



# IRAN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS REPORT

2019/20



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IHR is an independent non-partisan NGO based in Norway. Abolition of the death penalty, supporting human rights defenders and promoting the rule of law constitute the core of IHR's activities.

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## SENTENCES

- Ta'zir:** Punishment for offences at the discretion of the judge  
**Hadd:** Fixed punishment for offences mandated by God (Sharia)  
**Qisas:** Retribution in kind  
**Diya:** Blood money

## LEGISLATION

### Article 48 of the Code of Criminal Procedure:

“The accused can demand the presence of a lawyer from the start of detention. The lawyer can meet the detainee paying due attention to the confidentiality of the investigations and negotiations. At the end of the meeting, which should be no longer than one hour, the lawyer can give their written observations for documentation in the case file.”

### Note to Article 48:

“Those charged with organised crimes and crimes against national and international security, who are subject to Article 302 of the Criminal Procedure, may choose a lawyer/lawyers from the list confirmed by the head of the judicial system. The list of the lawyers is announced by the head of the judicial system.”

### Article 134 of the Islamic Penal Code:

“In the cases of offenses punishable by *ta'zir*, where the offences committed are not more than three, the court shall impose the maximum punishment provided for each offence; and if the offences committed are more than three, [the court] shall impose more than the maximum punishment provided for each crime provided that it does not exceed more than the maximum plus one half of each punishment. In any of the abovementioned cases, only the most severe punishment shall be executed and if the most severe punishment is reduced or replaced or becomes non-executable for any legal reason, the next most severe punishment shall be executed. In any case where there is no maximum and minimum provided for the punishment, if the offences committed are not more than three, up to one-fourth, and if the offences committed are more than three, up to half of the punishment prescribed by law shall be added to the original punishment.”

### Article 639 of the Islamic Penal Code:

The following people should be imprisoned from one to ten years, and in the case of category (a) the property should be confiscated according to decision of the court:

- a) Anyone who establishes or operates a centre for corruption or prostitution
- b) Anyone who encourages or incites people to engage in corruption or prostitution

## PRISONS

**Evin Prison:** Iran's most notorious prison where Wards 209, 240 and 241, which have solitary cells called security “suites” and are controlled by the Ministry of Intelligence (MOIS):

Ward 209 Evin: dedicated to security prisoners under the jurisdiction of the MOIS.

Ward 2A Evin: dedicated to security prisoners under the jurisdiction of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC).

Ward 240: Originally MOIS cells but used for interrogations in recent years.

Ward 241 of the Judiciary Security Detention Centre: holds the judiciary's security prisoners.

**Greater Tehran Penitentiary (Fashafuyeh):** Originally built in 2012 with a capacity of 15,000 to house prisoners convicted of drug charges, political prisoners are regularly transferred there as a method of additional punishment. There is no separation according to crime, and political prisoners are kept with other prisoners charged with serious crimes.

**Qarchak Prison (Varamin):** Re-opened in 2011 as a women's prison and designed to house 500 inmates, it currently holds between 1,500 and 2,000 female prisoners from all over Tehran. The conditions at the prison have been described as dire, unsanitary and dangerous.

**Rajai Shahr Prison:** Formerly named Gohardasht, it was designed to house 3000 prisoners, while it is estimated to currently hold 8,000-12,000 prisoners. Like Fashafuyeh, there is no separation according to crime, and political prisoners are kept with other prisoners charged with serious crimes.

**Vozara Detention Centre:** While the centre is officially dedicated to individuals arrested for breaking morality laws such as sex-work by by NAJA (Iranian police), female activists are often taken there before

## REVOLUTIONARY COURTS

Established in 1979 on the orders of Ayatollah Khomeini to try former officials of the Pahlavi government, Iran's Revolutionary Courts have continued to operate and are responsible for issuing heavy sentences to human rights defenders, journalists, dissidents and all those criticising the authorities. Additionally, they are responsible for the vast majority of all death sentences issued in the last 40 years.

Article 303 of the Code of Criminal Procedure determines the jurisdiction of the Revolutionary Courts as for: “crimes against national and international security, *moharebeh* (enmity against God), *efsad fil-arz* (corruption on earth), *baghy* (armed rebellion), assembly and collusion against the Islamic Republic of Iran or armed action or arson, destruction and loss of property in order to oppose the system, insulting the position of the founder of the Islamic Republic and the Supreme Leader, all crimes related to drugs, controlled substances, weapons, ammunition...and other cases according to special laws.” Of those, *moharebeh*, *efsad fil-arz* and *baghy* carry the death penalty.

The courts are not transparent and Revolutionary Court judges are known for greater abuse of their legal powers than other judges. Revolutionary Court judges routinely deny lawyers access to individuals who are subjected to extensive interrogations under severe conditions.

A December 2019 European Parliament resolution affirmed that Iranian courts regularly fail to ensure fair trials, with the denial of access to legal counsel and denial of visits by representatives from consulates, the UN or humanitarian organisations, and permit the use of confessions obtained under torture as evidence; there are no independent mechanisms for ensuring accountability within the judiciary, and serious concerns remain over the politicisation of judges, particularly those presiding over Revolutionary Courts.

## JUDGES



**MOHAMMAD MOGHISEH:** Currently head of Branch 28 of the Tehran Islamic Revolutionary Court, he was a member of the 1980s “death committee” responsible for the 1988 massacre; he is infamous for the persecution of ethnic and religious minorities, journalists and issuing the death penalty. He is on the US OFAC sanctions list as a “hanging judge” (since 19 December 2019).

**13** featured defenders were sentenced by Judge Moghiseh: Nasrin Sotoudeh, Atena Daemi, Arsham Rezaii, Mahmoud Beheshti-Langroudi, Marizeh Amiri, Esmail Bakhshi, Sepideh Gholiyan, Asal Mohammadi, Neda Naji, Atefeh Rangriz, Monireh Arab-Shahi, Yasaman Aryani and Mojgan Keshavarz.



**ABOLGHASSEM SALAVATI:** Currently head of Branch 15 of the Tehran Islamic Revolutionary Court, he is also on the US OFAC sanctions list as a “hanging judge” and is responsible for handing down arbitrary sentences, in what witnesses have described as show trials, to protesters following the 2009 post-election nationwide protests.

**12** featured defenders were sentenced by Judge Salavati: Golrokh Ebrahimi-Iraei, Farhad Meysami, Arash Sadeghi, Sam Rajabi, Hooman Jokar, Niloufar Bayani, Morad Tahabaz, Sepideh Kashani, Abdolreza Kouhpayeh, Taher Ghadirian, Amirhossein Khaleghi and Raha Ahmadi.



**IMAN AFSHARI:** Currently head of Branch 26 of the Tehran Islamic Revolutionary Court, he is a young cleric who has managed to make a name for himself not only for his arbitrary sentences for protesters and activists, but also for introducing strange sentences such as banning an individual from using any smart devices post-release.

**10** featured defenders were sentenced by Judge Iman Afshari: Payam Derafshan, Nasrin Javadi, Hassan Saeedi, Rasoul Taleb-Moghaddam, Raheleh Ahmadi, Saba Kordafshari, Nahid Shaghaghi, Akram Nasirian, Maryam Mohammadi and Asrin Darkaleh.



**MOHAMMADREZA AMOUZAD-KHALILI:** Currently head of Branch 24 of the Tehran Islamic Revolutionary Court and a rising star amongst what former prisoners refer to as ‘death judges’, the 35 year-old judge started his career as the prosecutor. He gained public notoriety after his role in sentencing protesters following the November 2019 nationwide protests.

**2** featured defenders were sentenced by Judge Amouzad-Khalili: Atena Daemi and Rezvaneh Ahmad-Khanbeigi.

## Introduction

The situation of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) in Iran is more grave today than it has been the last three decades. *The Iran Human Rights Defenders Report 2019-2020* provides a brief account on the situation of 53 HRDs. They are lawyers who were defending their clients; trade union members claiming their legal rights, environmentalists working to preserve wildlife; child rights activists -- among many others.

The report shows that most HRDs have been subjected to persecution, detention and long prison sentences solely for practicing their freedom of expression - a right afforded to them by international human rights conventions, as well as the Iranian Constitution.

Commenting on the report, Iran Human Rights Director Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam underscored that “the intensified crackdown on human rights defenders has gone beyond just those criticising the human rights violations committed by the authorities, but now essentially includes anyone who, even within the legal framework of the current establishment, has taken a step towards protecting human rights. The situation of HRDs in Iran is critical and demands urgent international attention.”

53 HRDs, who have collectively been sentenced to nearly 400 years of imprisonment and 787 lashes, are profiled in this report. In addition, all have been subjected to a wide range of violations. Several of them, of instance, have been fired from their jobs or banned from practicing their profession. All the HRDs have been subjected to unfair trials with gross violations of their due process by the Revolutionary Courts. Economic pressure and threats to family members are among the ways that the authorities systematically use to silence the HRDs.

HRDs have been subjected to solitary confinement, placed under duress and coerced to give televised confessions, and psychologically and physically tortured. HRDs like workers rights defender Esmail Bakhshi who wrote of his time in prison: “I was tortured to near death and punched and kicked to the point that I could not move for 72 hours, and they beat me so much that it was painful for me to even sleep. After almost two months passing since those difficult days, I still feel pain in my broken ribs, kidneys, left ear and testicles.”

The lack and denial of medical care, overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, as well as keeping HRDs with prisoners convicted of serious crimes such as murder, are other systematic methods of pressuring HRDs. Some suffer from serious medical conditions; several have been diagnosed with COVID-19, yet remain behind bars.

One of the most alarming patterns over the past two years, has been the crackdown on lawyers who have represented political, minority and security cases. Lawyers like Amirsalar Davoudi, who was arrested and sentenced to 30 years in prison and 111 lashes in relation to his Telegram channel “No Retouch”, where he discussed breaches in judicial processes, the judicial harassment of lawyers and human rights abuses.

Women’s rights defenders have also been persecuted in large numbers. In the past few years, increasing numbers of women have joined the movement against the compulsory hijab. A fundamental right, taken for granted elsewhere, lands women in Iran heavy prison sentences. Women like Saba Kordafshari, a then 22-year-old woman who was arrested for taking off her head covering in public and is currently serving a 24-year sentence. Days before the publication of this report, Saba’s request for a retrial was rejected. Also incarcerated - but in a different prison - is her mother, Raheleh Ahmadi, who seeking justice for her daughter and standing against the compulsory hijab in her own right, was also arrested and sentenced to 31 months in prison.

The 53 HRDs profiled in this report, are but a small representation of all HRDs who have faced harassment or have lost their freedom during the reporting period. It is thus our hope that this effort will provide new insights into the deteriorating state of human rights in the country, offer accurate information to researchers and journalists, and assist human right defenders and concerned citizens around the world in educating and informing about the fortitude of ordinary Iranians, seeking to improve the lives of others, at their own risk.

