

NCRI Human Rights Center Weekly Bulletin

October 01, 2018

Systematic violations of the right to life

Executions, arbitrary killings, deaths in custody, and death sentences

Execution

Prisoner executed in Tonekabon on Murder Charges

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17132/>

A prisoner convicted of murder was executed in Iran's northern city of Tonekabon on September 25th. On the eve of his execution, the Iranian authorities transferred him to solitary confinement per protocol for prisoners whose execution is imminent. Majid Pili, 41, was from the northern city of Ramsar and had spent three years in Tonekabon Prison. Iran's Supreme Court confirmed Pili's death sentence earlier this year. (Human Rights Activists in Iran – Sep. 25, 2018)

Iran: A Brief Look at an Executed Political Prisoner's Case

<https://iranhr.net/fa/articles/3493>



Mohammad Abdollahi, a political prisoner, was hanged along with four other people at Urmia Central Prison in August 2016. After three years, Iran Human Rights has obtained some pieces of evidence indicating multiple violations in the judicial proceedings of his case. We interviewed one of Mohammad Abdollahi's relatives under the pseudonym Ali. It should be noted

that the burial place of the defendant has not been announced to his family yet.

Mohammad Abdollahi was shot and arrested by the Revolutionary Guards in Mahabad in March 2010.

One of his relatives, aka Ali, told IHR, "We went to Almahdi Detention Center several times but they told us that Mohammad was not there and threatened us not to look for him."

He added, "The Revolutionary Guards beat him badly while he was already injured and bleeding. His right hand, left leg, and three of his teeth broke under torture. Mohammad was interrogated and tortured in the solitary confinement for three months until he had internal bleeding and was transferred to Mahabad Prison."

Intelligence Organization of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps claimed that Mohammad Abdollahi had entered Iran along with some members of Komalah and was involved in an armed conflict that led to the murder of three police officers. However, Ali says, “Mohammad never admitted to involvement in the armed conflict, possession of any weapons, and cooperation with Komalah, the only thing they found on him was a membership card of Komalah. Nonetheless, he was sentenced to death on the charge of “Moharebeh and membership of Komalah” in September 2013.”

He added, “His lawyers believed that he would be saved from death. He didn’t even make a false confession under torture. But Judge Javadi Kia told him that he would do everything in his power to have him executed.”

Mohammad Abdollahi was finally transferred to Urmia Central Prison after his verdict was issued in April 2014. He protested against the verdict and his case was investigated at branch 27 of the Supreme Court.

Mostafa Ahmadian, his appointed lawyer, had told HRANA news agency, “There are many problems with the case. My client wasn’t treated with justice. He had never touched a gun.”

Mr. Ahmadian explained, “We made an appeal and it was sent to the same court that had issued the death sentence while it should have been sent to a parallel court.”

Finally, Branch 1 of the Revolutionary Court sentenced him to death again and the Supreme Court accepted the verdict.

Mohammad Abdollahi was executed along with four other prisoners, named Kamran Pourfat, Tohid Pourmahdi, Amir Azizi, Jahangir Razavizadeh, and Jebraeel Kan’ani at Urmia Central Prison on August 9, 2016.

Ali stated, “Judge Javadi Kia finally did what he wanted to do and got him executed...they told him to write a repentance letter but he refused and said that he hadn’t done anything to repent of.”

Now after three years, Mohammad Abdollahi’s family don’t know where his burial place is, although, they asked the authorities about it several times. (Iran Human Rights – Sep. 19, 2018)

One man hanged in Rajai Shahr Prison

<https://www.khabaronline.ir/detail/808100/society/events>

A 31year old convict charged with murder hanged in Rajai Shahr Prison. He was identified as Amir. The Supreme Court confirmed his death sentence. (Khabar online state-run website – Sep. 29, 2018)

Arbitrary killing

Northeastern Border Guard Opens Fire on Shepherd

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17097>

As he had done for the past 20 years, Hamidreza Sepahi Layin was taking his sheep to graze from the border town of Dargaz, Razavi Khorasan province on September 19th, 2018. As Hamid's brother Alireza explains, shepherds like Hamidreza often usher their herds across the plains and mountain grasses carpeting Iran's northeastern borderlands with Turkmenistan. What happened next, however, was a break in routine.

That day, Layin, a 32-year-old father of two, had herded his flock about half of a mile into Turkmenistan territory when he caught sight of Majid Amiri, the head of the Sangdivar border guard post. Layin was familiar with the guard, and while crossing back to the Iranian side made his way over to greet him. When he was about 10 yards away from being able to reach out and give him a handshake, Amiri pulled out a gun and opened fire on Layin's leg.

A friend and fellow shepherd had accompanied Layin that morning and procured a donkey to rush his wounded friend to the village clinic. As Layin slipped out of consciousness, profusely losing blood from two bullet wounds, Amiri blocked their passage for a full 40 minutes until Layin's friend told him to either pull the gun on him, too, or let them go. Amiri let them pass.

Amiri's plans to blame Turkmens for the shooting were upended by a Turkmen cohort who witnessed the incident from afar and reported it to authorities before him. Layin has undergone an operation to repair his bullet-shattered bone with metal plates. (Human Rights Activists in Iran - Sep. 23, 2018)



Death sentence

Death Sentence for Urmia Political Prisoner

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17106>

Forty-two-year-old political prisoner Mohyeddin Ebrahimi has been convicted of cooperating with a Kurdish opposition party and sentenced to death by Judge Ali Sheikhloo in Branch 2 of Urmia's Revolutionary Court. He is currently being held in Section 12 of Urmia Prison in northwestern Iran.

A close source told Hrana that Ebrahimi has been recovering from three gunshot wounds for the better part of a year in the Urmia Prison clinic. He was shot during his arrest on October 23, 2017, at the Iran-Iraq border, where he was found to be carrying a walkie-talkie and accused of alcohol possession.

Hrana's source indicated the court was flippant in its verdict on Ebrahimi's case, verbally presenting the charge of "cooperating with a Kurdish opposition party" – punishable by death – while skipping over portions of the judicial process provisioned by law, e.g. formal questioning, providing him with a hard copy of his charge sheet, or the hearing of any statements in his defense.

Ebrahimi's record shows a history of alcohol charges: a 2010 arrest for which he spent 11 months in Urmia prison before being acquitted, and a 2014 charge that was eventually dropped due to lack of evidence. According to Amnesty International's annual report, Iran ranks first in the world in executions per capita. Mohyeddin Ebrahimi is from the village Alkaw, near the city of Oshnavieh, West Azerbaijan Province. (Human Rights Activists in Iran – Sep. 23, 2018)

Iran Prosecutor General threatens striking truckers to death



The nationwide strike of the truckers has entered its second week. The Chief Prosecutor General Montazeri threatened the strikers to execution. Montazeri said: "According to the information we have, in some routes, some of the cities, there are elements who are provoking some of the truckers, or possibly blocking them and creating problems for them. They are subject to the rules and regulations of banditry and the punishment of the bandits according to the law is very severe, sometimes resulting in the death penalty. "

(Irib state-run News Agency – Sep. 25, 2018)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFxuvupl6vs>

<http://www.iribnews.ir/fa/news/2238287>

Inhumane treatment and cruel punishments Amputation, flogging, torture and humiliation

Six Educator-Activists Get Sentences for May 10th Gathering

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17113/>



Six people arrested in a teachers' demonstration on May 10th have been issued a suspended sentence of nine months imprisonment and 74 lashings, or the equivalent financial penalty, on charges of "disrupting public order by taking part in illegal gatherings" and "disobeying authorities serving their duty." Their trial took place in

Branch 1060 of the Second Criminal Court of Government Employees on September 5th.

Hrana has identified the arrestees as Ali Eghdamdoost, a member of the retirees' union; Rasoul Badaghi, a previous officer of Tehran's Teachers Trade Union; Esmayil Gerami, Javaad Zolnoori, Hossein Gholami, and Mohammad Abedi.

All six took part in a May 10th gathering of teachers and retirees advocating in front of Iran's Planning and Budgeting Organization against the privatization of the country's education system, and for wages that would hoist them above the poverty line. Police attacks on the demonstrators led to injuries, hospitalizations, and eight arrests.

Arrestees were held in a security police detention house on Vozara street before being transported to Base Seven of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) a few days later. They were finally taken in shackles and handcuffs to Evin prison, where they eventually accepted to post a bail of 500 million rials (approximately 12,000 USD) to await their trial.

