



# 2019

## Annual Report

Women's Committee of the  
National Council of Resistance of Iran








## Annual Report 2019

Published March 2019

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# Foreword

Last year, as we were preparing our Annual Report, Iran was going through a massive outbreak of protests which quickly spread to some 160 cities across the country.

One year on, daily protests and nationwide uprisings have turned into a regular trend, changing the face of an oppressed nation to an arisen people crying out for freedom and regime change in all four corners of the country.

Iranian women also stepped up their participation in protests. They took to the streets at every opportunity. Compared to 436 protests last year, they participated in some 1,500 pickets, strikes, sit-ins, rallies and marches to demand their own and their people’s rights.

Iranian women of all ages and all walks of life, young students and retired teachers, nurses and farmers, villagers and plundered investors, all took to the streets and cried out for freedom and demanded their rights. In their cries, we heard the grievances of a nation suffering in the clutches of a bunch of corrupt rulers.

Iranian women’s impact on the democratic movement was so much that the regime’s IRGC commanders had to acknowledge their leading role on multiple occasions and confess to the larger number of arrests from among women.

Amnesty International said the arrests signal crisis in Iran human rights. Human Rights Watch called on Iranian authorities to drop all charges brought against protesters for peaceful assembly and release those detained on that basis. And the UN General Assembly urged the Iranian regime to end “widespread restrictions on the right to freedom of opinion and expression and the right to freedom of assembly” and to stop the “harassment and intimidation” of political opponents, human rights defenders, defenders of the rights of minorities and women, workers, students and environmental activists.

The fearless women who got arrested and those who were already in chains continued their resistance inside prisons, refusing to buckle under, and instead brought the authorities to their knees.

The most vivid example was seen in the perseverance of political prisoner Golrokh Iraee in her 81 days of hunger strike at the price of her health until she forced the regime to give in to her demand of being returned to the women’s ward of Evin Prison.

Another example was the cry of Maryam Akbari Monfared who slammed the presiding judge and his offer of amnesty, saying, “We are the ones to grant you amnesty.”

In this year’s Annual Report, we endeavored to offer a more in-depth and comprehensive look into the conditions of women in Iran since last March. We hope to enjoy more of your solidarity and support in the coming year as the courageous and determined women of Iran will be making their final moves in their quest for freedom and equal rights.

NCRI Women’s Committee



The year that passed saw many large-scale uprisings or continuous protests in which women had a great role. The protests by various strata of women also saw multiple-fold rise. Here is a brief review:

### Students

After their inspiring role in the December 2017-January 2018 uprising, female students actively participated in all student protests throughout the past year. The number of student protests was estimated to be 243 from March 2018 to the end of January 2019.

A large number of protests were held on consecutive days against the heavy sentences handed down to students arrested and imprisoned for participating in the uprising including many girl students.

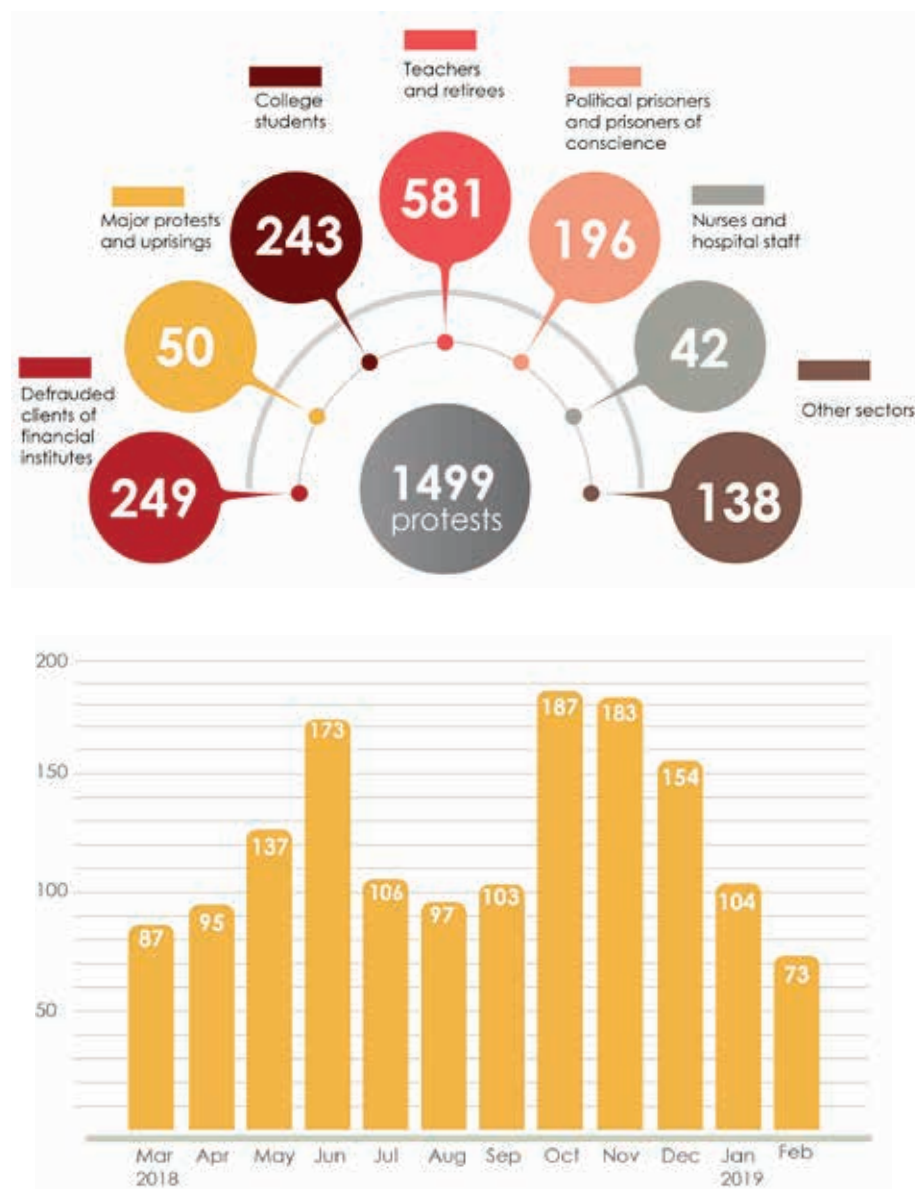
In the beginning of the new academic year, students of Tehran University staged a heated protest against Rouhani, the mullahs' president, who was speaking on October 14, 2018, to a selective group of students in one of the university's halls. They protested the arrests of their fellow students and the heavy sentences issued for them.

The students of Semnan University also confronted the regime's president, Hassan Rouhani, on their campus on December 6, and asked him, "What is your answer to high prices and inflation?" On dozens of occasions, Iranian students held their acts of protests in solidarity with striking workers and teachers. Students of many universities held protests against the policy of receiving fees and tuitions from students, in violation of the country's Constitution stipulating that education must be free for all Iranian students.

Students also held protests against the deplorable state of hygiene at their schools and dormitories, Hijab restrictions on girls while in dormitory, low or bad food quality, shortage of adequate services, poor transportation services, discriminatory university admissions and enforcement of quotas, etc. A major occasion where students held massive protests despite repressive conditions was December 7, the Student Day in Iran. In dozens of universities, students observed the day on several consecutive days by holding sit-ins and picket lines, free speech forums, street theaters, etc.

The students of Tehran University held a gathering and sit-in on December 8, on the street in front of the entrance gates of the university to observe the Student Day. When the State Security Force intended

## Women Lead Iran Protests



to disperse the participants, girl students stood up to them.

One of the girl students called on other students to go to their aid. Also in a street theatre on Tehran University Campus on December 9, a female student spoke out about the pain and suffering of Iranian women under 40 years of discrimination.

Female students of the central unit of Tehran's Azad University confronted the Guidance Patrol forces during a protest rally on October 27, 2018. Female students played an active role during the protest and tried to stop the Guidance Patrol vehicles which were driving into the crowd. Witnesses filmed a female student being pushed by the car.

An Azad University bus overturned and crashed on December 25, on the campus of the Sciences and Research University, killing 10 passengers including three young women, and injuring at least 28. Students of the Sciences and Research University held massive rallies for three consecutive days to commemorate their fellow classmates and called for resignation of "incompetent" university and government officials. Students also held a massive rally on December 31, 2018, outside the University of Tehran with chants of "death to the dictator." Eyewitnesses said most of the Tehran students participating in this widespread protest were young women who chanted anti-regime slogans.

### August uprisings

There was another major outbreak of protests in cities across Iran from July 31 to August 4, where dauntless women were present everywhere in the front row of all protests and confrontations, calling people to join their ranks.

The protests over the chaotic state of the economy, high prices, inflation, lack of water, unemployment, and the regime's destructive policies started in Karaj and Gohardasht (Alborz Province), Arak (capital of Markazi Province), Shahin Shahr, Najafabad and Qahdarijan (Isfahan Province in central Iran), Rasht (Gilan Province in the north), Shiraz (Fars Province in the south), Mashhad (capital of Razavi Khorasan Province in the northeast) and Ahvaz (capital of Khuzestan Province in the southwest), and extended to Tehran on the fourth day. Women's effective impact on the new wave of protests sweeping the country was so much that the regime's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and the State Security Force spoke out.

The IRGC mouth piece, Fars news agency, reported on August 5, 2018, "In the riots of Karaj, 20 leaders were identified and arrested, the majority of whom were women." In another report on the same day, Fars wrote, "It is noteworthy that today, too, similar to the previous days, the leader of these people [the protesters] was a woman." Rassoul Sanaii Rad, political deputy for the IRGC, confessed to the role of women in national protests, saying, "For the first time, 28 percent of the arrests in the protests were women." Referring to the arrests of women in the protests last winter, he noted, "Previously, the number of women arrested in the protests was 5 to 7 percent." (The state-run Mehr News Agency - August 15, 2018)

Highlight: One of the courageous Iranian women yelled at the State Security forces and said, "They killed our youths; they trampled our rights. If you cared, you would have assisted your own people and helped protect their lives."

## STUDENT PROTESTS





## Teachers and retirees

Women teachers, educators and retirees from various sectors participated in at least 581 protests over the last year. Retired teachers participated in both teachers' protests and the protests by retired personnel.

Iranian teachers held four nationwide protests, strikes and sit-ins in 2018 where women actively participated despite being brutalized by security forces.

The first chain of protests was held on May 10, in 32 cities, including the capital, Tehran.

Teachers also held a two-day nationwide sit-ins and strikes on October 14 and 15, in at least 62 cities in 26 out of 31 Iranian provinces, despite threats made to teacher activists.

The third round of nationwide strikes and sit-ins were held on November 13 and 14, and the fourth round on February 14, 2019, where teachers did not go to classes and stayed in the schools' offices. Thousands of teachers also participated in a nationwide campaign, starting on July 9 and continuing into mid-August, where they tore apart or burnt their pay slips because their salaries did not match the amount of work and their difficult living conditions.

Their main demands were to have decent salaries proportionate to the poverty line, health insurance, elimination of discrimination in the educational system, free education for school children, standardization of school, and securing their safety. One of the teachers' most serious demands was the release of imprisoned teacher activists.

On Sunday, June 24, 2018, in Ardabil, capital of Ardabil Province in northwestern Iran, a large number of teachers gathered outside the Department of Education in this city and demanded the ministry to determine their employment status. In a symbolic act, the protesters who were mostly women spread empty tablecloths across the floor to express their discontent over their deplorable living conditions.

In their latest protest which was violently attacked by security forces, the working and retired teachers and educators in Isfahan gathered outside the Department of Education on December 27, 2018, demanding pay raises and the release of imprisoned teachers.

Security forces lobbed tear and pepper gas at the teachers. Anti-riot guards arrested some 40 to 50 teachers, including a number of women, and took them to an unknown location



# TEACHERS AND RETIREES DEFRAUDED WOMEN

## Retirees

Retired employees have been very active over the past year. Their latest massive rally was in Tehran on January 2, 2019, across from the mullahs' parliament. Women have been very visible in the protests by retired employees and personnel which included the retired staff of the Education Ministry and the Health Ministry, the retired employees of Tehran banks, the retired workers of the Steel Industry, the retired veteran nurses, and medical personnel, as well as retirees of agriculture, banking and education, the retired teachers and educators, retired women of various government banks, the retired employees of the Medical Sciences University of Ahvaz and the University of Medical Sciences in Mashhad and several other government agencies.

Their demands included increasing the amount and payment of their pensions which are usually several months past due, payment of their insurances, bonuses, and final service rewards,



improvement of basic health care services, etc. They say, "The poverty line is 6 million toman, our salary is 2 million (tomans)," and "Our salary is in rials, prices are in dollars."

## Defrauded investors

Women participated in at least 249 protests by swindled investors of fraudulent financial companies and institutes backed by the Central Bank or the IRGC (the Revolutionary Guard Corps). The companies encouraged people to invest and receive interest, but have neither given them any interests nor reimbursed their deposits.

This group of protesters are very outspoken. There has been hardly any day throughout the past year, when they did not hold any protest. Women in this sector have been very active and outspoken.

On July 31, 2018, a large group of investors plundered by the fraudulent financial institutes of Caspian, Arman-e Vahdat, and Arman-e Alborz Iranian converged in Tehran outside the Central Bank and marched in capital's downtown. Eyewitnesses said the gathering was one of the most unprecedented by plundered investors, which was led by courageous

Iranian women.

In Rasht, capital of the northern Iranian province of Gilan, a group of women have braved rain and storms, tirelessly and regularly holding protests outside the company's branch in this city.

They put tapes on their mouths or worn white shrouds and marched to the Governorate building. They pelted rotten eggs, tomatoes and trash, and splashed paint at the entrance of Caspian's branch, blocked the road, banged at the door, and resorted to every possible means to compel government officials to respond to their demands. They have even been arrested and held in custody for holding protests, but have vowed to continue their protests until they receive their money back to the last toman.

Defrauded clients have carried out similar acts of protest in other cities. On April 12, 2018, outside the Prosecutor's Office in Mashhad, capital of Razavi Khorassan Province in northeastern Iran, protesters chanted slogans demanding dissolution of Padideh Shandiz company and putting

it on auction. The State Security Force arrested 12 of the protesting women and men.

In another protest in Mashhad, protesters including many women set up tents and held a round-the-clock sit-in from August 2 to 9, 2018, outside the Padideh Shandiz Institute. On the eighth night of their sit-in, women were attacked and brutalized by the company's security agents. The protesters demanded that the company be dissolved and its 20-billion-toman properties sold to pay for the money they owe to the people. On November 13, 2018, hundreds of clients plundered by the IRGC-backed Caspian Credit Institute gathered in protest outside the Judiciary's building in Tehran and then marched in downtown Vali-Asr Avenue. They cried out, "Complicit thieves have blocked the rule of law," "products of officials' work are plunder and embezzlement," "Our properties have been robbed by the Central Bank."



### The water crisis

Shortage or lack of water turned into a major social crisis in Iran in spring and summer 2018.

From April till July, women held protests, marched and even blocked roads in Kerman, Kurdistan, Chaharmahal-o Bakhtiari, Khuzestan, Bushehr, and others over lack of potable water. In some places, people complained of not having water for bathing and laundry. Women of Khorramshahr participated in three days of city-wide protests and confrontation with security forces over lack of clean drinking water from June 29 until July 1, 2018.

The three-day uprising of the people of Khorramshahr was supported by the people of Ahvaz, Abadan, Mahshahr, Karoun, Sarbandar and Khor Moussa. Thousands of people also held heated protests in Borazjan, capital of Dashtestan county located in the southern Bushehr Province, on July 7 and 8, over severe water shortages in their city.

### Kazerun

Thousands of residents of Kazerun staged a massive uprising from April 16 to 20, 2018, with a remarkable presence of women. Kazerun is one of the major cities of Fars Province in southern Iran known for the bravery of its people. Protesting a proposal made by local officials to divide the city, women and men of Kazerun braved heavy presence of security forces and chanted, "We are fighting women and men, we fight against segregation." They called for the resignation of their "incompetent governor."

The residents of Kazerun once again took to the streets on April 27, 2018. They had previously held protests on May 13, 16, 17 and 22, when security forces opened fire, killing at least three and wounding dozens including women.

### International Workers Day

Iran's women workers participated in the Labor Day rallies and protests on May 1, 2018.

Thousands of women and men, Iranian workers, marched and gathered outside the mullahs' parliament in Tehran despite heavy presence of security forces.

Another major protest gathering was held in the early hours of the day outside the House of Workers (a state-backed and funded foundation), where protesters demanded license for the Labor Day



march. Workers also marched in other parts of Tehran and walked towards the House of Workers.

Their banner read, "Social security is workers' inalienable right." Workers chanted, "Death to the oppressor, hail to workers."

### Karaj Hospital

Some 250 physicians, nurses and medical personnel of the largest hospital in Karaj, including a large number of women, held at least 35 rounds of protests, marches, strikes and sit-ins from May till end of December to demand payment of their salaries not paid for over a year.

### Workers protests in Khuzestan

The strike and demonstrations of sugarcane workers of Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Industrial Complex in Shush, and steel industrial workers in Ahvaz saw the widespread, active and outspoken participation of women in November and December.

Sugarcane workers of Haft Tappeh staged protest gatherings for almost a month, demanding their past-due salaries as well as end to the private ownership of the complex.

The wives and families of workers accompanied them in their marches, with pre-school and elementary school children holding placards which read, "We are hungry!"