Through its publication, Iran Human Rights calls on the international community and all states with diplomatic relations with Iran, to demand the immediate release of all imprisoned HRDs. We also call upon civil society and members of the public all over the world to read their stories, learn their names, and join us in not only demanding their freedom and that of all HRDs, but also amplify their voices demanding basic fundamental rights for all Iranians.



## AMIRSALAR DAVOUDI

Age: 39

Activities/Rights: Human rights lawyer

Status: Evin Prison

Judicial status: 30 years imprisonment and 111 lashes

Violations: Judicial harassment, arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial, denial of medical care, solitary confinement without access to lawyer

### BACKGROUND

Amirsalar Davoudi is a lawyer with a history of defending political prisoners and ethnic and religious minorities. He was arrested by security forces on 19 November 2018 and transferred to section 241 of the Judiciary Security Detention Centre in Evin Prison. Prior to his arrest, security officers had raided his office and home, confiscating a number of his personal files and belongings. He was arrested in relation to his Telegram channel “No Retouch”, where he discussed breaches in judicial processes, the judicial harassment of lawyers and human rights abuses.

### UPDATE

On 21 January 2019, Amirsalar was issued with an indictment when his case was referred to Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran presided by Judge Salavati. On 1 June 2019, the court delivered its verdict to his lawyer, sentencing Amirsalar to 111 lashes and a total of 30 years in prison<sup>1</sup>; 15 years for “forming a group to overthrow the political system” (through his Telegram channel), “propaganda against the system”, “publishing lies” and “insulting officials and the leader” and a few other charges, the details of which have not been shared.<sup>2</sup>

Amirsalar went on hunger strike for 10 days in February 2020 to protest his continued detention and being denied furlough due to COVID-19.<sup>3</sup>

In a tweet, his wife announced that he had tested positive for COVID-19 on 12 August 2020.<sup>4</sup> Ten days later, his lawyer Hossein Taj tweeted that after spending 14 days in quarantine, he had been returned to the general ward after making a full recovery.<sup>5</sup>



## PAYAM DERAFSHAN

Age: 39

Activities/Rights: Human rights lawyer

Status: Medical furlough

Judicial status: 2 years imprisonment

Violations: Judicial harassment, arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial, denial of medical care, freedom of speech

### BACKGROUND

Payam Derafshan is a lawyer and human rights activist who has represented many political and minority cases. He was arrested along with a fellow lawyer, Farrokh Forouzan, on 31 August 2018 in Karaj and detained for a limited time. The two were arrested at the home of another lawyer who was in custody at the time.

### UPDATE

Payam was arrested again on 8 June 2020, in connection with new allegations made against him while he was already behind bars and sentenced to two years in prison and a two year ban on practicing law for “insulting the Supreme Leader” by the Branch 1 of the Karaj Revolutionary Court.<sup>6</sup>

His lawyer, Saeed Dehghan told ILNA: “Since my client’s previous sentence was a suspended sentence and the suspension was confirmed, his arrest has nothing to do with the previous sentence. We are still waiting for details of the reason for the arrest.”<sup>7</sup>

On 6 July 2020, he was sentenced to two years and six months in prison by Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran headed by Judge Iman Afshari for “propaganda against the system, publishing lies with the intention of disturbing public opinion and carrying unauthorised explosives and shockers.”<sup>8</sup> The trial took place in absentia due to Payam’s ill health. On August 10, Saeed Dehghan tweeted that Payam’s sentence had been upheld by Branch 36 of the Court of Appeals just two days after their 400 page submissions to the court.<sup>9</sup>

Payam was sent on a one-week medical leave on September 2, after doctors recommended a three-month leave to complete his course of treatment<sup>10</sup> which was last extended on October 11.<sup>11</sup>



## MOHAMMAD NAJAFI

Age: 44

Activities/Rights: Human rights lawyer

Status: Arak Central Prison

Judicial status: 19 years and 6 months imprisonment

Violations: Judicial harassment, arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial

### BACKGROUND

Mohammad Najafi is a lawyer and human rights activist. First arrested in 2009 and charged with “propaganda against the system”, “insulting the president” and being in “possession of satellite TV equipment”, the arrests and sentences for his professional and human rights activities have earned him a long rap sheet throughout the years. Since 2018, he has been caught in a web of court cases on trumped-up charges that overlap and will ensure he is kept behind bars for years to come.

Mohammad was arrested in January 2018 while investigating his most notorious case, the suspicious death of Vahid Heydari in custody. While officials had claimed Vahid was a drug dealer who had committed suicide in custody, Mohammad’s investigation revealed that he had in fact been arrested at a protest in Arak in December 2017 and there was physical evidence to suggest he had died under torture in prison,<sup>12</sup> and he shared his findings on Instagram. Officials claimed that Mohammad been arrested as one of the organisers of the protests but failed to obtain any evidence to back the allegation and he was released on a bail of 1 billion Tomans in April 2018. In late July 2018, he was sentenced to three years in prison and 74 lashes for, amongst other accusations, “slander with intent to disturb public opinion” in relation to the Vahid Heydari case. The sentence was upheld by the Court of Appeals in October 2018. In December 2018, Mohammad’s lawyer announced that his flogging sentence had been suspended due to his diabetes. He was re-arrested without a prior summons at his home on 28 October 2018 and taken to Arak Central Prison.

### UPDATE

In November 2018, Mohammad was sentenced to 10 years in prison on charges of “aiding an enemy state” for giving interviews to foreign media, two years for “insulting the Supreme Leader with ‘down with dictator slogans’” and one year for “propaganda for opposition groups and organisations”, by Branch 1 of the Arak Revolutionary Court. Mohammad’s 13-year sentence was upheld by the Court of Appeals in April 2019. He also has a ten year conviction from a previous case.

In a separate case tried at Branch 102 of the Arak Criminal Court in November 2018, he was sentenced to one year in prison for “publishing falsehoods in cyberspace with a phone and computer with the intention to disturb public opinion.” Branch 102 sentenced him to another two years of imprisonment in January 2019, this time for “disturbing the public mind” through an open letter, criticising Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei.<sup>13</sup> He was sentenced to a further six months in prison on 7 February 2020 by Branch 23 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court for making a speech at the home of the mother of blogger, Sattar Beheshti who died as a result of torture in the custody of the Iranian Cyber Police in 2012.<sup>14</sup> He was furloughed from prison due to the COVID-19 outbreak in prisons on March 31 and returned to Arak Central Prison on 10 May 2020.



## NASRIN SOTOUDEH

Age: 57

Activities/Rights: Human rights lawyer

Status: Medical furlough

Judicial status: 38 years imprisonment and 148 lashes

Violations: Judicial harassment, arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial, denial of medical care, harassment and trumped-up charges against family members

### BACKGROUND

Nasrin Sotoudeh is a lawyer, human rights activist, member of the Iranian Human Rights Defenders Association and an activist against the death penalty. She has represented many human rights activists, women's rights activists, victims of child abuse and juvenile offenders on death row. She is also the recipient of amongst others, the Sakharov Prize. She was previously jailed from August 2010 to September 2013 for her professional and human rights activities.

Nasrin was arrested on 13 June 2018.<sup>15</sup> She was sentenced to five years in prison in absentia on the charge of "concealing a spy."<sup>16</sup> In a separate case of seven different charges, she was sentenced to 148 lashes and 33 years in prison. Nasrin refused to have a defence lawyer in protest to the note to Article 48 of the IPC and was sentenced to 12 years in prison on charges of "inciting corruption and prostitution" under Article 639. This charge carries the heaviest conviction in her second case, forcing her to serve a 12 year custodial sentence if Article 134 of the IPC is applied. Part of Nasrin's conviction reads: "The aforementioned participated in the illegal gathering of Gonabadi Dervishes on 9 January 2018; on 12 October 2017, she participated and gave a speech at an illegal gathering outside the United Nations building with members and elements of the illegal group, LEGAM (campaign step-by-step till the abolition of the death penalty); and on 7 November 2017, she participated in an illegal gathering against the Islamic Republic system outside Evin Prison." In protest to the failure to comply with procedural rules in her case, Nasrin did not appeal and the ruling was upheld.<sup>17</sup>

### UPDATE

On 28 July 2020, her husband, Reza Khandan posted on his Facebook page that Nasrin's bank accounts had been frozen on orders of the Prosecutor's Office. Demanding the release of political prisoners, Nasrin went on hunger strike on August 11, in protest to the unfair legal proceedings, lack of recourse to the law and correspondence attempting to find legal recourse not being answered.<sup>18</sup> In order to pressure Nasrin, her daughter Mehraveh was detained for hours on August 17 by security forces and released on bail.<sup>19</sup> Nasrin ended her hunger strike on September 25 after being hospitalised.<sup>20</sup> On October 20, Reza tweeted that Nasrin had been transferred to Qarchak Prison in Varamin under the pretext of being taken for medical treatment. This was while "according to (medical) experts she should have been taken to the hospital for immediate heart examinations and angiographic surgery."<sup>21</sup> On November 7, her Nasrin was released on medical furlough.



## ZARTOSHT AHMADI-RAGHEB

Age: 56

Activities/Rights: Human rights activist

Status: Greater Tehran Penitentiary

Judicial status: 1 year and 3 months imprisonment

Violations: Arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial, denial of medical care, fired from job due to civil activism

### BACKGROUND

Zartosht Ahmadi-Ragheb is a human rights activist and death penalty abolitionist who has previously been arrested and imprisoned several times. Zartosht is one of the 14 activists who signed a letter to Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei demanding his resignation. He was a firefighter at the Tehran Fire Department for 17 years but was fired from his job for his civil activities.

In November 2015, Zartosht was sentenced to six months in prison by Branch 1 of the Shahriyar Revolutionary Court on charges of "propaganda against the system by publishing critical material on his personal Facebook page". He was also sentenced to nine months in prison for his civil activism on charges of "propaganda against the system" by the Branch 1 of the Shahriyar Revolutionary Court in May 2017.

He was arrested by security agents at his home on 27 August 2019 and transferred to Ward 209 of Evin Prison.<sup>22</sup> Upon finishing his interrogations, he was transferred to Andarzagah 8 of Evin Prison at the beginning of October 2019. He was charged with "propaganda against the system, insulting the leadership and insulting the heads of the three branches of state." After spending five months in temporary detention, Zartosht was released on bail on 13 January 2020.

