



NCRI Women's Committee

Monthly Report

December

2016

Introduction

The Women's Committee of the National Council of Resistance of Iran wishes a Happy New Year for all human and women's rights activists and hopes that the New Year will bring more advancements for the equality movement, peace and friendship to all nations and freedom to the people and women of Iran.

In the final month of 2016, the UN General Assembly adopted its 63rd resolution on December 19, condemning the violations of human rights in Iran. The resolution urged the Iranian regime among others "to eliminate, in law and in practice, all forms of discrimination and other human rights violations against women and girls," as well as against "persons belonging to ethnic, linguistic or other minorities," "address the poor conditions of prisons, to eliminate the denial of access to adequate medical treatment and the consequent risk of death faced by prisoners," and "to release persons arbitrarily detained for the legitimate exercise of these rights."

The Iranian Resistance's President-elect Maryam Rajavi said the 63rd resolution condemning human rights violations in Iran, makes it more essential than ever to refer the regime's dossier of systematic and flagrant violations of human rights to the United Nations Security Council, and prosecute its senior officials.

The Iranian women continued to express their protest as they did in the previous months. These protests extended from inside prisons, to universities and the streets across from the parliament, to marches for protection of the environment, to the gatherings of activist mothers commemorating victims of the regime's clampdown and breaking the atmosphere of silence and fear under repression.

Maryam Akbari Monfared sent yet another letter out of prison demanding prosecution of the masterminds and perpetrators of the 1988 massacre; Kurdish political prisoner Hajar Peari chanted "death to the dictator" in the face of the security forces who had raided her cell in the Central Prison of Kerman; Atena Daemi sent out a letter denying the unfounded charges levelled against her by the Revolutionary Guards; and Golrokht Iraee sent out an open letter holding the regime's officials accountable for the health of her imprisoned husband who is on hunger strike.

Women were again deprived of playing and performing in concerts. Frequent arrests of young women and men in private parties also continued to preserve the atmosphere of repression.

Reports on the poverty, especially of women, who have to sleep in graves in the cold of winter sent shockwaves through the society. Officials admitted 100 per cent growth in the number of homeless women in Tehran and new data was published on forced marriages of underage girls.

Inhumane treatment and cruel punishments

Political prisoner Shahla Mohammadiani, 28, has been tortured viciously under interrogation for 67 days while detained in solitary confinement of Mahabad's Intelligence Department in the Iranian Kurdistan.

Heman Mohammadiani, her brother, said Shahla had been tortured so much that her left shoulder has been disabled.

Ms. Mohammadiani is charged with membership in one of the Kurdish parties and of disseminating anti-government propaganda. Her brother has denied the trumped up charges.

Forces of the Municipality of Ahwaz attacked and wounded a woman peddling in the street on December 6, 2016. The son of this defenseless woman explained that a group of ten men from the Municipality's Implementation Office, armed with electric shockers, hit his 70-year-old mother who had set up her stuff in front of his shop and threw her to the ground. Ahwaz is the capital of the southern province of Khuzistan.



Prison

Prison conditions

Intelligence agents raided the cell where Afsaneh Bayazidi and Hajar Peari were detained in the Central Prison of Kerman and confiscated some of their personal belongings.



According to an informed source from inside Kerman's prison, Hajar Peari defied security agents' obscenities and foul language by chanting, "death to the dictator", and was subsequently transferred to solitary confinement.

Hajar Peari, 33, has been imprisoned since November 2007 without enjoying any leave. She is sentenced to 17 years in prison. She is accused of support for and membership in opposition Kurdish parties but is detained with dangerous and common criminals charged with drug trafficking.

Ms. Peari was transferred, despite her strong protest, on December 23 to Tabriz Prison after nine years of internal exile in the Central Prison of Kerman.

On the eve of the International Human Rights Day, Amnesty International launched [a new petition](#) for freedom of a number of human rights activists around the world. Among them was the Kurdish Iranian woman, Zeinab Jalalian, who is denied treatment for her eyes.



Amnesty International explained, "Zeynab Jalalian, aged 34, was a political activist working to empower Iran's ethnic minority Kurds, particularly women..."

"Today Zeynab suffers from a severe eye condition that urgently needs specialist surgery. Yet the authorities won't permit it."

