

## NCRI Human Rights Center Weekly Bulletin

October 22, 2018

### Systematic violations of the right to life

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

#### Execution

##### **Iran: Two Men Executed in Shahrekord Prison**

<https://iranhr.net/fa/articles/3522>

October 15, 2018: Two Prisoners were executed on murder charges at Shahrekord prison yesterday morning. The aforementioned prisoners identified as Saleh Dehkordi, 38, and Yarali Nouri, 40. Saleh Dehkordi was in prison for 7 years for murdering a person and convicted to qisas (retribution in kind). The Iranian media outlets have not published news related to the aforementioned execution so far. (Iran Human Rights - Oct. 15, 2018)

##### **Inside Account of Zanyar Moradi, Loghman Moradi and Ramin Hossein Panahi's Final Days**

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17425>



New details on the executions of Kurdish political prisoners Zanyar Moradi, Loghman Moradi, and Ramin Hossein Panahi has been brought forward by a staff member at the Iranian Prisons Organizations who asked to remain anonymous.

Moradi, Moradi, and Hossein Panahi were hanged September 8th and buried in undisclosed locations without prior notice to their families or attorneys, throwing the international human rights community into an uproar over the Iranian judicial system's chronic fits of caprice.

According to Hrana's source, the three young men were battered before their transfer to the gallows; and per the observations of the source's colleagues, Hossein Panahi, in particular, looked terribly ill.

"Zanyar Moradi and Loghman Moradi caught sight of Ramin Hossein Panahi while they were being transferred in handcuffs and shackles for execution," the source explained. "When they saw [Hossein Panahi] was only half-conscious and spoke up

in his defense, prison staff including Gholamreza Ziaie, Maghsoud Zolfali, and Nader Bagheri lay into them.”

The source explained that Loghman and Zanyar’s loved ones were distressed on September 7th when the men were sent to quarantine, which, while ominous, ran counter to the pre-execution protocol of sending the condemned to solitary confinement.

“The lawyers and families of these two prisoners were not sure whether they were scheduled to be executed,” the source said, adding that they were killed six hours after their family’s final visit at 10 a.m. on the 8th. “Even Rajai Shahr General Manager Hassan Ghobadi was absent during their last visit, and refused to confirm that their execution was imminent.”

According to Hrana’s source, the men’s hangings were atypical even for the Iranian prison system. Their gallows were mounted outside the designated execution quarters, known as “the silo;” it happened not at dawn, per Iranian custom, but at midnight; and the prison’s computer system shows no record of what were to be their very last movements on earth, i.e. their transfers. “We had heard that an execution had been carried out,” the personnel explained, “[but] since security officials took over the execution, even we don’t know exactly where that execution happened.”

Indeed, the details play out like a grim procedural: the Judiciary announced that the executions were carried out in “Tehran,” while a source close to the Moradi families confirmed to Hrana that Zanyar and Loghman’s bodies bore notes reading “executed in Rajai Shahr.” A visible presence on the night of the hangings was a Marivan Friday Prayer Imam notorious for his ties to the Iranian security apparatus, whose son had allegedly been murdered.

“I heard through my colleagues that the prisoners wanted to string the noose around their neck with their own hands,” the personnel said. “There was a scuffle when officials refused this request; Zanyar Moradi even claimed that Hassan Ghobadi had promised him that right.” (Human Rights Activists in Iran – Oct. 14, 2018)

### **Iran Executions: Man Hanged at Ferdows County Prison**

<https://iranhr.net/fa/articles/3525>

A prisoner was executed at Ferdows County Prison on murder and armed robbery charges last Sunday. On Sunday, October 14, a prisoner named Ayyub Jahandar, 28, from Torbat Heydariye city, was hanged at Ferdows County prison.

According to the prisoner's relatives, "Mr Jahandar was accused of murdering a person during an armed robbery that happened six years ago. His brother also convicted to 15 years of imprisonment for assisting Ayyub in the robbery."

Ferdows County is a county in the north of South Khorasan Province in Iran.

The Iranian media outlets have not published news related to the aforementioned execution so far. (Iran Human Rights - Oct. 17, 2018)

### **Iran Executions: Man Hanged at Ilam Prison**

<https://iranhr.net/fa/articles/3526>

A prisoner was executed at Ilam Central Prison on murder charges on Wednesday morning. According to the IHR sources, the prisoner identified as Kourosh (Ali) Behzadian. The source told, "Kourosh was married with two sons."

The Iranian media outlets have not published news related to the aforementioned execution so far. (Iran Human Rights - Oct. 17, 2018)

### **Iran Executions: A Prisoner Hanged in Maragheh, Two Others in Isfahan**

<https://iranhr.net/fa/articles/3527>

Three prisoners were hanged in Iranian cities of Maragheh and Isfahan on murder charges.

According to the IHR sources, on the morning of Tuesday, October 16, Mowloud Shah-Hosseini, 29, from the Iranian city of Divandarreh, was executed at Isfahan Central Prison. He was convicted to death on both murder and drug-related charges. However, the execution was carried out for the murder charge.

On the same day, another prisoner, Behrouz Ansari Lenjan, was executed at Isfahan Central Prison. A source close to the prisoner, told IHR, "Behrouz was convicted to death for murdering a man whose name was Majid. Majid owed Behrouz 7 million Tomans. They fought and unfortunately, Majid was killed."

Another prisoner, Aslan Shirani, 33, was executed on Sunday, October 14, at Maragheh Prison. He was from the Iranian city of Miandoab and was executed on murder charges.

The Iranian media outlets have not published news related to the aforementioned executions so far. (Iran Human Rights - Oct. 17, 2018)

### Arbitrary killing

#### **A Kurdish Citizen Killed by the IRGC Forces in Paveh**

<http://kurdistanhumanrights.net/fa/?p=6571>



A Kurdish citizen was killed during the conflict between the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) forces and Peshmerga of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (PDKI) near the city of Paveh.

Kurdistan Human Rights Network (KHRN) has been informed that, on Monday, Oct 12, 2018, IRGC forces surrounded the Bimiri promenade

in Paveh on the pretext of facing a team of Peshmergah of (PDKI) and targeted one of the houses in the area.

In this conflict, which lasted for nearly 3 hours, two Peshmergah members of the (PDKI) died. Moreover, a Pwah citizen called Farshad Chechani, who was present in the conflict zone, was killed by IRGC forces.

Following the clash, one of the sites affiliated with the Ministry of intelligence covering news on Kurdish parties introduced Farshad Chachani as a member of the PDKI while announcing that three people had been killed in this conflict. However, after a few hours, the site reportedly claimed that it was not yet clear to the security forces if Farshad Chechani was affiliated with the party or not?