### UPDATE

On 30 May 2020, Zartosht wrote on his social media that he had been sent a court notice, summoning him to Evin Court for "photographing prohibited areas." He surrendered at Branch 4 of the Execution of Criminal Sentences of the Public and Revolutionary Court of Shahriyar on 15 June 2020, where he was arrested.<sup>23</sup>

An informed source told IHR: "The summoning and arrest of Zartosht was to execute the sentence. This is despite the fact that he had objected to the sentence and his case was in the appeal process." In protest, he began a hunger strike, which he broke after he was granted a 19-day furlough due to the spread of COVID-19 in prisons.<sup>24</sup> He was arrested at his home on October 4 and transferred to the Greater Tehran Penitentiary to serve out his sentence where he immediately began a hunger strike to protest the continuous trumped-up charges in his case.



## REZVANEH AHMAD-KHANBEIGI

Age: 30

Activities/Rights: Human rights activist

Status: Evin Prison

Judicial status: 10 years and 5 months imprisonment

Violations: Arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial, denial of medical care, solitary confinement without access to lawyer

### BACKGROUND

Rezvaneh Ahmad-Khanbeigi is human rights activist who was first arrested on 16 January 2018 while distributing flyers and writing slogans on walls along with two friends. She was sentenced to four years and five months in prison by Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court for “assembly and collusion against national security and propaganda against the system.”

She was released from Evin Prison on 2 March 2019 on a bail of 150 million Tomans. In December 2019, the ruling was upheld by Branch 36 of the Court of Appeals of Tehran Province and sent for implementation.

### UPDATE

Rezvaneh was arrested again when 11 intelligence agents of the IRGC Sarallah forces stormed her home on 18 November 2019. According to Amnesty, she had attended the nationwide November 2019 protests the two previous days, where she was beaten by security forces.<sup>25</sup> She was transferred to the women’s ward following interrogation at the IRGC solitary confinement Ward 1A at Evin Prison.<sup>26</sup>

Rezvaneh’s trial was held on 1 February 2020 at Branch 24 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran and in the judgement issued the following day, she was sentenced to five years in prison for “assembly and collusion against national security” and one year in prison for “propaganda against the system” for her peaceful participation in the November 2019 protests and Instagram posts in support of political prisoners’ rights. On May 12, her husband, Behfar Lalezary announced on his Instagram page that Branch 36 of Court of Appeals had upheld Rezvaneh’s six year sentence.<sup>27</sup>

She was granted furlough due to her deteriorating health on 19 August 2020. According to her husband, Rezvaneh had suffered epileptic seizures multiple times in prison.<sup>28</sup> However, her furlough was not extended and she was forced back to prison without receiving the required medical treatment on August 26. On August 31, she went on hunger strike in solidarity with Nasrin Sotoudeh, demanding that the law be applied in the prison medical system and the treatment of sick prisoners.<sup>29</sup> Her lawyer tweeted that she had broken her hunger strike after he informed her that her demands had been agreed to and that her physical health was not a deciding factor.<sup>30</sup>



## SHAHNAZ AKMALI

Age: 55

Activities/Rights: Human rights activist

Status: Released

Judicial status: 1 year imprisonment

Violations: Arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial

### BACKGROUND

Shahnaz Akmali is a human rights activist. She joined the movement of mothers demanding justice for their children after her 26-year-old son, Mostafa Karim-Beigi was shot in the head in the 2009 nationwide protests. Since then, she has been an advocate for political prisoners, stood with other victim’s families and continues to seek justice for her son.

Shahnaz was arrested by the Ministry of Intelligence forces at her workplace on 25 January 2017, and after being taken to her home for it to be searched, she was transferred to the Ministry of Intelligence’s solitary confinement Ward 209 in Evin Prison. She was temporarily released on bail on 18 February 2017.

In November 2017, Shahnaz Akmali was sentenced by Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran presided by Judge Ahmadzadeh to one year in prison on charges of “propaganda against the system.” The ruling was upheld in absentia on 30 September 2019, by Branch 36 of the Court of Appeal.<sup>31</sup>

### UPDATE

Shahnaz was arrested on 15 January 2020 after surrendering herself to Evin Prison and was transferred to the women’s ward.<sup>32</sup>

She was furloughed from prison on 20 February 2020 due to the spread of COVID-19; on July 25, she was informed that she had been released early and would not be returning to prison.<sup>33</sup>



## ATENA DAEMI

**Age:** 32

**Activities/Rights:** Human rights activist

**Status:** Evin Prison

**Judicial status:** 12 years, 7 months and 1 day imprisonment and 74 lashes

**Violations:** Arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, lack of due process, unfair trial, denial of medical care, harassment and trumped-up charges against family members

### BACKGROUND

Atena Daemi is a human rights, children's rights, and death penalty activist. She was first arrested by authorities on 21 October 2014 and subjected to interrogations for 86 days in ward 2A of Evin Prison. She was sentenced to 14 years in prison on charges of "propaganda against the system", "assembly and collusion against national security", "blasphemy and insulting the Supreme Leader" and "concealing evidence". Facebook posts and her activism against the death penalty were used as part of the evidence against her. With the consent of the appellate judge, Atena was previously released on a bail of 600 million Tomans from the women's ward of Evin Prison on 15 February 2016. Following her release, on 28 September 2016, the Appeals Court reduced her sentence to 7 years.<sup>34</sup>

Atena was re-arrested on 28 November 2016 from her home to serve her sentence. She filed a complaint against the IRGC for using excessive force during her arrest. On 19 December 2016, Atena went before the Shahid Moghaddas Court to face charges of "insulting the Supreme Leader, insulting state officials, propaganda against the system, resisting arrest and assaulting the arresting officer". An additional 3 months and 1 day were added to her seven year sentence on 3 April 2017 by Branch 1163 of the Qods Criminal Court, which also issued the same sentence to both her sisters, Ensieh and Hanieh. In protest, she went on a hunger strike on April 8 until her sisters were acquitted in court 54 days later.

Though Atena suffers from various physical ailments, she has only been allowed to go to an external hospital once; on 25 September 2017, she was hospitalised while handcuffed and shackled. Throughout the years, officials have tried to pressure Atena through trumped-up charges, visitation bans, pressure on her family and transferring her to Qarchak Prison in Varamin with Golrokh Ebrahimi-Iraei for three and half months in March 2018. On 18 July 2019, both Atena and Golrokh were sentenced to an additional three years and seven months and a two year ban on group and organisational activities by the Revolutionary Court in Tehran for "insulting the founder and Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic and propaganda against the system," which was upheld by the Tehran Appeal Court on 5 September 2019.<sup>35</sup>

### UPDATE

On 21 December 2019, Atena along with a group of other prisoners, staged a sit in, in protest to the state response to the November 2019 nationwide demonstrations and in solidarity with the family of the victims. Atena was transferred to Ward 2A of Evin Prison on December 28 and returned to the general population on 8 January 2020. On July 2, her lawyer was informed that she had been sentenced to a further two years in prison and 74 lashes by Branch 24 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court, presided by Judge Amouzad on charges of "propaganda against the system and disrupting prison order." On the first charge, the court cited written letters and statements attributed to her and on the second charge, celebrating, partying and dancing during Ashoora, the day marking the death of Imam Hussein in the Shi'ite calendar, were cited. Atena called the new charges baseless, stating that, for example, in the case of disrupting prison order, there had been no celebrations by her or her fellow prisoners around the days marking Ashoora. As with her conviction in March 2018, Atena refused to attend the hearing in protest to the breach of her legal rights in the time between the date of notification and trial and the lack of access to her legal counsel.



## GOLROKH EBRAHIMI-IRAEI

**Age:** 34

**Activities/Rights:** Human rights activist

**Status:** Qarchak Prison, Varamin

**Judicial status:** 3 years and 7 months imprisonment

**Violations:** Arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial, interrogation under duress, imprisonment for unpublished work

### BACKGROUND

Golrokh Ebrahimi-Iraei is a human rights activist. She was first arrested by IRGC intelligence forces on 15 September 2014, along with her husband Arash Sadeghi and two friends and transferred to IRGC Ward 2A of Evin Prison. She was released on bail a few weeks later, but was charged with "blasphemy and propaganda against the system" after an unpublished story was found during a search of her house when they came to arrest her husband, Arash.

Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court, headed by Judge Salavati, sentenced Golrokh to six years in prison and Arash to 15 years in prison in May 2015. The sentences were upheld by the Court of Appeals on 22 December 2015. She was arrested on 24 October 2016 to serve out her prison sentence.

Golrokh was ultimately sentenced to one year in prison for "propaganda against the system and five years for blasphemy." Her record for "anti-security activities" include: taking her hijab off and promoting taking off the hijab by posting photos of herself without one on Facebook, opposing the *qisas* (retribution-in-kind) sentence for murder, signing petitions opposing the death penalty, participating in rallies, supporting political prisoners and visiting political prisoners and their families.

### UPDATE

After serving her three year sentence, Golrokh was released from prison on 19 April 2019. She was released on a 60 million Tomans bail for another case that was opened against her while she was in prison. The trial was held in Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court, presided by Judge Iman Afshari, where along with Atena Daemi, she was sentenced to two years in prison and banned from any party or group participation.<sup>36</sup>

Golrokh was arrested again on 9 November 2019 and held overnight in the Vozara Detention Centre in Tehran before being transferred to Qarchak Prison in Varamin, where she is currently being held.<sup>37</sup>



## FARHAD MEYSAMI

**Age:** 50

**Activities/Rights:** Human rights activist

**Status:** Rajai Shahr Prison

**Judicial status:** 6 years imprisonment

**Violations:** Arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial, denial of medical care, interrogation in solitary confinement without access to lawyer

### BACKGROUND

Farhad Meysami is a civil activist, physician, teacher and advocate of non-violent resistance. For years, he owned a publishing house which printed books for students sitting university entrance exams but more recently ran a cultural space where he held debates and sought to engage change in a practical way. He soon became a familiar face in peaceful protests along with Nasrin Sotoudeh, Mohammad Nourizad and other civil activists. He took an interest in and started advocating for the “White Wednesdays” movement as an act of peaceful protest.<sup>38</sup>

On 31 July 2018, he was arrested at his office and transferred directly to Ward 209 of Evin Prison. The charges against Farhad were “propaganda against the system, assembly and collusion against the system” and promoting and spreading anti-hijabism” for having badges that read “I protest the compulsory hijab” on them.

On 1st August 2018, Farhad went on hunger strike to protest his arbitrary detention, the false allegations against him and the lack of access to his lawyer of choice.<sup>39</sup>

### UPDATE

On 22 January 2019, his lawyer, Mohammad Moghimi stated that he had been notified that Farhad and Reza Khandan (Nasrin Sotoudeh’s husband) had received a six year prison sentence by Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran, presided over by Judge Salavati.<sup>40</sup>

The sentence was upheld by Branch 36 of the Court of Appeals on 21 May 2019.<sup>41</sup> Farhad refused to appear in court in protest to the note to Article 48 of the Criminal Code of Procedure, which deprives the defendant of their right to choose a lawyer during the preliminary investigations.