Amnesty International issued an [Urgent Action](#) on December 12, 2016, protesting the illegal and violent arrest of human rights defender and anti-death penalty campaigner Atena Daemi, and calling for her release.



Atena Daemi was informed on December 19, 2016, at Evin's Prosecutor's Office that she had been charged with "insulting the leader and officials" of the regime and "disseminating lies."

Ms. Daemi denied the charges and reiterated that she is the one who filed a complaint on the day of her arrest and that her complaint must be attended to.

Political prisoner Lavin Karimi who is suffering from hemorrhage of stomach ulcer started a hunger strike on December 21, 2016, to protest the refusal of Hamedan Prison authorities to allow her treatment at hospital and the prosecutor's refusal to grant her leave.



The young student from Saqqez suffered stomach ulcer due to torture under interrogation. Lavin Karimi, 26, was studying management, when she was arrested on the charge of cooperation with an opposition Kurdish party and sentenced to three years of imprisonment.



Tehran's Prosecutor's Office decided that the Christian prisoner Maryam Naghash Zargaran will stay incarcerated at Christmas and will not be conditionally released. Ms. Zargaran returned to prison from medical leave on December 6, despite her heart condition. She has been imprisoned since July 19, 2013.

Amnesty International issued an [urgent action](#) on December 19, 2016, indicating, "Iranian Revolutionary Guard officials have pressured British-Iranian charity worker Nazanin Zaghari Ratcliffe, a prisoner of conscience, to choose between moving her two-year-old daughter into prison with her for up to three days a week or sign a document to say that she does not want the 'right to be with her young daughter'."

There are no suitable facilities for children inside Evin Prison and neither choice is acceptable to Ms. Zaghami. AI wrote, "What she had requested from the authorities instead is more regular visits – either a day-long visit or two half-day visits each week – with her daughter. She is currently allowed to have only one hour-long visit per week. The authorities seem to have imposed this choice in a misguided attempt to counter the negative publicity caused by the fact that she has been separated from her child."



Arbitrary arrests

Two women were arrested in the course of a protest by the people of Khorramshahr to the diversion of Karoun River on December 8, 2016. They were taken to the detention center of the Department of Intelligence in this city. Rahil Moussavi, 22, photographer and reporter, was arrested on her way home. Security forces acted violently snatching her camera by force and brutally pushing her into their car. Roghieh Jaafari, 38, an environmental activist with four children, was also arrested during the protest.



Tahereh Riyahi, social secretary of BORNA news agency was arrested on December 27, 2016, for allegedly disseminating anti-government propaganda. (The state-run ILNA news agency - December 27, 2016)

Nine women and 14 men were arrested on December 5th, in a co-ed party in a Kahoo village garden, announced the IRGC commander of Chenaran, in the northeastern province of Khorasan. Those arrested were handed over with their files to the city's judiciary officials. (The state-run ROKNA news agency - December 6, 2016)

He also announced that his forces had arrested 18 girls and boys in a private party. Those arrested were between 18 and 25 years of age and were handed over to the authorities to go through the judicial process. (The state-run Fars news agency - December 17, 2016)

On December 9, 2016, Mashhad's police raided a private party in Torghabeh Shandiz and arrested 24 people including 8 women. (The state-run Iran Online website - December 11, 2016)

The Moral Security Police Force arrested more than 30 young women and a number of young men in a private party held at a restaurant in downtown Tehran. An informed source said those arrested were in the range of 18 to 25 years of age. (The state-run Donya-e Eghtesad newspaper)

On December 14, 2016, some 120 women and men were arrested at a coffee shop in downtown Tehran. They had rented the place for a celebration. Government forces took them all to prison and shut down the coffee shop. (The state-run ROKNA website – December 14, 2016)

The State Security Force has arrested 1,200 internet users, including some 300 women, in Iran over eight months from March to November 2016, for their activities in social networks. This was announced by the SSF Commander of Tehran, Hossein Sajedi-Nia.



Sajedi-Nia announced that 986 men and 298 women had been arrested in eight months. They are accused of disseminating false information, and audio and video clips on the internet.