Also, following the killing of this Kurdish citizen, the Paveh Intelligence agency has the family to announce that their son had been killed by the Peshmerga.

A resident of the area has told KHRN that the security forces had surrounded the whole area after the onset of the conflict and warned the locals that anyone present in the conflict zone will be considered as an enemy targeted by the IRGC forces.

According to this source, the security forces have dominated the city of Pave and the Guard helicopters are patrolling over Shahu Mountains following the conflict. (Kurdish Human Rights Network- Oct. 15, 2018)

#### **A Kurdish Tradesperson from Bukan Killed by Law Enforcement Force**

<http://kurdistanhumanrights.net/fa/?p=6636>

Ali Nasiri, a tradesperson (Kasibkar) from Bukan who was shot and wounded at the Bokeran-Miandoab road on suspicion of smuggling goods on Oct 12, 2018, passed away in the hospital due to the severity of injuries.



The Kurdistan Human Rights Network (KHRN) has been informed that Iranian Disciplinary Forces targeted a vehicle on the Bukan-Miandoab road on Friday, Oct 12, 2018 on the pretext of confronting smuggling of goods. Ali Nasiri and his companion Massoud Akbarpour were Severely injured in this attack.

Ali Nasiri, who was shot on the head, was transferred to the hospital in Mahabad. He passed away on October 18 due to severity of injuries. He was married with two children. Massoud Akbarpour was also transferred to a hospital in Orumiyeh for treatment.

The above-mentioned Kurdish tradesperson (Kasibkar) is only one of the people killed by the Iranian military and security officials who target kolbars and tradespersons crossing the border in the dark.

According to the KHRN investigations, at least 35 ordinary citizens and Kurdish tradesperson have been targeted and killed by these forces on the pretext of fighting smuggling of goods over the past years. (Kurdish Human Rights Network- Oct. 19, 2018)

## Death sentence

### **Iran's Death Penalty Laws Failing Children**

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/10/12/irans-death-penalty-laws-failing-children>



Last week, Iranian authorities executed Zeinab Sakaavand for allegedly murdering her husband when she was 17. During her trial the court discounted Sakaavand's claims that her husband frequently beat and abused her. She was only 15 when they were married.

Sakaavand is the fifth child offender that Iran has executed this year. On January 30, Mahboubeh Mofidi was executed for allegedly murdering her husband when she was 17. The same day, Ali Kazemi was executed for a murder he allegedly committed at 15. Amirhossein Pourjafar was also executed in January for the rape and murder of a 3-year-old girl when he was 16. In June, authorities executed Abolfazl Chazani for an alleged murder he committed at 14.

Iran is one of only four countries known to have executed child offenders since 2013. Amnesty International has identified 49 alleged child offenders at risk of

execution in Iran, and the United Nations Secretary-General reported that there were 160 child offenders on death row in Iran as of late 2014.

Iran changed its laws in 2013 to limit when child offenders could face capital punishment – they granted judges the discretion to not sentence to death a child offender who could not comprehend the nature and consequences of the crime when it happened.

Yet the law allows courts to rely on a forensic doctor's opinion as to whether a defendant understood the consequences of their actions. In the case of 14-year-old Chazani, the Legal Medicine Organization of Iran reportedly concluded he had reached “developmental maturity” at the time of the crime. Even with this flawed approach to the death penalty, research shows children are far more predisposed toward impulsive decisions.

Especially troubling is the cases of the two young women executed for killing their husbands who both were victims of child marriages and possible domestic abuse. In Iran, girls can marry at 13 and boys at 15. Girls who marry as children face a higher risk of physical and sexual abuse than women who marry later.

Under Iran's Qisas law, an intentional murder is punishable by death but victims' families can forgive the accused to save them from execution. This means the burden has been on activists and mourning families to work around the law. It is time for Iranian authorities to recognize their own responsibility and end the execution of child offenders once and for all. (Human Rights Watch – Oct. 12, 2018)

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

### **Clashing Zahedan Prisoners Beaten, Forcefully Undressed**

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17431>

On Friday, October 12th, fights that broke out amid the stifling conditions of Zahedan Prison landed 29 prisoners in quarantine. The next day, quarantined prisoners were taken to the prison yard, forcefully undressed, beaten by prison guards, and left outside until morning. According to one of the prisoner's relatives, tensions had reached a breaking point in Zahedan's Youth Ward, also known as Ward 1, which has a capacity of 140 but currently houses 350. The source added that 17 youth were injured in the scuffle, and authorities cut the phone lines to

Ward 1 immediately after the incident. The overpopulation of Iranian prisons a systemic issue exacerbated by authorities' laxity in addressing requests for furlough and sentence reductions, even for lawfully eligible prisoners. Meetings intended to review requests for commutation and conditional release are routinely postponed. (Human Rights Activists in Iran - Oct. 14, 2018)

### Arak January Protestors Sentenced to Imprisonment and Lashings

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17457/>

Six Arak residents arrested amid the January protests were sentenced to one year in prison and 74 lashes each for "disrupting the public peace through participation in an illegal gathering" in Arak's Criminal Court No.2, Branch 102. The defendants' sentences allow for detention already served to be counted towards their pending prison terms.



Lawyer and civil rights activist Mohammad Najafi told Hrana that, barring any new infractions, only one of the defendants will actually be serving his time. "One of [the defendants], grocer Hossein Agha Alidadi, did not appeal his initial sentence of one year in prison and 74 lashes, and that sentence was finalized. He had also been accused of espionage but was acquitted of that charge. Five others who requested an appeal had their sentences suspended by the Appeals Court of Markazi Province." As of the date of this report, the identities of those five others have yet to be confirmed.

In July of this year, 11 residents detained in Shazand city in connection to the January protests, including Mohammad Najafi, were tried and sentenced to imprisonment and lashings in Arak Criminal Court No.2, Branch 102, presided by Judge Mohammad Reza Abdollahi.

Five thousand people were detained and interrogated across the country in connection to nationwide demonstrations in January 2018 that came to be referred to as the "January protests." These economic protests led to skirmishes with police forces and the deaths of 25 individuals. Of the January protests, Ministry of the Interior Rahmani Fazli said, "A number of protests took place in 100 Iranian cities; in forty of those cities, the protests turned violent." (Human Rights Activists in Iran - Oct. 16, 2018)

## **More than 50 Special Forces Attack Ward 12 of Urmia Central Prison**

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17453>

In the latest of a long string of power abuses at Urmia Central Prison, more than 50 special forces responded to prisoner objections with severe beatings, breaking prisoners' bones, and sending a number of them to solitary confinement on the night of October 15th.