Women teachers and activists also joined the protest, sometimes taking the platform and speaking to the workers. In Ahvaz, too, brave young women were at the forefront of the march and gatherings of Ahvaz Steel Industrial workers in over one month of protests. The families of detained workers also held protest gatherings in late December and January outside the governorate of Khuzestan, demanding that their husbands, sons, and fathers be released.

### Arab citizens in Ahvaz

Thousands of people staged extensive protests in Ahvaz, capital of Khuzestan Province in southwestern Iran, from March 28 till April 2, 2018, against a racist presentation in the state-run television against Arab Iranians in Nowruz holidays. Women actively participated in the protests in Ahvaz and other cities including Shadegan. At least two women were identified among those arrested, but witnesses said dozens of women had been imprisoned in the Sepidar Prison of Ahvaz.

These protests continued into May by families of those arrested and imprisoned.

### Farmers protest in Isfahan

Women's participation was remarkably extensive in three days of protests by thousands of farmers of Varzaneh in Isfahan from April 9 to 11, 2018, despite massive control and obstructions by the State Security forces. At least two women participants were brutalized. The farmers had been protesting continuously for over a month to gain their share of water from Zayanderood for farming.

Even the state-run Sharq daily acknowledged wide extent of women's participation on April 12, 2018: "the women of Khorassgan are getting involved in the protests in step with men." The protests have been continuing intermittently from April to December and January.

Zayanderood used to be a copious river passing through Isfahan, one of Iran's major capitals and centers of tourism. Under the clerical rule, this river has dried up due to numerous dams placed on its route to divert water to Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) compounds and facilities for military purposes.

Clockwise from top: Women in the protests in Kazerun; families of Haft-Tappeh workers on march in Shush, their placard reads, "We are hungry"; protest of farmers in Isfahan demanding water, and women's participation in Labor Day march and protest in Tehran.



“ May be this is a difficult, painful and agonizing life but let there be no doubt that we did the right thing. We will overcome this suffering. Today, freedom is one day closer to us. ”

*These were the words of Maryam Akbari Monfared, in an open letter to Golrokh Iraee as she was going on a three-day hunger strike on April 4, 2018, in solidarity with her. These words reflect the true spirit of the fine, audacious women who risk their lives and everything they have in life to bring freedom to their fellow countrymen and women in Iran.*

In the year that passed, from March 2018 to February 2019, Maryam Akbari Monfared, Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee, and Atena Daemi continued to remain the most outspoken women political prisoners in Iran. On September 9, 2018, they resisted and refused an unannounced inspection inside the visitation hall for which the three women were deprived of having family visits for three weeks, starting on October 2, 2018. They were not shown any written papers but just verbally informed of the order.

Maryam Akbari Monfared, 43 with three daughters, was arrested at midnight on December 30, 2009, for contacting her siblings who are members of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI/MEK), the main Iranian opposition force to Iran's ruling regime. Her sister and three brothers were executed by the clerical regime between 1981 and 1988. Maryam Akbari was sentenced to 15 years in prison. She has so far served 9 years of this sentence without a single day of furlough. She suffers from various illnesses but has been deprived of receiving proper treatment in hospitals outside prison. She has written a number of open letters over the past year, sometimes joint letters with Golrokh Iraee and Atena Daemi, to international human rights authorities and organizations, as well as to declare solidarity with workers and families of political prisoners.

## Women Political Prisoners, Strong and Steady



### 'We are the ones to grant you amnesty'

One such letter was published on March 30, 2018, in which Maryam Akbari slammed the judge who sentenced her to 15 years but spoke to her husband about granting her amnesty. In the strongly-worded letter, Maryam Akbari wrote, "In a dark environment which did not have any opening to freedom and justice, a generation of pioneers who could not be intimidated or enticed, revealed the inhuman and medieval nature of this regime. Hail to the martyrs who gave their lives for freedom, hail to the martyrs of the 1980s, the martyrs of the 1988 massacre, who sowed the seeds of protest and resistance in Iranian society and made the world bow before their magnificence... "The 1988 massacre laid the foundation for a regime of executions, an incessant cycle of executions which has carried on up to this date. The Islamic Republic has brought none but carnage, plunder and bloodshed for Iran and Iranians... "Amidst so much misery and misfortune, the mullahs have sensed that their end is imminent. They seek to cover up so many years of oppression and what they have done to the people of Iran with the deceit of amnesty. "What I have briefly enumerated is a response to Abolghassem Salavati who told my husband after his latest inquiry about my case, 'Let me check out and see whether her name is on the amnesty list.' "After nine years of imprisonment, I am proud and steadfast and my heart is filled with joy for all of its moments. Not only I demand justice for my sister and brothers, but also for myself, for the life you stole from me, the childhood you stole from my children and deprived them of living for nine years. So, my enchained compatriots and I are the ones to grant you amnesty."



### Refusing food to protest injustice

Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee, 38, a writer and a human rights activist, has been sentenced to six years in jail for writing an unpublished book on the cruel punishment of stoning. Her husband Arash Sadeghi, also a human rights advocate is serving a 19-year sentence while suffering from cancer. One of the most important developments this past year was Golrokh Iraee's 81-day hunger strike which ended victoriously as she and her fellow inmate Atena Daemi were returned from Qarchak Prison to the women's ward of Evin Prison on May 10, 2018. She and Atena Daemi who had initially been detained in the Quarantine Ward, were again brutalized on March 12, 2018, and dragged to the ward of mothers where pregnant women and some 20 children are held, in a bid to increase the pressure on the two sick and hunger striking prisoners. In the final days of her hunger strike, Golrokh Iraee was transferred to a hospital near Shahr-e Ray (Qarchak) Prison for her constant feeling of nausea and vomiting bile due to damaged gall bladder. At this stage, she was no longer able to talk, walk or stand up and had lost 22 kilograms. Prison officials had vowed not to return her to Evin Prison even if she died. Ms. Iraee's persistence on her rightful demand, however, compelled the authorities to give in to her demand.



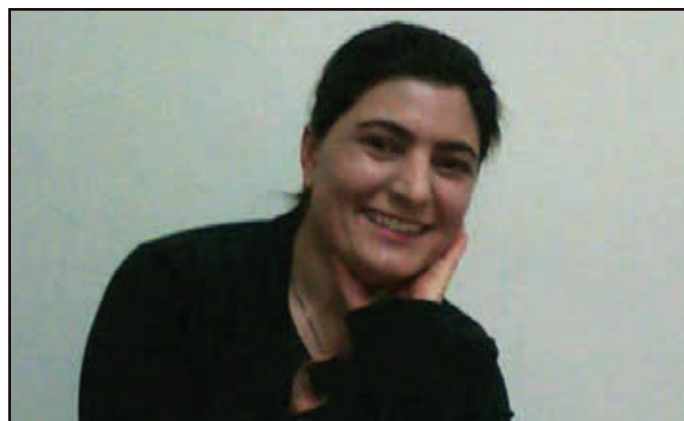
### A thorn in the eyes of her enemies

Atena Daemi, 29, a human rights and child rights activist, is sentenced to 7 years in prison on charges of «propaganda against the regime», «collusion against national security,» and insulting Khamenei. Ms. Daemi has been diagnosed to be suffering from Muscular Sclerosis (M.S.) which has probably been caused by sudden shocks and nervous pressures in prison. She also suffers from kidney and GI problems.

Amnesty International announced Atena Daemi as one of the five women in the world leading the struggle for human rights in 2018. In a statement issued in Geneva, four UN experts expressed alarm at the condition of human rights activists Atena Daemi and Golrokh Iraee, and said, "Their cases are illustrative of a continuing pattern of harassment, intimidation and imprisonment of those undertaking peaceful and legitimate activities in the defense of human rights and prisoners of conscience, often through using vaguely worded or overly broad national security-related charges."

Atena Daemi and Golrokh Iraee were brutalized and sent to internal exile to Qarchak Prison on January 24, 2018. Since then, they launched an admirable and courageous resistance in prison against cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment despite their deteriorating health conditions. They started a hunger strike on February 3, 2019, demanding to be returned to the women's ward of Evin Prison. Atena Daemi, who had been on a previous hunger strike for 54 days in April and May 2017, ended her hunger strike on February 15, 2018, due to her serious physical condition and on widespread appeals by human rights activists. She recorded an audio message in which she said, "I ended my hunger strike today, February 15, 2018, to stay alive and remain as a thorn in the eyes of my enemies. "I end my hunger strike so that my pen will continue to target your hearts. And I tell you, 'Don't tire yourselves because I will never back down from my positions. I will never apologize for the crime I have not committed, because as a human being I am entitled to freedom of speech, opinion and protest, and no one should deprive me of my rights. I tell you that every day I will let the world know of the lack of independence of the Judiciary and their injustice and oppression. Every day, I will shout in your ears of your own laws being broken by yourselves. You beat up and brutalized and arrested my family. Wait for the consequences of this savagery."





### 'Nothing is strong enough to prevent me'

Zeinab Jalalian, 36 from Makou, was arrested in Kermanshah in 2008. She was first sentenced to death and then granted a life sentence on the charge of "enmity to God" and "membership in Kurdish parties."

She has several medical conditions, including a heart problem and a severe dental infection.

Zeinab Jalalian also has heart, intestinal, and kidney problems, as well as an oral thrush or candidiasis that has caused painful white bumps on her tongue and interferes with her ability to eat and swallow.

She is at risk of losing her eyesight in prison as she is being denied surgery for a worsening eye condition called pterygium, which is impairing her vision and causing her severe discomfort. The right side of her body is numb, the reason for which remains unknown, as she has not received any diagnostic tests. Additionally, she is experiencing dips and spikes in her blood pressure, which the prison doctor has said is linked to the stress and psychological pressure she is under.

She has repeatedly asked the prison authorities to take her to a hospital outside the prison for specialized testing and treatment for her health problems but the authorities have either rejected outright her requests or have accepted them on the condition that she make videotaped "confessions."

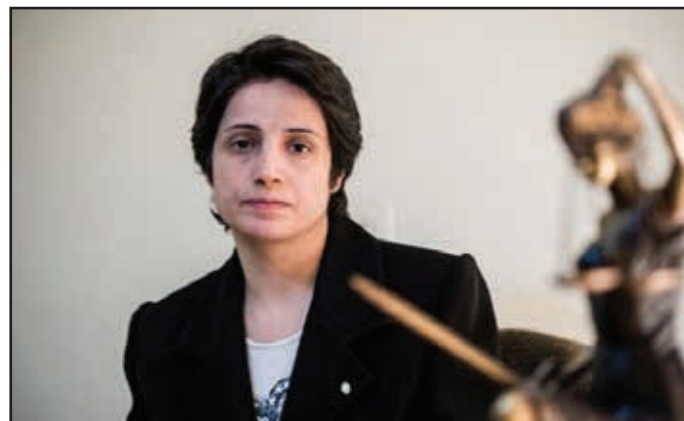
In its statement on August 25, 2017, Amnesty International "the denial of access to medical care in these circumstances" as amounting to "torture."

Zeinab Jalalian and nine of her cellmates went on hunger strike in late July to protest the confiscation of a cell phone discovered and confiscated during inspection of their cell.

On November 28, 2018, several of the Khoy Prison agents went into the women's wards and, without any explanation, inspected the bed of political prisoner Zeinab Jalalian. Then they seized all her personal belongings, including blankets, clothes, books and manuscripts. They gave her a blanket and told her that until further notice she could not have anything with her other than the clothes she was wearing.

Zeinab Jalalian has been deprived of her weekly family visits since December 24, 2018.

In one of her open letters from prison, Zeinab Jalalian wrote, "I knew that if I requested treatment, I would not receive any answers, just like now. No one and nothing is strong enough to prevent me from achieving my goals. On my own, I will be stronger than ever and I will continue my path."



### Imprisoned lawyer files suits against judge, warden

Prominent human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh was arrested at home in Tehran on June 13, 2018 and imprisoned in Evin Prison. She had been sentenced to five years in prison in absentia on October 4, 2016.

Amnesty International said the arrest was "an outrageous attack on a brave and prolific human rights defender."

On June 23, 2018, Nasrin Sotoudeh rejected her bail of 650 million tomans (\$150,000), believing the charges against her were unfounded and fabricated, and the bail bond disproportionate.

Her house was attacked by agents of the Ministry of Intelligence on August 18, 2018, looking for a badge that says, "I oppose the compulsory veil."

She went on hunger strike August 25 to October 3, 2018, to protest the authorities' failure to respond to her demands. She lost a lot of weight, was unable to walk up the stairs and needed to be constantly accompanied by her inmates.

On September 16, 2018, she refused to go to the visitation hall to see her children when prison officials attempted to force her to wear a veil during the visit.

Nasrin Sotoudeh has filed a complaint with the SSF Court for Judges against Mohammad Moghiseh, the judge presiding her case. She accused him of issuing verdicts outside the jurisdiction of the indictment, breaching impartiality in the due process, and ordering illegal arrests, among other breaches. She also filed a complaint against the head and the judicial deputy of Evin Prison on November 11, 2018, for issuing a ban on her visiting rights.



### Sufi women

Eleven Gonabadi dervishes were taken to Qarchak Prison. Shokoufeh Yadollahi, Sepideh Moradi, Maryam Farsiabi, Nazila Noori, Sima Entesari, Shima Entesari, Shahnaz Kiani, Maryam Barakouhi, Elham Ahmadi, Avisha Jaleleddin and Sedigheh Safabakht were brutalized during the crackdown on the dervishes' protest gathering in Tehran on Monday night, February 19 which carried through Tuesday morning, February 20, 2018.

They have been detained since under inhumane conditions, without access to their lawyers. Some needed urgent medical care for injuries sustained from beatings at the time of arrest. In one instance it was reported that fumes from the drainage system, filled their rooms with foul odors.

These women have suffered a range of health problems in custody, due to ill-treatment by security forces, including head injuries, broken arms and vaginal bleeding. They also have been denied adequate treatment for pre-existing medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes and high blood pressure.

Shokoufeh Yadollahi was badly brutalized during arrest and subsequently under torture as a result of which she has lost her sense of smell and needs to be treated urgently. A six-month denial of medical care has led to an increase in the level of infection in her blood and endangered her life.

Shima Entesari, who suffers from asthma, has experienced severe breathing difficulties requiring supplemental oxygen. Dr. Nazilla Noori who had been through vicious torture, was hospitalized but deprived of having a company, receiving visitors or phone calls.

Sepideh Moradi suffered injuries in the hand, elbow and fingers while being arrested during the Yaresan protest in Tehran. Her legs got burnt due to security forces' use of tear gas, the scars of which still remain after three months. Ms. Moradi has been denied medical care.

Ms. Shahnaz Kian Asl (Kiani) was transferred to the dispensary of Qarchak Prison of Varamin on May 19, 2018, upon insistence of inmates, but was returned to the ward without receiving medical care. She suffers from diabetes and her symptoms had aggravated due to mal-nutrition. A new mass has appeared in her chest area and she contracted ulcer and GI inflammation, but has not been cared for at the dispensary.

"Women prisoners of conscience from Iran's Gonabadi Dervish religious community are being subjected to verbal abuse, including sexual slurs, and denied proper medical treatment by doctors and other health professionals at Shahr-e Rey prison on the outskirts of Tehran," Amnesty International said in a statement issued on May 25, 2018.



“ These women from Iran's Gonabadi Dervish community should not even be imprisoned in the first place. It is deplorable that the Iranian authorities are seeking to intimidate and torment them further. ”

- Amnesty International

Philip Luther, Amnesty International's Research and Advocacy Director for the Middle East and North Africa, asserted, "Deliberately denying medical treatment to any prisoner is unlawful, cruel and inhuman and can amount to torture. These women from Iran's Gonabadi Dervish community should not even be imprisoned in the first place. It is deplorable that the Iranian authorities are seeking to intimidate and torment them further."

Sufi women went on hunger strike for 16 days from June 17, 2018, in the wake of their being attacked and beaten up by special prison guards using batons and shockers on June 13. The Revolutionary Court sentenced Nazilla Noori, Avisha Jaleleddin, Sima Entessari, Shima Entessari, Elham Ahmadi and Sedigheh Safabakht each to five years in prison.

Maryam Farsiabi was tried and sentenced to a six-month jail and a two-year ban from traveling abroad.

Sepideh Moradi was sentenced to five years' imprisonment in absentia on August 8, 2018, by Tehran's Revolutionary Court. She was also banned from leaving the country for two years, and from engaging in any social or political party or group or any activity in the social media.

Shokoufeh Yadollahi was sentenced to five years in jail. She is in critical conditions due to lack of medical treatment in prison. Two of Sufi women were released.

Ms. Shahnaz Kian Asl due to her dire health conditions and Ms. Massoumeh Barakouhi on the orders of the 15th Branch of the Revolutionary Court, were released.