Teachers' union activist Mohammad Habibi, currently housed in Section 4 of Evin Prison, is a defendant on the same case. He was sentenced July 23rd to 10 years and six months in prison, 74 lashings, and a two-year ban on both civic activities and travel.

At trial, a judge offered freedom to the May 10th activists in exchange for their pledge to cease future involvement with labor activism. In defense of their right to stage and participate in peaceful gatherings, all reportedly refused. (Human Rights Activists in Iran - Sep. 24, 2018)

Aliyeh Eghdam-Doost sentenced to 9 months of imprisonment, 74 lashes

<https://www.isna.ir/news/97022312692>

<https://women.ncr-iran.org/iran-women-news/5489-aliyeh-eghdam-doost-sentenced-to-9-months-of-imprisonment-74-lashes>



An Iranian woman, Aliyeh Eghdam-Doost, a teacher, was sentenced to 9 months of imprisonment and 74 lashes.

Ms. Aliyeh Eghdam-Doost was among six teachers arrested in a teachers' protest gathering in Tehran on May 10. Her trial had been held on September 5, 2018.

Upon the verdict issued on September 15, by Branch 1060 of Tehran's Criminal Court, Aliyeh Eghdam-Doost was sentenced to 9 months of imprisonment and 74 lashes which could be bought for 500,000 Rials.

The six teachers arrested in the May 10 Tehran protest were convicted of "disrupting public order by participating in illegal gatherings" and "defying on-duty officers." The teachers who had gathered outside the Budget and Planning Organization building in Tehran demanded to have their salaries increased to above the poverty line. They also opposed privatization of the country's education.

Ms. Aliyeh Eghdam-Doost, member of the (Teachers') Retirement Union, was arrested along with Mr. Rasoul Bodaghi, member of the board of directors of the Teachers' Association of Iran, Esmail Gerami, Javad Zolnouri, Hossein Gholami, and Mohammad Abedi, each of whom were sentenced to nine months of imprisonment and 74 lashes purchasable for 500,000 Rials.

Iran's teachers took to the streets in at least 32 cities across the country on Thursday, May 10, 2018, to stage protests. Security forces in Tehran violently clashed with the protesting teachers, resulting in the arrest and injury of several teachers.

At the time, some government officials opposed the arrests of teachers. In a public session at the parliament on Sunday, May 13, 2018, Fatemeh Saeedi, member of parliament from Tehran, asserted, "The peaceful gathering of teachers in protest to their horrible living conditions turned violent because of aberrant intervention in disregard for Article 27 of the Constitution, and a group of protesters were arrested."

“During the events in December and January where various strata of people played a role in them, it was emphasized that the people's complaints must be listened to,” Saeedi added. “Today, as a teacher, I would like to use this podium so that the voice of teachers is heard... Is it wise to beat and arrest a teacher who is only demanding improvement of their living conditions and the quality of education?”

(ISNA state-run news website – May. 13, 2018)

(NCRI women’s committee – Sep. 25, 2018)

Young Urmia Prisoner Suffers TBI in Beating from Prison Warden

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17094/>

After a beating from internal prison director Bayramzadeh left him with a concussion, Javad Shirzad (a.k.a Arash), a prisoner in Urmia Central Prison’s youth ward, was transferred to an outside hospital for treatment.

According to an informed source, Shirzad, who is in the fifth year of his sentence, went to another prisoner’s cell to say hi when Bayramzadeh began assaulting him.

According to the source, Shirzad was transferred on September 11th to an outside care facility where a battery of tests including an electroencephalogram (EEG) led to a diagnosis of traumatic brain injury. “He is still under supervision per the doctor’s orders,” the source said.

Prison officials have a long history of mistreating and assaulting prisoners with impunity. This past May, former IRGC 3rd Lieutenant Saeed Nouri reportedly sustained a beating by two prison guards inside the office of the prison’s internal director; and in July, a warden assaulted Saeed Seyyed Abbasi for arriving late to the prison yard for recreation time. Despite Abbasi’s injuries, he was subsequently transferred to solitary confinement without receiving any medical attention. (Human Rights Activists in Iran – Sep. 23, 2018)

Man Publicly Flogged In Nishabur

<https://www.yjc.ir/fa/news/6679186>

<http://www.irna.ir/rkhorasan/fa/News/83045126>

According to the The Razavi Khorasan judiciary, a man was publicly flogged in the city of Nishabur on September 26. Charged with narcotics and robbery, he faced 74 lashes in the Zabarkhan district. The victim was identified as A.T, son of Ismael.

(Young Journalists Club state-run Website – Sep. 26, 2018)

(IRNA state-run News Agency – Sep. 26, 2018)

Nishabur is a city in Razavi Khorasan Province, capital of the Nishapur County and former capital of Province Khorasan.

Prison

Prison conditions

An Academic Year of Teacher Crackdowns

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17096>



Iranian authorities have tightened their grip on union activities in recent years, and teacher union activists are far from the exception. Indeed, if representatives of various industries have been met with blowback for organizing in defense of their colleagues' collective rights, a retrospective of crackdowns in the education field gives reason to believe that authorities

reserve particular vitriol for the nation's educators.

So far this year, Iranian teachers and educator-activists have been arrested by security agents, brought to court under various allegations, issued lengthy prison sentences, flogged, and exiled.

On this turning of Iran's new academic year, this report looks back at the cases of several teachers who were persecuted by authorities this year.

Mohammad Habibi:

Union Activist, Member of the Teachers' Union Association Board of Directors in Tehran Province

On May 10, 2018, the Council for Coordination of Teaching Syndicates urged teachers, be they retired or employed, to assemble in protest across the country. In Tehran, several of those who responded to the call were beaten and arrested and five days later Habibi was transferred to Great Tehran Penitentiary; all but Habibi were released on bail.

Now, Habibi's case—which recently inspired more than 1400 civil and union activists to write to Iran's Supreme leader demanding that he receive medical treatment—will be reviewed in Branch 36 of the Tehran Appeals Court, presided by Judge Seyed Ahmad Zargar. Habibi's attorney Hossein Taj told a correspondent from the state-

run news agency IRNA on Monday, September 17th that a date for the hearing has yet to be set. Cumulatively, his charges would carry a sentence of ten years: seven and a half years for “National-Security Related Crimes”, 18 months for “Propaganda against the Regime”, and another 18 months for “Disrupting Public Order.” In addition to prison terms, he was dealt a two-year ban from political and civic activities, a two-year travel ban, and 74 lashings.

Habibi suffers from chest pain and throat and lung infections secondary to assault wounds inflicted by authorities during his arrest, yet continues to be denied medical treatment. On the one occasion his medical leave was granted, according to HRANA reports, the receiving hospital dismissed him without treatment, sending him back to Evin Prison’s Ward 4 on Monday, September 3, 2018, where he has remained since.

Habibi’s case—particularly his compromised medical condition—recently drew the support of teacher organizations abroad. In a letter addressed to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the French trade unions SFDT, SGT, FSO, Solidaires, and UNSA held the Supreme Leader accountable for Habibi’s fate, and called his imprisonment a violation of both human rights and the fundamental freedoms of syndicates. In May 2018, General Secretary of Education International (EI) David Edwards vehemently denounced Habibi’s arrest and detention, demanding his immediate release in a letter to Iranian president Hassan Rouhani.

The Teachers’ Union Association of the Province of Tehran has publicly condemned the recent persecution of union advocates, also demanding that the necessary steps be taken for Habibi’s immediate release.

Habibi was arrested at his workplace on March 3, 2018 and jailed for 44 days in Evin Prison. On April 15, 2018, he was released on a bail of approximately \$20000 USD (2.5 Billion Rials) pending his trial the following August.

A letter from Habibi’s HR office confirmed he is no longer receiving his salary.

