org/a/bahais-iran-new-wave-of-arrests/29250772.html>

The Baha’i International Community (BIC) says Baha’is in Iran are facing a new wave of arrests and raids on their homes across different cities in the country.

The community said in a May 25 statement that the "systematic nature" of the arrests in a number of provinces including Isfahan, Alborz and Razavi Khorasan, suggests "a coordinated strategy on the part of government authorities."

"In many cases, detentions have been accompanied by raids on personal homes and the seizure of religious books and writings," the statement said.

Baha'is in Iran face state harassment and discrimination and their faith is not officially recognized.

In past years, many Baha'is have been banned from higher education and their businesses have been shut down.

Many have been persecuted for their religious beliefs.

The Baha'i International Community called on Iran to ensure the immediate release of all these detained individuals and to end the four-decade long discrimination of its Baha'i citizens.