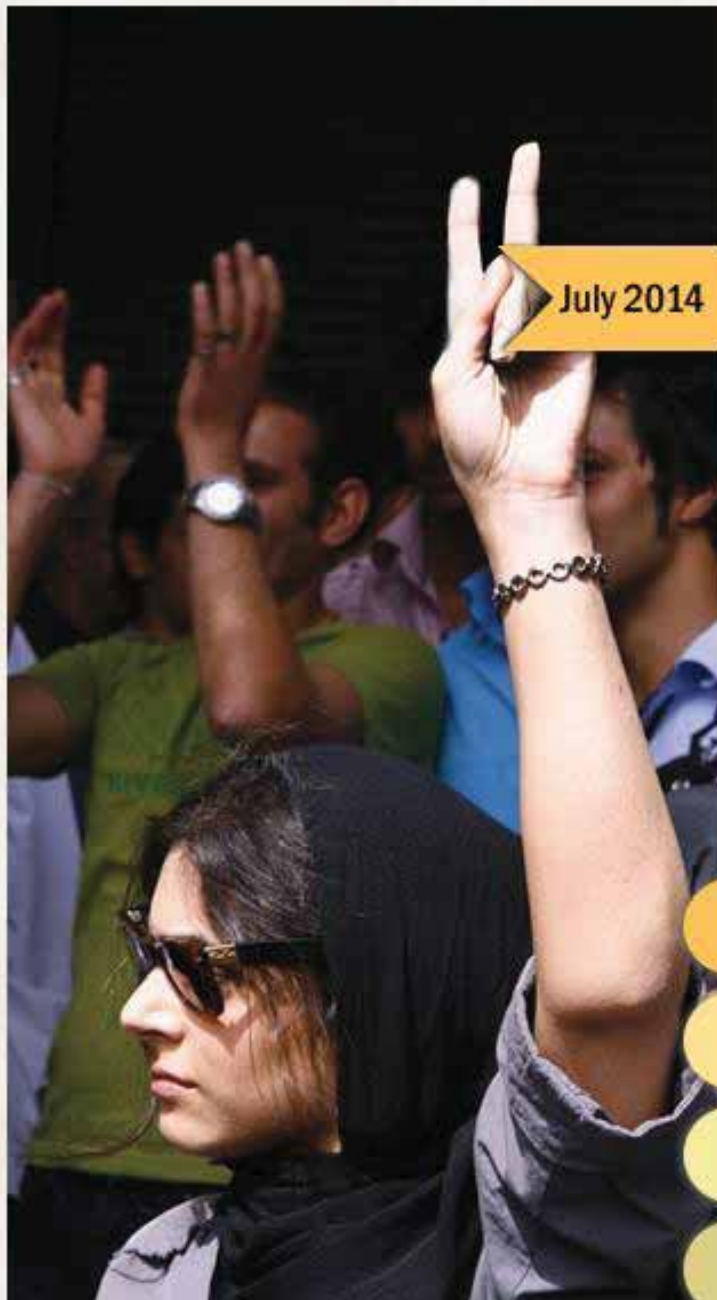

NCRI **Women's Committee**
Monthly Report



July 2014

- Monthly Report
 - NCRI
 - Women's Committee
 - *July 2014*
-



NCRI Women's Committee July 2014

Introduction

The month of July was a month of increased pressure on women as a result as gender segregation and the clampdown on women under the pretext of “bad hijab” became the main topic covered by the media.

New patrols and police were established to harass women and young girls particularly in the hot summer weather and in the month of Ramadan where the Iranian regime tried to systematically limit the youths’ recreational activities such as banning women from entering volleyball matches or watching the World Cup games in mixed environments.

According to a report, one of the reasons to mal-veiling was recognized as following daily fashion trends or is the use of satellite television and Facebook. Therefore the solutions proposed by the repressive forces included: banning the use of satellite television networks, mandatory hijab in public and in social areas and having agents of the Guidance (Ershad) police confronting all cases.

But most shocking of all was news of over 30,000 girls aged 15 and under who became child brides in the last year alone. These are statistics of registered marriages declared by the Iranian regime itself for the past nine months, leaving one to think what the rate of unregistered could really have been.

Systematic violations of the right to life

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

Execution

Ten prisoners were executed including four women in the holy month of Ramadan. The four women were hanged in the main prison of the city of Birjand (eastern Iran). The individuals were charged with possessing and transporting narcotics yet there is no information of their names.

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Death sentence

- The Iranian regime's court in the southern Fars province has sentenced a young woman named Razieh Ebrahimi to death after reviewing her case. Razieh was forced into marriage at the age of 14, became a mother at 15 and allegedly killed her husband at 17. She was on the brink of being executed. Razieh had reportedly first admitted to killing her husband while he was asleep in 2010. But later said her husband was killed by three persons who had entered their house.