Twenty-six young women and men, mostly university students, were arrested on December 22, 2016, in a nightly raid on a house in Abadan. The judge presiding over this case has summoned the families of the youngsters. (The state-run IRNA news agency – December 23, 2016)

Four women and a man were arrested in Mashhad for giving massage to the opposite sex. Deputy Prosecutor of Mashhad confirmed the report on December 26, 2016. (The state-run ROKNA news agency - December 27, 2016)

Basic freedoms and rights abused

Holding mixed-sex camping ventures by universities was officially banned in Iran.



The announcement was made by the Minister of Science, Research and Technology, Mohammad Farhadi, on December 7, just one day after Iran's Students Day. He told the parliament that such camping events would be punished. (The state-run ISNA news agency – December 7, 2016)

Security forces prevented a seven-year-old girl from entering Tehran's Azadi Stadium to watch a football game along with her father.



She had travelled all the way from Shabestar (northwestern province of East Azerbaijan) to Tehran to watch an important competition between two of the country's best teams, Esteghlal and Trakhtorsazi. (The state-run Khabaronline website, December 10, 2016)

A female player was prevented from going on stage on December 25, 2016, during a concert despite previous arrangements and permissions obtained for the concert.



Members of the musical group placed the instrument of Melanie Avanessian, the Christian woman who was prevented from playing in the concert, on the stage on her seat to show their solidarity and respect for her. (The state-run Fars news agency – December 26, 2016)

Religious and ethnic minorities



Mona Houshmand and Farinaz Mokhtari were expelled from university and deprived from continuing their education, due to their Bahaii faith. Security forces of the Intelligence Department also arrested Bahaii couple, Fariba Rouhani and her husband Amrollah Khaleghian, on December 21, 2016.

Consequences of Gender Apartheid in Iran

Considerable information was published in December on the dire economic and social conditions of women in Iran.

One of these reports indicated that an average of 50,000 women have been excluded from the job market every year in the period between 2005 and 2015.



Women's economic participation rate was 17 per cent for women in 2005 compared to 64.7 per cent for men. In 2015, women's economic participation dropped to 13.3 compared to 63.2 per cent for men. (The state-run Mehr news agency – December 17, 2016)

A member of Tehran's City Council revealed that there has been a 100% growth in the number of homeless women in Tehran over a span of six months.

Based on figures provided by Tehran Municipality patrols, Fatemeh Daneshvar said they rounded up 544 homeless women in the period between October 2015 and March 2016. While in the period from March to September 2016, the patrols rounded up 1038 homeless women in Tehran. "This shows a 100% rise in the number of homeless women," she said. (The state-run Tasnim news agency – December 5, 2016)

533 girls were married under 14 years of age including 5 who were under 10 years, in the 8-month period between March and November 2016 in the province of Isfahan.

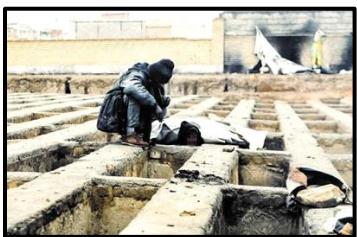


This was announced by Haj Rahimian, the General Director of the Census Registration Department of Isfahan on December 29, 2016. The legal age of marriage for girls in Iran is 13 and girls can be married under this age with the consent of their fathers or guardians.

(The state-run Tabnak website of Isfahan – December 29, 2016)

Poverty has also compelled many women in Iran to abandon their newborn infants and endure its consequent psychological distress. According to Ziba Mojarrab, head of the office of children without parents in the northeastern Province of Razavi Khorasan, "Every month, some 60 abandoned infants are turned in to the Welfare Organization in Mashhad." (The state-run Mehr news agency – December 13, 2016)

There were also shocking reports indicating that the cold of winter had driven poor women to sleeping in graves. These reports revealed that some 50 people sleep inside empty graves of Nassirabad Cemetery in Shahriar (a small city west of Tehran). They include a woman by the name of Shahnaz who lives with her 18-year-old son and 16-year-old twins in one of these graves. A number of families have also set up tents outside and around the cemetery. (The state-run Tabnak website – December 27, 2016)



Women's Protests

In a letter to international organizations which was publicized on December 22, 2016, political prisoner Maryam Akbari Monfared urged the UN to form a court of justice to prosecute the masterminds and perpetrators of the 1988 massacre. She further demanded measures to prevent implementation of the verdict issued for Ahmad Montazeri, son of Ayatollah Montazeri who published an audio file from his father's meeting in August 2016, revealing new information on the 1988 massacre.