A close source told Hrana that a large-scale reprisal was set into motion when three prisoners went to the guard's office to check in on their wardmate Hamid Rahimi, who had been beaten there by four personnel and transferred to solitary confinement after a verbal altercation with staff. Rahimi is from Ward 12, designated for political prisoners.

Once arrived, the wardmates – identified as Kamal Hassan Ramazan, Ahmad Tamooie, and Osman Mostafapour – were met with their own violent beatings. Authorities started in on Tamooie, while additional prisoners, on orders from personnel members “Eskandar” and “Rezaie,” assaulted all three with a sharp object. Prisoner Touraj Esmaili was also beaten in the attack.

Authorities reportedly looked on as the attackers cut Esmaili, broke Ramezan's nose, and busted the teeth of Tamooie, who has since gone on hunger strike to protest the assault.

When authorities were met with outcry over the assaults, they moved to disperse the victims and their comrades among different wards; when that measure, too, was met with resistance, prison authorities sent for reinforcements.

Prison guards and dozens of special forces stormed Ward 12 armed with batons, tasers, and tear gas, laying into Ramezan, Tamoo'i, Mostafapoor, and two more Ward-12 bystanders, Hassan Rastegari and Kamran Darvishi. The latter two were then transferred to solitary confinement; Rastegari has since been returned to Ward 12. “Hassan Rastegari was badly bruised all over,” the source said, adding that additional prisoners had attacked the men on orders from prison authorities.

Shortly thereafter, authorities established a perimeter around Ward 12. Crowded around the ward's door were all those in charge of the prison, its investigations and protection unit, and Intelligence Security of West Azerbaijan Province. Inside the ward, dozens of special forces took up watch, while still more stood armed guard roof.



The special forces dispersed a few hours later, with the exception of a few that remained in the main prison hall.

Kamal Hassan Ramezan is on death row for political charges. Ahmad Tamooie is serving a 15-year sentence, and Osman Mostafapour is serving a 35-year sentence. As of the date of this report, the health statuses of the assaulted prisoners have yet to be confirmed.

Iran's Prison Bureau stipulates that prisoner and prison-cell inspections must be carried out with respect to prisoners' safety, i.e. to uncover and confiscate contraband items such as weapons and narcotics. Increasingly common, however, are inspections that lead to insults or destruction of prisoner property, and political detainees have proven to be popular targets. Hrana previously reported on the September 18th storming of Ward 12 by special forces, where guards pilfered and destroyed the prisoners' personal belongings, including food they had purchased themselves.

Compounding harassment and pilfering at Urmia Central Prison is its authorities' liberal use of corporal punishment.

On October 8, 2018, prisoner Morteza Zohrali's right arm was broken in a beating by prison officials; On September 23rd, Youth Ward inmate Javad "Arash" Shirzad was sent to an outside hospital for treatment of a concussion sustained at the hands of "Bayramzadeh," the prison's internal director; in July, Saeed Seyed Abbasi was beaten and sent to solitary confinement without treatment of his injuries, all for arriving late to the prison yard for recreation time; and in May, according to Hrana reports, prisoner Saeed Nouri, son of a former IRGC lieutenant, was beaten by two personnel in the internal director's office. (Human Rights Activists in Iran - Oct. 13, 2018)

## Prison

### Prison conditions

#### **Iran: Environmentalists Languish in Jail**

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/10/11/iran-environmentalists-languish-jail>



(Beirut) - Eight environmental activists arbitrarily detained in Iran in January and February 2018 remain in detention eight months later without clear charges, Human Rights Watch said today. Iranian authorities should either immediately

release them or charge them with recognizable crimes and produce evidence to justify their continued detention.

On September 30, family members said on social media that judicial authorities had told them that the detained environmentalists can only be represented by lawyers from a pre-approved list of 20 that the judiciary had published in June. The authorities have not allowed the detained environmentalists access to lawyers of their choice or set a trial date.

“Iran’s judiciary is again highlighting its role as key functionaries in a repressive state machinery rather than defenders of justice,” said Sarah Leah Whitson, Middle East director at Human Rights Watch. “Even though the environmentalists have spent eight months in pretrial detention, the authorities have still not come up with a criminal charge against them.”

On January 24 and 25, the Revolutionary Guards intelligence organization arrested Hooman Jokar, Sepideh Kashani, Niloufar Bayani, Amirhossein Khaleghi, Sam Rajabi, Taher Ghadirian, Kavous Seyed Emami, and Morad Tahbaz, all members of a local environmental group, the Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation. On February 13, Abbas Jafaridolatabadi, the prosecutor of Tehran, told reporters that detained activists are accused of using environmental projects as a cover to collect classified strategic information.

It is unclear what classified strategic information they could potentially collect, as their organization says it only works to conserve and protect Iran’s flora and fauna, including the Asiatic Cheetah, an endangered species in Iran. On February 10, the family of Seyed Emami, an Iranian-Canadian university professor, reported that he had died in detention in unknown circumstances. Iranian authorities claimed that he committed suicide, but they have not conducted an impartial investigation into his death and have placed a travel ban on his wife, Maryam Mombeini.

On February 25, the Persian-language Etemed newspaper reported that authorities had arrested four other environmental activists, including Abdolreza Kouhpayeh, another member of the wildlife heritage group, who remains in detention. The three others were released from prison.

On May 9, Mojgan Jamshidi, a journalist who covers environmental issues, tweeted that authorities had arrested more than 40 local environmental activists in the city of Bander-e-Lengeh, in Hormozgan province in southern Iran. All 40 were later released, two sources confirmed to Human Rights Watch.

Several senior Iranian government officials have said that they did not find any evidence to suggest that the detained activists are spies. On May 22, ISNA News

Agency reported that Issa Kalantari, the head of Iran's Environmental Institution, said during a speech at a bio-diversity conference that the government had formed a committee consisting of the ministers of intelligence, interior, and justice and the president's legal deputy, and that they had concluded there was no evidence to suggest those detained are spies. Kalantari added that the committee said the environmentalists should be released.

A source who wished to remain anonymous told Human Rights Watch on October 3 that a person who works in the prosecutor's office told families of four of the detained environmentalists that they had been charged with "sowing corruption on earth," a serious charge that includes the risk of execution. One of the families' lawyers told the Center for Human Rights in Iran on October 8 that authorities have issued five indictments, but he believed authorities are falsely threatening the families with the "corruption on earth" charge to scare the families into choosing lawyers from the approved list.

