



# WOMEN IMPACT NATIONWIDE PROTESTS AND WORKERS STRIKES IN IRAN

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**MONTHLY REPORT**  
**Women's Committee**  
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## Women impact nationwide protests and workers strikes in Iran

The month of November was marked by widespread and active participation of Iranian women in all major protests.

### Teachers' nationwide protests

Teachers and educators began a second round of strikes and sit-ins across the country on [November 13 and 14, 2018](#). The strike was called for by the Coordination Council of Teachers and Educators. Teachers did not go to classes and stayed in the offices.

The [strikes and sit-ins](#) of Iranian teachers and educators were held in protest against the arrest and suppression of teachers, their dire living conditions, unbridled inflation and their dwindling purchasing power. They also demanded the elimination of discrimination against employed and retired teachers and educators.

One of the most serious demands of Iranian teachers was the release of imprisoned teacher activists, and recognition of independent teachers' unions.

Women teachers were particularly active in the nationwide strike.



The [second round of strikes and sit-ins](#) of teachers took place in more than 40 cities including Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz, Tabriz, Ahvaz, Mashhad, Yazd, Kermanshah, Ilam, Hamedan, Ardebil, Jolfa, Babol, Sari, Noshahr, Langrood, Karaj, Shahriar, Shahr-e Ray, Saveh, Sanandaj, Baneh, Saqqez, Marivan, Ivan-e Gharb, Sirvan, Chaboksar, Kazerun, Lamerd, Homayounshahr, Jam, Asaluyeh, Bushehr, Qazvin, Zanzan, Shahr-e Kord, and Charmahal-e Bakhtiari.



In some cities, students and their parents joined the teachers in solidarity.



The strikes and sit-ins were held despite various threats and harassments by the regime's repressive organs and forces and the summoning and arrests of a number of teacher activists.

In some schools, students and their parents also joined their teachers' strike in solidarity.

[The first round](#) of the strikes and sit-ins of teachers and educators had been held on October 14 and 15, 2018. They had announced that if their demands were not met they would start another round of protests.

### Women arrested in crackdown on teachers

Following the strike, the Coordinating Council of Iranian Educators' Guild Organization announced that 12 teachers had been arrested. A female teacher by the name of Ms. Vaezi from [Shiraz](#) and Fatemeh Bahmani, a female teacher activist from [Arak](#), are among the teachers arrested and detained.

According to the Coordinating Council of Iranian Educators' Guild Organization, 12 teachers were arrested, 30 teacher activists were summoned and interrogated, and over 50 threatening messages were sent to protesting teachers.

Ms. Fatemeh Bahmani, a female teacher activist from Arak, was arrested on November 13, 2018, by the Ministry of Intelligence.

On Monday, November 5, 2018, a group of the residents of Mashhad, accompanied the family of Mr. [Hashem Khastar](#), in their protest outside the [Ebn-e Sina Hospital](#), demanding his release. An activist of the Teachers' League, this retired teacher was arrested arbitrarily at home on October 24, 2018.

The State Security Force arrested two women, Mr. Khastar's son and a few other persons in a bid to apprehend his wife, Ms. Sedigheh Maleki who had obtained permission from the court to visit her husband in hospital, but was not allowed to meet him. She was told that since she gives interviews to the media, they would not give her permission to visit her husband.

Ms. Azam Dideban was arrested in this protest gathering. The State Security Force had announced that all those arrested in this gathering were released on the same night, but Ms. Azam Dideban was not released. She was taken to the detention center of the Intelligence Department and was not allowed to have any visits.



### Daughter calls for release of her father, a teacher activist

During the wave of arbitrary arrests of teachers and activists, Mr. Abbas Vahedian was also arrested by security forces on October 11, 2018, because of his activities in the [Teachers' Guild Association](#) in [Mashhad](#). He was transferred to an unknown location and no information has been available on his fate.

Hengameh Vahedian, Mr. Abbas Vahedian's daughter, announced in an open letter published in November, that no knowledge is available on her father's fate.



She expressed concern over his father's lack of access to a lawyer and said, "Our main problem is that no (government) institution accepts responsibility and all of them claim to be unaware of the case. Our minimum right as a prisoner's family is to know where he is, how he is, and to have a

short visit. However, this information has not been provided for 33 days and we do not know under what charges he is being arrested and where he is being held."

In another part of this open letter, Hengameh wrote, "I went to all the organizations and had to deal with all sorts of ugly and nasty behaviors, but I will never step back and I will continue. I'm sure that one day we will celebrate our freedom together with all your friends."

