



Mounting repression of
women in Iran, in step
with growing
discontent

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

July 2019

Mounting repression of women in Iran, in step with growing discontent

July was marked by brutal clampdown on Iranian society, including women. Beset by a whole host of economic, social and political crises, the clerical regime has been trying to rein in simmering social discontent by use of brute force.

The unprecedented executions of four women in just eight days bespeaks of the oppressive conditions in Iranian society.

Heavy sentences issued for civil and human rights activists as well as the heavy handed treatment of political prisoners detained together with common criminals in breach of the separation of prisoners' principle are also stark indications of mounting repression in Iran.

The regime has also geared up its efforts to counter Iranian women's defiance of the compulsory veil by taking extraordinary measures even at shopping centers and airports.

Four women hanged in matter of a week

Although execution of women is higher in Iran than in any other place in the world, and the Iranian regime is a record holder by executing 93 women during six years of Rouhani's tenure, but there had never been a week or even a month when four women were executed.

[Maliheh Salehian](#) from Miandoab was hanged on July 16, 2019, in the Central Prison of [Mahabad](#), in the western Iranian province of Kurdistan.

[Zahra Safari Moghaddam](#), 43, was hanged in the Prison of [Nowshahr](#), northern Iran, on July 17, 2019.

Arasteh Ranjbar and Nazdar Vatankhah, two in-laws who had already spent 15 years in prison, were [hanged in the Central Prison of Urmia](#), northwestern Iran, on July 23, 2019.

In a letter published on July 27 by former political prisoner Golrokh Iraee explaining the conditions of female prisoners in Qarchak Prison, she wrote, "In meeting women convicted of murder, I learned that a large percentage of them had murdered their husbands—instantly or based on a pre-meditated plan—after years of being humiliated, insulted, battered and even tortured by them and because of being deprived of their right to divorce. Although, they consider themselves criminals but are convinced that if any of their repeated appeals for divorce had been granted, they would not have committed such a crime."

As the NCRI Women's Committee had earlier pointed out, the women executed by the clerical regime are themselves victims of domestic violence and discriminatory family laws, and many act in self-defense. So, the verdicts carried out by the regime are absolutely unfair.

Unfair sentences for women activists

Golrokh Iraee and Atena Daemi each have been sentenced to [3 years and 7 months'](#) imprisonment. A new case was filed against them during their time in prison for expressing their protest to the executions of three Kurdish political prisoners.

Their trial had been held on June 18, 2019, for just two hours. They have been sentenced to 1.5 years in prison for disseminating "propaganda against the state" by sending open letters out of prison, and to 2 years and 1 month for "insulting the leader (Ali Khamenei)." Other charges



levelled against them were causing disruption in the prison's order by resisting an inspection and singing protest anthems on the day that the three Kurdish political prisoners were executed.

Political prisoner Golrokh Iraee was released from prison on April 8, 2019, after serving her sentence since October 24, 2016, for writing an unpublished book on the cruel punishment of stoning. Atena Daemi, began serving her five years in December 2016 and is presently held in Evin Prison.

Female student activist, [Sepideh Farhan](#) (Farahabadi), was sentenced to 6 years in prison and 74 lashes by Branch 36 of Tehran's Court of Appeal.

Sepideh Farhan was summoned to the Tehran court on July 24, 2019, and her sentence was read to her. Sepideh Farhan was accused of "disrupting public order through participation in illegal gatherings" and "association and collusion to act against national security" because [she participated in student protests in January 2018](#).



Three women's rights activists held in Qarchak Prison (Shahr-e Ray) have been sentenced to a total of [55 years and six months in prison](#). The Revolutionary Court of Tehran informed Yasaman Aryani, Monireh Arabshahi, and Mojgan Keshavar of their sentences in the absence of their lawyers on July 31, 2019.

Branch 28 of Tehran's Revolutionary Court presided by the notorious judge, Mohammad Moghiseh, sentenced each of these prisoners to 5 years in prison for "association and collusion against national security," one year for "disseminating propaganda against the state," and 10 years for "encouraging and preparing the grounds for corruption and prostitution." In addition to these charges, Mojgan Keshavarz has been sentenced to 7.5 years for "insulting the sanctities." These add up to 55 years and six months in prison for the women's rights activists.



Brutal interrogations to obtain forced confessions

[Saba Kord Afshari](#) was transferred from Qarchak (Shahr-e Ray) Prison to an unknown location on July 2, 2019, to be interrogated and pressured to make forced televised confessions.

Her mother, [Raheleh Ahmadi](#), was arrested at home by security agents and taken to Qarchak Prison on July 10, 2019. The next day she was informed of her charges including, "propaganda against the regime", "cooperating with opposing media" and "encouraging and provoking corruption and prostitution" and subsequently taken to an unknown location.