Despite international laws prohibiting execution for crimes committed by juveniles, Ebrahimi is on death row, pleading for her life.

- Somayeh Zarei, a young 25 year-old Iranian woman from the city of Rasht (northern Iran), unintentionally killed her husband in a confrontation five years ago. She had been married for only one year. The young woman has been sentenced to death by the court since then and has been waiting for her sentence to be implemented. The only way for her to be saved from execution is if she pays 800 million Rials for diyeh (blood money). The blood money should have been paid prior to the month of Ramadan, yet her family was only able to collect 300 million Rials.

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

In a shocking report, a pregnant women was attacked by agents of the Guidance patrol (Ershad) on Enghelab road on July 24, 2014. According to NCRI sources, the women wasn't able to fast because of her pregnancy and was drinking water when she was attacked and beaten by the police. They attacked her because she was eating during fasting hours!



Arbitrary arrests

Political arrests

The arrest of political activists, families of prisoners and female activists continued in Iran the month of July.



Ms. Negar Haeri, daughter of Mashala Haeri a political prisoner who is in coma and has been transferred to hospital because of his critical conditions, has also been arrested. Negar was arrested on June 10, 2014 and was transferred to Qarichak Varamin prison. Negar is 24 and is a lawyer and had given giving legal assistance to families of political prisoners.

Also Ms. Ziba Mohammadian, the wife of Mohammad Ali Taheri, a prisoner of conscience detained in Evin Prison was arrested by security agents in her home. The agents also confiscated her personal belongings.

Another controversial report was the arrest and detention of Ms. Marzieh Rasouli, a journalist who has been sentenced to two years prison and 50 lashes. She was charged with cooperating with foreign media outlets such as the BBC.



Social arrests

A number of women without political affiliations were also targets of arrests and detention.

Afsaneh Bayazidi, 28, who was arrested in her home by agents of the state security forces was transferred to a Revolutionary Guards base. Her charges included insulting women who forced girls to abide by mandatory veiling regulations.



Furthermore, according to the state-run Youth Reporters Club a female singer performing live in a hall in the city of Karaj, west of Tehran, was arrested by agents of the state security forces.



Prison

Prison conditions

During the past month there have been concerning reports published from prisons regarding the status of detained women.

Reihaneh Jabbari was blocked from her visiting rights, even with her lawyer, Zeinab Jalalian's



kidney disease worsened while in detention and Tehran public prosecutor's office did not permit student activist Bahareh Hedayat from getting a medical leave despite needing to be hospitalized.

Furthermore, there are reports published in non-government media outlets indicating that Negar Haeri is being held in a prison cell with many other inmates where conditions are unbearable and the weather is very hot. Concerning the dire prison conditions imposed on women, another example is Section 5 of Mashhad's Vakil Abad Prison which is allocated to Bahaii women. The regime officials have deprived the women of even the minimum necessities and rights including talking with other inmates, access to the library or gym as well as the right to medical leave.

Basic freedom and rights abused

Below is a summarized report on the step-up on the violations of women's rights in Iran under Rouhani's government in the month of July:

- Increasing pressure on women with mandatory hijab (cover) with warnings and arrests by state police in the streets, schools and office buildings
- Depriving women of participating in sports matches, especially during the World Cup games.
- Expansion of the horrific phenomenon of giving away girls for marriage, increasing suicides and addiction among women.



Massoud Jazayeri, a senior IRGC commander and a close confidant to Khamenei, called for an increase of pressure on women and emphasized on the need to take firm action. Furthermore, various government administrative offices in Nahavand, prevented women from entering offices under the pretext of improper hijab. The governor of Nahavand, Imam-Ali Abdolmalaki, said in the Public Culture Council, *“From now on, women with improper hijab, or no hijab whatsoever, will not be allowed to enter government offices.”*

On July 12th, the head of the Iranian regime’s infamous ‘Ansar Hezbollah’ repressive agents said motor patrols are getting back to work to control hijab on the streets.

Morteza Mirbagheri, deputy Interior Minister in social affairs stressed the government’s objectives in pressuring and increasing crackdown on women and said, *“4000 senior officials including ministers and governors are responsible for promoting the law concerning hijab and chastity across the country. Officials who are actively working in this field must seriously get involved.”*

Furthermore, a rally was held by agents of Rouhani's government in Tehran where they emphasized the need to increase pressure on women and instate mandatory hijab regulations.





Another controversial issue this month was depriving women from attending sports matches and stadiums.

