



NCRI WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

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MONTHLY REPORT

IN ADDITION TO UNFAIR SENTENCES
FEMALE POLITICAL PRISONERS ARE
AT RISK OF BEING KILLED
BY THE CORONAVIRUS

In addition to unfair sentences, female political prisoners are at risk of being killed by the coronavirus

The month of June saw another wave of increase in the number of corona cases in cities across Iran, and particularly so in the prisons.

The situation of prisoners is much worse than other people and they are more vulnerable to the disease. Female prisoners are under double pressure due to horrible conditions in prisons, shortage of hygienic products and denial of access to medicine, health care and medical treatment.

More activists were [summoned and arrested](#) in the month of June and female political prisoners experience more pressure. At least 8 civil and women's rights activists were summoned to court and six female activists received new sentences.

Resistant political prisoners, such as [Maryam Akbari Monfared](#) and [Atena Daemi](#), who are already serving their sentences in jail, were summoned to court and arraigned with new charges in new cases fabricated against them and handed down [unjust sentences](#) such as flogging.

In a trumped up case, Atena Daemi was condemned, for the third time in a row, to an additional sentence of two years' imprisonment and 74 lashes. Her prison sentence has thus reached a total of 10 years.

In addition to unjust sentences, women are practically put at risk of infection and death due to the coronavirus when they are imprisoned on security charges despite the pandemic.

Prison conditions are grim in Evin, Qarchak, Sepidar (in Ahvaz), and other cities. Not only political prisoners are not released or sent on furlough, but for those who were able to use the prison leave, they have been returned to prison after their leave expired and are held in the quarantine ward for months.

The prisoners who have been sent to Qarchak Prison in Varamin, as punishment or to internal exile, are held in abysmal conditions.

Abruptly transferred to Qarchak Prison on April 29, [Zeinab Jalalian](#) has been infected with the coronavirus and her life is in serious danger.

Another political prisoner, [Forough Taqipour](#) who was transferred to Qarchak in February has also contracted the virus and is serving her sentence in dire conditions in this prison.



Women's Ward of Evin Prison

The quarantine ward and sanitary conditions

New prisoners are held for 14 days in Hall No. 2, in a room in the administrative section of the quarantine ward, before being allowed into the general ward. However, the telephones which are

located in the sports club and the prison's store are commonly used by all prisoners, including the ones who are in the quarantine ward.

If the prisoners do not observe the hygiene protocols and social distancing, isolating the new prisoners in the quarantine would be practically useless.

Prisoners have to procure their own masks and gloves. In the prison's store, each mask or a pair of gloves are sold between 8,000 and 10,000 tomans to prisoners.

Detergents and disinfectants are rationed by prison authorities and put at the disposal of the prisoner in charge of running the ward to divide among all inmates. The ration is not sufficient and inmates have to buy their own detergents and disinfectants at prices several folds higher.

Dispatching inmates to hospitals

Prisoners have to pay all the expenses for being visited in civic hospitals, but prison authorities prevent or hinder their dispatch to medical centers. If in some cases, a prisoner insists on being sent to hospital, she is quickly returned to prison after initial visit by the physician and without receiving treatment.

After the outbreak, prisoners' dispatch to hospitals and medical centers face even more obstacles, and the visits are done either very late or on an irregular basis.

Sending patients from the ward to the Evin Prison's dispensary confronts many obstacles, for this reason specialist doctors rarely visit the women's ward.



Appearing in court

Restrictions and social distancing during the pandemic did not cut down the number of prisoners summoned to court. On the contrary, more prisoners are being summoned to court.

During this period, Atena Daemi and Maryam Akbari Monfared have been repeatedly summoned to court for new cases filed against them. These political prisoners, however, have refused to appear in court for fear of the outbreak. One of the reasons they do so is because prison authorities and soldiers who accompany the inmates do not observe the hygienic protocols and do not wear masks and gloves.

All-women Qarchak Prison

Health conditions in the [Qarchak Prison](#) for women is very critical so much that the state-run media and press have acknowledged them.

The state-run [khabaronline.ir](#) published a report in March, announcing the infection of at least [20 inmates](#) in this prison who were being detained among others.

In another report from this prison, a former inmate divulged that at least 100 prisoners are infected with Covid-19 in Qarchak Prison.



[Prisoners are not separated](#) according to the category of crimes and political prisoners are detained among ordinary prisoners and dangerous criminals. Young women who were arrested during the uprisings in November 2019 and January 2020 are detained in this prison and were not granted prison leaves.

Kurdish political prisoner [Zeinab Jalalian contracted the Covid-19](#) after being transferred to Qarchak Prison. She has been imprisoned for 13 years and suffers from various illnesses including Asthma. Presently, her lungs are fully infected and if not treated, her health would suffer irreparable damages.

Sepidar Prison of Ahvaz

More than 50 female inmates are infected in the women's ward of Sepidar Prison in Ahvaz and prison conditions have been reported as abysmal. Inmates who suffer symptoms such as fever and chills have been taken to the quarantine ward which is separated from other wards with only a few bars.

The inmates remaining in other wards also have symptoms similar to common cold. The prison's physician is sick and there is no one to visit and care for prisoners.

Inmates do not have medicine and the medications brought for them by their families are not accepted by prison authorities. The authorities also do not provide any information on the prisoners' conditions to their families.



Women's prison in Birjand

Four prisoners who reported in to the women's [prison of Birjand](#) have announced that they and other inmates have most probably contracted the Covid-19. Saghar Mohammadi, Sheida Abedi, Simin Mohammadi and Maryam Mokhtari turned themselves in on May 26, 2020 after their prison leaves expired. They have been held in the quarantine ward for more than three weeks and have not been allowed to enter the general ward.