## NARGES MOHAMMADI

**Age:** 48

**Activities/Rights:** Human rights activist

**Status:** Released

**Judicial status:** 16 years imprisonment

**Violations:** Arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial, denial of medical care, ill-treatment, fired from work due to activism

### BACKGROUND

Narges Mohammadi is a human rights and anti-death penalty activist, journalist, deputy director of the Defenders of Human Rights Centre (DHRC) and member of Legam, the ‘step by step to stop the death penalty’ campaign. First arrested in 1998, Narges has acquired a record for her activism. She was fired from her job for her activism in DHRC in 2009.

In April 2010, she was summoned to Branch 4 of the Revolutionary Court for membership in DHRC, and released on a 50 million Tomans bail. In July 2011, she was sentenced to a total of 11 years in prison by Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court on charges of “assembly and collusion against national security, membership in an illegal organisation and propaganda against the system.” This was reduced to 6 years imprisonment by Branch 54 of the Court of Appeals, and in April 2012, Narges was arrested and sent to prison to serve her sentence.<sup>42</sup> However, she was released on bail on 31 July 2012 due to a medical condition that caused partial paralysis.

Narges was arrested again on 5 May 2015. On 18 May 2016, Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court sentenced her to ten years imprisonment on the charge of “founding an illegal group” for Legam,<sup>43</sup> five years for “assembly and collusion against national security”, a year for “propaganda against the system” for her interviews with international media and her March 2014 meeting with the EU’s then High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton.<sup>44</sup> She had already come under attack for the meeting by the hard line media. The appeals court upheld her sentence on 28 September 2016.

### UPDATE

Narges has suffered ill health throughout her detention. She had a gallbladder removal surgery on 1 July 2018 and a hysterectomy on 14 May 2019 and subsequently returned to prison.<sup>45</sup>

On 21 December 2019, Narges among others staged a peaceful sit-in against the state response to the November 2019 nationwide protests. On December 25, she was violently transferred to Zanjan Prison which she described in an open letter.<sup>46</sup> On 8 October 2020, her husband Taghi Rahman tweeted that she had been released from prison at 3am that morning.<sup>47</sup> She had been given 3 days leave over the last five years of her detention.



## MOHAMMAD NOURIZAD

**Age:** 67

**Activities/Rights:** Human rights activist

**Status:** Evin Prison

**Judicial status:** 15 years and 8 months imprisonment and 148 lashes

**Violations:** Arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial, denial of medical care, harassment and trumped-up charges against family members

### BACKGROUND

Mohammad Nourizad is a human rights activist and freedom of speech advocate who has on several occasions openly criticised leaders of the Islamic Republic for suppressing and persecuting protestors, minorities and dissidents. He has since been detained and beaten by security forces on multiple occasions. He was last arrested on 11 August 2019, along with several others, in front of the Mashhad Court of Appeals building. In June 2019, Mohammad was also one of the 14 activists who signed an open letter to Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei demanding his resignation.

### UPDATE

Mohammad's trial was held on 18 January 2020, at Branch Four of the Revolutionary Court of Mashhad. He was sentenced to 15 years in prison, three years exile to Izeh in Khuzestan (1000 km southwest of Mashhad) and a three year ban from leaving the country for "forming an illegal group and propaganda against the system."<sup>48</sup>

On 2 May 2020, Mohammad attempted to commit suicide in protest to the pressure on his family.<sup>49</sup> Three days prior, one of Mohammad's sons, Ali had been sentenced to three-and-a-half years in prison for participating in the protests against the downing of Ukrainian Flight PS752 in January 2020. He was released on bail 20 days later.

Following his suicide attempt, Mohammad was transferred to Evin Prison on 5 May 2020.<sup>50</sup> On September 22, his lawyer tweeted that in a second case opened against him in Mashhad, the Court of Appeals had upheld an eight month prison sentence and 148 lashes.<sup>51</sup> His son, Ali was transferred to Fashafuyeh Prison to serve his sentence on October 3, while according to his lawyer, the authorities had promised to keep him with his father at Evin Prison.<sup>52</sup>



## ARSHAM REZAEI

**Age:** 28

**Activities/Rights:** Human rights activist

**Status:** Released on bail

**Judicial status:** 8 years and 6 months imprisonment

**Violations:** Arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial, lack of access to own lawyer

### BACKGROUND

Arsham Rezaee was a painter who was arrested by IRGC intelligence forces in Tehran on 7 January 2019, during the nationwide protests. After enduring two weeks of interrogations in solitary confinement, he was transferred to the quarantine section of Evin Prison and finally to the general ward. Arsham's preliminary hearing was held on 26 February 2019 in Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court, presided over by Judge Moghiseh, without his lawyer present.

In the immediate aftermath of his arrest, security forces had used his phone to ask two of his friends to join the protests, which the court used as evidence to charge him with "assembly and collusion with intent to act against national security" on 16 March 2019, when he was sentenced to a total of eight years and six months in prison. His other charges were "propaganda against the system", for which, his membership on social media apps like WhatsApp and Telegram, and an anti-death penalty placard were used as evidence, and writing "death to dictator" in his personal notebook as evidence of "insulting the leadership".<sup>53</sup>

### UPDATE

Arsham was released on bail from Evin Prison on 13 November 2019. On 22 July 2020, his sentence was upheld by Branch 36 of the Tehran Court of Appeals, presided over by Judge Zargar.<sup>54</sup>

Following the Court of Appeals ruling, Arsham will need to serve five years, the most severe sentence, if Article 134 of the IPC is applied. Speaking to IHR, Arsham said: "I was sentenced to 8 years and 6 months in prison by Judge Moghiseh in the Court of First Instance, but my hearing only lasted for 5 minutes! This is while I was denied the right to a lawyer at all stages of my legal proceedings. The judgement by Branch 36 of the Court of Appeals states that I did not present a well-founded defence. This is because there was no right of defence in my appeal against the judgement of the Court of First Instance, that is why every conviction issued against me was upheld by the appellate court and I was notified of it."<sup>55</sup>



## ARASH SADEGHI

Age: 41

Activities/Rights: Human rights activist

Status: Rajai Shahr Prison

Judicial status: 19 years imprisonment

Violations: Arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and ill-treatment to make forced confession, lack of due process, unfair trial, denial of medical care

### BACKGROUND

Arash Sadeghi is a human rights activist who was first arrested by agents of the Ministry of Intelligence on 9 July 2009 in front of Allameh Tabatabai University in Tehran, along with a number of other students protesting the results of the controversial presidential election, and was released on bail after 90 days.<sup>56</sup>

Arash was arrested for the second time on 23 December 2009 and taken to Evin Prison. He was released on bail on 6 March 2010 and issued a four-year suspended sentence. He was detained again in May 2014 by IRGC intelligence and was released on bail of 600 million Tomans after spending six months in detention. While out on bail, officers had raided his parents' house to arrest Arash, which caused his mother to have a heart attack and pass away in hospital four days later.

Arash was tried in Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran and sentenced to a total of 15 years imprisonment on charges of "assembly and conspiracy against national security," "blasphemy" and "insulting the founder of the Islamic Republic." The sentence was upheld by the Court of Appeals, ordering Arash to serve a 19 year sentence, including his previous four-year suspended sentence.

On 7 June 2016, after the Court of Appeals ruling and while pursuing his case and that of his wife, Golrokh Ebrahimi-Iraei at the Evin Prosecutor's Office, Arash was detained and transferred to Evin Prison to serve his sentence.<sup>57</sup> He went on a hunger strike for 72 days in protest to the arrest of his wife, which ended on 3 January 2017. He was transferred from Evin Prison to Rajai Shahr Prison in Karaj in October 2017. His health continued to deteriorate as the complications due to the hunger strike were left, and remain, untreated.

More alarmingly, Arash was diagnosed with chondrosarcoma, a rare type of bone cancer, for which he underwent surgery to remove a tumour from his shoulder. According to reports, despite the doctor's orders that he be allowed to heal and recuperate in hospital after the surgery, security officials transferred him back to prison, causing infection and ultimately losing all mobility and feeling in his arm.

### UPDATE

Arash Sadeghi continues to serve out his sentence at Rajai Shahr Prison.



## SAEED SHIRZAD

Age: 33

Activities/Rights: Human rights activist

Status: Released

Judicial status: 5 years and 6 months

Violations: Arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial, denial of medical care, ill-treatment

### BACKGROUND

Saeed Shirzad is a political activist and a member of the Society for Defending Street and Working Children from Kermanshah. Saeed was previously arrested on 21 August 2012 in a case known as "Camp Serand Aid", after he went to Ahar, East Azerbaijan Province to help victims of the earthquake. He was released on bail after 19 days in detention, but was given a one-year suspended sentence for "group and uncoordinated travel to the quake-hit areas."

He was re-arrested on 4 June 2014 at his place of work in a Tabriz refinery. He was taken to Evin Prison and later transferred to Rajai Shahr Prison in Karaj. 15 months and several delays after his arrest, Saeed was sentenced to five years imprisonment in 2015 by Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran, presided over by Judge Salavati, on charges of "assembly and colluding to commit crimes against national security." He was represented by Amirsalar Davoudi at his trial.

On 15 April 2017, his case was heard before Branch 54 of the Tehran Court of Appeals, in a tense atmosphere, where his sentence was upheld.

Additionally, as Saeed had played an active role in protesting the forced transfer of political prisoners to a security cell in Rajai Shahr Prison, two other cases were opened against him for "insulting the leadership" and "disrupting prison order". He was sentenced to a further six months in prison by Branch 1162 of the Second Criminal Court of Tehran. He spent a long time on hunger strike in protest and was repeatedly abused and beaten by prison officials.<sup>58</sup>

### UPDATE

Saeed Shirzad was released from Rajai Shahr Prison in Karaj on 4 May 2020.<sup>59</sup>



## IMAM ALI POPULAR STUDENT RELIEF SOCIETY



### BACKGROUND

The Imam Ali Popular Student Relief Society (IAPSRs) is a non-governmental organisation and one of the most well-known and successful charities in Iran, established in 1999 by Sharmin Meymaninejad, a student at Sharif University. The organisation is run entirely by a network of volunteer members which currently stands at 10,000 people.<sup>60</sup>

IAPSRs works on a host of issues including poverty, education, healthcare and employment. One of the most crucial areas of their work is supporting youth affected by crime, especially those sentenced to death, who were under the age of 18 at the time of the alleged crime. The organisation has managed to save 50 teenagers from execution through mediating with the victims' families. They also support 6,100 children and 700 women, including the internally displaced and war refugees as well as those affected by social issues stemming from poverty.<sup>61</sup>

The NGO earned special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in 2010 and general consultative status in 2018.