### **Sugarcane and steel workers' strikes**

More protests and strikes were held by workers in the cities of [Shush](#) and Ahvaz in the southwestern province of Khuzestan.

The strike and demonstrations of sugarcane workers of Haft Tappeh Industrial Complex in [Shush](#), saw the widespread, active and outspoken participation of women in 26 days in November.

[Workers of Haft Tappeh Sugarcane](#) Industrial Complex staged protest gatherings outside the Governorate's building in Shush, demanding end to the private ownership of the complex as well as past due payment of their salaries.



Many workers were accompanied by their wives and whole families. [Women](#) had brought their pre-school and elementary school children with them to the protest march and rallies. The children held placards which read, "We are hungry! HUNGRY."

In various scenes during the protest, [women took the stage](#) and spoke to the gathering of sugarcane workers. A woman teacher also joined the protest in solidarity and spoke to the sugarcane workers.

In one of these speeches, an outspoken woman said, "Workers should have been working in the factory, right now, so that the wheels of the factory would turn. But they must come to the streets and protest. Why? Why should they protest? Because this city does not have anyone in charge! We don't have responsible officials? We have no governor..."

"Dear brothers, we are your sisters. We expect that your sisters, mothers, wives and children would join us. Life has truly become difficult. Little children want different things and become impatient. Officials must be ashamed of the empty tables of Haft Tappeh sugarcane workers. What does it mean? It means that we are hungry."

Another outspoken woman told the gathering of Haft Tappeh sugarcane workers outside the Governorate of Shush, "Another thing is that the governor and officials gathered and said, 'We are discussing to see how to resolve your problems.' (I ask,) 'Sir, how many workers were there when you were solving our problem? How could someone whose stomach is filled be aware of the conditions of a hungry man?'"

Women also actively joined the workers of the Steel Mill of [Ahvaz](#). On Monday, November 26, 2018, [protesting workers](#) crossed the barrier of anti-riot forces and marched into the central city of Ahvaz and chanted, "Government, mafia, congratulations on your unity!"

On Tuesday, November 27, the [demonstrations of the Ahvaz Steel National Group workers](#) continued to be supported with the active participation of women and youth. An Ahvazi woman spoke in support of the workers.

## Workers' protests in Tehran

On the day of the adoption of the labor law, hundreds of [Iranian workers marched](#) in the streets of Tehran and gathered in front of the House of Workers and the Budget and Planning Organization in the capital. Women's participation in this large protest rally was outstanding.

The workers started gathering in the early hours of morning on November 20, 2018, outside the House of Workers on Tehran's Abu-Reyhan Ave. Hundreds of toiling men and women held placards. Some of them read, "No law can prevent workers from demanding their rights."

Workers taking part in this protest chanted slogans demanding pay raise and employment.

A labor activist taking part in this gathering said, "They cannot crack down on workers and arrest them, like they did in the case of the workers of Haft Tappeh, because they participated in a protest. We, workers, declare today that according to principles 26 and 27 of the law, it is our right to form our powerful and independent organizations. It is also our right to hold protest marches and go on strike." (The state-run ILNA news agency – November 20, 2018)



## Solidarity with teachers and workers

On Monday, November 19, 2018, groups of students held protests and pickets at the School of Psychology of Tehran University and in Tehran's Allameh Tabatabaai University. They expressed their support for the protests by teachers and workers. Students read a declaration in support of the strike of Haft Tappeh workers.

Students held a picket line protest on Tuesday, November 20, 2018, in the central campus of Tehran University in solidarity with the workers of Haft Tappeh, supporting their demands. The students chanted, "We are children of workers, we stand by them," "Students, teachers, workers, unite."

Ms. [Farangis Mazlumi](#), mother of political prisoner Soheil Arabi, sent a message in support of the Haft Tappeh Sugarcane workers on Friday, November 23, 2018.

On Tuesday, November 27, a group of retirees from across the country converged in Tehran in front of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs along with active participation of women.

On Wednesday, November 28, 2018, a number of retired Ahvaz medical staff joined the [protests of the Ahvaz Steel workers](#) in front of the city's Governorate building and held a protest rally with them.



On the same day, a group of students from the [Tehran University of Art](#), with the presence of women, gathered in solidarity with the workers of Ahvaz Steel and Haft Tappeh and showed their unity and support with the strike of these workers.

On Wednesday, November 28, 2018, a group of civil activists in [Arak](#) gathered in front of the HEPCO Arak court, in protest against the judicial sentences against labor and civil activists.

The presence of women in these protests was active and noteworthy.

Iranian women have actively participated in at least 735 protests from March to November 2018.