## Arrested on political grounds

- On the International Women's Day on March 8, 2018, Iranian women took to the streets of Tehran after 39 years and staged a protest outside the Labor Ministry. Security forces brutalized and arrested at least 59 women and transferred at least 14 of them to Qarchak Prison where they did not have access to water and cleaning material. Mahshid Pour Assadi, graduate of philosophy from Tehran's Allameh University; Marzieh Amiri, student of Social Sciences at Tehran University; and Atefeh Khosravi, a paramedic, were among those detained.
- Ma'edeh Shabani-Nejad, 16, was arrested on January 25, 2018, and held in Sepidar Prison of Ahvaz. She suffered from pain and bleeding of stomach after 75 days of interrogation.
- Zahra Rahimi, student of sociology at Tehran University, was arrested on February 5, 2018.
- Banafsheh Cheraghi, a Tehran University student, was arrested at home on March 6, 2018.
- Shetaw Faroughi from Marivan was transferred to the Central Prison of Sanandaj on March 24, 2018. She was arrested with her two children on March 3, 2018, at Tabriz Airport, upon return from Istanbul where she had visited her husband. Her children, 12 and 5, were released after three days.
- Ezzat Ka'abi and Nadia Mohammadipour (Hamidi) were arrested in the protests on March 28 in Ahvaz and taken to an unknown location. Khalediyeh Tarfi and Leila Bervayeh have also been identified among the women arrested.
- Ayesheh Neassi, 19, student of English at Payam Nour University of Ahvaz, and rights activist Khadijeh Neassi were among those arrested during the protests on March 29, 2018, in Ahvaz.
- Mahnaz Amouri, 36, married with an 8-year-old son, was arrested in June 2018 for helping her niece, Ma'edeh Shabani-Nejad.
- Tahmineh Khosravi, a retired textile factory employee, and Massoumeh Askari, a retired teacher, were arrested in the protests in Tehran on May 1, 2018, but were subsequently freed on bail.
- Massoumeh Taqinejad, 30, from Kermanshah in western Iran, was arrested and detained along with her son, Artin, in a raid on her residence in Karaj, on July 2, 2018. The Christian Kurdish woman is charged with "proselytizing Christianity" on the internet.
- Sussan Mehrani, 55; Mohaddeseh Mehrani, 50; and Elnaz, 28, (daughter of Mohaddeseh Mehrani) were arrested on July 19, 2018, in Gorgan because they are relatives of a victim of 1988 massacre.
- Security forces raided the residence of civil rights activist Negisa Shahbazi in Ilam and arrested her on August 1, 2018. Negisa Shahbazi is an electrical engineer and a civil rights activist.
- Zahra Modarres-Zadeh, a civil activist, was arrested on August 9, 2018, by security forces in Karaj.
- Women's rights activists Hoda Amid, a lawyer, and Najmeh Vahedi, a graduate of sociology, were arrested on September 1, 2018.
- Rezvaneh Mohammadi, a gender studies student and women's rights activist, was arrested on September 3, 2018.
- Kurdish women's rights activist and environmentalist, Hajar Saeedi, was arrested on September 5, 2018, in Sanandaj.
- Sorayya Khedri was arrested in Sanandaj on September 13, 2018.
- Elham Salmanzadeh, a Baha'i woman, was arrested in Karaj and taken to Evin Prison on October 16, 2018.
- Hakimeh Ahmadi, a civil activist and a mother of two, was arrested in Tabriz on October 18, 2018. Her fingers and ribs were broken under interrogation.
- Civil activist Nasim Sadeghi was also arrested in October 2018 and repeatedly brutalized by security guards during her detention.
- Lamya Hemadi, 20, was 7 months pregnant at the time of arrest by security forces in October 2018. Two other women Zoudiyeh Afrawi, 55, and Ghaisiyeh Afrawi, 60, residents of Albou Afri village in Susangerd, were also arrested along with their sons.

- Two Baha'i women, Nasrin Khajeh and Mojgan Khoshhal, were arrested in Isfahan on November 15, 2018.
- Baha'i woman Monica Alizadeh was arrested in Tabriz on November 18, 2018, and taken to an unknown location.
- Shahin Pishahang and her husband, labor activists, were arrested on November 29, 2018, in the city of Shush.
- Asal Mohammadi, a labor activist and a student of Pharmaceutical Sciences at Azad University of Tehran, was arrested on December 4, 2018, and taken to Evin Prison. She had published articles in support of workers protests by the Ahvaz Steel and Haft Tappeh workers.
- Azam Dideban was arrested on November 5, 2018, in a protest gathering in Mashhad.
- Ameneh Zaher Sari, a graduate of accounting, was arrested on November 6, 2018, by intelligence agents in Ahvaz.
- Ms. Vaezi from Shiraz and Fatemeh Bahmani, an activist from Arak, were among the teachers arrested and detained during the teachers' nationwide strike and sit-in on November 13 and 14, 2018.
- On November 20, 2018, Sepideh Keshavarz, a Baha'i woman was arrested at her house in Tehran and taken to an unknown location.
- Shabnam Essakhani, a Baha'i woman, was arrested in Tabriz on November 20, 2018, for her religious beliefs.
- Neda Shabani, a Baha'i woman from Karaj, was arrested and transferred to an unknown location on November 28, 2018.
- Ms. Medina Neasi was arrested in Ahvaz on November 28, 2018, along with her brother.
- Two Christian women, Shima and Shokufeh Zanganeh were beaten and arrested at their homes in Ahvaz on December 2, 2018, and transferred to the Sepidar Prison on December 12.
- Security forces arrested Leili Khatami, a child rights activist, in Zahedan, on December 10, 2018. She held plays and read stories for children in the deprived regions of Zahedan and Kermanshah.
- Soheila Hijab Bidsarakhsi, a lawyer and human rights activist, was arrested in Shiraz.
- Civil rights activist Mitra Taheri was arrested at home in Shiraz on February 5, 2019.
- A former political prisoner, Mahin Akbari, 57, was arrested in early February, and transferred to the Lakan Prison of Rasht after lengthy interrogations and torture in the detention center of the Intelligence Department of Rasht.

## Sentences for rights activists

- Mansoureh Behkish was sentenced to 7.5 years in prison for demanding justice for five siblings and a brother-in-law executed in the 1980s.
- Sima Kian, a Baha'i woman was sentenced to one year of imprisonment on January 27, 2018, and taken to Evin Prison.
- Kurdish activist woman, Ronak Aghaii, was taken to the Prison of Mahabad on April 4, 2018, to serve her jail sentence of six months.
- Nazanin Bangaleh, a young Baha'i woman, was tried by the Court of Shiraz on April 24, 2018, and sentenced to five years in prison.
- Aliyeh Aghdam-Dooft, a retired teacher, was sentenced to 9 months of imprisonment and 74 lashes on September 15, 2018.
- Three Baha'i women --Neda Sabeti, Forough Farzaneh and Nooshin Afshar-- were taken to the Prison of Ahvaz on May 13, 2018.
- Rouhiyeh Nariman, a Baha'i woman from Shiraz, was sentenced to a two-and-a-half-year prison term in July 2018.
- Leila Hosseinzadeh, a student of anthropology at Tehran University, was sentenced to six years in jail. She was also banned from leaving the country for two years.
- Roya Saghiri, 24 and a student of Tabriz University, was sentenced to 23 months in jail. She was taken to Tabriz Prison on August 25, 2018.



- Two Baha'i women, Maryam Ghaffarmanesh and Jamileh Pakrou, were arrested in Karaj on September 15, 2018.
- Baha'i women Bahareh Zeini (Sobhanian), Sepideh Rouhani, and Foujhan Rashidi were arrested in Isfahan on September 23, 2018, and later sentenced to four years in prison.
- Anousheh Rayeneh from Baharestan, in Isfahan, was sentenced to six years in prison.
- Parisa Rafii, 21, a student of photography at Tehran University's School of Fine Arts, was abducted on February 25, 2018. She was sentenced to 7 years in prison in August.
- Soha Mortezaei, a graduate student of humanities at Tehran University students, was sentenced to six years of imprisonment.
- Maryam (Massoumeh Mohammadi, 23 and a student, was sentenced to six years in prison and detained in the Prison of Babol on September 15, 2018.
- Fatemeh Dinar Saraii, 25 from Tonekabon, arrested on January 1, 2018, was sentenced to six months in prison.
- Mahin Taj Ahmadpour, 46, a peddler residing in Tonekabon, was arrested on January 1, 2018, and sentenced to 10 months in jail. She went on a hunger strike from September 10 to 15, in protest to denying her medical care and telephone calls.
- Sepideh Farhan (Farahabadi), a graduate of architecture and a civil activist, was sentenced to six years in prison in absentia.
- Arrested in Shazand during the December/January uprising, Neda Yousefi was sentenced to one-year imprisonment and 74 lashes on October 3, 2018.
- Arezo Sahrabi and Maryam Asadloo faced trial on September 10, 2018, for being arrested in protests in Khoy on January 1, 2018.
- Yasamin Ariani, 23, and Saba Kord Afshari, 19, arrested on August 2, 2018, in Tehran protests, were sentenced to one year in October.
- Azar Heydari was sentenced to one year in prison. Niloufar Homafar and Mojdeh Rajabi were sentenced to six months in jail. These young women had been arrested during Tehran protests on August 2, 2018.
- Elham Rasouli Baghi, a civil activist, was sentenced to one-year

imprisonment in Tehran in late November 2018.

- Maryam Shariatmadari, 32, a student of Computer Sciences at Tehran's Amir Kabir University, was sentenced to one year in jail on March 25, 2018, on the charge of "encouraging corruption through removing her veil."
- Afsaneh Rezaii, an elite student of master's of telecommunications of Shiraz University, was sentenced to six months in prison. She was transferred to Adel Abad Prison in Shiraz on December 24, 2018.
- Maryam Delbari was sentenced to 18 months in prison and two years of compulsory service in the seminary of Bushehr.
- Nashmil Ghavitasi, wife of political prisoner Arsalan Khodkam, was sentenced to one year in prison in Urmia.
- Sahar Kazemi, a civil rights and environmental activist and an athletics coach from Sanandaj, was arrested at her home in Sanandaj, on August 9, 2018. She was sentenced to five years in prison in mid-February 2019.
- Baha'i women Bahareh Ghaderi and Elaheh Samizadeh were arrested in Shiraz on September 15, 2018.
- Nora Pourmoradian, a Baha'i resident of Shiraz, was arrested on September 16, 2018, by agents of the Department of Intelligence and transferred to the department's Detention Center.
- Soudabeh Haghighat was arrested on September 16, 2018, at home in Shiraz while her family were preparing for the funeral of her grandmother.
- Three Baha'i women residing in Mashhad, Dori Amri, May Kholousi and her daughter, Saghi Fadaii, were taken to the Prison of Mashhad on October 31, 2018, to serve their one-year sentences.
- Mitra Badr-nejad, a Baha'i woman from Ahvaz, who had previously been detained in an undetermined status, was sentenced to 5 years in prison.
- Shahrazad Nazifi, a motocross champion and a motocross coach of the Baha'i faith, was arrested on November 18, 2018, in Tehran and taken to Evin Prison.
- Yekta Fahandeh Saadi from Shiraz was sentenced to 11 years of imprisonment in December 2018.



## Violence Against Women in Iran

### State-sponsored, and one of the world's highest

The most common form of violence against women in Iran is the state-sponsored measures to force Iranian women to observe the compulsory veil.

A report by the the Office of Cultural Studies of the Research Center of the mullahs' parliament (Majlis), published in July 2018, indicated that some 70% of Iranian women do not believe in the mandatory dress-code, namely the head-to-toe black veil or Chador, imposed by the regime. They are among the "improperly veiled" and protest the compulsory veil.

The report confirms that Iranian women observe the veil only through coercion and harsh restrictions.

More than 85% of the "improperly veiled" do not believe in the value of Chador and do not approve of government intervention to control this issue.

The regime has a hard time imposing the veil on Iranian women. They spend exorbitant sums of money to pay for 26 government and state agencies as well as 301 associations in charge of enforcing the veil and monitoring Iranian women's observance of the compulsory veiling.

This year saw some of the most horrific scenes of the regime's suppressive forces confronting women on the streets.

Maryam Shariatmadari, 32, a student of Computer Sciences at Tehran's Amir Kabir University, was pushed off a telecoms box by a State Security Force officer and hurt in the knee on February 23, 2018, when she was protesting the compulsory veiling by removing her shawl.

On April 18, 2018, at least four Guidance Patrols attacked four young women in a park, beating and shoving them around for improper veiling. One of the young women suffered from a heart condition and went unconscious as a result of the beatings. The video clip on this incident rapidly went viral and raised public outrage in Iran and around the world.

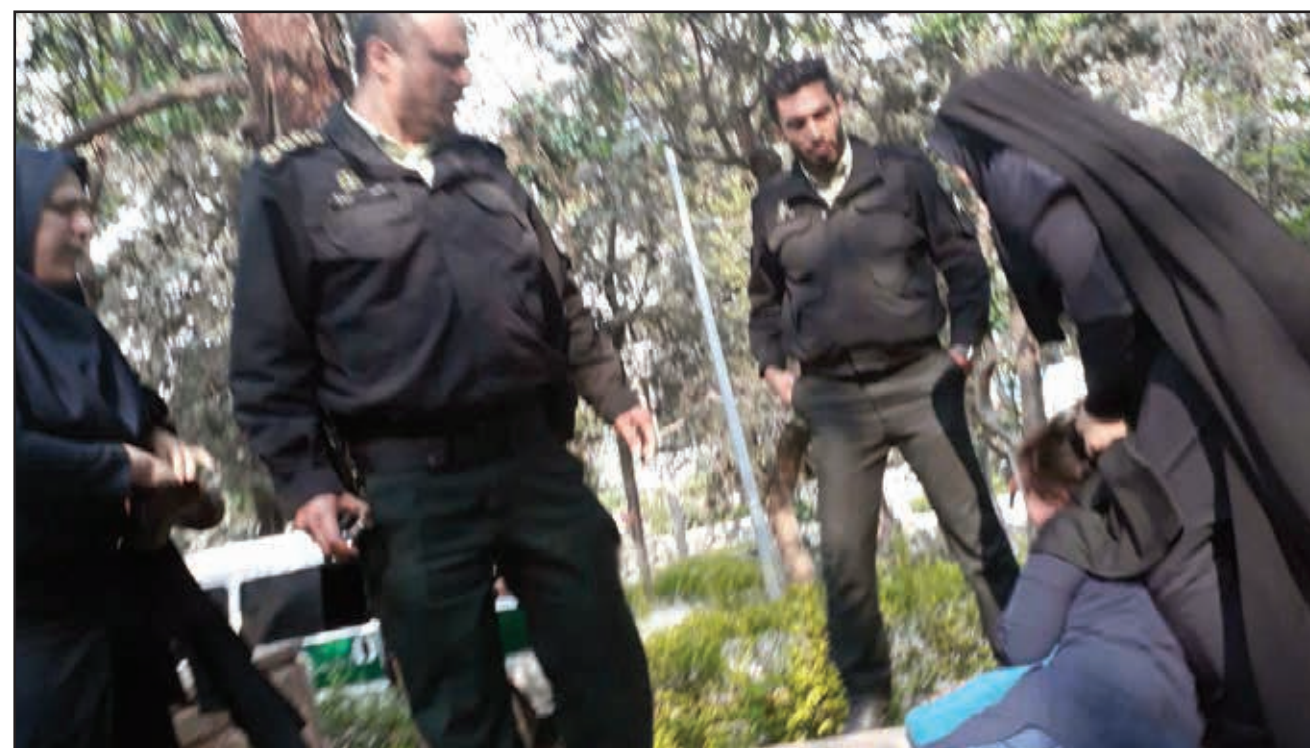
The outcry, however, fell on deaf ears and the regime went on to praise the female patrol guard involved in the case. Hossein Rahimi, Tehran's Chief of Police, declared, "We powerfully defend our agents."

On April 30, 2018, Commander of the State Security Force, Hossein Ashtari, announced that the officer involved had been granted a plaque and honored at the SSF command headquarters.

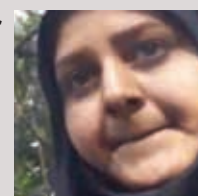
Finally in November, the Prosecutor of the Armed Forces' Judiciary Organization turned down the complaint filed by two of the victims, saying their evidence was not sufficient. There have been a number of other video clips last year substantiating the violent treatment of women on the streets by the guidance patrols.

The SSF Commander, Hossein Ashtari, announced in September 2016 that, "Some 2000 women who wear improper clothing are arrested every day in Tehran and some other provinces." This amounts to 730,000 arrests in a year, a minimized figure both due to lack of transparency on the part of the regime, and the increase in suppression of women as manifested in the video clips this year.

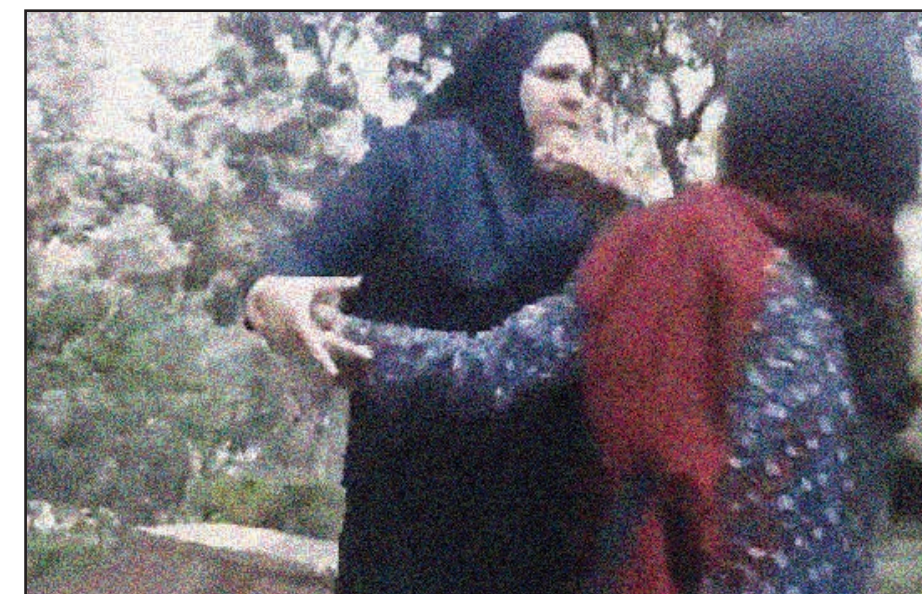
An MP confessed that there are long-lasting psychological consequences for women who are dealt with by the Guidance Patrol. In a gathering on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, Parvaneh Salahshouri admitted, "The anxiety and fear caused by the Guidance Patrol affects some young women and girls for long years, leaving undesirable psychological consequences. As an MP, I have seen cases when the girl's cover was not that bad but such unprincipled approaches have caused psychological problems for the person which has led to other ailments." (The state-run Mehr news agency, November 28, 2017)



The most common form of violence against women in Iran - On April 18, 2018, four Guidance Patrols attacked four young women in a park in Tehran, beating and shoving them around for improper veiling. One of the young women suffered from a heart condition and went unconscious as a result of the beatings. the officer involved (pictured) had been granted a plaque and honored at the SSF command headquarters only two days after the incident.