The arrest of Ms. Raheleh Ahmadi was aimed at pressuring her daughter Saba Kord Afshari because she has refused to make televised confessions. She was subsequently released on bail from Qarchak Prison.

Brutal mistreatment and battering of political prisoners

Early in July, it was reported that political prisoner [Ameneh Zaheri Sari](#) had been brutalized by prison guards in the Sepidar Prison of Ahvaz. Her family said, "Ameneh has been hurt in the arm due to the beatings and is presently deprived of receiving medical care to treat her arm." Ms. Zaheri Sari had been already deprived of receiving medical examination and treatment



Female labor activist [Neda Naji](#) was beaten by prison agents in the span of 24 hours in the notorious Qarchak Prison on July 6, 2019. Strikes on her head resulted in her vision being blurred for several hours.

Neda Naji was [attacked again on July 29, 2019](#), along with Yasaman Aryani, Atefeh Rangriz and Sepideh Oolian, by ordinary prisoners incited by prison authorities. Yasaman Aryani was hurt in the face and bruised all over the right arm and both legs, and Atefeh Rangriz who suffers from Asthma had to be taken to the dispensary due to her critical conditions.



Nazanin Zaghari taken to mental hospital

[Nazanin Zaghari](#), 40, has been transferred to a psychiatric ward from Evin Prison. She was handcuffed and shackled at the time of transfer and is held by the Revolutionary Guard Corps. Her father was not allowed to visit her.

Before being taken to the psychiatric ward on July 15, 2019, she said, "I was healthy and happy when I came to Iran to see my parents. Three and a bit years later and I am admitted to a mental health clinic. Look at me now - I ended up in an asylum. It should be an embarrassment. Prison is getting harder and harder for me. I hate being played in the middle of a political game. I just hate it."



Hunger strikes

Political prisoners, [Sanaz Allahyari](#) and her husband, Amirhossein Mohammadifar, started a hunger strike on July 4, 2019. The couple are members of the editorial board of an online magazine reporting on social justice including the situation of Iranian workers. They have been imprisoned since January 2019.

In a [statement](#) on July 3, 2019, Amnesty International wrote, "Sanaz Alahyari has been suffering from recurrent stomach pains, weight loss and severe shaking in her hands and legs for at least two months, and urgently requires medical treatment."



New arrests

Former political prisoner [Sedigheh Moradi](#) and her husband, supporters of the main Iranian opposition movement, the PMOI/MEK, were arrested in mid-July on the eve of the Iranian Resistance's gatherings in Albania.

Sedigheh Moradi, 57, has a 20-year-old daughter. She was in prison from April 2011 to November 2016, and twice before in the 1980s. She is a survivor of the massacre of political prisoners in 1988.



[Farangis Mazloumi](#), mother of resistant political prisoner Soheil Arabi, was arrested and taken to an unknown location by eight intelligence agents on July 22, 2019.



Also on July 23, 2019, Ministry of Intelligence agents raided the house of political prisoner Abolghassem Fouladvand, and arrested his wife, [Zahra Akbari-Nejad Dorcheh](#), 49, who suffers from a number of illnesses, including heart disease.

Abolghassem Fouladvand is a supporter of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI/MEK), who has been in prison since 2013 without a single day of leave and is currently held at Gohardasht Prison in Karaj (Rajaii Shahr) under inhumane conditions and deprived of minimum facilities.



Women's rights activist, [Maryam Mohammadi](#), was arrested at home on July 8, 2019, by Ministry of Intelligence agents. On July 28, 2019, another women's rights activist Esrin Derkaleh was arrested by intelligence agents and security forces. Both women were members of The Voice of Iranian Women Association (Anjoman-e Neday-e Zanan-e Iran) and were mainly active in women's literacy movement.



A Kurdish woman activist, [Parvin Advaii](#), was arrested by agents of the Intelligence Department of Marivan on July 27, 2019. No news has been available on her fate.

Arrests of religious minorities

[Four Christian women](#) were arrested by agents of the Ministry of Intelligence in Bushehr on July 8, 2019, for their beliefs. Maryam Fallahi, 35, Marjan Fallahi, 33, Khatoun Fathollahzadeh, 61, and Fatemeh Talebi, 27, were arrested along with their husbands. They are held in solitary confinement at the headquarters of the Ministry of Intelligence Office in Bushehr without access to a lawyer.

A court in Birjand sentenced nine [Baha'i citizens](#), including four women, to 54 years in prison. The four Baha'i women are Maryam Mokhtari, Rafat Talebi Fard, Shaida Abedi and Simin Mohammadi.