Article 48 of Iran's 2014 criminal procedure law says that detainees charged with various offenses, including national or international security crimes, political, and media crimes, must select their counsel from a pre-approved pool selected by Iran's judiciary during the investigation. The list published in June of lawyers allowed to represent people charged with national security crimes in Tehran province did not include any women or human rights lawyers.

Under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Iran is required to ensure that anyone facing criminal charges has access to a lawyer of their choosing. Anyone arrested should be promptly informed of any charges against them, and detention before trial should be an exception, not the rule. Anyone detained is entitled to a trial within a reasonable time or release.

Under article 286 of Iran's penal code, "Any person, who extensively commits a felony against people's physical safety, offenses against internal or international security of the state, spreading lies, disruption of the economic system of the state, arson and destruction of properties" can be considered among the "corrupt on earth" and sentenced to death if the court finds "the intention to cause extensive disruption in the public order, or creating insecurity, or causing vast damage or spreading corruption and prostitution in a large scale, or the knowledge of effectiveness of the acts committed." If not, the sentence can be between six months and five years.

"Iran's leaders need to search no further for a source of simmering societal anger against them than the judiciary's despicable treatment of peaceful activists who are

only trying to mitigate the country's many serious problems, including environmental crises," Whitson said. (Human Rights Watch - Oct. 11, 2018)

### **Golrokh Iraee Calls Citizens to the Defense of Persecuted Activist Soheil Arabi**

<https://www.hra-news.org/letters/a-623>



Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee, a civil rights activist imprisoned at Evin, has written an open letter in response to the recent re-sentencing of Soheil Arabi, a prisoner of conscience in Great Tehran Penitentiary who has been held without furlough since November 7, 2013.

On new charges of “propaganda against the regime” and “disturbing the public mind,” Tehran Revolutionary Court Branch 26 sentenced Arabi to three more years of imprisonment and three years of exile on September 22, 2018. Cited as evidence against him were voice files he allegedly sent from inside the prison, in which he can be heard comparing Evin to a torture chamber.

In her letter, Iraee accuses authorities of using the exile sentence to banish dissidents like Arabi from public memory.

While behind bars on separate charges in June of this year, Arabi was issued a six-month prison sentence by Judge Moghiseh on charges of “blasphemy” and “propaganda against the regime.” The charges stemmed from a case file opened up against Arabi and his ex-spouse Nastaran Naimi, who was sentenced to 18 months’ imprisonment for “blasphemy” and “aiding and abetting.”

Iraee’s letter warns the Iranian public that apathy towards the extension of Arabi’s detainment would be ignoring symptoms of a malaise for which all Iranian citizens are responsible.

The full text of her letter is below:

“He has been behind bars for years without having committed a crime. He is held captive by a vengeful system that has no tolerance for dissenting views, that stifles them instead in bondage, with physical and mental tortures.

Soheil Arabi was first detained on a misunderstanding that devolved into a blasphemy charge. After spending years behind bars and nearing the end of a

sentence that tore his family apart (after the immoral and inhumane pressures they submitted him to, to break his spirit), yet another case file emerges, yet another prison sentence is leveled against him. After compounding his suffering with a ban on visits from his daughter, they now want to do with him what they did with Arjang Davoudi and Gholamreza Kalbi: exile him to the middle of nowhere, remove him from public memory, and let his existence perish into the abyss.

After the hunger strikes and beatings he endured in prison, Soheil's condition is worrisome indeed. It is fitting that we be reminded, after commemorating the World Day against the Death Penalty, of Soheil's initial execution sentence. He was made to suffer for a long time under the threat of execution, and the [long-term] imprisonment to which his death penalty was commuted, yet we are still witnessing concerted efforts to annihilate him with continued torture and new case files extending his imprisonment.

This method of eliminating activists, protesters, and dissenters may be the current status quo of the judicial system, but it is critical we consider these actions as the red flags that they are, and that we increase public sensitivity and attract the attention of international organizations so that we can put a stop to the annihilation of political and ideological activists. Abandoning them in this state renders us guilty of spreading the disease of our judicial system, and condoning the repetition of such crimes.

Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee, Women's Ward of Evin Prison, October 2018."

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Golrokh Iraee was arrested along with her husband on September 6, 2014. She was first held at an IRGC safe house for two days and then spent 20 days in the solitary cells of Evin's Section 2A, which is under IRGC jurisdiction, before being released on a bail of 800 million rials. On October 24, 2016, the IRGC arrested Iraee again, without a warrant. Her husband Arash Sadeghi, who was sentenced to 19 years in prison, is currently in Karaj's Rajai Shahr Prison and has undergone operations for cancer. Iraee was sentenced to six years in prison, which was reduced to 2.5 years based on amnesty and Article 134 of the Islamic Penal Code. She was convicted of "insulting the sacred" and "gathering and collusion against the regime." (Human Rights Activists in Iran - Oct. 13, 2018)

### **Seventy One Political and Conscientious Prisoners On Continuous Hunger Strike at Orumiyeh Prison**

<http://kurdistanhumanrights.net/fa/?p=6627>



71 prisoners of conscience and political prisoners held in wards 12 and 13 of Orumiyeh Central Prison are on hunger strike for the second consecutive day in protest to the beating of some of the political prisoners by prison authorities and prisoners of dangerous crimes in addition to deprivation of prisoners of conscience and political prisoners from furlough right. The family of a number of political and conscientious prisoners at Orumiyeh Central Prison have told Kurdistan Human Rights Network (KHRN) that these prisoners had continued their hunger strike which began yesterday in protest to being beaten up and denied the right of furlough.

According to families of some of these prisoners, on Tuesday morning, Oct 17, 2018, three political prisoners called Kamal Hassan Ramadan, Ahmad Tamoi and Turaj Esmaili, who were beaten on October 15, were transferred to the Orumiyeh Forensic Medicine Bureau and the Forensic Medicine experts advised that they should be examined by an injury diagnostic specialist.

The Inspector General of Orumiyeh Central Prison who visited ward 12 (where the Political Prisoners are being held) and confirmed that both sides had filed a complaint. According to these complaints, a number of prison guards and prisoners of conscience have been accused of deliberately assaulting three political prisoners while the prison officers have accused a number of political prisoners of blasphemy. Families of a number of these prisoners reiterated that each time the political prisoners have been beaten up, prison officers have accused the political of unfounded allegations in order to justify their actions. As a result, the complaints filed by the political prisoners are concluded at the court without any further investigations.