- 70% of Iranian women do not believe in the compulsory veil and are considered "improperly veiled." More than 85% of the "improperly veiled" do not approve of government intervention to enforce the veil.
- According to SSF Commander, some 2,000 women are arrested and brutalized every day across Iran for improper veiling.



The above photos are screen shots from video clips posted on the internet from Iran showing the brutal treatment of young women in Iran who oppose the compulsory veil



# Drastic Rise of VAW in Iran

One of the most significant indications last year on the drastic rise of violence against women in Iran was official acknowledgements in this regard.

In a VAW conference, Parastoo Sarmadi revealed that, "Iran has one of the highest statistics on violence against women." (The state-run ILNA news agency, September 18, 2018)

"Unfortunately, the last national survey on violence against women was conducted 14 years ago... Since then, no national research on violence against women has been carried out, or if done, it has been kept confidential and not publicly announced," Sarmadi added.

"Today we see that violence (against women) has become institutionalized," Parvaneh Salahshouri, member of the mullahs' parliament, confessed. (The state-run ILNA news agency, September 18, 2018)

"Currently domestic violence against women is pervasive in society," Salahshouri told another event. (The official IRNA news agency, November 25, 2017)

Tayyebeh Siavoshi, member of the women's faction of the mullahs' parliament, asserted, "Many women who are subjected to violence do not file complaints for different reasons. Nevertheless, they lose their living skills due to the violence inflicted on them, to the extent that sometimes they lose their sanity and commit suicide..." (The state-run donya-e-eqtasad.com, July 17, 2018)

Reza Jafari, head of the Social Emergencies, told the media in May 2018 that domestic violence against women had seen a 20% growth over the past year.

Chief Coroner Shojaii announced that the Coroner's Office had examined 74,180 battered women in 2016 and 77,059 in 2017. Shojaii also stated that the number of women who filed complaints against domestic violence had risen 5.8% in 2017 compared to 3.2% increase in the preceding year. (The official IRNA news agency - June 9, 2018)

A 2015 study on violence against pregnant women showed that 48% of pregnant women were subjected to domestic violence. Studies on VAW at the workplace show that 72.6% of nurses have been subjected to violence while on their job.

Last year, Ali Hadizadegan, head of the Coroner's Office of Mashhad had acknowledged that most victims of domestic violence are women between 20 and 35 years of age, and that women generally do not file complaints and the government's data does not accurately reflect the reality. (The state-run Fars news agency, November 23, 2017)

Fatemeh Ghassempour, head of the Research Center on Women and Family in Tehran, divulged in an interview that 66 per cent of Iranian women experience domestic violence in their lifetime. (The state-run ISNA news agency, November 16, 2018) Although the figure is double the world average of one-in-every-three women (or 33%), it must be considered a blatant mitigation of the reality.

A social expert said male domination and its related prejudices have grown in the younger generation, and men consider domestic violence against women as a right they are entitled to. (Interview with the official IRNA news agency, July 18, 2018)



## Judiciary Stalls Provision of Security for Women Bill

Despite high record of violence against women in Iran, the bill for Provision of Security for Women (PSW) has been stalled by the Iranian Judiciary for at least eight years. Initially called, "Elimination of Violence Against Women," the bill was first renamed as "Provision of Security for Women." In the next step, 41 of its 92 articles were removed supposedly because they ran parallel to the articles of the Islamic Punishment Code and the Penal Prosecution Procedure. And yet the bill to prevent violence against women has not been adopted by the mullahs' parliament since being proposed eight years ago.

Ashraf Gerami-zadegan, a legal advisor to the presidential directorate on Women and Family Affairs, explained the reasons for the bill's lack of approval: "Some groups believe that the bill would weaken the authority of men in the family, and some consider the bill's structure to be contrary to their views." On August 24, 2017, Zabiollah Khodavian, legal deputy to the Judiciary, expressed his opposition to the adoption of the VAW bill because 70 out of 100 articles of the bill were "criminalizing", "setting prison sentences for even the slightest tensions between couples."

More recently, the spokesman for the Judiciary announced that the bill could not be reformed, but had to be completely overhauled and re-written with the help of government. Gholam-Hossein Mohseni Eje'ii, first deputy minister and spokesman of the mullahs' Judiciary Branch, said the bill had too many faults. "One of the problems is that our general policy is de-imprisonment. In the PSW bill, however, imprisonment has been predicted as a punishment for every minor violation in this regard. And in doing so, it jeopardizes the foundations of families." (The official IRNA news agency - February 17, 2019) The Judiciary's cultural deputy, Hadi Sadeqi, had also asserted, "The PSW bill against violence is apparently drafted to support women, but in essence it strikes the greatest blow to women and families. When a woman sends her husband to jail, then that man can never be a husband for her again, and the woman must accept the risk of getting divorced in advance."

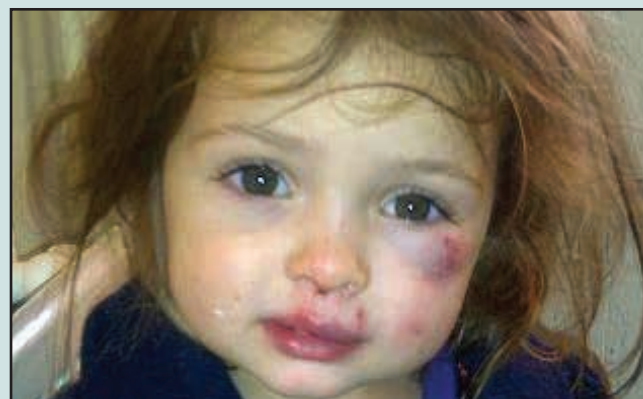
The remarks by Iranian Judiciary officials indicate that they do not take it serious that domestic violence and violence against women have a destructive impact on the foundations of families which will in turn lead to drastic social ailments. A glance on cases of death-row female prisoners, women's suicide, runaway girls and growing divorce rates in Iran which have already jeopardized the foundations of the family in Iran shows that in the majority of cases, these women were initially

victims of violence and domestic violence. Drafting and tabling the bill on Provision of Security for Women against violence, began more than eight years ago under Ahmadi Nejad's government with the cooperation of the Judiciary. It was drafted to contain 92 articles and five principles. But the parliamentary Committee on Bills found some faults with the bill, the deliberations on the bill were brought to halt, and ultimately it was pushed out of the agenda with the conclusion of Ahmadi Nejad's tenure.

According to article 2 of the bill, all women over 18 and married women over 13, can enjoy the support provided by this bill.

## 13,000 children abused in one year in only one out of 31 Iranian provinces

The total number of children abused in Iran is at least 300,000 every year, 52% of whom are girls



Right, Fatemeh and Omolbanin, and their brother were found in Mahshahr, Khuzestan, tortured by stepmother. Next, Atena Aslani, 7, raped and murdered in East Azerbaijan Province.



## OFFICIAL ADMISSIONS

○ Violence "institutionalized" and "pervasive" in Iranian society.

○ Iran among the highest statistics on violence against women.

○ Domestic violence against women has seen a 20% growth over the past year.

○ 74,180 battered women were examined in 2016 and 77,059 in 2017.



# Early Marriages Are Violence Against Women

Parliamentary Committee rejects bill to increase age of girls' marriage

Parvaneh Salahshouri, head of the women's faction in the mullahs' parliament, told a meeting in Tehran on child marriages, "We continue to see girls get married between 9 and 14 years of age... Some 6 per cent of those who get married are girls between 10 and 14." (The official IRNA news agency, January 6, 2019)

Yet, the parliamentary Legal and Judicial Committee rejected the plan to increase the minimum age of marriage for girls. Allahyar Malekshahi, chair of the Legal and Judicial Committee of the mullahs' parliament, told the press on December 23, 2018, "The Legal and Judicial Committee concluded that it was not possible to discuss this plan any further since it contains religious and social deficiencies. So, it was decided that a delegation made up of the committee members draft another proposal which could resolve the problems with the existing plan." (The state-run Fars news agency, December 23, 2018) Members of the mullahs' parliament had agreed in October to urgently deliberate on the plan to reform article 1042 of the Civil Code and raise the minimum age of marriage, but referred the plan to the Legal and Judicial Committee for further scrutiny. Mohammad Ali Pour-Mokhtar, member of the Judicial and Legal Committee, had already announced that the motion "contradicts the teachings of Islam." He added, "Members of the Legal and Judicial Committee believe that given the present circumstances, getting married must be encouraged and facilitated and has priority over increasing the age of marriage." (The state-run Nasim Online – December 17, 2018) The plan to reform Article 1041 of the Civil Code to increase the age of marriage had proposed to ban marriages of girls under 13 years of age, and in order to wed girls between 13 and 16, required the father's consent and endorsement of the court.

## Statistics on under-15 marriages

In a gathering in Tabriz, Massoumeh Aghapour, MP, said early marriages are examples of violence against women. "They are in fact, the worst form of oppression of girls and future women of Iran," she added. Zahra Ayatollahi, head of the Social-Cultural Council of Women and Family at the Supreme Cultural Revolutionary Council, told the same meeting, "Based on the statistics of the National Statistics Center, last year (March 2016-March 2017) there were 36,422 marriages of girls under 15." (The state-run ISNA news agency, March 10, 2018) A similar figure was confirmed for the following year by another MP, Parvaneh Salahshouri, who said some 37,000 girl children under 15 got married from March 2017 to March 2018. (The state-run IRNA news agency, May 8, 2018) The statistics and monitoring director of the Social and Cultural

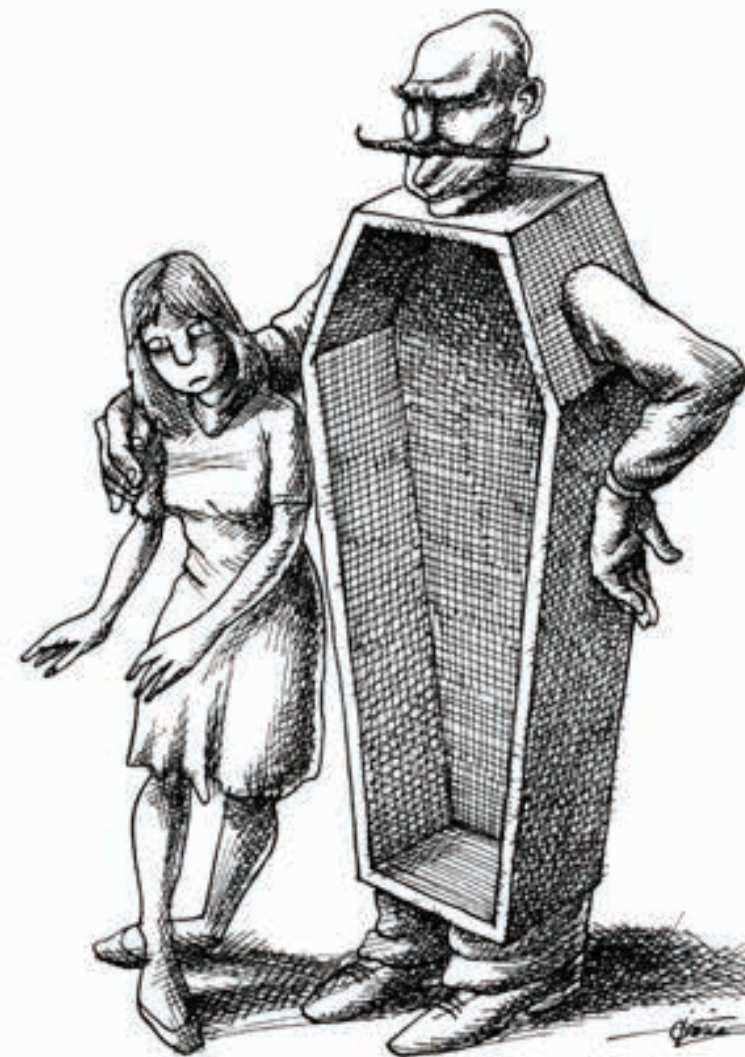


Council of Women and Family said some 43,000 girls under 15 were married in the Persian year 1396, from March 2017 to March 2018. (The state-run salamnews.com, July 24, 2018)

## Early marriages lead to child abuse

Batool Salimi Manesh, a social researcher, said, "180,000 early marriages take place in Iran every year." She added, "The number of girl children under 10 who have gotten married was 220 in 2011; 187 in 2012; 201 in 2013; 176 in 2014; and 179 in 2015. These figures are probably higher because of unregistered marriages." (The official IRNA news agency, August 5, 2018)

Ali Baghdar Delgosha, advisor in youths' affairs to the Governor of Razavi Khorasan Province, said the average marriage age is 11 for girl children in Zaveh village in Razavi Khorasan Province in northeastern Iran. (Speech at the School of Literature of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad on May 14, 2018) Amir Taghizadeh, cultural and youth affairs deputy in the General Department of Youths and Sports in East Azerbaijan, said 3,944 girls between 10 and 14 years got married in 2015. One year later, in 2016, this number reached 4,165 marriages. The marriage age for girls in Zainub village in this province is under 10. (The state-run ISNA news agency, May 24, 2018) There are families who force girls as young as 9 or 10 years old to get married with old men just to obtain some money to provide for the rest of the family's needs. (The state-run ROKNA news agency, May 28, 2018) The Razavi Khorasan Province (eastern Iran) has the largest number of early marriages followed by East Azerbaijan Province. (The official IRNA news agency, August 5, 2018) Following them are the provinces of Sistan and Baluchestan, West Azerbaijan, and Kermanshah which are national record holders of some 4,000 girl marriages under 15 every year. (The state-run website of Young Journalists Club, July 5, 2018) Massoumeh Agha-Alishahi, MP, said there are some 24,000



widows under 18 years in Iran, and most of the early marriages end up in divorce. (The state-run ROKNA news agency, May 28, 2018) Shahrbanou Imami, member of Tehran's City Council and former MP, told an IWD gathering at Tehran's Melli University that there were 15,000 young widows under 15 years in Iran. (The state-run ILNA news agency, March 8, 2018) Mehrdad Motalebi, deputy for Social Affairs in the Welfare Organization of West Azerbaijan Province, announced, "More than 13,000 cases of child abuse were registered and reported to the Social Emergency Room of West Azerbaijan Province, during the Persian year 1396 (March 2017- March 2018)." (The state-run uromnews.ir, August 7, 2018) Thus the horrifying dimensions of this social ailment in all 31 Iranian provinces amounts to at least 300,000 cases per year. Reza Jafari, general director of social ailments in the Welfare Organization, confirmed that 52% of child victims of violence are girls. (The state-run salamnews.com, October 4, 2018) Iranian sociologists believe that the surge in child abuse in Iran is due to poverty and forcible early marriages. Institutionalized in the clerical regime's laws, the legal age of marriage for girls in Iran is 13 years, and they can be given to marriage even younger if the father and a judge decide that they are mature enough. The Convention on the Child Rights reiterates that a child becomes mature at the age of 18, thus child marriages violate this convention and other international laws.

# Assailants with government ties rape young women

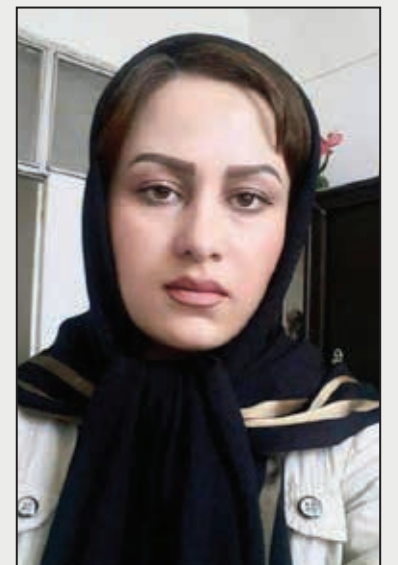
An increasing number of rape accounts kept mushrooming in different parts of Iran, including the rape and murders of 6 and 7-year-old girl children. However, the rapes of 41 women and girls in Iranshahr, in southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan, was the most horrific case stirring controversy across the country in June 2018.

The victims were between 18 and 30 years of age assaulted by a gang of four men, linked to the city's wealthy and influential families, the Bassij and IRGC. Officials minimized the issue and helped the criminals evade justice. Finally, Prosecutor-General Mohammad Jafar Montazeri, declared on June 18, 2018, "We must deny this story the way it has been presented." Referring to Mowlavi Tayyeb, the Friday Prayer leader of Iranshahr who first went public with the case, he said, "The Judiciary will deal decisively with the individual who has taken advantage of a public forum by misinforming the public by fake news without verifying its validity, and thereby jeopardizing the honor of some families." He emphasized, "This incident is certainly not true in the scale it has been raised."