Mahmoud Beheshti Langroodi:

Former Spokesman of the Teachers’ Union Association

Mahmoud Beheshti Langroodi, former spokesman of the Teachers’ Union Association, has been persistently following up on his requests for conditional release, having already served half of the five-year sentence he began September 6, 2015 in Evin. Authorities have thus far been unresponsive. According to his wife Adineh Beigi, Langroodi started his teaching career in 1983 and remained an hourly employee for the first seven years, suspended in the recruitment process due to his allegedly oppositional intellectual leanings. In the genesis of the Teachers’ Union

Association in the early 2000s, he was one of the first to join its board of directors, and was elected general secretary for two terms. He has also served on the board as an inspector and spokesman. Langroodi had been sentenced to a total of 14 years in prison for three separate cases tried in revolutionary courts, all presided by judges known as “Salavati and Moghiseh.” In April 8, 2017, with the application of article 134, which limits defendants of multiple charges to the single heaviest among their sentences, his 14-year prison sentence was reduced to five years. Now, having served two third of his prison term, his family awaits his release. On July 2, 2018, Langroodi went on hunger strike to protest the continued mistreatment of political prisoners, and wrote an open letter imputing the eventual consequences of his hunger strike on those who had put him behind bars, particularly the judges and prosecutor’s office. On July 16th of this year, the Teachers’ Union Association of Tehran Province issued a statement condemning the judiciary’s disregard of the law, and criticizing the assistant prosecutor in charge of Evin Prison for negligence. The letter validated the demands of Beheshti and his fellow imprisoned teachers, urging them to cease their hunger strike. Moved by his comrades’ letter and concerned about his declining health, Beheshti ended his hunger strike after 14 days.

Langaroudi has been summoned, interrogated, arrested, and detained several times during the past few years for his peaceful trade union activities.

Esmail Abdi:

General Secretary of the Teachers’ Union Association

Esmail Abdi, former secretary general of the Teachers’ Union Association, is serving a 6-year sentence in Evin Prison.

A former teacher of mathematics, Abdi was arrested by security forces June 27, 2015 and sentenced February 2016 by Judge Salavati in Branch 15 of Revolutionary Court on charges of “Propaganda against the Regime” and “Assembling and Colluding against National Security.”

On May 14, 2016, after serving 11 months, he was released on bail until his trial the following October, when Branch 36 of the Tehran Appeals Court upheld his six-year prison sentence. He has been in Ward 8 of Evin prison since being arrested in his home by security forces on November 9, 2016.

Under Article 134, Abdi’s sentence should be limited to the heaviest one of his multiple sentences, and thus should not exceed five years. It remains to be seen if the judiciary will uphold Article 134 in his case.

Over the course of Abdi’s imprisonment, several groups have spoken out against his treatment by the judicial system and pleaded for his release, including the Syndicate

of United Bus Company Workers of Greater Tehran (known as ‘Sandicaye Sherkat Vahed’), the International Education Organization, the Iran Teachers’ Organization, a number of individual labor and union activists, the Coordinating Council of Iranian Teachers’ Trade Associations, the Kurdish Teachers’ Association, and the Canadian Teachers’ Federation.

In April 24, 2018, Esmail Abdi staged a 23-day hunger strike to protest the “widespread violation of teachers’ and workers’ rights in Iran.” Amnesty International was prompted by the urgency of his hunger strike to issue their own demand for Abdi’s release on April 28, 2018.

Abdi had previously gone on hunger strike one year earlier in protest of his trial proceedings, the judiciary’s lack of autonomy, and the continued unlawful repression of teachers and labors union activists. More than a month into the strike he was transferred to a hospital and began eating again on June 7th at the requests of his family and the Teacher’s Union Association.

Abdi was the 2018 recipient of the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) Solidarity Award at its annual conference in Birmingham, England.

Mohammad Sani, a Teacher of Exceptional Schools in Southern Iran

Mohammad Sani, a teacher from Bushehr, southern Iran, was sentenced to two years in prison and 74 lashings for his union activities, which landed him a conviction of “spreading misinformation and disturbing public opinion” this past August. He is currently waiting for the Enforcement Department to deliver his summons and begin his prison time.

An informed source previously told HRANA that Sani’s charge is related to the widespread teacher protests in 2015, which prompted the County Governorate of Dashtestan, Bushehr province to open a case against the protestors. “When Mr. Sani responded to the county governor’s insults to the teachers at the sit in, they opened a case on him,” the source said.

In October 2015, Iranian teachers staged peaceful protests across the country, demanding the release of their imprisoned colleagues, the fulfillment of union requests, and public consideration for the threatened livelihoods of educators.

Ruhollah Mardani:

Teacher and Tehran University Student

In Ward 4 of Evin Prison, Ruhollah Mardani is currently serving a sentence of six years, plus a two-year ban on typical citizen rights including travel.

Mardani was arrested and transferred to Evin Prison on February 17, 2018 for his participation in the widespread January protests one month earlier. His initial court hearing, which convened in June of this year, convicted him on charges of “Propaganda against the regime” and “Gathering and collusion aimed at disrupting national security.”

Mardani started a hunger strike April 24th 2017 to protest his detainment and stalled court proceedings while in prison. When authorities promised to accelerate their investigation of his case on May 21st, he began eating again after twenty seven consecutive days of strike.

An informed source previously told HRANA that the Education Security Office cut off his salary in the first month of his arrest, arguing that he could not be paid during his detention. “His job security is under threat right now,” the source said.

Mardani was working as a consultant teacher in region 4 of Karaj while studying at Tehran University.

Bakhtiar Arefi:

Teacher in Sardasht, northwestern Iran

Bakhtiar Arefi began serving his 18-month prison sentence on Tuesday July 24, 2018 in Mahabad Prison. He was arrested January 25, 2015 for non-union reasons including “Membership in a Reformist Organization” and released on bail after one month. Shortly thereafter in Revolutionary Court on February 25, 2017, Arefi was sentenced to three years in prison. His sentence was upheld in Branch 40 of Supreme Court, only to be later reduced to eighteen months in Branch 13 of Urmia Appeals Court on October 30, 2017, via application of Article 18 of Islamic Penal Code. If he serves his sentence as indicated, he will be released December 23, 2019. (Human Rights Activists in Iran - Sep. 23, 2018)

53 Days into Solidarity Strike, an Ailing Civil Rights Activist Stands His Ground

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17116/>



In protest of the imprisonment of his comrade Reza Khandan, civil Rights Activist Farhad Meysami has now been starving himself for 53 consecutive days.

In a visit to the Evin Prison clinic September 22nd, according to a close source, doctors noted Meysami’s 42-pound weight loss and steep drop in blood pressure and urged him to be admitted to the clinic. Meysami refused, persistent in his requests to be transferred to an outside hospital. Shortly thereafter, prison authorities, including the prison director, came to visit Meysami, who

reiterated to them the sole condition in which he will end his hunger strike: the dropping of all charges against Reza Khandan.

Farhad Meysami was arrested in his personal study on July 31st. He was originally charged with “gathering and collusion aimed at disrupting national security,”; “propaganda against the regime”; and “insulting hijab, a necessary and sacred element of Islam.” On September 3rd, however, Branch 7 of the Evin prosecutor’s interrogation department claimed that charges have since changed, with the last one replaced with “spreading corruption and prostitution.”

Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have both asked for Meysami’s release. (Human Rights Activists in Iran - Sep. 24, 2018)

A Prisoner Died Following Hunger Strike at Tabriz Central Prison

<http://kurdistanhumanrights.net/fa/?p=6431>

A prisoner of ordinary crimes, who had been on hunger strike at Tabriz Central Prison since Sept 22, 2018 died yesterday on Sept 24, 2018 due to heart stroke.

According to Kurdistan Human Rights Network, this prisoner has been identified as Biok Lotfollahzadeh, (61 years old from Tabriz) who was a retired employee of the Electricity Utility Company. He only had to serve another 40 days in prison to complete his one year imprisonment sentence due to not affording to pay his debt two million Tomans. The family of this prisoner has repeatedly contacted the Tabriz court over the last 40 days and offered to pay the debt and release him but their request was rejected every time for unknown reasons. In protest against this situation, the prisoner had gone on hunger strike Sept 22, 2018 despite suffering from a serious heart problem but the authorities of Tabriz Central Prison still neglected him.

He died of a heart attack in his sleep at 7:30 PM on Sept 24, 2018, when he had gone to bed to rest. His dead body was immediately transferred to the prison’s health centre before being transferred to Forensic Medical Center of Tabriz. (Kurdish Human Rights Network- Sep. 25, 2018)

Two Teachers Imprisoned at Evin Pen Statement of Support for Farhad Meysami

<https://www.hra-news.org/letters/a-612>



Mahmoud Beheshti Langroudi and Esmail Abdi, two teachers imprisoned at Evin, have demanded in a letter to Judicial authorities that their ward mate Farhad Meysami—who is now in the 54th day of his hunger strike—be transferred to an outside treatment facility to avert an

impending health crisis.