### UPDATE

On 21 June 2020, the NGO tweeted that their founder, Sharmin Meymandinejad as well as their compliance officer, Katayoun Afraze and head of public relations, Morteza Keymanesh had been arrested.<sup>62</sup>

They later issued a statement on their website that read: "At 4pm yesterday (21 June 2020), two groups of judicial officers, with a warrant filed by the Revolutionary Guards' Sarallah forces headquarters, simultaneously entered the homes of Mr Sharmin

Meymandinejad (founder of Imam Ali Society) and other members of the society.

In the warrant, Mr Meymandinejad was charged with insulting the Supreme Leader, as well as the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Mr Morteza Keymanesh and Ms Katayoun Afraze were charged with acting against national security."<sup>63</sup>

Reporting Sharmin's arrest, Fars News Agency, affiliated with the IRGC, wrote: "This person has collaborated with anti-Iranian centres under the guise of charitable work. (...) According to the information obtained, as well as blasphemy and promoting deviant anti-religious beliefs, they have collaborated with dissident and foreign media."<sup>64</sup>

Morteza and Katayoun were released on bail a month after their arrest. On August 17, two months following their arrests, the Ministry of Interior set a 20-day deadline for the NGO to change its structure.<sup>65</sup> Saeed Dehghan, the NGO's lawyer, tweeted at the time: "The simultaneous arrest of the members of the society and the deadline set by the Ministry of Interior to change its structure, that is, to choose between brain death and real death!"<sup>66</sup>

A hundred civil society activists issued a statement protesting the "deterrent and narrow-minded treatment of NGOs" and called for the release of Sharmin and other imprisoned civil society activists. In part, the statement referred to the "unjustified insistence on changing the statute of the Imam Ali Society and its organisational structure from the Board of Trustees to the General Assembly, weakening and rendering it ineffective."

Following the expiration of the deadline, Zahra Rahimi, the organisation's managing director and Sharmin's wife, was arrested on September 6 and released the next day. Sharmin was transferred to the general population at Evin Prison on October 18<sup>67</sup> and released on bail on October 27.<sup>68</sup>





## ESMAEIL ABDI

**Age:** 45  
**Activities/Rights:** Teachers' Trade Unionist  
**Status:** Evin Prison  
**Judicial status:** 6 years imprisonment  
**Violations:** Arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial, denial of medical care

### BACKGROUND

Esmail Abdi is a teacher, civil activist and member of the Iranian Teachers' Trade Association who has been arrested and imprisoned for his union activities on multiple occasions. He was arrested and detained for a day for the first time on 14 March 2007 for participating in a protest rally. He was again arrested and detained for a day by the security police on 17 September 2007 while attending a nationwide co-ordination meeting of the Teachers' Trade Association.

On 31 December 2008, he was arrested in front of the main door of the Islamic Consultative Assembly (parliament) while meeting with a member of the minority faction of the Assembly, and was again released a day later. On 19 May 2010, his house was searched by the Ministry of Intelligence and his personal belongings were confiscated.

Ultimately, in 2011, the Revolutionary Court, presided over by Judge Pirabbasi, sentenced Esmail to 10 years in prison, which had been suspended for five years, on charges of "propaganda against the system" and "links to enemy states." He was arrested on 27 July 2015 by the IRGC Sarallah forces and spent 10 months in detention, after which he was released. On appeal, Esmail's sentence was reduced to six years imprisonment. He was arrested at his home on 9 November 2016 to serve out his sentence.

### UPDATE

Esmail was granted furlough on 8 June 2019, and returned to Evin Prison a month later on 8 July 2019 to finish serving his sentence. He was furloughed from prison due to the COVID-19 outbreak in prisons in March 2020 but was detained when he went to the Evin Prison Prosecutor's Office to extend his furlough on April 20, and was returned to Evin Prison.<sup>69</sup>

In an interview with VOA on August 10, Esmail's wife, Monir said her husband had tested positive for COVID-19. According to the phone call from Esmail the previous day, he was one of six political prisoners who had tested positive in Ward 8 of Evin Prison.<sup>70</sup> Ten days later, his lawyer Hossein Taj tweeted that after spending 14 days in quarantine, he had been returned to the general population after making a full recovery.<sup>71</sup>

## MAHMOUD BEHESHTI-LANGROUDI



**Age:** 60  
**Activities/Rights:** Teacher's Trade Unionist  
**Status:** Released  
**Judicial status:** 5 years imprisonment served  
**Violations:** Arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial

### BACKGROUND

Mahmoud Beheshti-Langroudi is a union activist and spokesperson for the Teachers' Trade Association of Tehran. Previously arrested in 2004 and 2006, he was re-arrested again in 2010 and sentenced to five years in prison on charges of "collusion against national security" by Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran.

He was arrested once more in 2015 and sentenced to another five years in prison by Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran. Ultimately, after the consolidation of the two sentences by the Tehran Court of Appeal, a five-year imprisonment sentence was upheld.<sup>72</sup>

### UPDATE

The Tehran prosecutor opposed his conditional release due to COVID-19.<sup>73</sup>

On 9 August 2020, after completing his five year sentence, he tweeted that he had been released and that "after about twenty years, today is the first day that I don't feel like I'm being pursued by the security forces and judiciary."<sup>74</sup>



## MOHAMMAD HABIBI

Age: 40

Activities/Rights: Teachers' Trade Unionist

Status: Released

Judicial status: 7 years and 6 months imprisonment and 74 lashes

Violations: Arbitrary arrest and detention, ill-treatment, lack of due process, unfair trial, denial of medical care, fired from job due to activism

### BACKGROUND

Mohammad Habibi is a teacher and a member of the Iranian Teachers' Trade Association. He was first arrested on 3 March 2018 when he was beaten and pepper-sprayed in front of his students outside the school he taught at. He was released on bail a few days later, but was re-arrested on 10 May 2018, during a peaceful union rally. According to eyewitnesses, he was beaten up by security officers during his arrest and dragged on the asphalt.

Mohammad went on hunger strike to protest not being able to contact his family and lawyer during his detention. In the court of First Instance, he was charged with "assembly and collusion to act against national security" with his membership of the Teachers' Union used as an example, "propaganda against the system" with articles and educational and union notes being used as examples, "disrupting the public order of the country" for participating in trade union rallies and "disobeying police orders during his arrest."<sup>75</sup>

In August 2018, he was sentenced to seven years and six months in prison for "conspiracy against national security", 18 months in prison for "propaganda against the system" and 74 lashes for "disturbing public order." He was also handed a two year ban from participating in any political parties and groups, social or political activities, and banned from leaving the country as extra punishment.<sup>76</sup> He will have to serve the 7.5 year sentence after the consolidation of his sentences according to Article 134 of the IPC. Mohammad's sentence was upheld by Branch 36 of the Tehran Court of Appeals in late December 2018.

### UPDATE

He was transferred from Evin Prison to Farabi Hospital in Tehran for medical treatment on 30 June 2019. Doctors found a tumour in his right forearm that needed to be removed as soon as possible, but treatment was refused and he was returned to prison.

Civil society groups have tried their best to secure Mohammad's release. In the latest of these attempts, 15 Iranian teachers' trade unions issued a statement in April 2020, demanding his immediate release.<sup>77</sup> Not only was he not granted leave, but was also fired from his job as a teacher by the Ministry of Education.

Mohammad was released from prison on 10 November 2020.



## MARY MOHAMMADI

Age: 21

Activities/Rights: Minority rights activist

Status: Released

Judicial status: 3 months and 1 day imprisonment and 10 lashes

Violations: Religious discrimination, arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial, lack of access to own lawyer, expelled from university due to civil activities

### BACKGROUND

Mary Mohammadi is a civil activist and Christian convert. In 2019, she was sentenced to six months in prison by the Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran, headed by Judge Ahmadzadeh, on charges of "acting against national security through propaganda against the system and membership in evangelical groups." She served her sentence at the women's ward of Evin Prison.

She was beaten and detained by plainclothes forces near Azadi Square on 12 January 2020, during a protest rally against the downing of the Ukrainian plane by the IRGC. Security officials first transferred her to the Vozara Detention Centre and following 24 hours of interrogation, handed her over to the Evin Prosecutor's Office. At her arraignment hearing at Branch 6 of the Evin Interrogation Unit, she was informed that she was being charged with "disturbing public order and peace by participating in an illegal gathering".

### UPDATE

Mary was transferred to Qarchak Prison in Varamin and released on 27 February 2020, on a bail of 30 million Tomans. Her trial was held on 14 April 2020 at Branch 1167 of the Tehran Criminal Court, where she was sentenced to three months and one day in prison and 10 suspended lashes.<sup>78</sup>

Mary, who was studying English translation at the North Tehran branch of the Azad University, found out that she had been banned from the university on 21 December 2019. Without elaborating, officials told her that she was not allowed to continue her studies at the university.<sup>79</sup>



## ZARA MOHAMMADI

Age: 29

Activities/Rights: Kurdish rights activist

Status: Released on bail

Judicial status: 10 years imprisonment

Violations: Ethnic discrimination, arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial

### BACKGROUND

Zara Mohammadi is the director of Nojin Cultural Association, which teaches the Kurdish language and culture.

On 23 May 2019, Zara was arrested along with two other members of the Nojin Cultural Association, after security forces raided their homes in Sanandaj.<sup>80</sup> The other two members, Edris Manbari and Ribwar Manbari were released on bail four days later and subsequently acquitted in court. According to Amnesty International, she later told her family that she had been under duress to make false televised confession that she was co-operating with Kurdish opposition groups, which she refused to do.<sup>81</sup>

Zara was kept in prison for over six months until she was temporarily released on a bail of 700 million Tomans on 2 December 2019.

### UPDATE

On 12 July 2020, she was summoned to Branch 1 of the Revolutionary Court in Sanandaj and sentenced to ten years in prison for “forming a group against national security.”<sup>82</sup>

On August 5, 38 Kurdish NGOs wrote a joint letter to President Rouhani, protesting the policy of banning non-Farsi languages in Iran and Zara’s arbitrary sentence, emphasising “the right to be educated in one’s mother-tongue as one of the most basic rights.”<sup>83</sup>

Her case has not been heard by the Court of Appeals and she remains out on bail.