Another shocking case was the rape and murder of Zahra Navidpour, 28, in Malekan, a small city in East Azerbaijan Province.

She was found dead at her mother's home on January 6, 2019. Zahra who was looking for a job after her father's death, was offered a job by Salman Khodadadi, the city's deputy in the parliament but was repeatedly raped. Khodadadi had threatened to kill Zahra and her family «overnight without anyone knowing.» Zahra filed a suit against Khodadi but faced an unfair trial and a presiding judge

who was intent to incriminate her. She had written to the judge that she had no security and needed to be protected. The coroner's office was supposed to perform autopsy on Zahra Navidpour's body to determine the reason for her death, but security forces stole and secretly buried her body in a village before the autopsy.





The world Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2018 ranked Iran 142 among 149 countries, ahead of Mali, Congo, Chad, Syria, Iraq, Pakistan and Yemen.

The Iranian regime scores 0.589 on a 0.0 to 1.0 scale. As for women's economic participation and opportunity, Iran slid down to 143 rank with a score of 0.376. The official Iranian news agency IRNA published a report on January 17, 2019, indicating that women's participation rate in the job market in 2017 was only 16.8% which is considered very low compared to the male participation rate of 71.4%. It said that Iran's job market was male-dominated.

Before the 1979 Revolution, women's participation in the labor force was 12 percent.

The World Bank put the average value for Iran from 1990 to 2017 at 14.21 percent with a minimum of 9.83 percent in 1990 and a maximum of 19.41 percent in 2005. Nearly half the Iranian population or about 39.4 million are female, of which perhaps half could be considered to be of working age. Iran's total labor force is said to be 21.3 million. Only 3 million Iranian women are employed. Compare this to 18.2 million working men, and the gender gap in employment becomes clear.

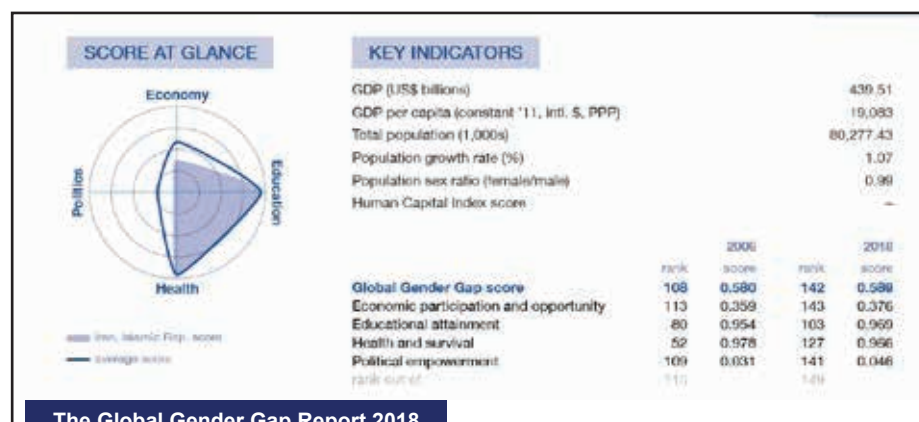
Women in Iran confront an array of legal and social barriers in all realms of life. Their participation in the job market is significantly lower than the average participation in other upper-middle income countries and is lower than the average for all women in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, and one of the lowest worldwide. (The state-run Donya-e Eqtasad – September 29, 2015)

### Iranian women discriminated against in the law

Low women's participation in the labor force is mainly because discrimination against women is institutionalized in the Iranian regime's laws. Women confront an array of restrictions and are denied equal access to employment; they are restricted from entering certain professions and 77 fields of education, while denied equal benefits at work, basic legal protections. Some employers are reluctant to hire women because their ability to travel depends on their husband's permission.

Women are severely underrepresented in senior public positions and as private sector managers. The Iranian regime has created and enforced numerous discriminatory laws and regulations

# Women's Plight in the Male-Dominated Job Market of Iran



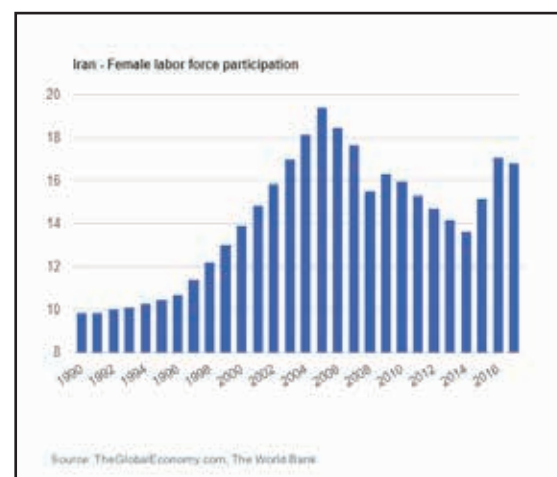
limiting women's participation in the job market while also failing to stop widespread discriminatory practices against women in the private and public sectors, thus violating women's economic and social rights.

Iranian women are excluded from any real power. Iranian women's participation and representation in the formal political structure is among the lowest in the world: 3 percent female parliamentary representation. The most senior women in government are only three so-called vice-presidents who do not have any influence on key economic, foreign policy, political, cultural, or social matters. In general, the regime prefers that women remain at home and care for their families.

### Unemployment of women and educated women

Domestically, the Iranian state faces high unemployment and income inequality. When it gets to women, the situation is drastic.

The state-run press have indicated that from the 27 million women over the age of 10 in Iran, only three million are employed and the remaining 24 million are not in the workforce. (The state-run Mehr news agency - June 8, 2016) According to a report published in October 2018 by the Centre of Strategic Statistics and Information of the Iranian Labor Ministry, the number of unemployed women in Iran has increased by 200,000 from 830,996 in 2011 to more than 1,037,000 women in 2017. That is a 25% increase in just seven years. Unemployment rates among young



people, women and educated women, are alarmingly high particularly in western provinces. In some of these provinces, youth unemployment rates range from 50% to 63% and educated women's unemployment rates in the same provinces fluctuate between 63% and 78%. (The state-run ISNA news agency - November 21, 2018)

In November 2013, it was announced that the average unemployment rate of women is only 21.6% in Tehran despite the highest concentration of industrial plants and administrative centers in the nation's capital. In other provinces, women's unemployment rates exceed 50%. (The state-run Economists (Eghtesad-danan), August 13, 2015) In 2004, some 43 percent of women with higher education were unemployed compared to 22.5 percent of university educated men.

In January 2016, the state-run press reported that the unemployment rate among young women under 30 was 85.9%. (The state-run Mehr News Agency – January 5, 2016 / the state-run

### Rate of Women's Unemployment in Some Iranian Provinces

Province	Unemployment rate %	Province	Unemployment rate %
Alborz	55.9	Kermanshah	61.6
Ardabil	51.2	Khorassan Razavi	69.5
Central Province	62.5	Khuzistan	63.5
Chaharmahal & Bakhtiari	80.1	Kohgiluyeh & Boyer Ahmad	64.7
Fars	70	Kurdistan	55.1
Gilan	39	Lorestan	81.7
Golestan	69.7	Mazandaran	64.1
Hormozgan	73.1	North Khorassan	55
Ilam	86.4	Qazvin	58.7
Isfahan	53	Tehran	21.6



Tabnak website – December 26, 2015) The high unemployment rate for educated women is not only due to discriminatory laws but also due to an imbalance between the type of available jobs and the level of education which has resulted in the unemployment of the educated work force. A survey done in 2016 and 2017 indicated that out of 3.2 million jobless people in Iran, more than 1.3 million or 42% of the unemployed population held university degrees. This comes as only 24% of jobholders in the same year were university graduates. Women with higher education are regarded as a new sector who are either unemployed or have been forced to engage in menial jobs with low wages. Many women with college education have to resort to peddling in the streets, working in restaurants or as secretaries in offices and accept salaries as low as one-third of the minimum wage. Women with bachelor's degrees are working in welding workshops, and a graphics major is now a simple worker. Iranian women are also the prime victims

of layoffs and expulsions from work. All female journalists and administration staff of the ANA news agency, belonging to the so-called Islamic Azad (Free) University, were fired on September 18, 2018, just because of their gender. Most of the female journalists sacked by ANA had more than three years of work experience.

### Gender inequality

In its annual survey of Iran's labor force, the National Statistics Center (NSC) also confirmed gender inequality in the job market of Iran in the 10-year period spanning from 2008 to 2017. The NSC findings indicate that the 63% average participation rate of men in the job market was four times greater than women's participation rate of only 14% in the said period. The survey also indicated that out of every 100 persons holding jobs in Iran, 84 were men and only 16 were women, a clear indication that the job market is male-dominated. A survey by the Labor Ministry's Center

for Statistics and Strategic Information found unequal access to wage-earning jobs for men and women. According to this study done for the period spanning from March 2016 to March 2017, men's share of wage-earning jobs was 82.7 per cent compared to women's 17.3 per cent share, indicating a fivefold access for men to wage-earning opportunities compared to women. (The state-run Mehr news agency – January 23, 2018) According to the figures compiled by the NSC, the rate of unemployment among young women between 20 and 30 years of age is double that of men in the same age range. (The state-run Asr-e Iran website – December 20, 2017) "In some provinces, unemployed educated women are three times more numerous than men," said Massoumeh Ebtekar, Rouhani's deputy in women and family affairs. (The state-run Ghanoun website citing IRNA – October 30, 2017)



# Disastrous Quality, Conditions of Education

Two million of Iran's 4.3 million university students and over 50 per cent of university graduates in Iran are young women.

Ironically, more than 60 per cent of the country's 11 million illiterates are also women while the quality and conditions of education are catastrophic.

## Education, neither mandatory nor free in Iran

Education is mandatory and free in most countries of the world for 6 to 14 age group and UNESCO has underlined the need for mandatory education for children.

According to Principle 30 of the Iranian Constitution, "The government is obliged to provide free elementary and high school education for all members of the nation and facilitate free higher education for all until the country is self-sufficient." Ali Bagherzadeh, deputy Minister of Education and head of the Literacy Movement Organization, however, revealed at a conference at the Ministry of Education that education is not mandatory in Iran. (The state-run Salamnews.com, April 25, 2018)

## 11 million illiterates

The Statistics on literacy or illiteracy in Iran are scarce, inaccurate and conflicting.

According to Seyyed Mohammad Javad Abtahi, member of the parliamentary Education and Research Committee, the number of illiterates in Iran has reached 11 million making up some 13 per cent of the population of different ages. (The state-run salamnews.com, September 26, 2018) This shows 1.5-million increase in seven years considering the figure of 9,483,028 in 2011, announced by the National Statistics Center (NSC). Approximately two-thirds of this illiterate population, i.e. 6,250,965 were women.

However, in April 2018, Ali Bagherzadeh had told the press that there were only 2.3 million illiterates in the 10 to 49 age group with 1.38 million of them women. (The state-run Salamnews.com, April 25, 2018) He contradicted his earlier remarks in March when he said the figures were 2.7 million and 1.8 million for women. (The state-run ILNA news agency, March 31, 2018)

## 2 to 4 million students remain out of schools

The most recent figure announced on the number of students deprived of education has been 2 million.

According to the state-run salamnews.com, September 26, 2018, there are more than 15 million school-age Iranians, but the student population is only 13 million. This means that at least 2 million Iranian students, including a large number of girls, have not been able to go to school.

This contradicts a 2016 report on the number of illiterate children which said there are over 3.2 million children deprived of education in Iran. (The state-run Mehrkhaneh website, December 5, 2016) The statistics for this report had been collected in 2006.

And still a 2015 report by the parliamentary Research Center had set the figure at 4 million.

Considering that there has been no improvement in education in Iran, with the Ministry of Education constantly suffering from

budget deficits and struggling to pay even its teachers' salaries, it seems that the new announcement is intended to minimize the gravity of the situation rather than reflecting the reality.

## Contributing factors

The country's economic bankruptcy is a factor contributing to illiteracy.

In the past few years, Rouhani has ordered shut-down of many schools in rural communities to cut down on budget. The regime has also been gradually expanding its demands for tuition from students and their families, further contributing to school drop outs.

More and more universities have also been demanding tuitions and fees from students, something that led to numerous protests over the past year in universities across the country. Iranian students have been also protesting the quality of education in universities including shortages or lack of instructors, laboratory facilities, books, libraries, etc.

In elementary and high schools, teachers have to work two or three jobs to earn their living, thus compromising the quality of children's education.

At the same time, sub-standard conditions of schools and the government's failure to renovate them have led to numerous accidents.

## Alarming figures

At least a quarter of Iran's students are forced to quit school every year with a large number of them joining the estimated 3 to 7 million child laborers. (Nahid Tajeddin, member of the board of directors of the Social Commission of the Majlis, the state-run Salam news, September 27, 2017)

This is mainly due to pervasive poverty and lack of social support for destitute families in Iran while education is neither free nor mandatory.

The presidential Directorate on Women and Family Affairs published a report in 2015, according to which the illiteracy of women and girl children is critical in some 40 Iranian cities. Drop-out of girl children, 6 years and older, is widespread particularly in the provinces of Sistan and Baluchestan, Khuzestan, Western Azerbaijan, and Eastern Azerbaijan. Abbas Soltanian, deputy for mid-level education in the Ministry of Education, announced, "This academic year, from October 2017 until June 2018, there have been 151,046 girl students who did not register in any schools, their names were not registered anywhere, and were not considered students at all." (The state-run ILNA news agency - June 25, 2018) Comparing girl students with boys, Soltanian said, "A total of 4.23 per cent of students dropped out of school in the previous academic year. Girl students constituted 4.17 per cent of it, meaning that there is a big difference between girls' and boys' drop outs."

Soltanian added, "Girls are more vulnerable relative to boys." An administrative clerk in a village in Khuzestan province said, "About 50% of boys and almost all girls have no choice but to drop out of school because there are no middle schools." There are no girls' high schools in the city of Hoveyzeh and the 40 villages in that region, as a result of which the majority of girls have been compelled to give up their education.

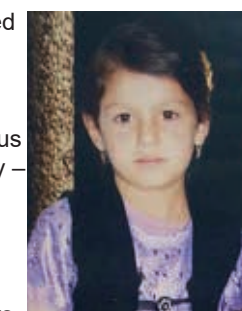


## Substandard educational spaces, unsafe transportation, irresponsible approaches

Girl children and young women in Iran also become victims of substandard school systems and structures, unsafe transportation, and irresponsible approaches of school officials and staff.

- The car transporting students of a girls' high school in northern Fars Province, turned over and the five girls riding in the car suffered broken and dislocated bones. (The official IRNA news agency – January 22, 2018)
- In another accident in January 2018, a girls' school bus overturned north of Fars Province, where five girl students were injured.
- Fatemeh Rezaii, 15, lost her limbs in an explosion in a high school in Kuhdasht of Lorestan Province. The explosion took place on February 27, 2018, when Fatemeh and two of her classmates were posting papers on a board using a metal object they had picked from the ground which was apparently an unexploded grenade. (The state-run Tasnim news agency – June 23, 2018)
- Sara Ayineh, a student of biology at a high school for talented students, was among the 27 victims of a horrendous bus crash in Sanandaj on July 11, 2018.

● A 7-year-old Kurdish girl, Donya Veisi, died when the wall crumbled on her at school in Sanandaj. The first grader was immediately taken to hospital by her father, teacher and the school principal, but lost her life to serious injuries. (The state-run Tasnim news agency – October 8, 2018)



● The bus carrying girl students to a compulsory camp, called Rahian-e Noor, crashed on the Tabriz road. Two girl students died in the accident and more were injured. (The state-run ISNA News Agency – October 10, 2018)

● Four pre-school and elementary girl students lost their lives in a fire on December 18, 2018, at a non-governmental girls' school in Osveh Hassaneh in Zahedan, capital of Sistan and Baluchestan Province. The victims were Mona Khosroparast, Maryam Nokandi, Saba Arabi, and Yekta Mirshekar who died two days later in hospital. (The state-run Tasnim news agency – December 18, 2018)

● On December 25, 2018, a bus crash on the campus of the Sciences and Research Branch of Azad University in Tehran, led to the deaths of eight including 3 female students. 28 students were injured.

● A bus from the Buein Zahra Technical University veered off the road. A female student was consequently injured and transferred to the hospital. The bus had previously stopped on the roadside several times, due to technical defects. (The state-run ROKNA news agency – January 13, 2019)



● On January 26, 2019, the car used for a school transportation in Mashhad overturned on the road. Three girl students, a boy and the female driver of the car were injured.

● A female midwifery student from Bonab Azad University named Damon Moludpour, lost her life at the Tabriz Hospital on January 29, 2019, due to a minibus overturn.

A minibus vehicle carrying six female midwifery students.