Since the inmates in the quarantine ward have to pass through the general ward, they are not allowed to do so and have thus been deprived of their visitations.

The quarantine ward of the women's ward in the Prison of Birjand is an old sports hall. Some 120 inmates are presently detained in this hall which makes overcrowded and prisoners cannot observe the distancing protocol.

Other than liquid soap, there is no other disinfectant in this hall. The inmates are deprived of having masks or gloves.

There are only two working toilets in this hall and four showers which are used by all inmates. In addition to personal hygiene, female inmates have to do their dishes in the same place and mothers wash swaddles of their babies.

Many of the inmates have lost their senses of smell and taste.

A number of female prisoners have fever, chills, sore throat and physical pain. They are detained among other prisoners without receiving any medical care. In one instance, after the inmates persisted and followed up to be visited by a doctor, a physician went to the ward and visited some 80 inmates. He told all of them that they have caught a simple cold and gave them cough syrup and some tablets.

Other prisons

The clerical regime continues to conceal the true dimensions of the spread of the coronavirus in prisons and the infection of inmates.

The general director of the Health and Medical Organization, Mehrzad Tashakorian, did not answer a question by khabaronline.ir reporter on the number of infected prisoners. His only response was that he was not permitted to announce the numbers.

Scattered reports and the existing evidence, however, indicate that the Covid-19 has widely spread in most prisons.

In the Prison of Isfahan, a large number of prisoners have been infected. A considerable number of prisoners have fever and bad coughs. The fever of these prisoners were measured on June 13, 2020, and they were subsequently taken to an undisclosed location.

More than half of the inmates in Isfahan's Dastgerd Prison are infected with Covid-19. One of the doctors working in this prison said 40 inmates had already lost their lives due to infection with the coronavirus.

In the Gohardasht Prison of Karaj (a.k.a. as Rajaishahr), the situation is grim. Political prisoners are deprived of the minimum hygienic resources to contain the virus if they are infected. There are reports that one of the inmates in the political prisoners' ward has been infected with the virus, putting other prisoners at risk of infection. There are very sick prisoners in this ward including Arash Sadeghi who suffers from bone cancer or chondrosarcoma.

200 inmates in the Greater Tehran Penitentiary have been infected and the prisoners are deprived of access to potable water.

In the Prison of Kamyaran, in Kurdistan Province, prisoners are infected and due to the overcrowding of this prison and lack of medical and sanitary resources, the situation is critical in this prison.

According to reliable sources, at least 100 inmates in the Prison of Urmia have contracted the Covid-19, and seven of them have lost their lives.

One of the basic reasons why the conditions in the women's wards in Iranian prisons are worse, is lack of adequate infrastructures in these prisons.

In most prisons, women are held in disused chicken farms or makeshift containers used for sports. So, in comparison with male inmates, women suffer from more infrastructural problems and greater lack of resources. This is while a large number of female inmates are mothers and are accompanied by their children while serving their prison terms.

Second wave of coronavirus across the country

The [Iranian Resistance](#) has announced that as of Sunday, July 5, 2020, the death toll due to coronavirus in 342 cities in Iran has exceeded 65,900.

The Middle East Monitor reported on June 9, 2020 that Iran has once again turned into an epicenter of the spread of the coronavirus in the Middle East, and it is among the world's top 10 countries suffering from this outbreak.

Minoo Mohraz, member of the National Coronavirus Combat Taskforce, announced that some 20 percent of the population are infected with the Covid-19 and at least some 40 to 70 per cent of the population are going to contract this disease. (The state-run Tabnak website, June 6, 2020)

Dr. Maheri said, "We face a new wave of growing number of infections among middle-age and young people." (The state-run ISNA news agency, July 1, 2020)

Iraj Harirchi, deputy Minister of Health, said they have re-imposed restrictions in the provinces of Khuzestan, Sistan and Baluchestan, Hormozgan, Bushehr, Fars, East Azerbaijan, West Azerbaijan, Razavi Khorasan, Kerman, Tehran and Alborz. He said, "One-third of all hospitalized patients and victims of Covid-19 in Iran are in Khuzestan." (The state-run ISNA news agency, July 1, 2020)

The deputy to the National Coronavirus Combat Taskforce in Tehran said, "The medical staff are exhausted. The continuation of this trend is going to undermine the abilities of the medical staff to manage the situation... This would lead to acute increase in the death toll across the country... We have limited hospital capacities and soon, we will face a situation where 100 percent of beds in the Intensive Care Units will be occupied." (The state-run ISNA news agency, June 30, 2020)

On June 4, 2020, Mahmoud Hosseinpour, vice president of the Medical Sciences University of Hormozgan, said: "Bandar Abbas has the highest number of coronavirus cases. 25 percent of the patients in this province are [housewives](#), because they go out every day to do shopping and they are in touch with other people."

Shahla Khosravi, deputy Minister of Health in the affairs of mid-wives, said [about 700 pregnant women and 240 mid-wives](#) have been infected with the coronavirus in Iran. (The official IRNA news agency, May 3, 2020)

Two days later, Hossein Karim, president of the Medical Sciences University of Alborz, announced: "684 pregnant women are suspected of being infected with the virus in this province." (The state-run Hamshahrionline.ir, May 5, 2020)

Such contradictions in the statistics announced by regime officials, only reveal the extent to which the regime is concealing the truth and the lack of transparency on the number of cases, including the infection of pregnant women in Iran.

The second wave of the spread of the coronavirus and the increasing number of victims in Iran are the direct product of the policies of the clerical regime which cares for nothing but preserving their own rule.

The mullahs' regime is directly responsible for the dire conditions in Iranian prisons. The Iranian Resistance urges the UN Secretary General, the UN Security Council and other relevant international organizations to send an international delegation to visit Iranian prisons and prisoners, particularly the political prisoners.