It should be noted that the other two political prisoners, known as Kamran Darwishi and Hamid Ahmadi who were injured by the prison authorities, have been transferred to solitary confinement and they still have not been returned back to the ward. (Kurdish Human Rights Network - Oct. 17, 2018)

### Open Letter: Reza Khandan Echoes Public Support of an Ailing Farhad Meysami

<https://www.hra-news.org/letters/a-624/>



Imprisoned civil rights activist Reza Khandan has published a letter calling attention to fellow activist Farhad Meysami's mistreatment by prison authorities, who are reportedly unmoved by the steep decline of

Meysami's health since he declared hunger strike on August 1st.

Since forcibly taking Meysami to the prison clinic on September 26th, prison authorities have kept him in quarantine-like conditions, restricting all of his contacts with the outside. In protest of his arrest, as well as authorities' refusal to appoint the lawyer of his choice, Meysami has already been on hunger strike for more than 75 days.

Medical doctors, publishers, bookshop owners, and university graduates numbering 1400 in all have published an open letter raising their own concerns over Meysami's condition and pleading for his immediate release. The voices of two teachers incarcerated at Evin also got behind what has become a burgeoning public campaign for, at the very least, Meysami's transfer to an outside medical facility.

The full text of Khandan's letter is below:

Dear Compatriots,

Fellow human rights activists,

It has been 75 days since Dr. Farhad Mesyami started his difficult and worrisome hunger strike. Three weeks ago, he was forcibly transferred to the prison clinic from the general ward. Reportedly on orders from the prosecutor's office, and with the cooperation of the clinic's director, prison officials have repurposed the clinic into a security detention unit where patient spaces can be used as solitary confinement cells.

Currently, Farhad Meysami is being held in one of those rooms under tight security controls. In his frail state he has reportedly been subjected to inhumane treatment whereby, against his will and without the presence of family or a lawyer, he was strapped to a bed and given injections.

In these instances, we must hold accountable not only judiciary authorities but also the Ministry of Health and the President himself, who has sworn to protect the rights of the people.

Moreover, we must advocate that medical professionals be held accountable, those who have in an unprofessional and unprincipled manner taken action against the will of the patient, heeding any and all orders [from authorities], however unethical they may be.

Farhad Meysami's health and life is at risk now more than ever, and it is urgent he is transferred to a hospital outside the prison for medical care.

Reza Khandan, October 14, 2018, Ward 4 of Evin Prison

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Reza Khandan Khandan was arrested in his home by security forces on September 4, 2018, before being charged in Branch 7 of the Evin Prosecutor's Interrogation office. He was summoned to Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court on October 5th but refused to attend as an act of protest against the unlawfully late subpoena. (Human Rights Activists in Iran - Oct. 17, 2018)

### Prison sentences

#### **Activist Mohammad Najafi Charged with Visiting the Family of Ramin Hossein Panahi**

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17440>



Attorney and human rights activist Mohammad Najafi was charged with “spreading lies with intent to disrupt the public mind” after travelling to Iran’s Kurdish region to meet with the family of Ramin Hossein Panahi, a political prisoner who was recently executed. Najafi confirmed to Hrana that he was read his charges in Branch 1 of Shazand’s General and Revolutionary Investigation Court on October 14th, pursuant to a summons he received the day before. Though Shazand Criminal Court No. 2 recently opted not to suspend Najafi’s internet activity, he said more charges would be forthcoming against him for content he posted online. Najafi was previously detained for inquiring into the death of civilian Vahid Heydari, who died in Police Detention Center No. 12 amid the January protests. Najafi challenged Iranian judicial authorities who had claimed Heydari was a drug dealer that committed suicide while in custody. Najafi’s interviews with Heydari’s loved ones suggest that Heydari was a street peddler with no criminal record, whose autopsy report showed none of the typical markers of suicide, but did indicate head injuries consistent with blunt-force trauma. When news of Najafi’s situation reached Tehran MP Mahmoud Sadeghi, he accused security forces of fabricating the grounds for his case, and defended Najafi by saying he had only gone as far as clearing Heydari’s name of a drug-dealing charge.



Najafi was detained in July 2018 along with 10 others who participated with him in the January protests in Shazand. The group was charged with “disturbing the public peace and spreading lies with intent to disrupt the public mind.” Judge Mohammad Reza Abdollahi of Criminal Court No. 2 Branch 102 of Arak, the provincial capital of Markazi Province, convicted and sentenced the group to three years of imprisonment and 74 lashes each. The sentence is currently being appealed in hearings that began October 3rd in Markazi Province Appellate Court Branch 1. Shazand is located in Markazi Province, central Iran. (Human Rights Activists in Iran - Oct. 15, 2018)

### **Iran Sentences Protesters To Heavy Prison Terms**

<https://www.isna.ir/news/97072514284>

New reports indicate the Iranian judiciary is resorting to issuing heavy sentences against protesters and political prisoners.

The General Prosecutor of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province said that a court had sentenced six people to prison for writing slogans on walls and ripping up images of Iranian officials, according to the state-run ISNA news agency.

“The six-person group aiding the Arrogance were affiliated with the Nefagh Group who got their orders from outside of the country and carried out destructive actions against the System,” Gholamreza Mazareie said.

In yet another case, the regime’s courts in the city of Arak, central Iran, issued a total of six years behind bars and 444 lashes for six protesters arrested during the December/January uprising that spread to over 140 cities across the country. These individuals are facing charges such as “disrupting public order and peace by taking part in illegal rallies.”

It is worth noting that the mullahs’ regime arrested over 8,000 protesters in different cities during those protests. At least 14 of these individuals were murdered under torture and the Iranian regime repulsively claimed they committed suicide. (ISNA state-run News Agency - Oct. 17, 2018)

### **Once-Buried Case Pulls Abdolreza Ghanbari Back to Evin Prison**

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17485>



Teacher and former political prisoner Abdolreza Ghanbari was arrested Saturday, October 13th, and

transferred to Ward 8 of Evin Prison to serve the remainder of a recently-resurrected prison term.

Amid re-reviews and permutations of his case under a changing penal code, Ghanbari has been pulled through the judicial wringer since his initial arrest in 2009, when he was detained in his workplace amid widespread “Ashura” demonstrations following the contentious Iranian election cycle of that year.

In February 2010, after two months of interrogation, Judge Salavati of Revolutionary Court Branch 15 sentenced him to death for “Moharebeh” [enmity against God],” through his alleged ties to the opposition group People’s Mujahedin of Iran (MEK).