Makrem Shirazi, a senior mullah in Iran said, *“The general atmosphere at sports stadiums isn’t suitable for women ... women should refrain from participating, especially since these games can be seen in the media. Their presence isn’t necessary.”*

(State-run Asr-e Iran daily – July 22, 2014)

The desire for women’s attention and interest in volleyball attracted the attention of International Volleyball Federation President Dr. Ary S. Graça. He placed “discussion about Iran’s situation” on the IVF’s agenda to review the matter of women being banned to watch the matches in Iran after woman's rights activists protested and addressed an open letter to him.

A shocking report on the high rate of child brides raised the attention of woman's rights activists in Iran and around the world. Over 30,000 young girls under the age of 15 became child brides.

Iran's Registration Organization has recently published a chart on the age of couples who have married in a 9 month period in 2013.

According to this data 30,956 individuals of the 579,871 married couples were girls under the age of 15, consisting of 3.5% of all the marriages in the country. Based on this data during the past seven years one third of the registered married women have been under the age of 19.

(Khabar Online state-run website– July 7, 2014)

In a letter addressed to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, woman's rights activists emphasized issues of *“reforming internal laws to ban marriage of girls under the age of 18”* and *“legal action against all individuals responsible for giving away kid girls such as the mullah, husband and judge that issues the license for such marriages.”* They called for her attention to the situation of girls being forced into marriage at very early ages in Iran.



The increasing number of girls forced marriage occurs because there is no such thing as a legal marital age for girls. Although the “law” under the rule of the mullahs regime says that the legal marital age for girls is 13 and 15 for boys, clerics – with the agreement of the judge – are



permitted to allow marriages at any age after the child is born. After early marriages most girls are deprived of education, face domestic violence and sexual harassment.

Religious and ethnic minorities

Religious minorities were the main targets of repression in the month of July.



Two Baha'i citizens by the names of Ms. Tanaz Mohammadi and Mr. Iraj Lehrasab were separately arrested in their homes by agents of the Iranian regime's Ministry of Intelligence on June 29, 2014 and were taken to an unknown location. On Sunday, July 13, security agents inspected the home of Ms. Rashin Saberi and summoned her for questioning.

Also, the so-called revolutionary court in the city of Urumieh (Northwest) sentenced five Baha'i women on charges of propaganda against the state, holding gatherings and classes in their homes and promoting their faith to children and recruiting people. They were sentenced to a total of 162 months prison.

Discrimination against women

In July, segregation of women was an issue found in local news almost on a daily basis. Some regulations were set in government offices, especially in Tehran's Municipality. There is the new wave of gender segregation being systematically carried out throughout the country.

Women receiving 23% less wages than men in equal conditions

According to recent statistics the average income of women in jobs equal to that of men is 23% less. The difference of paychecks have been reviewed in fields such as consumption manager, construction engineer, human resources manager, supervisor of office affairs, chemical engineer, food industries, financial manager, clerk and office manager, sales manager, programming expert, electrical engineer, electrical technician, computer programmer, sales supervisor, supervisor technician, accountant, procurement supervisor and researcher. The highest difference in wages was seen in sales managers and the least difference was among researchers.

7,237 people were analyzed in this research.



The difference between senior technicians and technicians in the fields of research and development was 33 percent, analyst 30, quality control technician 27, web programmer 25, financial manager 22, electrical engineer 20, mechanic engineer 15, sales supervisor 14, accountant 10, office manager 10, technical office technician 9, human resources manager 8, sales technician and project control manager 0 percent.
(Asr-e Iran state-run news website daily, July 8, 2014)

Excuses to set aside women from municipality jobs

A Tehran municipality official confirmed news of the recent local government's decision to not hire women in posts such as office administrators, secretaries and typists.

"Municipality officials may remain in their office until late at night and also carry out various inspections in projects that may need the presence of office administrators and in this case ladies may be bothered and hurt and their lives might be disrupted! Women may have children and may want to go to their families sooner, for example I have coworkers who are forced to go home at 3 pm," he said.

(State-run ILNA news agency – July 13, 2014)

Tehran municipality requests 'gender segregation' in its offices

Tehran municipality has ordered its administrators to only use men employees in their offices and if possible separate men from women at the working environment.

"Arrangements have been made for municipality deputies and directors to not hire female secretaries," said Farzad Khalafi, an official at the Tehran municipality. (Radio Farda – 14 July 2014)

Tehran municipality plans to segregate park benches for boys and girls



Meitham Emrudi, an official in Tehran's municipality, called for the separation of benches in parks for boys and girls.

"There used to be benches next to one another in the past allowing boys and girls to sit next to each other. Now, there must be a table between the seats so that distances are respected and more families will be able to use them," he said.