## PERSIAN WILDLIFE HERITAGE FOUNDATION



Activities/Rights:

Environmental activists

Judicial status: 4-10 years imprisonment

Violations: Arbitrary arrest and detention, death in custody, lack of due process, unfair trial, denial of medical care

### BACKGROUND

Sam Rajabi, Hooman Jokar, Niloufar Bayani, Morad Tahabaz, Sepideh Kashani, Abdolreza Kouhpayeh, Taher Ghadirian and Amirhossein Khaleghi are all members of the Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation (PWHF), a non-profit environment organisation. They were arrested on 25 January 2018 by the IRGC intelligence Sarallah forces.

While the judiciary alleged they were guilty of “espionage”, the Minister of Intelligence, Mahmoud Alavi, and Isa Kalantari, the head of the Environmental Protection Agency, denied the allegations. In a letter to the head of the Islamic Republic’s judiciary, the families of the eight activists, wrote: “no evidence had been provided by the prosecutor’s office or the IRGC’s intelligence organisation” regarding the allegations.

On 9 February 2018, Kavous Seyed-Emami, the managing director of PWHF died under suspicious circumstances in custody. The intelligence forces claimed he had committed suicide in solitary confinement, a narrative that his family have never accepted. Kavous, a dual Canadian-Iranian citizen, was a professor of sociology.<sup>84</sup>

### UPDATE

Following a struggle between state security apparatuses, the remaining activists’ trial was held in November 2019 and the sentences were as follows: Morad and Niloufar were sentenced to ten years in prison for collaborating with the United States. Hooman and Taher were sentenced to eight years in prison for collaborating with the US government, Sam and Sepideh to six years in prison for collaborating with the US government, Amirhossein to six years in prison for espionage and Abdolreza to four years for assembly and collusion against national security.<sup>85</sup> Following the confirmation of their sentences in February 2020, Niloufar spoke out in a letter to authorities: “any confessions about espionage or other criminal activities were dictated and induced under the most severe mental and psychological torture as well as physical and sexual threats during at least 1,200 hours of interrogations.”<sup>86</sup> Abdolreza was released on March 7 after serving half of his sentence.<sup>87</sup> According to his sister, Katy, Sam tested positive for COVID-19 in April, all seven activists remain behind bars.



## MARZIEH AMIRI

**Age:** 34

**Activities/Rights:** Journalist/workers rights

**Status:** Released

**Judicial status:** 10 years and 6 months imprisonment and 148 lashes

**Violations:** Arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial, denial of medical care

### BACKGROUND

Marzieh Amiri is a women's rights activist and a workers rights activist as well as an economics journalist for Shargh newspaper. Previously arrested at the 2017 nationwide protests and the International Women's Day rally in 2019, she had described the horrific time she had spent at Qarchak Prison where she was denied food and water and placed in cells with non-political prisoners who harassed her.

She was arrested again when she went to seek information about the people arrested at the 2019 International Workers' Day rally. Her sister tweeted about her ill health and the lack of access to medical care: "during her detention, Marzieh suffered from persistent hypotension, dizziness, gastrointestinal bleeding, and skin diseases...she has epilepsy and suffered an epileptic seizure while in solitary confinement. Prison officials have so far ignored Marzieh and our repeated requests for her to be sent to hospital." She was finally sent to have an MRI and brain scan after two months, with her family paying the bill.

Her arrest was met with condemnations both domestically and internationally including the International Federation of Journalists.<sup>88</sup>

### UPDATE

Marzieh was convicted at a hearing held on 13 August 2019 at Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran, presided by Judge Moghiseh, who refused to release her on bail. She was sentenced to 148 lashes, 10 years and six months in prison, of which she will have to serve 6 years.<sup>89</sup> She was charged with "assembly and collusion, propaganda against the system and disturbing public order". The allegations were met with protests from members of the editorial board and the editor-in-chief of Shargh newspaper.

She was released on a bail of 1 billion Tomans on 26 October 2019. On 24 May 2020, her lawyer, Amir Raeisian told Shargh new agency that while Marzieh had received a summons to serve her sentence, at the behest of the judiciary, he had been orally informed that Marzieh's sentence had been revoked and she would not be required to return to prison.<sup>90</sup>



## ESMAEIL BAKHSHI

**Age:** 37

**Activities/Rights:** Workers rights

**Status:** Released on bail

**Judicial status:** 7 years imprisonment

**Violations:** Arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and ill-treatment, forced confession, lack of due process, unfair trial, pressure to accept false sexual charges

### BACKGROUND

Esmail Bakhshi is a workers rights activist and representative of the Workers Union of Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Company in Shush, Khuzestan. He was arrested on 18 November 2018, on the 14th day of the Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Agro-Industrial Complex workers strike, which began due to months of unpaid wages and mismanagement after the company was privatised. There were various reports of torture and ill-treatment at the time of his arrest.<sup>91</sup> On 24 November 2018, the Ministry of Labour, Cooperatives and Social Welfare called the accusations against him "security-related", stating that they were unable to do anything to secure his release. Esmail was released on a bail of 400 million Tomans on 12 December 2018.

### UPDATE

On 4 January 2019, he took to Instagram to confirm accounts of the torture and ill-treatment he had received during his detention. Inviting the Minister of Intelligence, Mahmoud Alavi, to debate, he wrote: "During the 25 days that I was unjustly detained by the Ministry of Intelligence, I was subjected to such pain and suffering that still haunts me today and I have had to resort to psychiatric drugs to escape them. But during this period, two questions have been eating away at me, which only you personally can answer and it's my right and the people's right to know the answer to these questions. First of all, in the first days, without any reason or word, I was tortured to near death and punched and kicked to the point that I could not move in my cell for 72 hours, and they beat me so much that it was painful for me to even sleep. After almost two months passing since those difficult days, I still feel pain in my broken ribs, kidneys, left ear and testicles."<sup>92</sup>

On 7 January 2019, Esmail's lawyer told the media that his client was under pressure to withdraw his accusations of torture. Refusing to back down and retract his statement, he was arrested on 20 January 2019 by security forces at his home. A day prior to his arrest, state broadcaster, IRIB TV1, ran a special program during their 20:30 news segment titled "Failed Planning", which showed Esmail and Sepideh Gholian's forced confessions. In it, they "confess" to having connections with subversive individuals and groups, including the Communist Workers' Party. They were also forced to name dissidents abroad, who had supposedly tried to teach them how to organise.

On 7 September 2019, he was sentenced to seven years for "assembly and collusion against national security", two years for "insulting the Supreme Leader", two years for "publishing lies", one-and-half years for "propaganda against the system" and a year and a half and 74 lashes for "disrupting public order", of which seven years were enforceable per Article 134.<sup>93</sup> The sentence was later reduced to 7 years in December 2019, of which 5 years may be enforced.<sup>94</sup> He was released on bail on 30 October 2019 but his sentence remains enforceable.



## SEPIDEH GHOLIYAN

Age: 25

Activities/Rights: Civil and workers rights activist

Status: Evin Prison

Judicial status: 5 years imprisonment

Violations: Arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and ill-treatment, forced confession, lack of due process, unfair trial, pressure to accept false sexual charges



## LEILA HOSSEINZADEH

Age: 27

Activities/Rights: Workers rights/student activist

Status: Pardoned due to incurable illness/2nd case pending

Judicial status: 30 months imprisonment

Violations: Arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial

### BACKGROUND

Sepideh Gholiyan is a civil and workers rights activist. She was first arrested on 24 February 2017 for her civil activism at her family's home, and was later released. She was arrested again on 18 November 2018, while reporting on a workers rights protest organised by the Workers Union of Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Company. Sepideh, along with other representatives of the workers of Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Agro-Industrial Complex, were first taken to a detention centre in the city of Shush and transferred to Ahvaz by security officials. Sepideh was released on 18 December 2018, on a bail of 500 million Tomans.

### UPDATE

On 9 January 2019, she used Instagram to reveal details of the torture she and Esmail Bakhshi had been subjected to by officers during their detention. She also said she was ready to testify in court about her torture and that of Esmail. In addition, she tweeted that intelligence agents had told her that she would only be released if she pleaded guilty to "sexual charges."

On January 19, 2019, state broadcaster, IRIB TV1, ran a special program during their 20:30 news segment titled "failed planning". The program was the forced confessions obtained from Sepideh and Esmail during their detention, in which they "confess" to having connections with subversive individuals and groups, including the Communist Workers' Party. They were also forced to name dissidents abroad, who had supposedly tried to teach them how to organise. Sepideh was arrested a day after the program aired, along with her brother, Mehdi.

She was transferred to Sepidar Prison in Ahvaz on 4 March 2019 where she remained until her transfer to Evin Prison on 28 April 2019. She was subsequently transferred to Qarchak Prison in Varamin on 3 June 2019.

In September 2019, Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran sentenced Sepideh to a total of 18 years in prison.<sup>95</sup> This sentence was reduced to five years on appeal at the Tehran Court of Appeals in December 2019. On 26 October 2019, she was temporarily released from Qarchak prison on bail.<sup>96</sup>

Sepideh made a complaint against IRIB, the editor-in-chief of the 20:30 news section and Ameneh Sadat Zabihpour for producing and airing her forced confession,<sup>97</sup> but the court later acquitted the defendants and closed the case. Following the closure of the complaint against IRIB, Sepideh faced new charges of propaganda against the system but was released on bail. She surrendered to Evin Prison on 21 June 2020 to serve out her five year sentence.<sup>98</sup>

### BACKGROUND

Leila Hosseinzadeh was a student at the Faculty of Social Sciences and secretary of the Student Union Council of the University of Tehran. At the time of her arrest, she was completing her Master's degree in anthropology. She was arrested outside her house on 1 January 2018 for taking part in the December 2017 protests at the university. After spending 16 days in solitary confinement and interrogations, she was released on bail pending trial.<sup>99</sup>

On 7 March 2018, she was sentenced by Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court, presided by Judge Mashallah Ahmadzadeh, to five years in prison for assembly and collusion against national security, a year for propaganda against the system and a two-year ban on leaving the country after serving her sentence.<sup>100</sup>

Her sentence was upheld by Branch 36 of the Court of Appeals. According to Article 134 of the IPC, she will have to serve 30 months in prison.<sup>101</sup>

On 5 August 2019, Leila's lawyer, Amir Raesian tweeted that she had been transferred to the prison ward to serve her sentence.<sup>102</sup> On 19 May 2020, he tweeted that due to an incurable disease, Leila had been deemed unable to serve her sentence, and that due to the illness, she had been included in the Norouz pardons list and her release papers issued.<sup>103</sup>

### UPDATE

On 24 June 2020, Mr Raesian tweeted that "on 21 June, Leila was summoned to Branch 2 of the Security Court. At the arraignment, it was explained she was being charged with "disturbing prison order" and she was released on bail. Today, we were informed that an indictment has been issued for disturbing prison order, while Ms. Hosseinzadeh was released from prison due to an incurable illness."<sup>104</sup>

On 21 August 2020, she tweeted that her trial for the aforementioned with co-defendants Atena Daemi and Maryam Akbari-Monfared was due to take place on 31 August<sup>105</sup>; there have been no updates to date and she remains free on bail.