Four years later, in June 2013, Ghanbari’s death sentence was reversed in the Supreme Court and commuted to 15 years imprisonment by Revolutionary Court Branch 1.

When Article 186 of the Islamic Penal Code was eliminated in 1996, Ghanbari requested and obtained a retrial, which resulted in the suspension of his sentence. He was released March 16, 2016 after having served more than six years in prison.

The return to normal life was relatively short-lived, as a close source explained to Hrana: “In September 2017, his prison sentence was reviewed again by Branch 28 of [Tehran’s] Revolutionary Court, presided by Judge Moghiseh, and increased from 10 years to 15 years in prison.” (Human Rights Activists in Iran – Oct. 17, 2018)

## Basic freedom and rights abused

### Two Days of Teacher Strikes Knock at Reform’s Door

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17452/>



Last week’s plea from the Coordinating Council of Teachers Syndicates in Iran (CCTSI) brought together the voices of learners, educators, and ideologues in a second day of strikes against privatization, minority-language discrimination, judicial persecution of teacher-activists, and educator salaries grazing the poverty line.

In a statement last week, the CCTSI censured the Ministry of Education for its compensation system, decrying the status quo as detrimental to both educational quality and the livelihood of teachers. In the same statement, educational staff across the country were summoned to fill the administrative offices of their local schools with sit-in protests on October 14th and October 15th [the first two days of the Iranian work week]. CCTSI also urged prospective strikers to sensitize students to civic action by explaining the motives for the sit-in ahead of time.

“On behalf of workers in the education system both active and retired, CCTSI has exhausted available paths for bettering our current conditions,” the statement read, concluding their defiant call to strike with an entreaty not to penalize its participants.

Iranian teachers staged sit-ins both yesterday and today, October 15th across the provinces of Fars, Razavi Khorasan, North Khorasan, Kermanshah, Kurdistan, Ilam, East and West Azerbaijan, Mazandaran, Tehran, Isfahan, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, Hamedan, Qazvin, Bushehr, Alborz, Lorestan, and Khuzestan.

Strikers held placards emblazoned with their hopes for reform: “Free Imprisoned Teachers,” “No to Discrimination”, “Keep Education Public,” “The Right to Mother-Tongue Instruction,” “Implement Teacher Ranking.”

Teachers and pedagogical staff were reportedly joined in solidarity today and yesterday by students in the social science departments of Tehran and Allameh Tabataba’i University, as well as school-age students of Karaj, Ahvaz, and Qom.

Meanwhile, further from the action, a number of imprisoned teachers could only attend strikes in spirit, and authorities are drawing up charges against detained CCTSI Chairman Mohammadreza Ramezanzadeh. To be sure, the CCTSI call – heartening though it was – has yet to be answered at the policy level. (Human Rights Activists in Iran – Oct. 15, 2018)

### **Authorities Intimidate National Front of Iran into Cancelling Meeting**

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17455>

Before it could assemble for the first time in 12 months, the National Front of Iran again had to cancel a meeting due to threats of detainment from security forces, who have been impeding the group’s gatherings for the past three years.

The political group had intended to hold leadership elections on Monday, October 15th in the home of one of its members. A close source told Hrana that the elections were scheduled to fill the position of late central council chairman Adib Boroumand.

The National Front of Iran is a nationalist political organization that has faced restrictions to its activities since it was founded in 1949. (Human Rights Activists in Iran - Oct. 16, 2018)

## Two Iranian Dailies Indicted For Reporting On Sex Tourism by Iraqi Pilgrims

<http://www.mizanonline.com/fa/news/460502>

<https://www.radiofarda.com/a/iran-two-daily-papers-indicted-over-report-on-sex-tourism/29548314.html>

Indictments have been issued against the directors of two Iranian newspapers for publishing reports on Iraqi pilgrims travelling to holy sites in Iran for sex tourism.

A website close to the speaker of parliament and dailies Shahrvand and Sharq published reports in August concerning Iraqis who travel



to Iran seeking sexual services while pretending to be visiting Shi'ite holy sites, including Mashhad, northeastern Iran, where the eighth Imam, Ali ibn Moussa al-Reza is buried.

Indictments have been issued against the managing directors of Shahrvand and Sharq dailies, Tehran Prosecutor-General, Abbas Jafari Dolatabadi said on Wednesday, October 17.

The Islamic Republic's authorities have vehemently dismissed the reports of sex tourism as unfounded.

Nonetheless, hundreds of social media users insist that Mashhad has turned into a destination for sex tourism, competing with Pattaya in Thailand.

In an August 26 story the daily Shahrvand had quoted a tourism industry worker as saying, "Some of the Iraqi pilgrims book their rooms in Mashhad provided they come with a woman for *sigha* (temporary marriage)." Shi'a Islam permits temporary marriages in addition to the four legal wives a man can have.

Besides sex tourism, it's a well-established fact that the recent dramatic fall in the value of Iran's national currency (rial) has attracted tens of thousands of Iraqis to Khuzestan province markets for an "almost free" shopping spree that has substantially increased prices for many goods in the cities of Abadan and Khorramshahr, southwest Iran.

Meanwhile, enraged Iranian citizens have accused Iraqis of harassing local young women.

Based on images circulated on social media, protests against the influx of Iraqis in the two cities have turned into large demonstrations where people chanted vitriolic slogans, condemning the behavior of their neighbors to the west.

A footage circulated on social media showed hundreds of demonstrators in Abadan chanting, "Iraqis, out, out," in Persian, referring to visitors who came from Iraq's southern provinces.

However, Tehran Prosecutor-General has dismissed the reports as "fake news", accusing their publishers as playing a "divisive" role.

Following the publication of such reports, Jafari Dolatabadi said that a number of website administrators and newspaper managing directors were summoned and officially warned.

Without elaborating on the content of the indictments against Shahrvand and Sharq managing editors, the prosecutor issued a new warning, "The media should pay attention to the politics and interests of the country; for they will be prosecuted if they ignore the establishment's redlines."

Earlier, the Islamic republic's judiciary spokesman, Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei had also maintained that [pro-reform] daily Sharq and other news outlets would be indicted for sowing "seeds of division" among Iranians and Iraqis.

As reporting on the issue became embarrassing for the authorities, the head of judiciary, Sadeq Amoli Larijani, also threatened that those media which publish reports about sex tourism to Iran would be held accountable.