Meysami has dropped 30 pounds since he started starving himself on August 1st to protest both his detention and authorities' refusal to appoint the lawyer of his choosing. In addition to his 18-year history of ulcerative colitis, Meysami experienced a steep drop in blood pressure on Saturday, September 8th, prompting the prison doctor to recommend more aggressive treatment. Notwithstanding the doctor's orders, prison authorities refuse to clear his transfer to a different facility for treatment.

In a letter, Langroudi and Abdi, two imprisoned teachers held with Meysami in Ward 8 of Evin Prison, urge authorities to approve Meysami's transfer to a medical treatment facility, to "prevent a possible calamity from occurring."

The full text of their letter, translated into English by HRANA, is below:

"In the name of the God of wisdom and life,

Fifty days have passed since Dr. Farhad Meysami, civil activist and political prisoner, declared his hunger strike. His strike was a response to unjust legal proceedings, and authorities' hindrance of his effective defense by refusing him the right to choose an attorney. He is now in a critically weakened condition. It is said that the doctors at Evin Prison insisted he be hospitalized, yet judicial authorities refuse to issue the order to have him transferred to a prison more materially equipped to treat him.

Because this civil activist suffers from ulcerative colitis and has lost 30 pounds over the course of his hunger strike, his blood pressure, pulse, and other vital signs have dipped into gravely abnormal ranges. As of last week he stopped accepting intravenous treatment, leaving us more concerned than ever that a calamitous outcome might be imminent.

We, the undersigned, thus put on guard the relevant judicial authorities, that they express their agreement to transfer Dr. Meysami to a proper hospital without delay, to prevent a possible calamity from occurring.

His ward-mates, Mahmoud Beheshti Langroudi and Esmail Abdi" (Human Rights Activists in Iran - Sep. 25, 2018)

Mehrnaz Haghighi, MD, taken to jail to serve her sentence

<https://women.ncr-iran.org/iran-women-news/5490-mehrnaz-haghighi-md-taken-to-jail-to-serve-her-sentence>



Mehrnaz Haghighi, 49 and a medical doctor from Bandar Abbas, was transferred Saturday, September 22, 2018, to the Prison of Bandar Abbas to serve her six-month prison sentence.

Mehrnaz Haghighi was initially arrested at her home on

February 19, 2017, by agents of the Ministry of Intelligence. She was incarcerated for more than three months in the detention center of the Security Police of Bandar Abbas and in Evin Prison in Tehran. She was temporarily released on bail on May 26, 2016.

Mehrnaz Haghighi was exonerated from the preliminary charges of disseminating lies, insulting the mullahs' supreme leader, and acting against national security. The Prosecutor, however, brought two new charges against her accusing her of "membership in the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI/MEK)" and "propaganda against the state and in favor of opponents."

This medical doctor and civil rights activist denied the charge of membership in the PMOI/MEK.

Mehrnaz Haghighi was arrested at home at the age of 12, in the course of the massive crackdown on the opposition in the early 1980s. She was released shortly after due to young age. She did not have any activities until 2009 when visited families of political prisoners and offered them financial support.

The Iranian regime has made fresh arrests and issued sentences for human rights activists, women's rights activists and human rights lawyers. The unprecedented wave denotes a crisis in the situation of human rights in Iran and is seen as an effort on the part of Iranian regime officials to silence every voice of dissent.

Amnesty International issued a statement on September 3, 2018, in which it warned against the arrests of lawyers and women's rights activists in Iran. AI pointed out, "These latest arrests are a blatant attempt to silence those advocating for human rights in Iran." It also noted that this is part of the officials' efforts to prevent lawyers from defending their clients. (NCRI women's committee - Sep. 27, 2018)

Nationalist-Religious Activist Reza Aghakhani Denied Conditional Release

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17138>



Despite his eligibility for conditional release for already having served a third of his sentence, authorities have said "no" to Evin Prisoner Reza Aghakhani, a nationalist-religious activist.

An informed source said, "The assistant prosecutor of the prison cited an objection from the interrogator as the reason for the negative response, despite the fact that his wife recently just had a kidney transplant and his child is dealing with a physical disability."

Aghakhani was sentenced to three years in prison by Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court on a charge of "acting against national security." In its processing of the case,

Branch 35 of the Supreme Court did not assent the charges. They were nonetheless confirmed later in Branch 54 of Appeals Court.

Aghakhani was previously detained for 45 days in May 2013 and served a few years in prison in the eighties for his political activities. Along with some of his fellow prisoners, Aghakhani previously went on hunger strike for three days in protest of human rights violations across the country. (Human Rights Activists in Iran – Sep. 25, 2018)

Kermanshah Prisoner Shahriar Tahmasbi: Status Update

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17095/>



Unable to post his bail amount of 150 million tomans (approximately \$36,000 USD), Kermanshah resident Shahriar Tahmasbi has been behind bars since security forces detained him on July 5th.

An informed source told Hrana that Tahmasbi's bail was too heavy for him to post. "He has not yet been able to procure that much money. He requested that the bail is lowered, but no decisions have been made so far in that regard."

Tahmasbi was arrested along with Mostafa Bagheri Ashena and Ardeshir Musavi, whose bails were also set at \$36,000 apiece. While both were able to afford it and have now gone free, Hrana's source stated that the bail amount was far out of proportion with the severity of the charges they face.

Earlier, another source provided background into the evening Tahmasbi was arrested, stating that a group of about 8 people had gathered in the Kermanshah residence of Ali Nazari on Jalili street to discuss the formation of a literary society for speakers, learners, and enthusiasts of a minority dialect called Laki.

"Security forces entered the house proclaiming that Shahriyar Tahmasbi was a fugitive, and arrested him along with Ardeshir Musavi," the source said. "They also seized the cellphones of six people in attendance, including the host."

Tahmasbi was also detained on September 6th of last year for organizing a protest in support of border couriers known as Kulbars. Walking out of Kermanshah's Dizelabad Prison one month later on October 10, 2017, cost him \$24,000 (100 million Tomans) in bail money. (Human Rights Activists in Iran – Sep. 23, 2018)

A Dismal Prison: a Brief Report on Conditions at Dezful

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17131/>

The gnawing pang of hunger, the festering of dirty sores, and the dread of what might happen if you look at the warden sideways. For the 1,300 people currently detained in Dezful Prison, these are private, everyday torments to which authorities there are less than sympathetic.

Indeed, one of Dezful's most darkly effective forms of punishment, a former prison functionary told Hrana, is an administration seemingly devoid of humanity. "A while ago, Mr. Postchi, the general manager of the Khuzestan Province Prison system, came in for inspection," the functionary said. His response to the complaints of malnourished prisoners about the deplorable sleeping conditions? "He told the prisoners, 'You're wearing out the beds with how much you eat and sleep.'"

The cruel irony of the system manager's comments could not be lost on prisoners' family members, who expressed distress at the nutritional deficits of the Dezful canteen. "For a period of one week, rice was omitted from their diet, and during that time they didn't even have bread to eat," one family member said. A former Dezful prisoner elaborated, "the prison food is very low-quality, and the prison store doesn't even stock bread that the prisoners can buy themselves to stave off their hunger."

Currently populated at a few hundred inmates above its maximum capacity, Dezful lacks more than adequate food stores. Without a medical professional on site, it packs the medical consultations of its 1300 prisoners into half-hour windows every two days in which medical professionals swing by the prison. Hygienically, conditions are ripe for disease: each ward houses 300 people for every five showers and six toilets, and when night falls ward floors are crowded with the sleeping bodies of those who weren't lucky enough to get a bed.

According to eyewitness reports, one rare vestige of prisoner autonomy is their power to appease, as best they can, those who have authority to make their bad conditions worse. "No one dares complain in this prison," the former Dezful prisoner related to Hrana, revealing that the sense of humanity in Ward 6 was particularly tenuous. "If a prisoner disagrees with Ward's internal administrator [Mr. Daneshyar], he will be beaten by prisoners, who are goaded by the administrator [...] then the prisoner will be moved, on Daneshyar's orders, to another Ward."

Still, prisoner's control over their day-to-day fate is ultimately limited: beatings ordered on prisoners because of their legal charges, or even their general disposition, are reportedly routine.