Mounting social restrictions

Attacking women for flouting the mandatory veil

Former political prisoner, [Fatemeh Mohammadi](#) was sitting in a bus on July 9, 2019, when a woman in chador disrespectfully and threateningly told her to put on her head scarf. She did not stop and began shouting and approaching Fatemeh. She put her hand on Fatemeh's chest and scratched her face. The bus driver stopped in front of the police station, where Fatemeh Mohammadi managed to take the harassing woman named Mousavi to the police station. Despite the complaint filed by Fatemeh Mohammadi, Ms. Mousavi left the police station a few hours later, but Fatemeh was held at the detention center until 3 am and eventually released on bail on July 10.



Improperly veiled women not allowed to travel

Hassan Mehri, commander of the [Airport Police](#), announced that they had received instructions for dealing with "women who remove their veil." He stressed, "It is possible that we prevent the person from travelling. We will file legal cases against these people and hand them over to judiciary officials." (The state-run ISNA news agency – July 1, 2019)

70 women cyclists arrested in Tehran

Gholam Hossein Ismaeli, spokesman for the Judiciary, confirmed the news on the [arrests of 70 women cyclists](#) when talking to a reporter. He said the 70 women cyclists had been arrested for breaching the rules of "chastity and Hijab." Ismaeli did not provide any details particularly around the timing of the arrests of the 70 women cyclists. (The state-run ISNA news agency – July 30, 2019)



Resorting to force to deal with improper veiling

Following the launch of [8,000 morality patrols](#) in Khorasan Razavi Province and 2,000 morality troops in Gilan, the Friday Prayer leader of Isfahan also called on the paramilitary Bassij to engage in cracking down on improper veiled women. "We must stand against abnormalities with force," he said, stressing the need to fight improper veiling. (The state-run Tasnim News Agency - July 12, 2019)

In a related development, the plainclothes agents who had brutalized and arrested a young woman, 16, for playing water guns with her friends in Tehran's Tehranpars park, were praised by the Commander of Tehran's State Security Force and granted awards and cash gifts.

Women's concert cancelled

On July 18, 2019, the charity concert of [an all-women musical band](#) called Delyar was cancelled in Urmia, northwest Iran, claiming that they did not written permission from the State Security Force. (The official IRNA news agency – July 17, 2019)



More women arrested at parties

A Revolutionary Guards official in [Hamadan](#) Province announced the [arrest of 20 women at a party](#). Hamadan's IRGC official announced the news as "dismantling the assembly of a women's network aimed at promoting a Western lifestyle", and without mentioning the details and timing and how the group was dismantled, only stated, "the 20 detained women were dealt with." (The state-run ISNA News Agency – July 30, 2019)

Ali Akbar Karimpour, public relations and propaganda officer for the Hamadan Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution, said the detainees had been handed over to the judiciary and claimed, "These people were supported from Tehran... to implement Western thoughts, ideas, mentality and lifestyle among them."

According to the state-run Fars News Agency, on Thursday, July 25, 2019, law enforcement officers in [Sari](#) also attacked a party and arrested 8 women and 9 men.

Imposing restrictions on businesses and drivers

Agents of the Public Places Police have instructed women clerks working in some Tehran shopping centers to wear the Maghna'eh instead of simple scarves or shawls, otherwise their shops would be sealed and shut down.

Abol-ghassem Shirazi, head of Tehran's Union of Clothing Manufacturers and Wholesalers, announced that they are implementing a plan to tackle and prevent production and sale of see-through or open-front women's manteaux. (The state-run ISNA news agency – July 31, 2019)

In Gilan Province, northern Iran, commander of the State Security Force, Mohammad Reza Is'haghi, announced that they had sent 66,000 text messages to drivers in this province, carrying female passengers who had dropped their veils inside the car. (The state-run ILNA news agency – July 31, 2019)

Suicides

Pressures and restrictions of life under the mullahs' rule, continue to take toll on women and girls, leading to fatal consequences.

We were able to compile the names and news of at least 15 women who committed suicide in July, most of them were young and three of them were under 18 years. This is 20 percent teenage and juvenile suicides among women, compared to the annual 7% the regime claims.

Another shocking report was the suicide of a woman and her two young daughters in Yazd on July 28, 2019. The reason for such incidents are poverty. More women are [committing suicide](#) in Iran due to poverty.

Another case in point was the case of a [female municipality employee](#) in [Arak](#) who attempted to set fire to herself in protest over the severe decrease in staff salaries. She was saved by security forces but the municipality of Arak fired her instead of listening to her grievances. (The state-run ROKNA news agency – July 19, 2019)

