
NCRI **Women's Committee**
Monthly Report



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October 2015

Introduction:

In the month of October we witnessed the execution of a young woman, Fatemeh Salbehi, who was a minor at the time of alleged crime and subsequent arrest and imprisonment. We also saw another spate of crackdown and killings of Iranian women under the mullahs' rule. Female prisoners faced increasing pressure. The International Human Rights Federation and the Global Organization against Torture expressed outrage over the conditions of Narges Mohammadi and other similar cases. Arrests of civil and political activists, lashing people and pressuring religious minorities were also on the regime's agenda.

The "Hairdressers Police" was a new entity formed to arrest and detain even more women. On Khamenei's emphasized orders, Interior Ministry officials set out to implement further regulations for the observation of the compulsory veil and stationed more female police agents on the streets.

October was also the month of protests held by mothers of prisoners. These courageous women made their demands heard as they stood firm outside prison walls and state organizations, demanding release of their loved ones.

Systematic violations of the right to life

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

Executions



Fatemeh Salbehi was executed on Tuesday, October 13 in Adel Abad Prison of Shiraz.

Amnesty International had warned a day earlier of her imminent execution. This prisoner was only 17 at the time of her alleged crime.

Salbehi had not accepted the charges in court, yet the judge ordered her execution. The regime's Supreme Court upheld this sentence in May.

Salbehi was born in November 1991 and married off at the age of 16 to a man aged 30 whom she had never met before marriage. In April 2009 after the body of her husband was found in their home, Salbehi was arrested and placed under interrogation as the main suspect, and later condemned to death despite all the loopholes in her case.

Prior to this, Amnesty International issued a statement in February 2011 warning of the possibility of execution of Fatemeh Salbehi, and demanding suspension of her execution and those of juveniles.

Amnesty statement referred to her arrest and death sentence while she was under 18 years of age and called on judiciary officials to stop her execution.

After her execution, the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon expressed concern over the increasing number of executions, pointing out that it "reflects a worrying trend in Iran."

“Over 700 executions are reported to have taken place so far this year, including at least 40 public, marking the highest total recorded in the past 12 years,” he said.

(The Guardian – October 20, 2015)

Another development was a ceremony on Sunday, October 25 to remember Reyhaneh Jabbari on the first anniversary of her execution. The gathering was held at Tehran’s Behesht-e Zahra cemetery where participants placed flowers on her grave.



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

October also witnessed lashing verdicts issued for a female Iranian poet by the name of Fatemeh Ekhtesari and her husband. She was sentenced to 11½ years in jail and 99 lashes. The ruling drew protests from Iranian Writers Association. Ms. Ekhtesari is charged with disseminating “propaganda against the state”.



Arbitrary arrests

Intelligence Ministry agents raided the residence of Azimi family and arrested Mahmoud Azimi and his wife Fatemeh Zia’ii Azad, transferring them to an unknown location.

The family has seen its members arrested as political prisoners since the 1980s and during the past few years many have been arrested and transferred to solitary confinement. Ms. Zai’ii, suffering from chronic MS, had been held behind bars for many years while suffering from this illness. (NCRI Women’s Committee – October 15, 2015)

Prison

Prison conditions and pressure on female prisoners were another one of the main aspects of repressive measures against women in October.

Reports indicate that Narges Mohammadi’s health deteriorated while in hospital for treatment. Her hands and feet had been chained to her bed. Ms. Mohammadi fainted when a number of civil activists went to visit her at the hospital. The detained activist is currently serving her term in the women’s ward of Evin Prison. She was hospitalized from October 11 after suffering a number of shocks and seizures due to lung complications and muscular paralysis. Her inhumane conditions in prison have raised numerous protests by human rights



organizations such as the International Human Rights Federation and the World Organization against Torture.



The eye condition of Zeinab Jalalian, another prisoner detained in Khoysar Prison, has aggravated with the winter cold kicking in. Sources close to this prisoner have reported that she may even lose her eyesight. Jalalian was arrested on the charge of “*moharebeh*” (waging war against God) which is punishable by death, but her sentence was later commuted to life in prison.

Atena Farghadani is another case of improper treatment of women and violation of their rights. “She was forced to undergo a ‘virginity and pregnancy test’, prior to her trial for a charge of ‘illegitimate sexual relations’ for shaking hands with her lawyer, ... another stain on Iran’s shameful record of violence against women,” Amnesty International wrote. (Amnesty International – October 9, 2015)



Basic freedom and rights abused

As for violation of women’s basic rights in the past month, the “Hairdressers Patrol” was launched to arrest even more women. The Interior Ministry, on the orders of Khamenei, began implementing the plan for mandatory veiling and strict clothing regulations in recreational areas and even kindergartens.

Strengthening and expanding gender-segregated universities is a top priority for the 11th government, said Rouhani’s deputy Minister of sciences, research and technology. (State-run IRNA news agency – October 4, 2015)



Khamenei’s representative in Isfahan, Tabatabaiee-nezhad, reiterated, “Gender segregation is a necessity for an Islamic society, and university officials across the country must take this issue into consideration.” (State-run IRNA news agency –

October 10, 2015)

As for mandatory dress-code, an Interior Ministry director made significant remarks emphasizing Khamenei’s role in this regard. The state-run Mehr news agency cited Ali Molazadeh as saying: “The Staff (in charge of) Safeguarding Sanctum of General Security and Citizens’ Rights is involved in the two arenas of expanding the culture of virtue and veiling, and drafting citizens’ rights,” he said. “These two issues are of grave concern to the Leader (Khamenei) and must be seen to.”



He further underscored that orders containing 310 articles have been issued to 27 executive and administrative agencies in order to carry out this plan.

“These measures are in line with expanding the culture of virtue and veiling,” he added. Molazadeh explained that under this plan, kindergartens and recreation areas will also be placed under supervision. (State-run Mehr news agency – October 21, 2015)

Religious and ethnic minorities



Violations of ethnic minorities' rights continued in Iran in the past month. Nasim Bagheri, a professor of the Baha'is internet university, was arrested and sentenced to 4 years behind bars on charges of propaganda against the state and measures against national security.

Another case involved a Christian woman by the name of Mahtab Mohammadi arrested in Tehran. Security agents had previously placed her family under immense pressure by summoning Mohammadi's mother and sister.



Women protests

Protests by women and girls across Iran continued in October. One of the main rallies was the gathering of teachers held outside the Education Department in the city of Rasht, northern Iran, demanding officials' response.



Another rally was outside Abadan's Free University in southwestern Iran where female students were seen clashing with security agents.

"The truth must be told" was the cry of a mother of an imprisoned student by the name of Amin Anwari. She was protesting in defense of her son outside the prison where he was held. This brave mother also explained how she had gone to Evin Prison many times without receiving any information about her son's whereabouts. This grieving mother expressed her thoughts as such: "I will support my son until the very last drop of my blood. I will raze Evin to the ground and release my child!" Protests held by this and other mothers ultimately led to the freedom of Amin Anwari.