Accusing Washington of having a covert role in the incident, Iraq born Amoli Larijani claimed, "The United States had fabricated the reports of Iraqi sex tourism in Mashhad and is attempting to sow the seeds of division among Iranians and Iraqis," adding, "I have ordered Tehran's Prosecutor-General to charge media outlets that seek to promote animosity between Iranians and Iraqis by highlighting these stories about pilgrims to Mashhad."

Immediately after Amoli Larijani's comments, the Interior Ministry also joined the chorus to dismiss reports that Iraqis sexually harass Iranian women in Mashhad, as baseless. Sex services are offered to Iraqi men and other foreign tourists and pilgrims in up to 6,000 private accommodations called "travelers houses" in Mashhad, Khabar Online, the website affiliated with parliament speaker Ali Larijani, reported. Iranian law explicitly forbids unmarried men and women from entering a hotel room together. (Mizan state-run News Website, Radio Farda – Oct. 17, 2018)

**Accused of Posing "Security Risk," Iranian Actress Barred from Limelight**

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17473>



After being interrogated twice for her social media publications, Iranian actress Parastoo Salehi says that Iranian security forces are barring her from making public appearances. Salehi said that she was first interrogated on August 19 of this year, when she was summoned by the Iranian judiciary surveillance unit to explain her public commentary on Iran's social and economic setbacks.

In a video she recently published online, Salehi said she was called again on October 2nd to the Ministry of Intelligence facility on Khajeh Abdollah Ansari street. "The public wasn't to have knowledge of this meeting. But now I am being told again and again that I can't appear in public for 'security reasons.'"

Salehi questioned the intent behind Iranian authorities' citation of "security reasons," asking at the conclusion of her video, "How do I pose a security risk? Should I not act? Should I not speak? How can I get paid? How can I make a living?" Salehi reported that she was being censured for using her public Instagram profile to decry issues such as embezzlement, the drop in value of the Iranian currency, political detainees, rape, child abuse, and the Caspian Sea agreement, a highly-contentious diplomatic agreement that was recently finalized. (Human Rights Activists in Iran - Oct. 17, 2018)

## Religious and ethnic minorities

### Iran: Arrests, Harassment of Baha'is

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/10/16/iran-arrests-harassment-bahais>



(Beirut) – Iranian intelligence officials have increased the arrests of the country's Baha'i religious minority over the past two months, with no clear charges, Human Rights Watch said today. In August and September 2018, authorities arrested more than 20 Baha'i citizens, as well as a city council member who a colleague said

offered support for those arrested. Those arrested included 12 people in the city of Shiraz, 4 of whom remain detained in an Intelligence Ministry detention center. On September 25, the Center for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI) reported that between August 23 and September 23, authorities arrested 11 more Baha'is in Isfahan and Karaj provinces and transferred them to the Shiraz detention center. The source

who spoke to Human Rights Watch did not know about the charges brought against the detainees. Authorities also detained Mehdi Hajati, a member of Shiraz City Council, for 10 days after he said he was trying to secure the release of the Baha'is.

“The more than 20 arrests in a month without providing any justification shows how intolerant the Islamic Republic is towards Iran’s Baha’i community,” said Michael Page, deputy Middle East director at Human Rights Watch. “And authorities are taking their campaign of intimidation, harassment, and persecution even further by detaining elected officials who dare to show solidarity with their fellow citizens who are Baha’i.”

Iran’s constitution does not recognize Baha’is as a religious minority in Iran. Authorities routinely harass, prosecute, and imprison Baha’is solely for practicing their faith, and they also regularly destroy their places of burial. They also prevent Baha’i students from registering at universities and expel those who are adherent of this faith.

On October 10, a source who wished to remain anonymous told Human Rights Watch that authorities arrested Bahareh Qaderi, Navid Bazmandegan, Ehsan Mahboob Rahvafa, Elaheh Samizadeh, Soudabeh Haghighat, and Noora Pourmoradaian on August 24 and 25. The source said the authorities arrested Koroosh Rouhani, Mahboob Habibi, Dorna Esmaili, Houman Esmalili, Negar Misaghian, and Pejman Shahriari on August 17.

Authorities released Misaghian and Dorna Esmaili the day of their arrest, while conditionally releasing Rouhani, Shahriari, Habibi, Haghighat, Pourmoradian, and Samizadeh until their trial.

The Center for Human Rights in Iran said that authorities arrested Bahareh Zeini, Sepideh Rouhani, Afshin Bolbolan, Milad Dordan, Anousheh Rayneh, Farhang Sahba and Foujan Rashidi in city of Baharestan, in Isfahan province, and Peyman Manavi, Kianoush Salmanzadeh, Maryam Ghaffarmanesh and Jamileh Pakrou in the city of Karaj, in Alborz Province in period between August 23 and September 23.

On September 27, Qasem Moghimi a member of the Shiraz City Council, told the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) that authorities arrested Hajati, a member of Shiraz city council who is also a member of the council’s citizens’ rights commission, “for supporting Baha’is.”

Hajati had tweeted on September 25 that “Over the past 10 days, I tried my best to secure the release of two Baha’i friends but have failed. While standing against the foreign enemy, our generation has a duty to do its best to reform the judicial processes and other issues that threaten social justice.”

On September 30, Ali Alqasimehr, the head of the judiciary in Fars province, told Mehr News that other than “supporting a deviate cult,” Hajati is facing other criminal charges but did not provide details. Authorities released Hajati on October 7.

Several members of the Iranian parliament raised concerns about Hajati’s arrest and said he was defending citizens’ rights. On October 3, however, the association of members of parliament from Fars province published an open letter asking authorities to not allow the “deviant cult” of Bahai’s to conspire and operate while ensuring citizens’ rights are respected.

On September 18, Iran Wire news website published the name of 54 Baha’i students whom authorities had prevented from registering at universities after they took the national entrance exam for the 2018 school year. The origin of such blatant discrimination reportedly goes back to a 1991 by-law of the High Council of Cultural Revolution, a body in charge of setting education policies, that mandates authorities to expel Baha’i students from higher education institutions.

Under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights”(ICCPR), to which Iran is a party, freedom of religion includes “freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.” Similarly, under ICCPR “anyone who is arrested shall be informed, at the time of arrest, of the reasons for his arrest and shall be promptly informed of any charges against him.”

“For four decades Iran’s judiciary and security agencies have violated the most fundamental rights of the Baha’i community in Iran,” Page said. “President Rouhani and his cabinet need to stop pretending that they aren’t responsible for persecuting the Baha’i and end these violations.” (Human Rights Watch – Oct. 16, 2018)

### **Under Pressure from Security Forces, Samsung Company Fires Baha’i Employee**

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17460>

In continued efforts to marginalize the Iranian Baha’i community, Yazd security officials put pressure on the administrator of a Samsung subsidiary to fire marketing representative Sahar Rouhani on the grounds of her faith.