These conditions have driven so many to self-harm that authorities have removed the bathroom mirrors, making shaving difficult, the former inmate said; one more

mundane task of self-care that from within the walls of Dezful seems a faraway luxury.

Dezful Prison has nine wards. It is located in Khuzestan Province on the outskirts of Dezful. The current head of the prison is Azadeh, and his deputy is Noghrehchi. (Human Rights Activists in Iran - Sep. 25, 2018)

Amnesty Condemns The Iranian Authorities' Treatment Of Arash Sadeghi

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/09/iranauthorities-deliberately-jeopardize-health-of-jailed-activist-with-cancer/>



The Iranian authorities are torturing jailed human rights defender Arash Sadeghi, who has cancer, by deliberately depriving him of the specialist medical care health professionals have said he desperately requires, Amnesty International revealed on September 26.

“Arash Sadeghi, whom Amnesty International considers a prisoner of conscience, having been sentenced to 19 years in prison in 2016 solely for his peaceful human rights work, was diagnosed with a cancerous bone tumour last month. However, authorities at Raja’i Shahr prison, in Karaj, a city north-west of Tehran, have since repeatedly impeded his access to potentially life-saving medical care,” wrote Amnesty in a press release and criticized the Iranian authorities for “deliberately jeopardizing the health and life of Arash Sadeghi.”

Jailed human rights defender Arash Sadeghi had undergone surgery on September 12. The State Security forces removed him prematurely and shackled his left hand and left leg while he was still unconscious. Security forces then blocked the area around his hospital bed, which resulted in the medical team being unable to conduct routine post-op checks, despite protests from hospital staff.

On September 15, Arash Sadeghi was transferred back to Raja’i Shahr prison. This was against strict explicit medical advice that required him to spend at least 25 days hospitalized following the operation so that he could be monitored by specialist doctors. Doctors said that they needed this post-operative recovery period to assess

whether Arash Sadeghi required chemotherapy, radiation therapy or additional surgery.

He had a pre-arranged doctor's appointment on September 22 with his cancer surgeon who had specified his availability being limited to the morning. However, the prison guards transferred Arash Sadeghi in the afternoon, by which time the surgeon was no longer present.

"The Iranian authorities' treatment of Arash Sadeghi's is not only unspeakably cruel; in legal terms it is an act of torture. Every step of the way, the prison authorities, the prosecutor's office and the Revolutionary Guards have done everything they can to hinder and limit access to the essential treatment that Arash requires in order to address his life-threatening cancer," said Philip Luther, Research and Advocacy Director for the Middle East and North Africa at Amnesty International.

(Amnesty International - Sep. 26, 2018)

The Price of Neglect: Prisoner Dies in Zahedan

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17187/>

Abdolnabi Saresi, 52, from Afghanistan, was confirmed dead Friday, September 28th after being denied medical care in Zahedan Prison, where he was being held in Section 4. Saresi had been awaiting trial for two years on financial charges. A close source told Hrana that Saresi was denied medical attention despite his history of diabetes. Staff at the prison clinic urgently recommended a hospital transfer on Thursday, which authorities refused. Authorities have yet to visit the prison since his death.

(Human Rights Activists in Iran - Sep. 28, 2018)

Harassed by Authorities, Christian Former Prisoner Stages Sit-in Across From Evin

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17177/>



Fatemeh Mohammadi, a Christian convert who was released from Evin Prison earlier this year, has staged a sit-in across from her former prison to protest what she referred to as the prison authorities' "campaign of verbal harassment" against her.

Mohammadi was initially detained last November, and sentenced to six months in prison by Branch 26 of the

Revolutionary Court of Tehran. She was released from Evin Prison's women's ward after completing her sentence. Now, she claims authorities are contacting her family to insult and harass them.

"After I was released from Evin Prison, I was contacted by the prison's interrogation team," Mohammadi told Hrana. "They called me all sorts of vulgar words. Last night, September 26th, 2018, Evin Prison again called my home. The person on the phone said [unpleasant] things to my family and told them, 'It is best that you stop your daughter from her activities as the path she is on leads to corruption.'"

She said she was prompted to begin her protest when her home was contacted once again on Thursday, September 27th, 2018.

"They repeated their words," Mohammadi said. "Afterwards, I went to Evin to find out what was wrong, but no one offered an explanation. For this reason, I am protesting and staging a sit-in across from Evin Prison, and will continue to do so until they process my complaint."

Mohammadi previously published a letter in which she spoke of the anguish she endured during her interrogation.

Last November, Mohammadi was detained in Tehran and transferred to Evin prison along with Majid Reza Suzanchi Kashani, another recent Christian convert. On April 7th, 2018, Mohammadi, who was 19 years old at the time, was sentenced by Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran, presided by Judge Ahmadzadeh, to six months' imprisonment on charges of "membership in proselytizing groups," "christian activity," and "acting against national security through propaganda against the regime."

Per Iranian law, Mohammadi's sentence should have been reduced by a quarter when she consented to the verdict; however, she served a month and a half longer than anticipated per the law. She was released May 14th, 2018. (Human Rights Activists in Iran - Sep. 27, 2018)

Prison sentences

Ejlal Ghavami, the Kurdish Journalist, Sentenced to Eight Months of Imprisonment

<http://kurdistanhumanrights.net/fa/?p=6445>



Ejlal Ghavami, the Kurdish journalist and human rights activist who was arrested and briefed in Sanandaj on Aug 20, 2018, has been sentenced to 8 months of imprisonment in absentia on charges of "publishing lies

to disturb public opinion” by Branch 109 of Sanandaj Penal Court.



Kurdistan Human Rights Network has been informed that the verdict was issued by Branch 109 of Sanandaj Penal Court on Sept 22, 2018 and it was officially served on him today. The journalist announced the issuance of the verdict on his Twitter account. ‘I have been sentenced to 8 months of imprisonment on the basis of a verdict in absentia by Branch 109 of Sanandaj Penal Court. I was briefed in this case a month ago. I will be also tried at Branch Four of Court of Appeals on Nov 13, 2018, on charges of propaganda against the state.’, he stated.

This case relates to the charge of publishing a statement on Twitter and Instagram regarding the execution of Mohammad Salas and Ramin Hossein Panahi.

Ejlal Ghavami was previously tried in Branch 1 of Sanandaj Revolutionary Court in 2016 on charges of “propaganda against the state”, “interviews with foreign media abroad”, “Publishing falsehood” and “insulting Islamic Republic of Iran Guards Corp (IRGC)” but he was acquitted of all the charges. However, Sanandaj Prosecutor protested contested the verdict and the case was referred to the Sanandaj Court of Appeals (branch 4) where there will be a hearing on Nov 18, 2018, at Branch 4 of Sanandaj.

It should be noted that this civil activist has been summoned to the security services over the last few years and has been interrogated on his activities. (Kurdish Human Rights Network– Sep. 26, 2018)

Azerbaijani Activist Sentenced to 1 Year in Prison for Cultural Rally

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17180/>

Kiumars Eslami, an Azerbaijani activist arrested during the July 4th Azerbaijani rallies at Babak Fort, has been sentenced to one year in prison by Judge Firooz Farahani Mazrae Jahan, on the charge of “propaganda against the regime.”

Babak Fort is a site in northwestern Iran, home to the country’s Azerbaijani minority group, that has gained popularity in recent years as an annual cultural rallying spot for Azerbaijani activists during the first week of July.



In justifying his verdict, the judge cited Eslami’s cultural and ‘separatist’ activities: “The defendant is one of the ethnic, separatist, and Pan-Turkic activists in

Parsabad,” Jahan wrote. “In order to carry out this separatist activity, he prepares reports, translates Persian books into Turkish [In Persian, the Azerbaijani language is often referred to as Turkish], distorts them in cyberspace, and disseminates them to foreign networks associated with the opposition. He is a leader and a member of the sub-branches of the Pan-Turkic movement in Parsabad county.”

Another reason cited for Eslami’s conviction was his reference to Iran’s Azerbaijani provinces as “South Azerbaijan” in social media posts.

According to an informed source, the head of Parsabad’s intelligence office, known only as Hazrati, previously told Eslami that his case file would be closed if he announced on the news that he would cease his Azerbaijani-related activism and cut off contact with fellow activist Abbas Lasani, who was recently convicted of similar charges.

