



Unjustified sentences and  
brutal treatment of  
women in Iran  
prisons

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## Unjustified sentences and brutal treatment of women in Iranian prisons

June 2019 saw tighter clampdown on female rights activists in Iran. As the clerical regime is getting weaker every day, the activities of rights activists become more dangerous for them.

There have been reports on some 20 female rights activists who got imprisoned or brutalized in prison during the month of June. Some were handed down heavy sentences and others transferred to prison to serve their sentences.

On the other hand, the regime has stepped up executions, including of women, to tighten up the general social atmosphere.

The executions and dastardly killing of prisoners in jail, however, have proven to fuel further discontent and opposition among the populace as demonstrated in the funeral of Alireza Shir-Mohammad-Ali.

### The 89<sup>th</sup> execution of a woman

The month of June saw the execution of another woman, the 89<sup>th</sup> to be executed during Rouhani's term in office. [Fatemeh Nassiri](#) who had been imprisoned in Qarchak Prison for 11 years, was hanged on June 19, 2019, in Ghohardasht Prison, a.k.a. Rajaii-shahr. She had reportedly claimed responsibility for a murder committed by her son.



### Death penalty for a mother defending herself against rape

Shocking was the death sentence issued on June 25, for [Soghra Khalili](#), 36 and mother of two, for defending herself against rape.

She has been in jail for seven years. Her 4-year-old son is staying with her in the Central Prison of Sanandaj. Her other son is 14 and is living with his father.

Omid Badri, Soghra's husband said, "The death verdict was issued in 2015, but the murder my wife committed was in defense of her dignity. There was a man who disturbed my wife and harassed her. The residents of our village know that the victim had harassed several other families in the same way and put pressure on other married women. Ali (the victim) did not leave my wife alone, while she was a married woman. Finally, my wife got tired and stabbed him to death."

Mr. Badri said they have only two months to pay the blood money to the victim's family, otherwise she is going to be executed.

International laws [discourage issuing prison sentences](#), let alone death sentences, for women due to their roles as mothers and caregivers but this is not so under Iran's ruling regime.

Also, this is not the first time a woman is being sentenced to death for defending herself against rape. In 2014, Reyhaneh Jabbari was hanged after seven years in jail after she did not give in to pressures to collaborate in whitewashing the crime of the assailant, one of the regime's senior Intelligence Ministry officials.

## Call for justice at funeral of murdered political prisoner

On Friday, June 14, 2019, the funeral procession and burial of political prisoner [Alireza Shir-Mohammad-Ali](#) was held at [Behesht-e Zahra cemetery](#) south of Tehran.



The 21-year-old political prisoner had been viciously stabbed to death in a premeditated plan on June 10, 2019, by two inmates recruited by authorities of Greater Tehran's Penitentiary, a.k.a. Fashafouyeh Prison.

Although the funeral was held under repressive conditions with a large number of security forces and plainclothes agents present at the cemetery, a group of mothers of martyrs and political prisoners participated and turned the [funeral](#) into an occasion to seek justice for innocent victims of persecutions in Iran. These women urged Alireza's mother to be brave and join the Call-for-Justice movement of mothers of martyrs.

## Conditions of female political prisoners and rights activists

### Nazanin Zaghari

British-Iranian dual-national, Nazanin Zaghari, went on [hunger strike](#) for two weeks to protest her own unjust detention, demanding to be unconditionally released after three years.

She is a victim of the Iranian regime's policy of hostage-taking and is being used as a [bargaining chip](#) in Tehran's deals with the U.K.



Nazanin Zaghari began her hunger strike on June 15, 2019, on her daughter's birthday. Her husband, Mr. Richard Ratcliffe, also started his hunger strike on the same day in solidarity with his wife outside the Iranian Embassy in London.

Nazanin Zaghari was a project manager with the Thompson Reuters Foundation, when she traveled to Iran along with her two-year-old daughter Gabriella in March 2016 to pay a visit to her parents. She was detained at the airport on April 3, 2016, as she and her daughter were about to board a flight back to the UK.

After months of imprisonment without trial, she was [sentenced to five years in prison](#).

### Ameneh Zaheri Sari

Political prisoner Ameneh Zaheri Sari was [brutalized](#) by prison guards in the Sepidar Prison of Ahvaz. Her family said she had been hurt in the arm but was deprived of medical treatment and care.

Ameneh Zaheri Sari had previously suffered physical problems with parts of her body badly swelling. According to the doctor working at the dispensary, she must be quickly transferred to hospital for medical examinations and care. Prison authorities, however, have so far prevented her dispatch to hospital.





Ameneh Zaheri Sari was supposed to be freed on a 300-million-toman bail, but her temporary release has also been suspended.

### Saba Kord Afshari

Civil activist and former political prisoner [Saba Kord Afshari](#) was arrested at home on June 1, 2019, and taken to the detention center on Vozara Avenue in Tehran where she was held in solitary confinement for ten days. Then, on June 11, she was transferred to the Quarantine Ward of Qarchak Prison. On July 2, she was transferred to an unknown location for further interrogations.



Saba Kord Afshari, 19, was arrested during the protests in August 2018, and sentenced to one-year in prison, but was released in February 2019.

The charges she was informed of included promotion of “corruption and prostitution through removing the veil and walking without the veil, anti-regime propaganda, having contacts with groups opposing and planning for the soft overthrow of the regime,” as well as “collusion and association against the state.”

### Sanaz Allahyari

Sanaz Allahyari, a member of the editorial board of an online magazine called GAM, [has been held in detention for six months](#). She has become seriously ill during detention and lost 10 kilograms, but prison doctors have failed to diagnose her illness.