An informed source told Hrana that Rouhani was already being commended by Samsung executives as one of the best employees in the company after working there for little more than a year.



Rouhani's university photography studies were cut short for the same reason in 2009, the source added. "She was expelled from the university in the middle of the fourth semester, after paying full tuition fees, because of being Baha'i."

In August of this year, Hrana reported on the sudden and permanent dismissal of Baha'i Shiraz residents Sabah Haghbin, Samira Behinayeen, and Payam Goshtasbi from their private companies. Their company's executives, like those at Samsung, had been harried by security agents to fire them.

Ever since the Iranian Revolution of 1979, when Baha'is were fired from public-sector positions en masse in a process known as Paksazi (cleansing), state authorities have consistently quashed the efforts of Baha'i citizens to improve their social status, shuttering their bodegas, confiscating their property, blackballing them from schools, and pulling strings to terminate their employment.

UN Human Rights Rapporteurs have repeatedly objected to Iran's history of repressing Baha'is, citing it as a token example of the regime's neglect of human rights treaties.

Baha'i citizens of Iran are systematically deprived of religious freedoms, while according to Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, all people are entitled to freedom of religion, belief, and changes thereof, as well as the right to express and practice those beliefs as individuals or collectives, in public or in private. (Human Rights Activists in Iran - Oct. 16, 2018)

### **Baha'i Crackdown Continues with Two More Arrests in Karaj**

<https://www.hra-news.org/2018/hranews/a-17469>



Two Baha'i residents of Karaj, a northwestern suburb of Tehran, became the latest victims of the Iranian authorities' crackdown on the Baha'i community when they were arrested October 16, 2018.

Parvan Manavi and Elham Salmanzadeh became the seventh and eighth Baha'is to be arrested in their city after authorities confiscated some of their books and personal belongings during a raid of their homes.

A close source told Hrana that security forces first searched the workplace of Manavi, a greenhouse operator, before escorting him to his home where they carried out a search and seizure. "They raided Elham Salmanzadeh's home at the same time, and then arrested her afterward too," the source added.

On September 16th, Hrana reported on the arrest and transfer to Evin Prison of four Baha'i Karaj residents: Peyman Manavi, Maryam Ghaffaramanesh, Jamileh Pakrou, and Kianoush Salmanzadeh. Hrana also reported on the arrest of two more Baha'i Karaj residents, Hooman Khoshnam and Payam Shabani, on September 24 and 25, 2018. In recent weeks, Hrana also reported on the arrest of a number of Baha'i citizens in Shiraz and Isfahan. (Human Rights Activists in Iran - Oct. 16, 2018)

### Violence against women

#### Addiction age has plunged under 15 for Iranian women and girls

<https://women.ncr-iran.org/iran-women-news/5529-addiction-age-under-15-iranian-women-girls>

Addiction has been spreading at an alarming rate among Iranian women and girls, compelling the regime's officials and experts to acknowledge it. Akram Mosavvari Manesh has asserted that the average addiction age has dropped to under 15 years of age among Iranian women and girls.

Executive director of women's studies and research made the remarks on October 16, 2018, on the addiction of Iranian women and girls. She said, "Addiction age has dropped to the 15-18 range and even under 15."

Mosavvari Manesh added, "The worst social harm in Iran is addiction which also includes women and girls. The disaster has even entered schools." (The official IRNA news agency - October 15, 2018)

This confession is of course not the entire reality of addiction among Iranian women and girls. Three years ago, Shahindokht Molaverdai, presidential deputy on Women and Family Affairs, had announced that, "The average addiction age has plunged to 13 years for girls." (The state-run ISNA news agency - September 4, 2015)

In light of the deteriorating economic conditions in Iran and soaring unemployment, addiction has spread viciously among low-income and impoverished sectors affecting even young children.

So, the recent announcement of the U15 addiction age of women and girls, is an effort to conceal rather than revealing the realities transparently.

Zahra Shojaii, secretary general of the so-called reformist women's assembly, has stressed on feminization of poverty in Iran. She says, "Poverty has become feminized. Social ailments, suicide, runaway girls, addiction, and a rising number of female prisoners are some of the issues we face." (The state-run dustaan.com, June 20, 2018)

According to previous figures reported by the Iranian regime, there are at least 4 million drug addicts in the entire country which puts the population of Iranian women drug addicts at about 19 percent, indicating a dramatic increase in the percentage of addicted women in Iran. (NCRI women's committee - Oct. 18, 2018)

### **"I object to the presence of women in Azadi Stadium" Says Prosecutor**

<https://en.radiofarda.com/a/i-object-to-the-presence-of-women-in-azadi-stadium-says-prosecutor-/29554286.html>

Iranian women - most of them family of players, federation employees and relatives, arrive as are allowed for the first time to take part at the friendly soccer match between Iran and Bolivia at the Azadi Stadium in Tehran, October 16, 2018

While Iran is preparing itself for the second batch of Washington's sanctions against Tehran, the country's prosecutor-general has triggered a new heated debate over the question of women being allowed to attend stadiums to watch soccer matches.

The mid-ranking cleric and prosecutor has warned that his offices would not tolerate women entering sports arenas, watching "half-naked" soccer players competing against each other.

Women watching footballers "leads to sin," Mohammad Jafar Montazeri, speaking in the city of Qazvin, said on October 14. "I object to the presence of women in Azadi Stadium yesterday. We are a Muslim state, we are Muslims. We will deal with any official who wants to allow women inside sports venues under any pretext."

<https://www.isna.ir/news/97072514201>

State-run Mehr News Agency (MNA) quoted Montazeri as stressing, "When a woman enters a stadium and sees half-naked men in sports jerseys, it will lead to sinful acts."

Moreover, Montazeri cautioned, "If repeated, I will order the Tehran prosecutor-general to step in [and punish the culprits]."

<https://www.mehrnews.com/news/4432863>

Montazeri's comments triggered a backlash, even from figures affiliated with his own conservative camp.

Apparently, under pressure from the International Football Association (FIFA), Iranian authorities allowed nearly 100 women, most of them soccer players and close relatives of the footballers playing against Bolivia, to enter the venue.

Local news outlets described these female spectators as "special ladies."

Nevertheless, many ordinary female soccer fans were stopped at the gates and prevented from entering the arena.

The women were ushered to a special secluded section, surrounded by security guards.

(Radio Farda - Oct. 20, 2018)