(Radio Zamaneh – July 17, 2014)

Women without proper hijab banned from Isfahan hotels

The mullahs ruling Iran have increased crackdown on women. Statements were issued, banning women with improper hijab (head cover) from entering hotels in Isfahan (South of Tehran). The mullahs have called for measures to be taken against such individuals. (NCRI Women's Committee – July 23, 2014)



Official gender segregation in northern Iran city banks

The national Iranian Bank (Bank Melli Iran) has officially separated services for men and women by opening a

“women’s only” branch in the city of Rasht, northern Iran. No men are not allowed in this segregated branch.

(NCRI Women's Committee – July 23, 2014)



'Headquarters to promote virtue and prevent vice' sues ice-cream company!

The state-run 'Headquarters to promote virtue and prevent vice' in Isfahan filed a complaint against 'Mihan' dairy and ice-cream company for posting pictures of Barbie on its products.

“Based on the mandate of this entity, we have filed our

specific and explicit complaint against such improper measures to the relevant judicial office and officials demanding immediate orders to be issued and the law to be implemented in this regard. We request more attention by relevant officials to such cultural problems and attacks,” said Mohammad Ali Ahmadi, the head of Isfahan 'Headquarters to promote virtue and prevent vice'.

(Radio Zamane – July 12, 2014)



Women protests

During the month of July despite the heavy crackdown on women, they were defiant and did not remain silent.

Mother protests outside Isfahan judiciary

A mother cried and shouted outside Isfahan's judiciary on Saturday, June 28th, attracting everyone's attention in the area. The mother was protesting the court order issued for her child who was arrested for providing bread to feed their family. Earlier, the 16-year old youth stole a few loafs of bread to end his starvation in Najaf Abad near Isfahan. He intended to take the bread for himself, his mother and sister however, he was stopped by the baker and handed over to the state security forces. Despite the fact that there is enough evidence showing the young man was living under complete poverty, the judge issued a five year prison sentence for the young man.

(NCRI Women's Committee – June 29, 2014)

130 Iranian women's rights activists protest to Volleyball Federation president

Over 130 women's rights activists have written an open letter to the head of the International Federation of Volleyball demanding support for the right of women to watch volleyball matches in stadiums. They urged the federation to support the demand for an end to gender discrimination in stadiums and to denounce Iran's refusal to follow federation regulations regarding women's access to events.

They wrote, "We are demanding the lifting of any sexual discrimination in stadiums. Iran's sports federations must end such measures."

Women's rights activists criticized harsh behavior towards women and the arrest of those seeking to enter stadiums. (Radio Zamane – July 1, 2014)

Reza Shahabi's wife: I will go on hunger strike if my husband is not treated

Mrs. Robabeh Rezaie, the wife of Reza Shahabi a labor activist and detained political prisoner in Gohar Dasht prison who is on his 38th day of hunger strike, said her husband is in critical condition and threatened to go on hunger strike in support of her husband if authorities do not provide him with medical treatment.



Kurdish women protest lack of drinking water

Kurdish women have staged a gathering outside a local government office to protest the lack of drinking water in the 100-home village of 'Naysaneh' near the city of Pave in western Iran. (Kurdpa – July 6, 2014)



Young girl athletes clash with guidance patrols in Tehran

While returning home from their sports club on Monday, Jul 13th, a group of young girl athletes in Tehran clashed with female guidance patrols that were harassing them. (NCRI – July 16, 2014)

Female athletes clash with Guidance patrol in Tehran

A group of female athletes clashed with female agents of the Guidance patrol (Ershad) in Tehran on Monday, July 13. They were returning home from the women's gym near Hassan Abad Square when they were harassed by the patrol agents. A number of girls who couldn't flee the scene, were arrested by the suppressive forces. (NCRI Women's Committee – July 16, 2014)

Freedom of expression, clampdown on journalists and netizens

According to a report by Reporters without Borders on July 28, ten women who work in the media are currently behind bars in the Islamic Republic. They include 10 women, of whom three are foreign nationals, making Iran the world's leading jailer of female journalists and netizens.

Reporters Without Borders is extremely concerned by this wave of summonses and arrests aimed mainly at women working in the media, seven of whom have received prison terms of between six months and 20 years *"With 65 journalists and netizens in prison, Iran is still one of the world's biggest prisons for people working in the media,"* said Reza Moïni, the head of the Reporters without Borders Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan desk. *"The country is also the leading jailer of women journalists and netizens. The justice authorities, in collusion with the Revolutionary Guards and the ministry of intelligence, flout the rights of women who work in the media..."* Iran is one of the world's most repressive countries as regards freedom of information. It is ranked 173rd of 180 countries in the 2014 World Press Freedom Index.

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