## NASRIN JAVADI

**Age:**  
**Activities/Rights:** Workers rights activist  
**Status:** Released on bail  
**Judicial status:** 5 years imprisonment  
**Violations:** Arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial

### BACKGROUND

Nasrin Javadi (Azam Khezri) is a workers rights activist and a member of the Free Union of Iranian Workers (FUIW) and a founding member of the Social Security Retired Workers Council. She was arrested on 1 May 2019 along with other participants at the May Day rally. She was released from Qarchak prison on a 100 million Tomans bail on 30 May 2019.<sup>106</sup>

### UPDATE

On 6 August 2019, Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran, presided over by Judge Iman Afshari sentenced Nasrin to five years in prison on charges of “assembly and collusion against national security”, a year in prison for “propaganda against the system”, one year and 74 lashes, a two year ban on the use of smartphones and membership and activities in political and social groups and parties for “disrupting public order”. On appeal, the five year sentence was upheld but the two charges of “propaganda against the system and disrupting public order” were dropped.<sup>107</sup>

According to the indictment issued by the Court of Appeals, Nasrin was sentenced to 5 years in prison on charges of “assembly and conspiracy to act against national security.”<sup>108</sup> Nasrin was summoned to serve her sentence on 30 June 2020<sup>109</sup> and while it has not yet been implemented, it may be enforced at any time.



## ASAL MOHAMMADI

**Age:** 33  
**Activities/Rights:** Workers rights activist  
**Status:** 5 years imprisonment  
**Judicial status:** Released on bail  
**Violations:** Arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial

### BACKGROUND

Asal Mohammadi is a worker’s rights activist and a nurse who is studying for a PhD in pharmacology. She was part of a group of four journalists and editorial staff from Gam Magazine who covered the Workers Union of Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Company strikes.<sup>110</sup>

She was arrested at her home by security agents on 4 December 2018 and taken to the Ahvaz Intelligence Detention Centre. She was arrested due to her support of the week-long Haft Tappeh strikes. After enduring solitary confinement and interrogations for a month, Asal was transferred to Sepidar Prison in Ahvaz and ultimately to Evin Prison in Tehran.

### UPDATE

In September 2019, she was sentenced to 18 years in prison by Branch 28 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court, presided by Judge Moghiseh.<sup>111</sup> Asal was released on a bail of 2 billion Tomans on 2 November 2019. The Tehran Court of Appeals reduced her sentence down to five years in December 2019.

In an interview with Iran Wire in January 2020, she discussed another case that was opened against her as “she was still continuing her activism”. A text she had received a week prior to the interview informed her that her case had been referred to Branch 7 of the Evin Investigation Unit, with “Behrouz Shah Mohammadi” as the investigator.<sup>112</sup> While she remains out on bail, her sentence may be implemented at any time.



## NEDA NAJI

**Age:** 32

**Activities/Rights:** Workers and women's rights activist

**Status:** Pardoned

**Judicial status:** 5 years and 6 months imprisonment

**Violations:** Arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial

### BACKGROUND

Neda Naji is an activist who was arrested during a International Workers' Day rally in 2019, and transferred to Ward 209 of the Ministry of Intelligence in Evin Prison. After 45 days of interrogations, she was transferred to Qarchak Prison in Varamin on 15 June 2019. She was transferred from Qarchak Prison in Varamin to the women's ward of Evin Prison on 7 August 2019.

### UPDATE

Her trial, presided over by Judge Moghiseh, was held on 13 November 2019 in Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran. According to the verdict issued on December 4, Neda was sentenced to five years and six months imprisonment on charges of "assembly and collusion, propaganda against the system, disturbing public order and disobeying the orders of government officials."<sup>113</sup>

Neda Naji was furloughed on 27 February 2020. In a Twitter post on April 12, her husband, Jamal Ameli, wrote: "Today, we went to Evin Prison for a follow-up of Neda's case, it was determined that Neda Naji has been granted amnesty according to the March 17 judicial section and since she's already served a third of her sentence, she won't be required to go back to prison."<sup>114</sup>



## ATEFEH RANGRIZ

**Age:** 32

**Activities/Rights:** Workers rights activist

**Status:** Released

**Judicial status:** 5 years imprisonment

**Violations:** Arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial

### BACKGROUND

Atefeh Rangriz is a women's rights activist, who was also arrested at the International Workers Day rally on 1st May 2019 and transferred to Qarchak Prison in Varamin. She was transferred to Ward 209 of Evin Prison for the interrogations and returned to Qarchak Prison thereafter.

### UPDATE

In September 2019, Atefeh was sentenced to 11 years and six months in prison on charges of "conspiracy against national security and disturbing public order" by Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran, presided over by judge Moghiseh.<sup>115</sup>

She went on hunger strike in protest to being kept in prison despite having posted bail on 20 October 2019.<sup>116</sup> She was finally released on bail on 26 October 2019.<sup>117</sup> Her sentence was reduced to five years imprisonment by the Tehran Court of Appeals in December 2019.

On 24 May 2020, her lawyer, Amir Raeisian told Shargh new agency that while Atefeh had received a summons to serve her sentence, at the behest of the judiciary, he had been orally informed that Atefeh's sentence had been revoked and she would not be required to return to prison.<sup>118</sup>



## HASSAN SAEEDI

**Age:** 43  
**Activities/Rights:** Workers rights  
**Status:** Released  
**Judicial status:** 5 years imprisonment revoked  
**Violations:** Arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial

### BACKGROUND

Hassan Saeedi is a member of the Union of the Workers of Tehran Unified Bus Company. He was arrested for the first time on 10 August 2018, when security forces raided union activist and former political prisoner, Reza Shahabi's house and arrested five people including Hassan. They were released two days later.

### UPDATE

Hassan was arrested again on 1 May 2019, along with other participants of the May Day rally. Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran, presided over by Judge Iman Afshari, sentenced him to five years in prison and a two year ban on the use of smartphones and membership and activities in political and social groups and parties for "disturbing public order" and "assembly and collusion to disrupt national security."

The sentence was upheld by Branch 36 of the Court of Appeals,<sup>119</sup> and on 14 January 2020, Hassan received his summons notifications to serve his sentence.

In late June, the Union of the Workers of Tehran Unified Bus Company reported that Hassan's five year sentence had been revoked.<sup>120</sup>

## RASOUL TALEB-MOGHADDAM



**Age:** 44  
**Activities/Rights:** Workers rights  
**Status:** Released  
**Judicial status:** 2 years imprisonment, 74 lashes and exile  
**Violations:** Arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, lack of due process, unfair trial

### BACKGROUND

Rasoul Taleb-Moghaddam is a workers rights activist and a member of the Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company Syndicate. He was also among those detained at the May Day Rally in 2019. On May 11, he was released from Evin Prison's Ward 209 on a bail of 280 million Tomans.

### UPDATE

On 14 August 2019, Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court headed by Judge Afshari sentenced Rasoul to two years in prison, two years exile in Afriz, a village in South Khorasan Province, 74 lashes, a two-year ban on using a smartphone and joining political and social parties and groups on charges of "propaganda against the system" and "disturbing public order."

Following the sentencing, Rasoul surrendered himself to Evin Prison on 1 June 2020 and was flogged 74 times almost immediately. He was released from prison the next day.<sup>121</sup>



## RAHA AHMADI

Age:

Activities/Rights: Women's rights activist

Status: On furlough from Qarchak Prison

Judicial status: 2 years imprisonment

Violations: Arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial

### BACKGROUND

Raha Ahmadi, a civil activist and a supporter of the "White Wednesdays Campaign". After Yasaman Aryani and Monireh Arabshahi were arrested for handing out flowers and pastries to fellow passengers in a women's only carriage on the Tehran metro on International Women's Day, she appeared in a video posted online, handing out flowers to passengers with other activists in the Tehran metro in support of the detained mother and daughter.<sup>122</sup>

She was arrested by plainclothes agents on her way to work on 4 August 2019 and taken to Vozara Detention Centre before being transferred to Qarchak Prison in Varamin in mid-August.<sup>123</sup>

### UPDATE

On 4 December 2019, Raha was sentenced to two years in prison for "assembly and collusion" by Branch 15 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court, presided by Judge Salavati.<sup>124</sup>

Her sentence was upheld by the Tehran Court of Appeals on 19 February 2020.<sup>125</sup> She was granted temporary leave on bail from 11 May-26 May and 7 June-20 June and has been on a one-month leave since October 8.



## RAHELEH AHMADI

Age: 50

Activities/Rights: Women's rights activist

Status: Evin Prison

Judicial status: 31 months imprisonment

Violations: Arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial

### BACKGROUND

Raheleh Ahmadi is a mother who demanded justice for her daughter, Saba Kordafshari on social media. She was also with Monireh Arabshahi, Yasaman Aryani and Mojgan Keshavarz as they handed out flowers and pastries to fellow passengers in a women's only carriage on the Tehran metro on International Women's Day 2019.

Raheleh was arrested at her home on 10 July 2019 in order to pressure her daughter, Saba to make a false televised confession against herself. She was informed that she was being charged with "inciting and facilitating corruption and prostitution" through unveiling in public and posting it on social media, "assembly and collusion against national security" through cooperation with enemy media, "propaganda against the Islamic Republic system" and transferred to Qarchak Prison. After registering her cartex, she was transferred to the IRGC Ward 2A in Evin Prison, where her daughter was being held. Following interrogations, she was returned to Qarchak prison on July 12 and released on a bail of 700 million Tomans pending trial.<sup>126</sup>

### UPDATE

On 16 December 2019, Branch 26 of Tehran Revolutionary Court, presided over by Judge Afshari, sentenced Raheleh to a total of four years and two months in prison; three years and six months for "assembly and collusion to act against national security through cooperation with dissident media", and eight months for "propaganda against the system." She was acquitted of the charge of "inciting and facilitating corruption and prostitution".

Her sentence was reduced to two years and seven months in prison for not protesting the decision. Raheleh was arrested on 15 February 2020 after attending Branch 3 of the Evin Court and transferred to the Women's Ward of Evin Prison to serve out her sentence.<sup>127</sup>



## MONIREH ARABSHAHI

Age: 51

Activities/Rights: Civil Activist and anti-compulsory hijab activist

Status: Kachouii Prison

Judicial status: 9 years and 7 months imprisonment

Violations: Arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial

### BACKGROUND

Monireh Arabshahi is a civil and women's rights activist who on International Women's Day 2019, unveiled along with her daughter, Yasaman Aryani, Mojgan Keshavarz and Raheleh Ahmadi and handed out flowers and pastries to fellow passengers in a women's only carriage on the Tehran metro, which was filmed and shared widely.