She has been suffering from recurrent stomach pains, weight loss and severe shaking in her hands and legs for at least two months. Despite efforts by her family, prison officials have been preventing her transfer to hospital to receive the medical treatment she badly needs.

Sanaz Allahyari and her husband Amirhossein Mohammadifar started a [hunger strike](#) on July 4, 2019. The journalist couple reported on social injustices including the situation of Iranian workers.

### Nahid Shaqaqi

Nahid Shaqaqi, a member of the Neday-e Zanan-e Iran (Voice of Iranian Women) Association, remains incarcerated since last month when she was [arrested](#). Her status remains undecided.

[Three of her colleagues](#) were summoned to the Prosecutor’s Office at Evin Prison in mid-June, after their residences were ransacked by security forces.



Maryam Mohammadi, Esrin Derkaleh and Nargess Khorrami are also members of the Neday-e Zanan-e Iran (Voice of Iranian Women) Association.

Akram Nasirian, another member of this group, was freed on bail after 27 days in Ward 209 (the Intelligence Ministry ward) of Evin.

### Labor activists

The warrants for the detention of [labor activists](#) Neda Naji and Marzieh Amiri were extended for another month.



The arrest warrant for Atefeh Rangriz has been turned into bail but prison authorities have prevented her release under various pretexts. The officials of Evin's Prosecutor's Office say they do not accept bail for Ms. Rangriz is that she has got a new charge added to her case.

The three female labor activists remain incarcerated since May 1.

Marzieh Amiri, journalist and student of Tehran University, is presently held in the Women's Ward of Evin Prison. Neda Naji and Atefeh Rangriz are incarcerated in Qarchak Prison.

### Anisha Assadollahi

Anisha Assadollahi, also a labor activist, was [rearrested](#) by 12 intelligence agents as she was walking in the street on the night of June 18, 2019.

She had been released from prison on bail after being arrested during a Labor Day protest demonstration in Tehran on May 1.

Ms. Assadollahi contacted her family a few hours after getting arrested, informing them that she was in Evin Prison.



### Iran Rahpaykar

Civil activist Iran Rahpaykar [continues to remain in limbo](#) in the detention center of Sanandaj, capital of the Iranian Kurdistan Province, despite passage of 1.5 months since her arrest. She has been taken to the Department of Intelligence for interrogation several times. Ms. Rahpaykar suffers from asthma and her health condition has been deteriorating day by day due to lack of medical care.

### Zahra Mohammadi

Kurdish civil activist [Zahra Mohammadi](#) remains in undetermined conditions.

Zahra Mohammadi, director of Nojin Social and Cultural Association, was arrested on May 23, 2019.

Zahra Mohammadi, 28, holds an M.S. degree in geopolitics from the University of Birjand. She had been teaching Kurdish language in Sanandaj and its surrounding villages for ten years.

Nojin Association is a social and culturally active association with branches in Sanandaj, Kamyaran, Dehghan, Saqqez and Baneh among other cities.



### Atena Daemi and Golrokh Iraee

[New charges](#) have been brought against Atena Daemi and Golrokh Iraee for daring to protest the executions of three Kurdish political prisoners and refusing a physical inspection.

Their trial held on June 18, at the 26th branch of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran, was just two hours long, which is barely enough time for the defense to present their case in any trial.

[The two civil rights activists appeared before the court](#) with the vague charges of insulting the regime's founder Khomeini and Supreme Leader Ai Khamenei, causing disruption the prison's order by resisting an inspection and singing protest anthems on the day that the three Kurdish political prisoners were executed, and propaganda against the state by sending open letters out of prison.

Atena Daemi, who is currently serving five years for her civil activities, was arrested on October 21, 2014. She began serving her sentence in December 2016 in Evin Prison.

Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee was released on April 8, 2019, after serving her sentence. She had been imprisoned since October 24, 2016. If found guilty, she may well be forced back to prison.



### Leila Hosseinzadeh

The [3.5-year sentence](#) for Tehran University student activist Leila Hosseinzadeh was upheld by the Revision Court of Tehran Province. She is also banned from leaving the country for two years.

Leila Hosseinzadeh, secretary of the central council of students at Tehran University, was arrested during the nationwide uprisings of January 2018, and released on bail after some time.

On Monday, June 24, 2019, Branch 36 of the Revision Court of Tehran Province informed her of her sentence. Leila Hosseinzadeh has been sentenced to 30 months' imprisonment on the charge of "association and collusion against national security" and another one year for "propaganda against the state."



### Baha'i women

The First Branch of the Court of Tabriz sentenced [Monica Alizadeh and Shabnam Eassakhani](#) to six months in prison on the charge of membership in the illegal organization of Baha'is.

Also in Tehran, Sofia Mobini was sentenced to 10 years in prison by Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran.

### Samaneh Noruz Moradi

Political prisoner [Samaneh Noruz Moradi](#) who had been arrested and detained for two weeks in September 2018 and subsequently released on bail, has received a sentence of three years and nine months and taken to the Women's Ward of Evin to serve her term.

### Elena Allahverdi

[Elena Allahverdi](#), an employee of the Ministry of Oil, is also held in the general ward of Evin Prison under undecided status. She was arrested in March 2018 by forces of the IRGC counter intelligence and taken to the IRGC detention ward in Evin.

Her legal status remains unknown despite passage of 16 months since her arrest and while her case has been sent to the court.

Elena Allahverdi is 36 years old and has spent one year of her detention in solitary confinement and continuously interrogated.

### Nazilla Noori

Dr. Nazilla Noori, a gynecologist and a Gonabadi Dervish, has been transferred from Qarchak Prison to the Women's Ward of Evin to [serve her one-year](#) prison sentence.