A native of Parsabad-e Moghan, also located in northwestern Iran, Eslami was previously held in Moghan Prison, where he reportedly sustained head wounds and bleeding during violent interrogations by Iranian authorities. He went on a nine-day hunger strike beginning July 28th to protest the prison conditions and his oppression in the judicial system. He was released on approximately \$650 USD (120 million IRR) bail on August 9th. (Human Rights Activists in Iran – Sep. 27, 2018)

Arbitrary arrests

Social arrests

Two Kurdish Activists and Journalists Summoned to the Revolutionary Court

<http://kurdistanhumanrights.net/fa/?p=6441>



A civil activist in Sanandaj was summoned to the Sanandaj Revolutionary Court on the charges of ‘Insulting the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran’ while a journalist from Mahabad was also summoned to the Revolutionary Court in Mahabad on the charges of “publishing lies in cyberspace”.

According to Kurdistan Human Rights Network, a civil activist from Sanandaj called Sediq Rostami was summoned to branch 1 of the Revolutionary Court of Sanandaj on the charge of insulting the Islamic Republic of Iran’s Supreme Leader. The summons was served on the defendant on Sept 23, 2018, and he was asked to attend Branch 1 of the Revolutionary Court of Sanandaj on Oct 7, 2018. Rasoul (Hajar) Rahimi, the director of the “Hawal” news site, was also summoned on Sept 15, 2018, to Branch 2 of the Public Prosecution and Revolutionary court of Orumiyeh

following a complaint by Jalal Mahmoudzadeh, a representative of the Mahabad in the Islamic Consultative Assembly, on charges of publishing lies.

The Hawal news site is a news site licensed by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance that covers Kurdish political, economic and cultural news in both Kurdish and Persian languages.

It should be noted that the new round of summons and trial of media and civil activists has only increased due to various content on news sites and social networks over the past few months. (Kurdish Human Rights Network- Sep. 28, 2018)

Truckers Arrested as of Sixth Day of Renewed Strikes

<http://jamejamonline.ir/online/3459087804993531766>

<http://www.mizanonline.com/fa/news/455549>

<https://www.isna.ir/news/97070603362>

As the most recent round of truckers' strikes entered its 6th day on September 27th, dozens of truckers had been arrested by security forces.

Stalling commercial transport across several Iranian cities—including Shahr-e Kord, Ardabil, Nain, Karaj, Isfahan, Arak, Nishapur, Zarrin Shahr, Urmia, Sabzevar, Rafsanjan, Qazvin, Dezful—striking drivers heeded the call of the national truck-driver's trade union to cease their operations until authorities addressed their demands, including an increase in pensions, subsidized pricing for parts, 70+% hikes in fares, payment of drivers' insurance premiums, the removal of brokers from terminals, and increased supervision of officers and agents, positions that have proven susceptible to bribes in the past.

In wake of the industry unrest, local prosecutors have confirmed the arrests of multiple truck drivers; as of the date of this report, Qazvin Prosecutor Esmail Sadegh Niaraki, the Karaj Prosecutor, and the Ardebil Public and Revolutionary Prosecutor Naser Atabati announced the arrest of 15, 7, and 8 truckers in their respective jurisdictions, claiming that the detained drivers had disrupted public order by blocking the roads. Reports indicate at least 30 strikers in various cities have been arrested since the strikes first began on Saturday, September 22nd.

On Thursday, truck drivers received text notifications of fuel allotments for drivers who didn't participate in the strike and who can provide a bill of lading. These messages are reportedly an attempt by authorities to deter the ongoing protests.

Head of Tehran Poultry Farm Union Mohammad Yousef opined that the shortage and rising prices of poultry (currently \$1USD (100 thousand IRR) per kilogram) could be resolved if the striking truckers were to resume their usual routes.

Roads and Urban Development Ministry Deputy Abdol-Hashem Hassan Nia claimed that road freight transportation is ongoing, and promised a more consistent supply of domestic tires for truckers. He indicated that leveraging more of the country's tire supply from a government supply organ known as the Organization for Collection and Sale of State-owned Properties of Iran (OCSSPI) would be the next step in the resolution process. "Also, on orders from the vice president, the import tariff on tires will be reduced to 5%, which should accelerate the importation," Nia said, estimating the resultant supply increase could resolve the road fleet's tire complaints within a month.

(Jame-Jam state-run Website - Sep. 27, 2018)

(Mizan state-run Website - Sep. 27, 2018)

(ISNA state-run Website - Sep. 28, 2018)

Basic freedom and rights abused

Media Activist Hassan Shemshadi Caught in Bureaucratic Pitfalls

<https://www.peykeiran.com/Content.aspx?ID=165520>



In a September 18, 2018 session of the Computer Crimes Investigation Court, journalist and media activist Hassan Shemshadi was read charges on a case file for which he had already been summoned and charged twice.

Shemshadi's ordeal with his current case file began when he was summoned to the Judicial Office of the Province of Sistan and Baluchistan for a social media post in which he stated that villagers on the outskirts of Zabul, in the throes of their poverty, were resorting to the consumption of cat and crow meat.

According to Shemshadi, this was his third summons in the last six months for the same complaint, and it indicated that his arrest warrant would be issued if he did not appear in the Computer Crimes Investigation Court within the next five days.

As indicated, Shemshadi appeared at the Computer Crimes Investigation Court of Tehran where a prosecution assistant told him that Zahedan Investigation Court had issued permission to "process his charges."

"When I saw the case file number, I realized it was the same case file for which I had gone to Zahedan two months ago—the bail decision was even issued for it," He said.

“But the prosecution assistant said, ‘since I have not received anything to that effect from them, I’m bound by the law to arraign you. And you’re going to have to defend yourself.’”

Insisting that the same charges had already been processed two months ago, he was permitted to take up his complaint with the head of Investigation Court. “I explained the situation and offered him a copy of my numbered correspondence so he could check the system and see if I’m telling the truth or not.

Shemshadi said that the head of Investigation Court did just that, prepared a printout, signed it, sealed it, and sent it off to the court branch. “The prosecution assistant lady saw the printout and told me, ‘all set now! Good day!’” (Peykeiran – Sep. 20, 2018)

Journalist Kazem Imanzadeh Summoned to Court

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17188/>



Kazem Imanzadeh, a journalist from Sanandaj, western Iran, was summoned by Branch 1 of Criminal Court on September 28, 2018.

An informed source told Hrana that Imanzadeh is facing charges of “spreading misinformation with intent to slander the regime,” “disturbing public opinion by disseminating false statements about the regime,” “publishing content to sow ethnic, racial, and religious divisions” and “insulting Islamic sanctities and imams.”

Hrana recently reported on the conviction of Sanandaj-based journalist Ejlal Ghavami, a human rights activist who was released on bail after being read his charges on August 20th, 2018. Ghavami was sentenced in absentia to eight months in prison by Branch 109 of the Sanandaj Criminal Court 2, for “spreading misinformation with intent to disturb public opinion.” (Human Rights Activists in Iran – Sep. 28, 2018)

Charging tuition main factor contributing to student dropouts

Charging tuition is the most important factor contributing to student dropouts in Iran. At least 2 million school-age children in Iran have not been able to go to school.

According to the state-run press, there are more than 15 million school-age Iranians, but the student population is only 13 million. This means that at least 2 million Iranian students have not been able to go to school, a large number of whom are girl children. Mojgan Bagheri, a teacher and activist, says charging tuition from students has had a greater impact on dropout of girl children compared to cultural issues. "Today, more families in the rural and impoverished areas force their daughters to get married due to financial problems. Cultural reasons stand on the next level of importance," Bagheri noted. (The state-run [salamatnews.com](http://www.salamatnews.com), September 26, 2018)

<http://www.salamatnews.com/news/254441>

In light of pervading poverty in Iran, charging tuition for education has become the most important factor forcing a large number of students into quitting school every year and going to work. The number of student dropouts increases every year.

Mojgan Bagheri blamed the mullahs' parliament for the schools' charging tuition, indicating that the budget ratified for education only suffices to pay for basic expenses and the teachers' salaries, which are already half the poverty line.

She added, "Every day, we see that more factories and workshops go bankrupt as a result of which more people are laid off. The dismissed workers already had serious problems paying for their children's education. After being fired, their children will certainly have less and even no opportunity for education. In light of the present state of the economy, we will be seeing more students dropping out of school."

In addition to economic problems, weakness of specialized management of the educational system in Iran is one of the main factors contributing to school dropouts, Bagheri said. "The educational system in Iran needs to be revised and fundamentally reformed," she added.