On 11 April 2019, a day after her daughter was arrested, as Monireh and her husband were on their way to find out her fate, their car was stopped by police and she was arrested on the complaint of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance (MCIG). She was taken to Moghadas Court and transferred to Qarchak Prison in Varamin thereafter.

### UPDATE

Her trial was held on 31 July 2019 at Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran, presided by Judge Moghiseh. According to the judgement, Monireh was sentenced to a total of 16 years imprisonment on charges of "assembly and collusion against national security, propaganda against the system and inciting and facilitating corruption and prostitution."<sup>128</sup> On appeal, the sentence was reduced to nine years and seven months in prison by Branch 54 of the Tehran Court of Appeals.<sup>129</sup>

Monireh was transferred from Qarchak prison in Varamin to the women's ward of Evin prison on 13 August 2019. On 21 October 2020, her lawyer, Babak Paknia tweeted that he had been informed that his clients, Monireh and Yasaman were told they had a meeting with their lawyer, which was a lie and upon leaving their ward, they were transferred to Kachouii Prison in Karaj.<sup>130</sup>



## YASAMAN ARYANI

Age: 25

Activities/Rights: Women's rights activist

Status: Kachouii Prison

Judicial status: 9 years and 7 months imprisonment

Violations: Arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial

### BACKGROUND

Yasaman Aryani is a women's rights activist and an actress. First arrested along with more than 50 others on Valiasr Street in Tehran on 2 August 2018, for participating in protests against corruption and the deteriorating economy, she was transferred to Qarchak prison in Varamin. In October 2018, she was sentenced by Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court, presided by Judge Moghiseh, to one year in prison on charges of "propaganda against the system" and "disturbing order" and transferred to Evin Prison. Along with a number of others, Yasaman was pardoned by the Supreme Leader on 11 February 2019, as part of a general pardon coinciding with the 40th anniversary of the 1979 revolution, and was released from prison six months later. On 8 April 2019, as she was preparing for a role in a play at Malek Theatre (Actor's Studio), she found out that her role had been cut and she was fired by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance (MCIG).

On International Women's Day 2019, unveiled, Yasaman and her mother, Monireh Arabshahi, Mojgan Keshavarz and Raheleh Ahmadi handed out flowers and pastries to fellow passengers in a women's only carriage on the Tehran metro, which was filmed and shared widely. On April 10, she was arrested after security forces raided her house, confiscating her laptop and phone.<sup>131</sup> In a brief call to her father following her arrest, she said she had been arrested due to a complaint from the MCIG for "distributing flowers in a metro women's only carriage on March 8". The next day, as her parents were travelling to find out what had happened to their daughter, their car was stopped by police and her mother, Monireh Arabshahi was also arrested on the complaint of the MCIG. The case investigator and security officials stated that the mother and daughter had been detained for a month and transferred to Qarchak Prison in Varamin. They were subsequently transferred from Qarchak Prison to the women's ward of Evin Prison on August 13.

### UPDATE

On 26 June 2019, Yasaman was sentenced to 16 years imprisonment for "assembly and collusion against national security, propaganda against the system and inciting and facilitating corruption and prostitution" by Branch 28 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court, presided by Judge Moghiseh.<sup>132</sup>

The sentence was reduced to nine years and seven months by Branch 54 of Tehran Court of Appeals on 5 February 2020. Yasaman was transferred from the women's ward of Evin Prison to Ward 2A from 5-10 October.<sup>133</sup> On 21 October 2020, her lawyer, Babak Paknia tweeted that he had been informed that his clients, Yasaman and Monireh were told they had a meeting with their lawyer, which was a lie and upon leaving their ward, they were transferred to Kachouii Prison in Karaj.<sup>134</sup>



## MOJGAN KESHAVARZ

**Age:** 31  
**Activities/Rights:** Women's rights activist  
**Status:** Evin Prison  
**Judicial status:** 12 years and 7 months imprisonment  
**Violations:** Arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial

### BACKGROUND

Mojgan Keshavarz is a women's rights activist who along with Yasaman Aryani and Monireh Arabshahi and Raheleh Ahmadi unveiled and handed out flowers and sweets on a women's only carriage on the Tehran metro on International Women's Day 2019.

In the video, she says: "I hope one day, all women, whether with the hijab or without, can stand together without judgement and Iran is for all Iranians. I hope for a day when there's no violence against women, no man throws acid at a women, that laughter and happiness will be for all women, that no woman stands against another. Women have to support each other, unfortunately we have violence against women in Iran. We don't have the right to choose our own clothes, we don't have the right to sing. We don't have the right to an equal inheritance, the right to enter a stadium, the right to become a judge. Instead, we have too many rights to be censored and oppressed. Let's prepare ourselves for change. Congratulations on your day ladies! I hope we all stand together, with or without the hijab."

She was arrested at her home in front of her 9 year old daughter on 25 April 2019 and taken to Vozara Detention Centre before being transferred to Qarchak Prison in Varamin.<sup>135</sup>

### UPDATE

On 31 July 2019, Mojgan was sentenced to 23 years and six months at Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran, presided by Judge Moghiseh; five years for "assembly and collusion against national security", a year for "propaganda against the system", ten years for "inciting and facilitating corruption through unveiling" and seven years and six months for insulting Islamic sanctities.<sup>136</sup> According to Amnesty International, Mojgan, Yasaman and Monireh said the judge "yelled and swore at them and threatened them with years of imprisonment in Shahre Rey (Qarchak) Prison".<sup>137</sup>

The sentence was reduced to 12 years and seven months by Branch 54 of the Tehran Court of Appeals.<sup>138</sup> Mojgan was transferred from Qarchak prison in Varamin to the women's ward of Evin prison on 13 August 2019.



## SABA KORDAFSHARI

**Age:** 24  
**Activities/Rights:** Women's rights activist  
**Status:** Qarchak Prison, Varamin  
**Judicial status:** 24 years imprisonment  
**Violations:** Arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial, duress to extract forced confession, harassment and trumped-up charges against family members

### BACKGROUND

Saba Kordafshari is a civil and women's rights activist. She was first arrested on 2 August 2018 during the popular protests of July-August 2018. She was sentenced to a year in prison on a "disrupting public order" charge but was released on 14 February 2019 as part of general pardon marking the 40th anniversary of the revolution.

Saba was re-arrested on 1 June 2019 at her father's house and transferred to the Vozara Detention Centre.<sup>139</sup> It was explained that she was being arrested for "propaganda against the system through dissident groups and a soft overthrow plan, spreading corruption and prostitution and walking without a hijab, assembly and collusion and propaganda activities through contact with Masih Alinejad and HRANA News Agency." This was a reference to the White Wednesdays-My Stealthy Freedom campaign, started by Alinejad. She was subjected to 11 days of interrogations and pressured to make a televised false confession, before being transferred to Qarchak prison in Varamin.

On 3 July 2019, she was transferred to the IRGC Intelligence Detention Centre known as Ward 2A to force her to do a televised confession, which she refused again.<sup>140</sup> In order to add to the psychological pressure, security forces raided her family's home and arrested her mother, Raheleh Ahmadi and took her to the same ward.<sup>141</sup> Saba was transferred to the women's ward of Evin Prison on 13 August 2019. On 27 August 2019, Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran, presided by Judge Iman Afshari sentenced her to 24 years imprisonment: 15 years in prison for "inciting and facilitating corruption and prostitution" through unveiling, seven and a half years for "assembly and colluding against national security", a year and a half for "propaganda against the system" along with social restrictions.<sup>142</sup> On appeal, Branch 36 of the Court of Appeals acquitted her of the "inciting and facilitating corruption and prostitution" charges, thus reducing her sentence to nine years in prison, and she would have to serve seven and a half after the application of Article 134.<sup>143</sup>

### UPDATE

On 30 May 2020, her lawyer, Hossein Taj, tweeted that in a phone call with Saba, she had told him that the 15 year sentence, from which she was acquitted by Branch 36 of the Appeal Courts, has been altered in the written appeal judgement, meaning that her sentence has been secretly and unlawfully increased up to 24 years.<sup>144</sup>

## NEDAYE ZANANE IRAN

Activities/Rights: Women's rights

Status: Released

Judicial status: 2 years and 3 months imprisonment

Violations: Arbitrary arrest and detention, lack of due process, unfair trial



### BACKGROUND

Nahid Shaghghi, Akram Nasirian, Maryam Mohammadi and Asrin Darkaleh are members and collaborators of "Nedaye Zanane Iran Association" (Iranian Women's Voice Association) who work on women's rights issues. According to the association, "Nedaye Zanane Iran is a reflection of the efforts, sufferings, failures and successes of women in Iranian society and seeks to empower women to achieve a better life in the face of difficulties and discrimination."<sup>145</sup>

### UPDATE

In December 2019, they were tried by Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran, presided by Judge Iman Afshari, who sentenced each to three years in prison for "conspiracy to commit a crime against national security", six months for "propaganda against the system" and eight months for "committing a haram act such as unveiling."

Their sentence was reduced to two years and three months on account of them not protesting the sentence.<sup>146</sup>

## Recommendations

### Iran Human Rights calls on the Islamic Republic of Iran to:

- Release all imprisoned human rights defenders immediately and unconditionally.
- Provide proper medical care for all prisoners in line with the international law and standards.
- Cooperate with the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Iran, allow him to visit Iran and meet the human rights defenders in person.
- Guarantee freedom of expression and peaceful association and safeguard the activities of human rights defenders.
- Prosecute and bring to justice those who committed crimes against human rights defenders in prisons, including those who ordered torturing HRDs in order to extract forced confessions.
- Perform impartial and transparent investigations on the suspicious deaths in detention including that of Kavous Seyed Emami.
- Avoid and prevent judicial pressure on human rights defenders, journalists and other activists, taking into account international standards in this respect.

### Iran Human Rights calls on the international community to:

- Put the condition of the human rights defenders on the agenda of all bilateral and multilateral talks with the Iranian authorities.
- Call upon the Iranian authorities to release the imprisoned human rights defenders unconditionally.
- Support the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of the human rights in Iran.
- Use the UPR and all other UN mechanisms to put focus on the situation of human rights defenders in Iran.
- Hold Iranian authorities accountable for the harassment, persecution, torture and imprisonment of the human rights defenders.

- 1 <https://twitter.com/mostafaMTH/status/1156227607517630465>
- 2 <https://www.hra-news.org/2019/hranews/a-21263/>
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