Maryam Akbari Monfared was arrested on the charge of "waging war on God". She was sentenced to 15 years in prison and has already served seven years in Evin. On October 16, 2016, she declared that she is filing suit to seek justice for her siblings executed in the 1980s.

Civil and children's rights activist Atena Daemi sent a letter out of prison after she was arrested and taken to Evin Prison on November 26, 2016. In this letter, Ms. Daemi protested the corrupt Iranian Judiciary that leaves real criminals, namely the officials and government affiliates who issue death sentences, embezzle money and rape children, at large but imprisons human rights activists and advocates of children and women's rights.



Imprisoned human rights activist Golrokhs Iraee sent out an open letter from Evin Prison, protesting dire conditions of her imprisoned husband, Arash Sadeghi, who is on hunger strike. Ms. Iraee held the Prosecutor's Office, the Judiciary and the Revolutionary Guards Corps responsible for anything that might happen for her husband.



Ms. Iraee noted her December 4 visit to her husband and wrote, "In the presence of guards, I visited my husband. He was suffering from low blood pressure. He had lost a remarkable amount of weight (18 kilograms in 40 days), was very weak and could hardly walk with the help of a soldier who accompanied him..."

Ms. Iraee also pointed out in her letter that female prisoners are deprived of visitation by their families. "The women's ward (of Evin) has restrictions on phone calls. The women imprisoned in this ward are allowed to call their families only once a week for only a few minutes in the presence of guards. This week, I was deprived of even this much being completely isolated from the news of my husband."



A group of female students of Tehran's Allameh Tabataba'i University staged a protest on December 3, 2016, against gender discrimination and dormitory rules which restrict the time of women's entry and exit. The protesting young women reside in Farahmand Dormitory. The dormitory's superintendent physically reacted to the protest by snatching and tearing the statement the students were reading out at the rally.

The university's security forces also threatened the girls that their demands would not be heeded if they continue their protest.



A number of retired teachers and staff of the Education Ministry, a considerable number of them women, staged a protest on December 4, 2016, in front the mullahs' parliament or Majlis. The protest was held simultaneous with Rouhani's speech at the parliament. The protesters complained of unbearable living conditions and low retirement wages.

A human chain called, "I am a the next victim," was formed by residents of Piranshahr (northwest Iran) on December 8, 2016, to protest the several-fold increase in the number of casualties of road accidents in this city. Most of the protesters were young women and girls. They demanded expedition of the construction of Piranshahr-Naghadeh highway and the repair of Piranshahr-Sardasht Road.

Some 70 doctors and nurses of Gachsaran's Rajaii Hospital staged a protest on December 21, 2016, against non-payment of one year of their bonuses.



The protesters, representing 700 personnel of the hospital, gathered in front of the administration building.

Gachsaran is located in the southwestern province of Kohgilouyeh and Boyer Ahmad.

The Governor of Gachsaran, Abdol-Rahim Rahimi said the situation is not limited to Gachsaran and hospitals across the country face the same problem with payment of their personnel's bonuses.

A group of mothers of the victims of the 2009 uprising held a ceremony on December 16, 2016, to commemorate Mostafa Karimbaigi on the seventh anniversary of his martyrdom in Tehran's uprising. The ceremony was held in advance to avoid security threats. Mothers of the victims, the family of Mostafa Karimbaigi, and human rights activists attended the ceremony.



Also a group of Park-e Laleh Mothers and relatives of the martyrs of the 2009 uprising visited the tombs of their loved ones in Behesht-e Zahra and commemorated them on the anniversary of the climax of the uprising on December 26, 2009. Subsequently, they paid visit to Mr. Ahmad Montazeri, son of the late Mr. Hossein Ali Montazeri, who was sentenced to 21 years imprisonment for publishing an audio file of the meeting of his father with members of the Death Commission during the 1988 massacre.

The Park-e Laleh Mothers condemned his unfair sentence and appreciated him for what he did.

They also commemorated Shahram Farajzadeh in a ceremony held on December 28, 2016. The participating families declared their support for the political prisoners who are presently on hunger strike. They demanded immediate release of Arash Sadeghi (#SaveArash) and other political prisoners.