Article 79 of Iran's Labor Law bans hiring of individuals under 15 years of age.

Principle 30 of the Iranian Constitution also obliges the government to provide free elementary and high school education for all citizens. Article 570 of the Islamic Punishment Code indicates that any government failing to do so could be prosecuted.

(NCRI women's committee - Sep. 29, 2018)

<https://women.ncr-iran.org/iran-women-news/5493-charging-tuition-main-factor-contributing-to-student-dropouts>

Number of illiterates has increased from 9.5 to 11 million in Iran

The number of illiterates in Iran has reached 11 million who make up some 13 per cent of the population of different ages. Two-thirds of the illiterates in Iran are women. Seyyed Mohammad Javad Abtahi, member of the Education and Research Committee of the mullahs' parliament, declared on September 25, 2018, that the number of illiterates in Iran had reached 11 million, a figure which indicates "numerous flaws in the country's educational system."

Abtahi said, "We should be ashamed that the age of social crimes has dropped to 11 or 12." "There is no doubt that the educational system in Iran is sick and is threading away from standard education," he added. (The state-run [salamatnews.com](http://www.salamatnews.com), September 26, 2018)

<http://www.salamatnews.com/news/254443>

The state-run press say the UN has ranked Iran's education 103rd among other countries.

According to Iran's Statistics Centre, the number of illiterates in Iran was 9,483,028 in 2011, 6,250,965 of whom were women, which is approximately two-thirds of the total number of illiterates.

Every year, at least a quarter of Iran's students are forced to quit school with a large number of them joining the children of labor, whose population is estimated to be around 3 to 7 million today. An estimated 25million Iranians are purely or functionally illiterate.

Abtahi said lack of proper planning and the absence of professional executives and management are the two major deficiencies retarding Iran's education.

As for the situation of Iranian teachers and educators, Abtahi also said, "The Literacy Movement's educators systematically do not receive their wages for several months while being deprived of job security. The livelihood of teachers hired by the Education Ministry is also far from decent. Teachers are struggling to earn their living and at the same time fulfill their professional obligations... They face a plethora of problems, particularly economic problems." (NCRI women's committee - Sep. 29, 2018)

<https://women.ncr-iran.org/iran-women-news/5492-number-of-illiterates-has-increased-from-9-5-to-11-million-in-iran>

Religious and ethnic minorities

Baha'i Iranians continue to be arrested and denied education

<https://women.ncr-iran.org/iran-women-news/5485-baha-i-iranians-continue-being-arrested-denied-education>



The wave of arrests of Baha'i Iranians and denying them education has continued in Iran over the past days. Many of the victims have been women. Five Baha'i women were arrested and another 12 female Baha'i Iranians were deprived of pursuing their education despite passing the university entrance exam with good grades.

In the morning of Sunday, September 23, 2018, at least seven Baha'i Iranians including at least three women from the residents of Baharestan city in the Province of Isfahan, were arrested. Their names were Bahareh Zeini (Sobhanian), Sepideh Rouhani, and Foujhan Rashidi.

A week before, on Sunday, September 16, 2018, agents of the Intelligence Ministry also raided Ramin Sadeghi's residence in Andisheh township of Karaj, where a group of Baha'i Iranians participated in an environmental education class.

The intelligence agents initially confiscated the mobiles of all those present, obtained their personal information, and took separate applications from each of them. Then, they completely inspected the house and seized the computer and all documents of Bahá'í Faith, including books and documents kept by Mr. Ramin Sadeghi in his house.

The intelligence agents arrested three people, including the class instructor, Ms. Maryam Ghaffarmanesh, and Ms. Jamileh Pakrou.

They subsequently went to Ms. Pakrou's house and searched her residence. The Intelligence agents seized mobile phones, personal computers, hard disks and their home documents, and subsequently transferred the detainees to Evin Prison.

About 20 hours later, during a telephone call with her family from Ward 209 of Evin Prison, Ms. Ghaffarmanesh said they had set a 300-million-touman bail for her release.

In another development, Anahita Hor, associate student of architecture at Rasam non-profit University in Karaj, on the western outskirts of Tehran, was expelled from the university and prohibited from pursuing her studies.

Earlier, the names of 21 female Baha'i Iranians were announced who had participated in and passed the 2018 National University Entrance Exam, known as Concours, but were deprived of education and their applications were flagged as 'deficiency on file' on the National Organization for Educational Testing website.

Over the past days, the names of 12 other female Baha'i Iranians have been added to this list: Ava Kargar (ranking 8958 in math and 5753 in art), Nava Kargar (ranking 7007 in math and 3629 in art), Sama Mohebbi Kordsalafi (from Tehran), Alhan

Safajoo (from Karaj), Helia Khademi Deljoo (from Tehran), Tara Bahamin, Bitak Charkh Zarrin, Nona Ghadiri, Sayeh Aghaii, Pegah Siroosean, Sadaf Misaghi Seysan, and Anita Rastegar. (NCRI women's committee - Sep. 24, 2018)

Authorities Continue Pursuit of Baha'i Citizens in Isfahan Province

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17105>

On Sunday, September 23rd, Saham Armin became the eighth Baha'i citizen to be detained by Ministry of Intelligence forces after having his home searched in Baharestan, a city 12 miles southeast of Isfahan on the route to Shiraz.

Hrana previously reported on the arrest of Afshin Bolbolan, Anoosh Rayeneh, Milad Davardan, Farhang Sahba, Bahareh Zeini (Sobhanian), Sepideh Rohani, and Fojan Rashidi by security forces in the same city [1]. As of the date of this report, no further information was available on their location or the reasons behind their arrest.

A close source to the group previously confirmed that Bolbolan's books, laptop, tablet, and mobile phone were seized by authorities during a search of his home. (Human Rights Activists in Iran - Sep. 23, 2018)



Shiraz Councilman Arrested For 'Protecting Baha'i Sect'

<https://www.radiofarda.com/a/hajati-shiraz/29513591.html>

<http://www.irna.ir/fars/fa/News/83046731>



A member of Shiraz city council has been arrested Thursday evening on charges of "protecting Baha'i sect".

The official IRNA news agency quotes another member of the city council as saying that Mehdi Hajati was already under investigation by the city's Revolutionary Court.

The Baha'i are a religious minority, which Iran's Islamic establishment, especially conservatives, regard as heretics and use every opportunity

to persecute. Hundreds of Baha'is have been arrested, some executed and their businesses closed in the past 40 years.

Bahram Parsaei a member of parliament from Shiraz has criticized the arrest in his own tweets, saying that Mr. Hajati has been fighting the destruction of historic buildings and sites in the city and he had already been targeted by judicial officials.

He added that authorities take no action to prevent the destruction of cultural heritage, but they arrest a member of city council for a simple tweet.

(IRNA state-run News Agency – Sep. 27, 2018)

(Radio Farda – Sep. 28, 2018)

Authorities Raid Home of Detained Baha'i Citizen Noora Pourmoradian, Arrest her Parents

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17174>



The aggression against Baha'is in Iran was still palpable Thursday, September 27th when Shiraz-based Security forces raided the home of Shirazi Baha'i prisoner of conscience Noora Pourmoradian, seizing her personal belongings and temporarily detaining her mother and father.

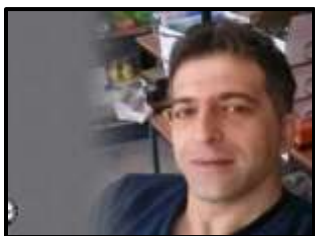
Claiming that the search was necessary to the completion of Noora's case, security forces threatened the Pourmoradian family with "severe consequences" if they leaked photo evidence or publicly disclosed information about the incident.

"To intimidate them, they handcuffed Mr. Saeid Pourmoradian (Noora's father) and took him into the car, menacing him [about what would happen] if he didn't keep quiet," a close source told Hrana.

On Sunday, September 16, 2018, Hrana reported on Noora Pourmoradian's arrest and transfer to a Shiraz Intelligence Detention Center known as Plaque 100. Four other Shirazi Baha'is were arrested the same day: Elaheh Samizadeh, Ehsan Mahbub-Rahvafa, and married couple Navid Bazmandegan and Bahareh Ghaderi. (Human Rights Activists in Iran – Sep. 27, 2018)

Kurdish Student Massoud Karimi Barred from Education

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17185/>



After placing among the nation's top 20 on the competitive college entrance exam, Kurdish student Massoud Karimi, from the city of Javanrood in Kermanshah province, has been barred from continuing his studies due to a purported

deficiency in his student file. Karimi was pursuing a master's degree in political science.