● 25 girls were poisoned on January 29, 2019, after being exposed to carbon monoxide leak from the heating system in their classroom in the girls' elementary school in Bam, Kerman Province. Nine girl students were transferred to the hospital for treatment. (The state-run ISNA News Agency – January 29, 2019)

● Leila Osmani, 12, and Abbas Osmani, 13, lost their lives when a school minibus crashed with a trailer truck on the Omidiyeh to Mahshahr axis. Ten other students were injured in this accident. (The state-run Jamaran Website – February 6, 2019)

● On February 6, 2019, the ceiling of a girls' secondary school on Lakan Boulevard in Rasht was burned due to the short circuit of the electrical wiring on the roof of the school. The fire did not leave any fatal casualties but burned down a part of the school. (The state-run Tabnak Website – February 6, 2019)

### Education Ministry lacks funds to replace non-standard heating systems

Mohammad Ali Bathaie, the Minister of Education made shocking confessions to reporters at a government meeting on December 12, 2018, saying, "Given the credit the government and the Education Ministry have, it is not possible to remove (the non-standard) heaters from schools in seven or eight years." (The state-run Rouydad 24 news agency – December 19, 2018)

The mullahs' Minister of Education had previously announced in 2017 that 42 percent of Iranian schools do not have a safe heating system. (The state-run Mehr news agency – September 23, 2018)

The quality of nursing services and the working conditions of nurses are categorized under social protection systems and access to public services, both significant themes taken up this year by the 63rd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

In Iran, nurses face a plethora of damaging social and economic problems created by 40 years of the corrupt rule of the mullahs. 78.5% of Iranian nurses are women. By September 22, 2017, the total number of nursing personnel employed by the medical sciences universities, including the personnel for operation rooms, anesthesia, and medical emergencies, amounted to 117,639 persons which included 92,442 female nurses.

### Most nurses work on temporary contracts

Despite the sensitivity of their job, and its inherent pressure and harms, the majority of female nurses in Iran are not permanently employed, and the majority of them work on temporary contracts. As a result, they are offered a small salary which is not regularly paid.

While nurses are forced to work overtime, their overtime fees are not paid for between six to twelve months. Nurses working for the hospitals affiliated with the Medical Sciences University of Golestan Province (northern Iran), for example, have one-year worth of unpaid fees and salaries. (The state-run ILNA news agency – September 18, 2018)

The average income of female nurses is presently around 2.4 million tomans (approx. \$178) but many work for 500,000 tomans (\$37) without having any insurance.

### Hospitals short of 80 to 150,000 nurses

Ali Asghar Dalvandi, president of the National Nursing Organization, says discrimination and injustice against the nursing community in Iran has aggravated in the past five years. He acknowledges that the situation of nurses in Iran is worse than the nurses' situation in Kenya and Iraq.

"We need at least another 150,000 nurses. The world standard of the ratio of nurses to hospital beds is 1 to 8 (12.5%), while in our country this ratio is 0.7% (i.e. 7 for every 1000 beds). This shows we are way below the standards," he said. (The state-run Mehr news agency – January 12, 2019)

On January 12, 2019, the state-run ILNA news agency reported, "The secretary general of the Iranian Nursing House said last month that due to financial restrictions and the policy of not granting new licenses, there are 30,000 unemployed nurses in Iran. He added, "To provide adequate nursing services, we must have four nurses for (every 1000 persons in) the population. Of course, the world's average is six nurses for every 1000 persons in the population. So, if we want to have the minimum number of nurses for the 80 million population (of Iran), we must have at least 240,000 nurses working across the country, whereas right now, there are only 160,000 nurses who provide medical and health services."

### Lack of funds hinders new recruitments

Nurse shortages have led to an increase in the number of patient companies. It has also led to overtime work and mandatory work shifts for the existing nurses. This is a problem that the regime's officials have essentially not paid attention to. The latest example is the rejection of the new fiscal year budget allocation for recruitment of new nurses in the Persian year 1398 (from March 21, 2019- March 20, 2020).

The responsibility of recruiting new nurses is constantly being

## Nurses Bear the Brunt of Pressure



passed from one government agency to the other. This while half of the nursing graduates remain without jobs. In some provinces, 2,500 persons have graduated in recent years but only 450 of them have been recruited.

The number of graduates of nursing is not small, but there are many who do not get employment licenses after graduation. This is why many nurses decide to migrate despite rampant shortage of nurses in the country. The secretary general of the House of Nurses, Mohammad Sharifi Moghaddam said some 1,000 nurses leave Iran every year due to discrimination and migrate to other countries. (The state-run ILNA news agency – May 30, 2018)

### Tremendous pressure at work

Abbas Eskandari, chair of the board of directors of the Nursing Organization of Isfahan, has also complained of the shortage of nurses in this province. He said, "Shortage of nurses creates additional pressure at work, causing professional distress, increasing the possibility of nurses making mistakes, and consequently increasing the possibility of deaths in hospitals." (The state-run ILNA news agency – January 12, 2019)

Female nurses in Iran are not only missing their monthly salaries but are enduring great pressure at work. Since in the end, they cannot respond to everyone's needs, they become directly face to face with the patients and their companies, and are often insulted and even brutalized. Twenty-eight nurses

were brutalized in 2017, and 20 nurses have lost their lives in the past three years.

Eleven years after the mullahs' parliament, Majlis, announced in 2007 that they have passed an Act for Implementing Tariffs on Nursing Services and Balancing Nurses' Commission Fees, there has been no news of its enforcement. (The state-run Salamnews.com, March 22, 2018)

This is one of the reasons for nurses' low wages, forcing them to work consecutive shifts of a difficult job. In this way, those who provide more than 80 percent of medical services at a hospital do not receive their fees, when no tariffs are defined by government officials.

Such chaotic situation has caused increased immigration, growing discontent, and repeated protests by nurses without receiving any response from relevant authorities.

Mohammad Sharifi Moghaddam, the General Secretary of the House of Nurses, says, "Iran is badly in need of nursing services. The government must invest in this field and recruit its graduates in both public and private sectors. When their salaries and commissions as well as their working hours comply with international standards, our nurses will not have to leave the country for Germany, Australia, Canada, the U.S., and even the Persian Gulf countries." (The state-run ILNA news agency – January 12, 2019)

Nurses' salaries in the said countries used to be three times greater than their salaries in Iran even before the value of Rial plunging so much.



The mullahs' regime has left no windows for defending the rights of workers. Today, workers' wages and monthly salaries are not paid for months and even over a year. Workers have to get loans and pay interest, sell their organs and sometimes set themselves alight out of despair. In light of such tortuous conditions for all workers, one can conceive of the grave situation of female workers in Iran, since women are systematically discriminated against in the law, in employment and job market, and in every other realm of life. The Iranian regime, which is a member of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), has not adopted any of the CSW recommendations to improve women's economic empowerment, and is moving in the opposite direction. Instead of "eliminating structural barriers and discriminatory laws" and "creating equal economic opportunities," the regime sanctions more discrimination against women and its legislations marginalize them even further. The mullahs' Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei reveals the misogynist vision of the regime by stating that women "physically and emotionally have been created by God for a special role in life" and "the issue of women's employment is not among the main issues." As a consequence of such visions and laws, Iranian women who need to make ends meet for their families are forced to accept just any job with a small salary. They get hired by small workshops to work under unsafe conditions without insurance coverage, bonuses, or job security. Some experts have best described the harsh conditions of women workers as "slavery."

### Working conditions of female workers

The working conditions of female workers in Iran are grossly different from those of their male counterparts. Women's participation in the workers' movement is unnoticeable and they are oppressed in silence and darkness. Women suffer from double oppression partly because they are rarely hired in official jobs due to provisions of the Iranian laws which give priority to men. In contrast, women comprise the greater portion of the workforce in unofficial workshops not monitored by the government and are greenlighted to pay less to their workers and deny them benefits or insurance. Women who are desperate to have any



**12** women and girls work up to 12 hours with a meager wage of 400,000 tomans a month, \$30

**70%** Women constitute 70% of carpet weavers in Iran

“Low wages and long working hours constitute new slavery conditions for women workers”

job to earn their family's living are widely preyed upon by such workshops. A large number of women sell their work force for a small amount of money without being felt or considered as a worker. They work between 10 to 12 hours at home applying glue on envelopes or sewing spangles on fabric, but their daily wage is around 5,000 tomans or merely a dollar. These women do not even have a specific employer and their products are sold through intermediaries who pocket most of their revenues. At the same time, the status of Iranian workers is an off limit and the occasional inquiries and data published in this regard fail to address the number of women and the problems they face in

this male-dominated environment, under discriminatory laws. However, a few reports and interviews which appeared in the Iranian media on the International Workers Day, shed light on a small part of women's deplorable situation.

### “New slavery” conditions

In a gathering on April 28, at the Labor Ministry in Tehran, Massoumeh Ebtekar, Rouhani's deputy for Women and Family Affairs, confessed that “women have the largest share in unofficial jobs.” The state-run IRNA news agency wrote that unofficial jobs are referred to jobs which are outside the official structures; in a word, they are jobs in units which are not officially registered and not monitored

said, “Oppression of women in some production units with regards to the payment of their wages and their long working hours is new slavery.” Amirabadi added, “I have visited these production units. Some women are working more than the legally sanctioned working hours and the wages they receive are rather small.” In another part of his speech, Amirabadi acknowledged that women and girls “go to work at these production units since early morning and work up to 12 hours with a meager wage of 400,000 tomans (a month, approx. \$30).” (The state-run ISNA news agency - May 1, 2018) The minimum wage in Iran is around 1,100,000 tomans (approx. \$81.5) and the poverty line is 6 million tomans. (approx. \$450)

### No equal pay, job security or insurance for women workers

Another state official confessed to the catastrophic conditions of women workers in the Province of Qazvin, northwest of Tehran, in an interview with the official IRNA news agency on May 3, 2018. Fatemeh Pourni, Secretary of the Union of Women Workers in Qazvin (a state institution), said, “Women workers work in step with men in production units, but do not receive equal wages. They are not aware of their legal rights. Therefore, they do not even find out if their insurance has been considered in their payrolls. But they do not file any complaints in this regard since they fear being fired by their employers.” Pourni said in another part, “Temporary three-month contracts have deprived female workers of job security. Sometimes, employers mistreat women workers for the smallest flaw in their work. Most of the women in the workers' community are heads of household. They face long working hours but are deprived of many rights and benefits.” She also noted that the majority of women workers are heads of household and added, “There are many young women who have to work in the production units to help mitigate economic pressure on their families and assist their parents. They have to bear with the harsh work conditions at the workshops and factories.” (The official IRNA news agency - May 3, 2018) Another official, Abdollah Bahrami, the CEO of National Union of Hand-woven Carpet Producers, also revealed that, “Women constitute the majority of carpet

weavers in Iran and if we want to put it in percentages, they form 70% of the weavers.” In his interview on May 16, 2018, with the state-run ILNA news agency, Bahrami noted that 320,000 of the one million carpet weavers are covered by insurance, adding, “A large percentage of these carpet weavers are women heads of household.”

### Lack of supportive laws

Absence of supportive laws for female workers and common use of semi-legal contracts have made work conditions way more difficult for women compared to men. A number of women workers in the Province of Qazvin, northwest of Tehran, complained about tough jobs which place double pressure on their bodies and do not match their physical capabilities. Zahra Parhizgari, a graduate of Law, has recently lost her job because the factory where she worked has shut down. In an interview with the official IRNA news agency, she complained of harsh work conditions for women in such production units. While mentioning some employers' mistreatment of female workers, she pointed out that lack of supportive laws and shortage of employment for women has led someone like her with a bachelor's degree to a job in an environment which does not suit her gender and education, to earn a living. Hadissh Rostami is another young woman who has become unemployed due to the factory's shutdown. She described the work environment as “extremely male-oriented” and added, “Despite doing equal work, we did not receive the minimum benefits and wages... Unfortunately, there is no difference between the wages of a worker who has been working on the production line for several years and a newcomer.” Ms. Rostami also complained about violence and discrimination against women by some employers and the poor sanitary conditions they face in production units. She said the laying off of workers exerts double pressure on other workers who have to work more despite their physical conditions. (The semi-official Aryanews.com, May 3, 2018)



## The most vulnerable work force in the job market

Women workers have always been the most vulnerable group in the Iranian job market.

As it became evident by official admissions and some of the published cases, women are the first victims in the face of any economic problem and among the first groups of workers to be laid off of work. Women are considered a secondary work force who receive smaller wages for equal work with men. Plans introduced in recent years to increase the length of maternal leave or reduce women's working hours under special circumstances have practically discouraged employers from recruiting female work force, giving them excuses to refrain from employing women. Even when women are employed, their job security is on the line by marriage or pregnancy.

Women also make up the majority of the work force in small workshops with less than 10 workers. These workshops are exceptions to the labor law and not supervised by the government. This is called the unofficial sector or the "Grey Economic Sector."

Women hired in the unofficial sector or the "Grey Economic Sector" have to work in the workshops for minimum wage and without receiving any benefits, retirement pensions or health insurance. But these women are also the main victims who are easily dismissed from their jobs without any unemployment insurance.

At the same time, the small workshops are the first group of businesses to shut down in the economic ups and downs. In light of women's greater share of employment in small workshops, one can conclude that unemployment has been higher among women in recent years due to economic hardships. This has driven more women towards signing temporary contracts to earn their living. According to the latest statistics, 85 per cent of Iranian workers are hired by workshops on temporary contracts. While there are no official reports on the share of women, women are estimated to comprise a greater share of temporary contracts than men.

As it was earlier noted by a regime official, oppression of women in some production units can be only described as "new slavery."

# Teachers Struggle to Live

Women make up more than half of the teachers' population in Iran. They live on salaries which are way below the poverty line and at the same time face numerous social and legal discriminations because of their gender. Despite tremendous work pressure, they do not receive a fair salary.

An activist teacher just recently pointed out, "Every year, the budget ratified for education only suffices to pay for basic expenses and the teachers' salaries, which are already half the poverty line." (Mojgan Bagheri, the state-run salamatnews.com, September 26, 2018)

## Teachers systematically not paid

A member of parliament revealed, "The Literacy Movement's educators systematically do not receive their wages for several months while being deprived of job security. The livelihood of teachers hired by the Education Ministry is also far from decent. Teachers are struggling to earn their living and at the same time fulfill their professional obligations... In a good educational system, teachers must enjoy the most value and importance... However, this has not happened for Iranian teachers and they face a plethora of problems, particularly economic problems." (Mohammad Javad Abtahi, member of the Education and Research Committee of the mullahs' parliament, the state-run salamatnews.com, September 26, 2018)

## Teachers' salaries

Teachers officially and permanently employed by the Ministry of Education earn 1.4 million tomans per month (\$100) while the poverty line stands at 6 million tomans (\$450). This is less than one-fourth of what they need to subsist. The majority of teachers, however, work on temporary contracts. The monthly salary of contract teachers is 800,000 tomans (\$60) which is below the minimum wage of 1,100,000 tomans (\$81.5), which is itself less than one-sixth of the poverty line. They do not enjoy any benefits, either. Nevertheless, it frequently happens that teachers do not receive any salary for months. Contract teachers held a protest in Tehran on February 10, 2018. They said five months past the new academic

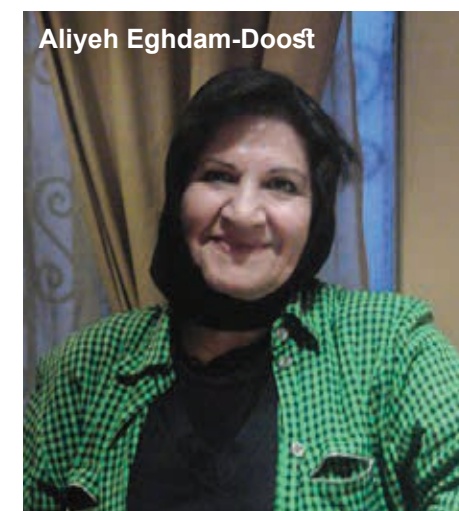
year, they had been paid only once. Not receiving wages for four months has caused many problems for the teachers who work on contracts. With most teachers working two or three shifts a day to provide for the needs of their families, they are so preoccupied that obviously have not much energy to concentrate on the education of children.

## Contract teachers

Contract teachers fill in for the shortage of teachers at schools. The Ministry of Education has for years prevented leakage of any information on the number of contract teachers and their gender. One of the main demands of contract teachers and teaching assistants is to become permanent teachers. An Education Ministry deputy for women's affairs recently said that of the 1 million female government employees in Iran, 500,000 work for the Education Ministry. (Farahnaz Minaii Pour, the state-run ISNA news agency, January 2, 2019) She did not specify how many of them are contract teachers.