A week before the examination results were released, Kermanshah's Intelligence Office had summoned Karimi and interrogated him about his student activism, a source told Hrana. He was then told that he wouldn't be allowed to study, so that "others could learn."

After several follow-ups, the National Examination Office – which first claimed not to know the reason for Karimi's disqualification – confirmed that he was rendered ineligible for political reasons. (Human Rights Activists in Iran – Sep. 28, 2018)

Violence against women

Golestan nurses seek one year of wage arrears, tired of discrimination

<https://www.ilna.ir/%D8%A8%D8%AE%D8%B4-%DA%A9%D8%A7%D8%B1%DA%AF%D8%B1%DB%8C-9/669637-%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%BE%D8%B1%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%DA%AF%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%86%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D8%B9%D8%AF%D9%85-%D9%BE%D8%B1%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AE%D8%AA-%D9%85%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%85%D8%B2%D8%AF%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D8%AA%D8%A8%D8%B9%DB%8C%D8%B6-%D8%AE%D8%B3%D8%AA-%D9%87-%D8%A7%DB%8C%D9%85>



Golestan nurses working in various medical hospitals in this northern Iranian province have reported that they have not been paid their wage claims. They said, "We have up to a year of unpaid wage arrears," and "we are tired of this discrimination."

Golestan nurses said they have been repeatedly sending letters to provincial authorities asking for their wage payments, but have not yet received an answer. The nurses have said that they have not received their shift payments, wages and overtime payments, and have to wait months for their salaries. Golestan nurses also criticized discriminatory rules in the clerical regime's payment system, saying, "While the law on tariffs for nursing services is not being implemented in hospitals, physicians' fees have increased after implementing the Health Promotion Plan, and they have huge incomes. But nurses, who endure the most stress in the medical care sector, have to wait for months to get their low wage payments."

Such work pressure includes compulsory over-time work and ongoing discriminations against women in the medical system, while nurses are not being regularly paid their salaries and benefits.

Last June, more than 17,000 nurses wrote an open letter and called on officials to urgently address the situation of nurses. Golestan nurses stated that they would have no other choice but to go on strike if their demands were not answered.

Nurses have been calling for the implementation of the law on tariffs, eliminating discrimination in salary payments, reducing the wage gap between doctors and nurses, and eliminating human resources supply companies as contractors for nurses from the public and private medical centers.

Golestan nurses said, "We are tired of this discrimination and we hope that the authorities are thinking of a solution to improve the situation to some extent."

According to official statistics, every 15 Iranian patients have only one nurse, while according to international standards every nurse has to attend to one or maximum of four patients. 17 nurses have died in Iran in 2016-2017. All victims are suspected of dying due to work-related stress. (ILNA state-run News Agency – Sep. 18, 2018)

Soccer coach arrested in Iran for training national women's team

<https://www.fartaknews.com/%D8%A8%D8%AF%D8%B4%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%B2%D8%B4%DB%8C%7%128706-%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%B9%D9%87%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B2%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B4%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A8%DB%8C-%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%AF%DB%8C-%DA%A9%D9%87-%D8%A8%D9%87-%D8%AA%DB%8C%D9%85-%D9%85%D9%84%DB%8C-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%AA%D9%85%D8%B1%DB%8C%D9%86-%D9%85%DB%8C-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B9%DA%A9%D8%B3>



A male soccer coach was arrested for training the Iranian women's national soccer team at a training camp in one of the northern cities of Iran.

Citing one of the members of the women's national team, the state-run fartaknews.com published a report on September 19, 2018, saying a male coach

was training the women's national football team at a training camp held for a few days in northern Iran to prepare the team players. The man got arrested when the news leaked out.

Under interrogation, it became clear that the Football Federation was aware of the man's participation and training in the camp and had granted him permission to train the women's team. (The state-run fartaknews.com, September 19, 2018)

The revelation made by a member of the women's national football team compelled the Football Federation to verify the news and claim that the male soccer coach had the right to train the players of the women's national team.

According to Iran's laws, male instructors are not allowed to undertake women's training and practices, particularly in sports, and none of the state authorities are allowed to issue such a permit. (Fartak news state-run Website – Sep. 19, 2018)

Women's rights activists linger in jail, no news on their fate

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/09/iran-arrests-of-lawyers-and-womens-rights-activists-signal-intensifying-crackdown-on-civil-society/>
<https://women.ncr-iran.org/iran-women-news/5488-iranian-women-s-rights-activists-jailed>



No news is available on the fate of three Iranian women's rights activists 25 days after their arrests. Women's rights activists Hoda Amid, Najmeh Vahedi and Rezvaneh Mohammadi, are lingering in jail under undetermined status. It is not clear why the three women's rights activists have been held in detention.

Hoda Amid, a lawyer and a women's rights activist, was arrested at home in Tehran by security forces on September 1, 2018.

Najmeh Vahedi, another women's rights activist and sociology graduate, was arrested on the same day at her home in Tehran.

A few days following the arrests of the two women's rights activists, Rezvaneh Mohammadi, a gender studies student and women's rights activist, was arrested on September 3, 2018.

Hoda Amid and Najmeh Vahedi were involved in training workshops for women's rights in marriage contracts and other peaceful activities related to women's rights.

Najmeh Vahedi has had a brief visit with her mother on September 18, 2018, but there has not been any news about possible family visitations for Hoda Amid and Rezvaneh Mohammadi. Najmeh Vahedi's brother, who posts updates about her situation on Twitter, writes that their family is still not aware of the reasons for her arrest.

Women's rights activists have repeatedly faced suppression and threats by security forces in Iran. Protesting against gender discrimination, unequal laws and compulsory veil are considered acts "against national security" and "propaganda against the regime."

Amnesty International issued a statement on September 3, 2018, warning that the arrests of lawyers and women's rights activists in Iran signal intensifying crackdown on civil society.

"These latest arrests are a blatant attempt to silence those advocating for human rights in Iran," said Philip Luther, Amnesty International's Research and Advocacy Director for the Middle East and North Africa. "The human rights situation in Iran has reached crisis point," Luther stressed.

(NCRI women's committee - Sep. 25, 2018)

(Amnesty International - Sep. 03, 2018)

Arrests of women continue in Iran as a sign of intensifying crackdown

<https://women.ncr-iran.org/iran-women-news/5494-arrests-of-women-continue-in-iran-as-a-sign-of-intensifying-crackdown>



Arrests of women continue in Iran. Afsaneh Khorsandi and Maryam Azad were arrested on Wednesday, September 26, 2018, in Mahabad of Iranian Kurdistan, and in Tehran.

Intelligence agents in Mahabad raided the residence of Afsaneh Khorsandi on September 26, 2018, arresting and transferring her to an unknown location. It is not clear why she was arrested and

where she has been taken to.

Afsaneh Khorsandi is the sister of Aram Khorsandi who had been arrested a day earlier by security forces and transferred to an unknown location.

A new wave of arrests of women civil activists and Kurdish activists has been launched by the Revolutionary Guard Corps to intensify the atmosphere of fear and terror in the areas inhabited by Kurds.

At the same time, Maryam Azad, another women's rights activist from Shiraz, was arrested by security forces. Maryam Azad was arrested at a Tehran Airport as she was leaving the country for Turkey.

An associate of Ms. Azad said she had been arrested by security forces without being informed of her charges. Her arrest took place after she had passed the gate and boarded the plane.

Maryam Azad, 31 and a graduate of Dramatic Arts, was very much interested in performing in plays but was not able to continue in this profession due to the illness she is being treated for.

Earlier, women's rights activists and advocates, Hoda Amid, Najmeh Vahedi and Rezvaneh Mohammadi were apprehended in the wave of arrests of women activists and lawyers. After nearly one month, they are still detained under undetermined status, denied access to legal counsel and basically deprived of having family visits. (NCRI women's committee - Sep. 29, 2018)

Amnesty International issued a statement on September 3, 2018, warning against the arrests of women including lawyers and women's rights activists in Iran, saying it signaled intensifying crackdown on civil society in Iran.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/09/iran-arrests-of-lawyers-and-womens-rights-activists-signal-intensifying-crackdown-on-civil-society/>