## Retired teachers' demands

One of the main demands of retired teachers is to raise their pensions and improve their basic health care services. A retired teacher said, "We object to the 2019 budget plan. It is not fair that only two billion tomans are considered for equalization of retirement pensions in the budget plan. Officials themselves say that they need at least 15 trillion tomans for equalization of liquidity." (The state-run ILNA news agency – December 20, 2018)



Aliyeh Eghdam-Doost

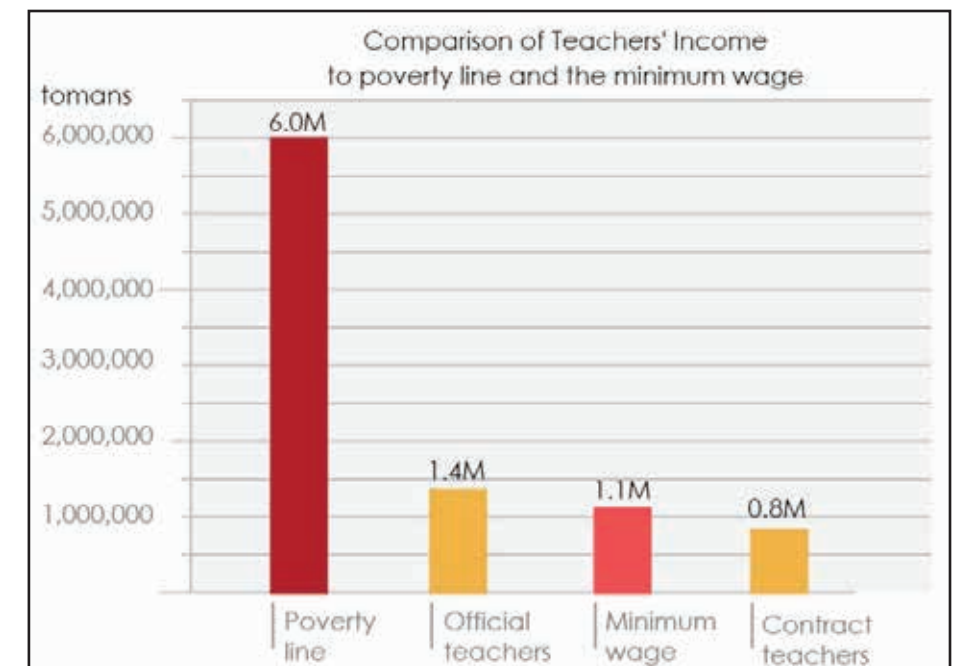


## 581 protests in a year

The Teachers Association has called for numerous nationwide protests over the past three years. Iranian teachers and retirees held at least 581 protests last year including four nationwide protests, strikes and sit-ins in May, October, November 2018, and February 2019. They have been demanding decent salaries proportionate to the poverty line, health insurance, elimination of discrimination in the educational system, free education for school children, standardization of school, and securing their safety. One of the teachers' most serious demands was the release of imprisoned teacher activists, and recognition of independent teachers' unions.

In Tehran, the teachers' protests in May met with security forces' violence where teacher activists were arrested. Six of the teachers including Ms. Aliyeh Eghdam-Doost were arrested outside the Budget and Planning Organization's building and subsequently condemned on September 15, 2018, to nine months of jail and 74 lashes for "disrupting public order through participation in illegal gatherings" and "defying on-duty officers."

The literacy educators are systematically not paid for several months while deprived of job security. The livelihood of Education Ministry teachers is also far from decent. Teachers are struggling to earn a living.





**N**ames of 3,600,000 women have been registered in the data bank of the women heads of household.

This was announced by Massoumeh Ebtekar, head of the presidential directorate on women and family affairs, in an interview on October 7, 2018, with the official IRNA news agency. According to Ebtekar only 40% of these women receive support from the Welfare Organization or the Relief Committee. Another regime official, Seyed Hassan Moussavi Chalak, chair of the Social Aid Association of Iran, says the number of women heads of household has more than doubled in a 20-year period. (The state-run Salamnews.com, May 19, 2018)

According to the Welfare Organization, the number of women heads of household in Iran has increased by 60,300 every year in the past ten years making up 12.1% of the population in 2011.

At least 500,000 or 16% of women heads of household are under 20 years of age, according to Zohreh Ashtiani, secretary of the Family Faction of the mullahs' parliament. (Interview with the state-run Shahrivand newspaper, July 10, 2018) Ashtiani stressed that this figure only accounts for the 3,100,000 women heads of household "who have been identified or have introduced themselves to support centers."

#### Root causes

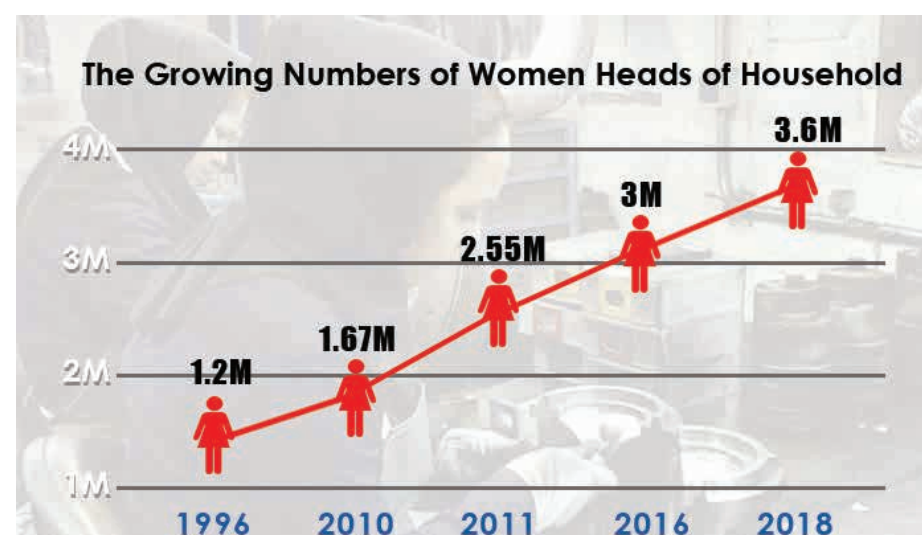
Poverty is the main reason for the rising number of women heads of household. "Poverty drives the head of household towards addiction and when the husband is in jail or just at home (due to addiction), the woman has to undertake the responsibility (of heading and running the family). In other cases, poverty leads to divorce especially among younger women which in turn leads to more young women heads of household," Ashtiani explained in her interview. She expressed fear that, "If we cannot reign in this situation and provide proper support for the women heads of household, we cannot prevent them from joining the cycle of social ailments... The drastic fall in the age of women heads of household in Iran is itself a serious problem because they cannot endure undesirable conditions, and rapidly enter the cycle, sooner than others, to provide the basic necessities of their lives under the poverty line."

Rouhollah Babaii, chairman of the Social Committee of the mullahs' parliament, admitted, "Many of the damages we see in this realm cannot be rectified in any



## Women Heads of Household Endure Double Pressure

There was a 39% cut in the budget for women heads of household this year, while the budgets for some cultural agencies doubled.



way." (The state-run salamnews.com - September 18, 2018)

Ashtiani admitted, "The issue of women heads of household in Iran has been on the table for more than 35 years without being heeded." Nonetheless, she continued, "there was a 39% cut in the budget allocated to women heads of household in this year's budget (Iranian fiscal year 1397), while the budget of some other so-called cultural agencies has doubled or remained the same." (The state-run Shahrivand daily - July 10, 2018)

Giving support to these women has been long overdue. Female heads of households often earn their living with great difficulty, even if they receive any aid from relatives or acquaintances. The occasional and insignificant support, such as loans and subsidies, do little to improve the living conditions of women heads of household.

“ We have seen many times that a woman head of household has been forced to take unconventional measures, the most common of them being the selling of kidneys. ”

(Government official in Kermanshah cited by the state-run Mehr News Agency - October 8, 2015)

#### Financial support

Women heads of household in Iran have tremendous difficulties in receiving job loans.

Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpay, head of the National Welfare Organization, asserted, "We are lagging with respect to economic indexes, such as providing jobs and employment for women. Of course, this is mainly due to country's policies where we have 22 women employed compared to every 100 men with employment."

Mohseni Bandpay added, "180,000 women heads of household are consistently receiving aid from us and 100,000 receive social insurances. With regards to job loans to women without guardians or with bad guardians, however, the organization faces major challenges." (The state-run Tabnak website - February 13, 2018)

According to another report, child benefit has been deducted from salaries of women heads of household. Zahra Sa'ii, spokeswoman for the parliamentary Social Commission, revealed that child benefit has been being deducted from the payrolls of women heads of household since Autumn 2017. The decision was implemented abruptly and the amount that had been previously paid to them were withdrawn at once from their accounts. (The state-run Salamnews.com, March 28, 2018)

#### Double economic pressure

With the deteriorating economic situation in Iran, women heads of household have suffered double economic pressure. Most of the women in the workers' community are heads of household. They face long working hours but are deprived of many rights and benefits. (The official IRNA news agency - May 3, 2018) 70% of carpet weavers in Iran are women and a large percentage of them are heads of household. (The state-run ILNA news agency - May 16, 2018)

According to the same report, the number

of carpet weavers in Iran presently stands at one million. By this account the number of women weaving carpets amounts to at least 700,000. The report also states that only 320,000 of carpet weavers (both men and women) have insurance.

Over 3 million or 82% of women heads of household in Iran are unemployed. This was estimated by Massoumeh Ebtekar in a meeting of women members of the city and village councils in Semnan Province. (The state-run ISNA news agency - July 7, 2018)

Shahindokht Molaverdi, former presidential deputy on Women and Family Affairs, told a seminar, "An 82% illiteracy rate makes it much more difficult for (female heads of household) to find a job, something which has led to their poverty." (The state-run ISNA news agency, TNews.Ir, October 10, 2015)

Only a small percentage of women heads of household are covered by the Welfare Organization and receive a meager monthly aid of 70,000 tomans (\$5) which is less than 10 percent of the minimum wage of 1,100,000 tomans (\$81.5), while the poverty line in Iran currently stands at 6 million tomans (\$450). (The official IRNA news agency - November 22, 2015)

Because of limited employment opportunities for women, a large number of women heads of household have to accept just any job in small workshops with very low income, without enjoying any of their legal benefits including insurance, and without any government or legal support.





## Social Protection, Public Services, and Infrastructure

In step with this year's theme of the UN Commission on the Status of Women focusing on strengthening linkages between social protection, public services, and infrastructure for gender equality, this section has been devoted to the shortages with regard to infrastructure, public services and social protection. Lack and shortage of water was one of the major problems the people of Iran had to deal with this past year. Iran suffers from water crisis particularly in the south, but authorities are not taking any effective measure to resolve the problem. On the other hand, there have been reports that good potable water is being exported to other neighboring countries from the same cities that desperately need it. Gas and electricity have also been issues of concern as some schools burnt in fire due to lack of standard heating systems in schools. Bad roads and transportation also take a large toll on human lives particularly in schools and universities and among women workers. The Iranian regime does not report on these shortages, preferring to blur hollow claims of Iranian villages having access to the internet while they do not have water, electricity, gas, schools, and roads among many other shortcomings. The information in this section has been compiled from reports of protests last year in which women participated. A glance on these reports reveals the shortcomings Iranian women face all across the country.

### Water crisis, shortages of other utilities

- Residents of Abu Havan village staged at least two protests in Ahvaz in February and April 2018 over lack of water, electricity, gas and roads in their village.
- On May 27, 2018, residents of Khoshkabad village in Minab, southern Iran, held a gathering outside the Rural Water and Sewage Company of Minab in the wake of eight days of drinking water cut-off.
- On May 30, 2018, residents of Masjid Yas district in Boukan, Iranian Kurdistan, marched to the Governor's Office to protest water and gas cut-off.
- On June 17, 2018, a group of residents of Khorramshahr, in southwestern Iran, held a protest outside the city's Water Department because their drinking water was salty.
- In Abadan, the second largest capital of the oil-rich Khuzestan Province, a group of residents held a protest on June 20, 2018, across from the Department of Water and Waste Water, demanding healthy drinking water because the so-called potable water people buy and pay for in Abadan is salty with a foul odor.
- On June 23, 2018, in the Province of Bushehr, women participated in an act of protest against 55 days of water cut-off in Dashtestan. One of the women participating in this protest said, "We have

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We have no drinking water, and we have no water for bathing and laundry.

- Woman protester in Bushehr

It has been 10 days that we have no water in the Valfajr region.

- Woman protester in Borazjan

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no drinking water, and we have no water for bathing and laundry." Bushehr Province is located in southern Iran and lies along the Persian Gulf coast. It is the country's 17th largest province.

- Women of Khorramshahr, the key port of southwestern Iran, participated in large numbers in city-wide protests from June 29 to July 1 demanding clean drinking water. Their drinking water is salty. The protesters held up their empty 20-litre jerry cans and chanted angry slogans.
- The residents of Rasht, capital of Gilan Province in northern Iran, including a large number of women, held a protest on July 1, 2018, outside the Power Department because of frequent electricity cut-offs.

Low water pressure and cut-offs were prevalent in many parts of Dashtestan County in June and July. Borazjan is the center of Dashtestan county, and second largest city in the Province of Bushehr. The Abfay (water) Company of Dashtestan was not consistently informing the public on the periods of water cut-off so that they could keep reserves. In some central parts of Borazjan, water was pumped for only a few hours during the day and in some neighborhoods, water cut-offs lasted several days. In many cities, people had to wait long hours in line to get a jerry can of drinking water. Some of the villages receive water by tankers every three days, and some, every ten days. Some villagers had to resort to well water which was not healthy. The people of Dashtestan had to spend the long, hot days of summer, sometimes above 50 degrees Celsius, with no drinking water and they were extremely dissatisfied. So, thousands of the people of Borazjan held large scale protests on July 7 and 8, 2018, against severe water shortages in their city. They carried placards which read, "We have no water." The residents of the southern districts of Borazjan blocked Borazjan-Ahrom road, on July 22, 2018. A woman showed her empty bottle and said, "It has been 10 days that we have no water in the Valfajr region."

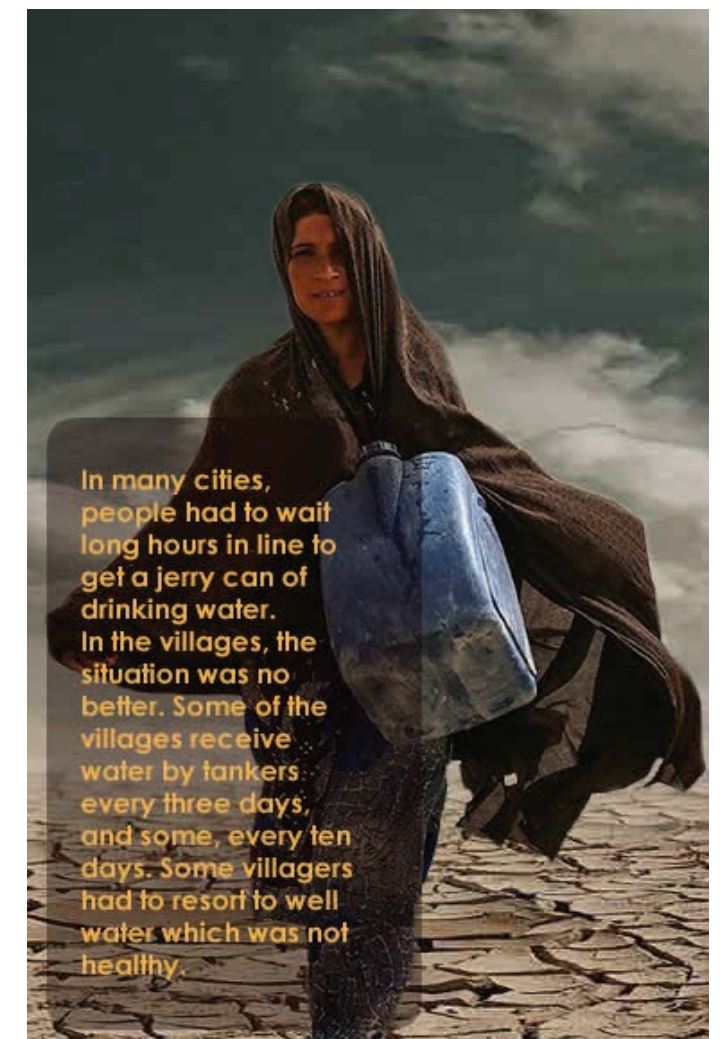
- On July 10, residents of Barchi region in Kerman Province (southern Iran) including women gathered outside the Copper Complex to protest the critical water situation.
- Women residing in Roudbar's Golshahr-e Imam Reza staged a protest against lack of drinking water in their township. The residents of Golshahr have repeatedly protested against water cut-offs in this township but have not received any response. Roudbar is located in Kerman Province.

● On August 1, 2018, farmers of Marghmalek and their families held a protest outside the Governorate of Shahr-e Kord, the capital of Charmahal and Bakhtiari Province. Women loudly expressed their objection to the lack of drinking water. One of the women said they had not been able to bathe for weeks and they did not have water even for washing their hands.

● On September 10, 2018, men and women from the earthquake-stricken village of Bi Bayan, in Sarpol-e Zahab (western Iran), gathered in front of the Governorate of Kermanshah in protest of the drought in the village and the lack of accountability of government officials.

● On September 17, 2018, a group of residents of Roudbar Koohbanani, one of the cities of Lorestan Province in western Iran, gathered in protest in front of the Governorate building and the Department of Roads and Urban Development in Koohdasht, to protest their problems about the roads and lack of water.

● On December 23, 2018, a group of elementary students from the village of Tang-e Rulag in Dana County, Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, left their school in protest to the lack of gas for school classrooms. They wrote on their banners: "We are protesting, we need gas."



In many cities, people had to wait long hours in line to get a jerry can of drinking water. In the villages, the situation was no better. Some of the villages receive water by tankers every three days, and some, every ten days. Some villagers had to resort to well water which was not healthy.



## Medical and other social service workers

- Hundreds of healthcare workers and personnel, including women, held a protest gathering on June 2, 2018, in Kermanshah in protest of their salary cuts, non-payment of their salaries, unfair working hours, and lack of job security.

- In Tabriz, northwestern Iran, a group of women who have worked on temporary contracts for the city's municipality staged a picket line outside the building. They have not received any benefits for years and demand to be officially employed by the municipality.

- In Karaj, women participated in some 40 rounds of protests throughout the year by the medical personnel of Khomeini Hospital in protest of the authorities' failure to pay a year of their salaries and bonuses. The state-run ISNA news agency reported on October 3, 2018, that some of the medical personnel in this hospital, most of whom are women, have been attempting to sell their kidneys to provide for their family's expenses.

- On August 29, 2018, the hospital staff of Amir Al-Momenin Hospital in Zabol, which consists of mostly women personnel staged a protest gathering against the delay in salary payments and the decrease in their wages. While the country is facing an economic crisis, the delay and decrease in paying the wages only add to the problems of the medical personnel and their families.

## Eliminating decent jobs for women

- Some 100 managers of kindergartens in Tehran staged a protest on February 18, 2018, outside the Labor Ministry, demanding that a memorandum signed between the Welfare Organization and the Education Ministry be revoked. According to this memorandum, children between 4 to 6 years of age, are going to be taken care of by the Ministry of Education, creating crises in the kindergartens. One of the protesting managers said, "Most of the women working at the kindergartens are heads of household and their families' breadwinners. If kindergartens are to take care of children only 13- years old, many of these women will lose their jobs."

- On December 6, 2018, some 150 of the staff and employees of the Parseh Clinic in Kermanshah staged a protest against sealing off of the clinic. A large number of women participated in and led this protests. They were demanding that the Prosecutor of Kermanshah stop this measure as a result of which a large number of women lose their jobs.

- An NGO complex in south Tehran where women heads of household were learning job skills was closed down due to lack of funds for payment of water bills. 40 women heads of household and other vulnerable women were working in the workshops of this civil association. Their pre-school children were also going to the kindergartens in the same complex. The complex had to shut down due to water cut off, leaving the women and their pre-school children without jobs and schools. (The state-run ILNA news agency, October 2, 2018)

## Medical care

- A 3-year-old dies after hospital turns her down. On September 4, 2018, Zahra Barghi died in less than 24 hours after not being admitted to a public hospital in Tehran to receive medical treatment.

The doctor ordered the child's admission after examining and performing initial tests. However, the hospital refrained from admitting the 3-year-old girl on the pretext that they had no vacant beds in the hospital for non-emergency patients.

- A young woman, 14, died due to wrong injection. On August 25, 2018, Zahra Karimi referred to hospital for a simple stomach pain, but lost her life at the hospital emergency department in Yazd, due to the injection of a wrong medicine.

## Social support

- Shinabad girls held a protest in Tehran on July 17 and 18, 2018, across from the office of the mullahs' president, Hassan Rouhani. Shinabad girls criticize officials for not responding to their needs, by refusing to issue them passports, and pay for their travel abroad and medical expenses.

Their lawyer, Hossein Ahmadi Niaz, said the Shinabad girls had been waiting for a week in Tehran to meet the ministers of Education and Health but received no answers. Finally, they were forced to stage a protest. (The state-run Entekhab website, July 18, 2018)

The 12 Shinabad victims complain about the process of their treatment, insults and disrespect by some officials, undelivered promises of buying hospital equipment the lack of which has led to the drying of their finger joints, etc.

They have had 360 surgeries and operations without producing any desirable progress.

Sima says, "Our doctor says if we were sent abroad, we could recover sooner because there are better facilities. Eight months ago, Hashemi (the Minister of Health) promised and signed a letter so that they would bring better facilities for us to the hospital, but this never happened."

Hossein Ahmadi Niaz also stresses, "The most important issue for these girls is that their treatment be expedited and improved. This must be done abroad. On the other hand, they must receive full compensation (from the government), which has not been paid to them (because they are girls). The girls must receive their full rights. Their psychological problems need to be taken care of. They face problem in receiving their National Card and birth certificate." (The state-run ILNA news agency, March 4, 2018)

On August 2, 2018, Mohammad Bat'haii, the Minister of Education, told the state-run ILNA news agency that the girls do not need to be sent abroad and "it is possible to treat them in Iran," something that has met numerous obstacles, so far. The complaint by Shinabad girls to receive compensation from the Education Ministry was delayed by the Coroner's Office of West Azerbaijan Province as it failed after three months to provide its assessment on the extent of damages inflicted on the girls in the fire. (The state-run IRNA news agency, August 7, 2018)

Shinabad is a village in Piranshahr, in West Azerbaijan Province. The elementary school in this village caught fire five years ago, in December 2012, due to mal-functioning of a kerosene heater. 37 girls burned in the fire, two of whom died as a result of severe injuries. The girls have been promised to be sent abroad for treatment but officials have failed to deliver on this promise.

## Shinabad girls

Victims of 2012 Iran School Fire



The 12 Shinabad victims complain about the process of their treatment, insults and disrespect by some officials, undelivered promises of buying hospital equipment the lack of which has led to the drying of their finger joints, etc.

“The most important issue for these girls is that their treatment be expedited and improved. This must be done abroad. They must receive full compensation (from the government), which has not been paid to them (because they are girls). Their psychological problems need to be taken care of.”

Hossein Ahmadi Niaz, Shinabad girls' lawyer

**Seven-year denial of aid to burn victims**





### Earthquake victims

● One year after November 12, 2017, when the year's deadliest earthquake of 7.3 magnitude hit vast parts of Kermanshah Province in western Iran, residents of the afflicted areas continue to live in disastrous conditions, suffering from various psychological problems.

The earthquake damaged 10 cities and 1,930 villages, and destroyed more than 100,000 housing units, leaving at least 620 dead and 9,338 people wounded. The cities of Qasr-e Shirin, Sarpol-e Zahab and Salas-e Babajani were hit worst. With 5,200 aftershocks over the past year, the deprived survivors in the afflicted areas do not feel secure and are constantly in a state of anxiety.

Mehdi Tahbaz, governor of Sarpol-e Zahab, announced that some 30 percent of those who lived in rented urban housings are now living in temporary arrangements on the streets.

● On March 19, 2018, women and men residing in Sarpol-e Zahab, the center of earthquake in western Iran, protested a visit by Rouhani's deputy heading the Planning and Budget Organization.

The suffering people of Sarpol-e Zahab were still living in tents and using the bathroom in a park, four months after the earthquake. Their living conditions are unsanitary as they are living among the rubbles, garbage and sewage. The freezing cold weather in Kermanshah Province led to the deaths of a number of people, including children and infants. One of the residents said, "The situation is particularly bad for women. Many have suffered miscarriages and pregnant women are living in difficult conditions in tents."

He said, "Pregnant women had been promised to get a trailer. Our neighboring woman went to get hers, she was told that she could get a trailer only if she was eight or nine months pregnant."

Some women had to deliver their babies in the tents and they have nowhere else to go. Then they contract infections and face thousand other problems. A recent survey indicates that stress and depression is high among residents of this area, but higher in women in comparison to men. (The state-run Salamatnews.com, March 15, 2018)

● The teams assigned to help the people, have left them alone. The contractors employed to rebuild the stricken areas, have abandoned their projects and banks do not grant loans to the victims of earthquake. Some of the victims have to live in tents in the freezing cold weather. (The state-run ICANA news agency, November 7, 2018)

According to Parviz Fattah, head of the Relief Committee, the government has not granted gratuitous loans which it had promised to earthquake victims. (The state-run Tasnim news agency, January 14, 2018)

● Forty families living in Shahed Camps 2 and 3 were forced out of the camps on May 30, 2018, on the order of the Governor of Sarpol-e Zahab. The water and power of the units belonging to 40 families were cut off and they were forced to evacuate the camps. Women and children have been rendered homeless.

● 80 percent of the city's infrastructures have been damaged or destroyed. Only 20 percent of the populace live in their own homes, but they would rather live in trailers because of repeated aftershocks. Families of nine and more live in a tent or a trailer.

### Poor hygiene and sanitation

● Most villages in Sarpol-e Zahab do not have drinking water. The number of lavatories and bathing facilities are very limited. Vermin, insects and animal feces around the tents are harmful for children and their living environment.

● Shortages of washing detergents, soaps and shampoo, wet wipes and diapers, women's tissues, underwear, bath towels, etc. are among the problems the residents of afflicted areas face. The persistence of these conditions will lead to the outbreak of various diseases among women and children.

● Children suffer from mal-nutrition and numerous other illnesses due to lack of powdered milk, food and medicine.

● A young woman while crying says, "I am sick and tired of this life. Twice, I attempted to commit suicide to get rid of this life. I wish I could die and be relieved of so much pain. I cannot do anything. I am sick, myself. This child is sick, too. His treatment costs 150,000 tomans a day and I swear to God, I don't have it."

● One of the city officials says, "Hygiene is very poor. The municipality has not given us any money to do anything... Not a tanker, a sewage machine or even a sprinkler. They have not allocated any budget to us. People are removing the rubbles at their own expense. For every round of removal of rubbles, they have to pay nearly 2 million tomans to rent a bulldozer and a truck. There are people who are willing to sell their own kidneys to pay for reconstruction of their houses."

### No water for bathing

● In Chaman bar Aftab village, girl children take a bath with cold water and washing detergent in an open area in front of the public's eye. This has become a natural routine in this village. The village's women have a lot to talk about and complain about the shortages and the medicines and medical care they need.

● Zahra Sirvan Erfan is sitting inside a trailer and searching through the hair of a 4-year-old girl. She says, "This innocent child has not been able to take a bath because she is weak and the water in the jerry cans is cold. Now, she has lice in her hair." Many children, women and elderly have contracted skin diseases because they cannot bathe regularly.

● Soheila Jamshidi, mother of two small children and wife of an epilepsy patient, says, "I have lost my house and all its furniture in the earthquake. Today, I am living in a trailer with no showers or bathroom. My husband cannot work because of his epilepsy. He has finished his medicine and so, he has seizures all the time. I don't know what kind of an insect bit my son last night, that one side of his face has completely swollen. And I don't have any money to take him to a doctor or medical center."

● Sonia, another woman residing in this village, sobs and says, "The children of this village have been asking their parents over the past nine months for a new suit, a pair of new shoes, a pair of slipper or socks, tooth paste and tooth brushes, combs or toys. Some of them have their own childish dreams and ask for biscuits, raisins, figs, chips and fruits." Sonia adds, "One of the main demands of the people of this village is regular spraying of insecticides, so that they could rest in their trailers without worrying for their kids and infants being bitten by insects. Many women believe that they cannot leave their infants in the trailers. Also, in light of poor hygiene, and the existence of snakes, scorpions and rapid dogs, we cannot leave our children alone in the village."



● On May 7 and 12, 2018, a number of families from six villages of Boyerahmad and Kohgiluyeh Province, in southwestern Iran, got together and held a protest gathering outside the Boyerahmad's Governorate since they had not received any assistance after earthquake hit their villages. The ceilings and walls of their houses had been cracked, but their requests to receive tents had gone unnoticed. One of the protesting villagers said, "Our houses have been severely damaged due to the earthquake and are no longer habitable, but no government official is thinking of us. We don't have any tents or temporary place to live and it is not clear how they are distributing these stuff. It has been several days that our families are staying out of the house at nights in open air in bad climate."



## More Teenagers Under 17 Are Committing Suicide



Clockwise from left: A woman jumped off a bridge in Shiraz and took her own life due to poverty; faces of three suicide victims; the two children of Zahra Rahmati who killed them and herself under the pressure of poverty.

**I**ncreasing pressure and restrictions on women in Iran and numerous obstacles for women's employment and social activities have led to widespread depression and despair among women and culminated in a high rate of suicide. More women, many of them young and under 17, committed suicide last year due to poverty. Women's suicide rates in Iran are the highest in the Middle East.

- The Iranian Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine published the annual statistics on suicide in Iran in September 2018. According to this report, more than 1,365 women committed suicide in the Persian year 1396 (March 2017 - March 2018).

- Mohammad Mehdi Tondgooyan, deputy for youths affairs at the Ministry of Sports and Youth, announced on August 19, 2018, that the total number of suicides in Iran was estimated at 4,992 suicides in the year ending in March 2018. Tondgooyan said, "In the whole country, the rate of attempted suicides among women was about two thirds, and one third among men," Tondgooyan added, "Tehran had the highest rate of suicide... On the average, the country has a high suicide rate in two age ranges, the group of 25 to 34 years, as well as the group aging 35 years and higher. "Most suicides occur in these two age ranges, but it has been a few years that youngsters under the age of 17

also commit suicide. According to the latest figures, 212 youngsters under the age of 17 have committed suicide in the country." (The state-run ILNA news agency - August 19, 2018)

- A social pathologist announced last year that woman's suicide increased by 66 percent in Iran during a five-year period. (The state-run Khabar Online - November 3, 2017)

- An impoverished young mother of two, Zahra Rahmati, committed suicide on February 10, 2019, after killing her two sons, Alireza, 6, and Abbas, 3. The unfortunate incident took place in Chaghan-Ali village in Kermanshah Province, western Iran. The destitute and impoverished mother first hanged her two sons and then took her own life.

- Earlier on January 7, 2019, another woman, threw herself from the Zarqan Bridge at the Shiraz-Marvdasht highway and ended her own life due to poverty.

**A**ddiction has been spreading at an alarming rate among Iranian women and girls, compelling the regime's officials and experts to acknowledge it.

- Akram Mosavvari Manesh has asserted that the average addiction age has dropped to under 15 years of age among Iranian women and girls. The executive director of women's studies and research made the remarks on October 16, 2018. She said, "Addiction age has dropped to the 15- 18 range and even under 15." Mosavvari Manesh added, "The worst social harm in Iran is addiction which also affects women and girls. The disaster has even entered schools." (The official IRNA news agency, October 15, 2018) This confession is of course not the entire reality of addiction among Iranian women and girls.

- Three years ago, Shahindokht Molaverdai, presidential deputy on Women and Family Affairs, had announced that, "The average addiction age has plunged to 13 years for girls." (The state-run ISNA news agency, September 4, 2015) In light of the deteriorating economic conditions in Iran and surging unemployment, addiction has spread viciously among low-income and impoverished sectors affecting even young children.

- Unofficial figures indicate that the number of addicted women in Iran has risen from 3 to 12 per cent. Ahmad Kaheh, general director of public education at the Social Directorate of the State Security Force, announced that the percentage of women used to be three per cent in the past, but unofficial figures indicate that it has risen to 12 per cent of the population of addicts. Kaheh also said, "36 per cent of narcotic drug consumers are college students. Whereas in the past only five per cent of addicts had higher education." (The official IRNA news agency, May 12, 2018)

- Addiction of women in Iran is escalating. There is one addicted woman for every 6.6 addicted men in the age range of 15 to 25. This is according to the statistics presented by Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpay, head of the National Welfare Organization, on July 11, 2018. The statistics has been compiled in the Persian year of 1394 (March 2015-March 2016).

## More Women Among Drug Abusers



- Iran is the world's largest transit route for narcotic drugs.
- The government is unable to tackle growing drug addiction among adolescents and women.
- The largest number of drug addicts are between the ages of 15 and 20.
- The number of AIDs victims among women has increased ten folds in the past two years.

- Seyed Mohammad Mousavi, the SSF Commander of Gachsaran, in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, admitted to the increasing numbers of Iranian women drug addicts and said, "More than 55 percent of divorces are due to drug addiction... We have to accept that there are more than 750 thousand Iranian

women drug addicts in the country."

- Moussavi said Iran is the world's largest transit route for narcotic drugs. He admitted that today the government is unable to tackle the growing drug addiction in particular among adolescents and women and cannot engage in the

anti-narcotics campaign by itself. Mohammad Mousavi added, "The largest number of drug addicts are between the ages of 15 and 20." "The age of drug addiction in Gachsaran has dropped to 12, and today the government cannot fight addiction to narcotic drugs on its own," he said. (The state-run ILNA news agency, August 17, 2018)

- The number of AIDs victims among women has increased ten folds in the past two years. In an interview on May 19, 2018, Minoo Mohraz, head of the AIDs Research Center, announced, "The number of women suffering from AIDs increases every year. Even in the past couple of years, the number of AIDs victims among women has grown ten folds. The number of women who suffer from AIDs has been increasing." (The state-run khabaronline. ir - May 19, 2018)

- Earlier, Hamidreza Fat'hi, head of the Department for Prevention of Drug Addiction in the Ministry of Health, had declared, "women's share of drug addiction is rapidly on the rise." (The state-run IRNA news agency, February 5, 2017)

## Unprecedented Figures on Divorce, Child Widows

**T**he number of divorces taken place in Iran over the past year have been described as "unprecedented" in the country's history.

The spokesman for the National Registration Organization announced that the registration of 174,597 divorces over the past year in Iran has broken the country's record. Over the Persian year 1396 (March 2017 - March 2018), one divorce was registered for every three marriages. Since a decade ago, the number of marriages has paved a downturn course, while the number of divorces has been on the surge.

The state-run Salamat News website wrote, "The number of divorces over the past year has been unprecedented over the past 51 years of the country's history." A state-backed expert acknowledged that among the "very important" factors leading to increasing divorce is "the absence of happiness and joy at home and in society,"

because in the absence of happiness, the family experiences tensions and consequently divorce rate surges. (The state-run salamatnews.com - April 11, 2018)

**C**hild widows constitute a great catastrophe in Iran, said Hassan Moussavi Chelak, head of the Social Aid Association.

In remarks made on July 24, 2018, Moussavi Chelak, expressed concern over this catastrophe by saying, "The existence of more than 24,000 widows under 18 years of age, warns of a worrying situation." Moussavi added, "Some of these child widows could even commit crimes or become victims of social harms to earn their living. Economic and psychological pressures build up on child widows, eventually entangling them in psychological and social crises."



# 2019

## Annual Report

Women's Committee

The National Council of Resistance of Iran



**March 2019**

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