



NCRI WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

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MONTHLY REPORT

**Fundamental rights of
female political prisoners
in Iran violated**

Fundamental rights of female political prisoners in Iran violated *They are main the targets of the clerical regime's vindictiveness*

October saw violations of the most fundamental rights of female political prisoners in Iran. The clerical regime adopted various inhumane measures especially against political prisoners. Besieged by various political, social and economic crises, and in the face of growing public discontent, the clerical regime has no answer but to step up repression. It has ramped up the number of executions, arrests, humiliating punishments, and more heavy sentences which are unproportionate with the alleged crimes. So, the clerical regime attempts to put up a show of force to cover up its tremendous instability. To this end, the regime has deployed all the country's resources not for the fight against the coronavirus but to ratchet up repression.

Handcuffed captives, immediate victims

Political prisoners are the most oppressed among all social sectors and groups. They are handcuffed captives bearing the brunt of the regime's vindictiveness in any development. They have been incarcerated just for expressing a different political opinion or for their activities in defense of human rights. In the first place, they should not be in prison. The mullahs' regime not only does not release political prisoners even temporarily but they send more and more dissidents to jail every day. The mullahs have taken advantage of the coronavirus to eliminate their captives. Prisons do not receive hygienic resources and equipment to protect inmates against the virus. Shortage of water, detergents and disinfectants, shortage of protective equipment like masks and gloves, lack of space for quarantine, and inadequate medical care have all expedited the spread of the Coronavirus in Iran prisons. Not only there is no separation of prisoner categories in women's prisons, but even sick prisoners with contagious diseases are held among others. Following is a brief review of the clerical regime's inhumane measures in prisons against female political prisoners in Iran in the month of October:



From left, Mojgan Kavousi, Saba Kord Afshari, Massoumeh Senobari, Nejat Anvar Hamidi and Fatemeh Mosanna

Denial of medical treatment and care

One of the methods commonly used by the clerical regime to torture political prisoners to death is depriving them of medical treatment. There were several cases in the women's ward of Evin Prison last month. Prisoners with serious illnesses were either deprived of treatment altogether or were sent to hospital but returned before being treated.

- Fatemeh Mosanna suffers from intestinal infection. She had been [suffering from internal hemorrhage](#) for one month. Evin's clinic has announced that they are not able to do anything for her treatment. She became viciously ill twice over the past month. The second time was on October 17, when prison authorities refused to send her to hospital or even grant her medical leave.

Finally, on October 27 when Fatemeh Mosanna [suffered another heavy intestinal bleeding](#), the authorities agreed to send her to Taleghani Hospital.

There, the doctor said she must be treated under his supervision. But if the treatment did not prove effective, then he had to operate on her.

Despite her critical conditions, prison guards returned her to prison. The order came from the Ministry of Intelligence and the Prosecutor Supervising Political Prisoners.

- [Saba Kord Afshari](#) who had hurt her ankle two weeks earlier, needed to have her cast removed. Her ankle was bruised and swollen. Prison authorities did not provide her the medical service she needed. So, she removed the cast on her own.
- Kurdish writer Mojgan Kavousi also needs to be operated on. But Evin Prison authorities have not allowed her to undergo surgery in a hospital of her choice. They insist that she should be operated on in Taleghani Hospital. But the hospital is filled with COVID-19 patients, and Mojgan Kavousi does not accept to be operated on in that hospital.
- In the women's ward of Tabriz Prison, political prisoner [Massoumeh Senobari](#) is serving eight years in prison on the charge of supporting the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran ([PMOI/MEK](#)). She is being detained among ordinary prisoners and is under a lot of pressure. She has contracted the COVID-19.

Ms. Senobari suffers from blurry vision, a broken right leg and other illnesses due to torture during her interrogation. But prison authorities have refused to grant her medical leave to receive treatment.

- In the women's ward of Sepidar Prison of Ahvaz, political prisoner [Nejat Anvar Hamidi](#) suffers from poor eyesight, thyroid complications and chronic headaches. In addition, she has contracted the coronavirus.

The 62-year-old prisoner was arrested in March 2019 and detained in Sepidar Prison to serve her 5-year sentence. She is charged with membership in the [People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran](#) (PMOI/MEK). Authorities of Sepidar Prison have so far prevented her from receiving medical care.

Relocation of political prisoners from Evin

Another one of the clerical regime's methods to increase pressure on female political prisoners in Iran is sending them to prisons where they are detained among ordinary prisoners and dangerous criminals.

To this end, at least 7 political prisoners were moved from the women's ward of Evin to other prisons where separation of categories of prisoners is not observed.

- Baha'i prisoner of conscience Elham Barmaki who was supposed to be conditionally released, was transferred from the women's ward of Evin to Qarchak Prison on October 5, 2020.
- Imprisoned lawyer [Nasrin Sotoudeh](#) was transferred to Qarchak Prison on October 20, 2020. Evin Prison authorities called her out of the ward under the pretext of sending her to hospital, but instead took her to Qarchak.
- [Yasaman Ariyani and her mother, Monireh Arabshahi](#), were sent from Evin Prison to the Kachouii Prison in Karaj on October 21, 2020. They are imprisoned because of showing their opposition to the mandatory Hijab. They are sentenced to 9 years and seven months in prison, each.
- [Maryam Nassiri](#) was transferred to Qarchak Prison on October 22, 2020, after her interrogations were completed. She was previously detained under torture in solitary confinement in Ward 209 of Evin Prison.

The 62-year-old political prisoner is a lawyer and has four children. She was imprisoned for three years during the 1980s for supporting the [People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran](#) (PMOI/MEK).

- Kurdish political prisoner Sakineh Parvaneh was removed from the women's ward of Evin Prison and sent to the Prison of Quchan on October 27, 2020. She had been previously detained in Qarchak Prison and was returned to Evin only after she went on hunger strike.
- Some [300 ordinary and political prisoners](#) from across West Azerbaijan Province were moved to the Central Prison of Urmia on October 23, 2020. The relocation took place on the orders of the Judiciary.

Over 200 female prisoners were already detained in the women's ward of Urmia Prison.

The Qarchak Prison of Varamin and the Central Prison of Urmia are among the worst prisons in Iran [plagued with Coronavirus](#).

Many protesters arrested during the November 2019 uprising are detained in Qarchak Prison. They include Raha Ahmadi, Zeinab Alipour, Leila Akbari, Samira Hadian, Gita Horr, Parizad Hamidi Shafaq, and Zohreh Sarv.

Reports from the women's ward of Evin indicate that after the relocations, the atmosphere of repression in the ward has been stepped up. Prison authorities have reduced the period of telephone calls, saying there are some problems about telephone lines.

The reports also indicate that the relocated prisoners were not given any opportunity to take their hygienic and other essential items with them.

In addition to increasing pressure on female political prisoners in Iran, the relocations are intended to open up some space for new detainees in the upcoming days.

It is also widely believed that prison authorities are planning to close down the women's ward of Evin. This is the only women's ward in the country where political prisoners are separated from common inmates.



From left: Forough Taghipour, Zahra Safaei, Parastoo Mo'ini, and Golrokh Iraee

Harassment and intimidation of political prisoners in Qarchak

Authorities running the notorious Qarchak Prison collected signatures on a letter against political detainees to prevent them from going to the workshop and educating other prisoners.

News came in the last week of October indicating that Mirzaii, the deputy warden of Qarchak, and Asgari, the head of the prison's workshop, had circulated a letter among ordinary prisoners. The letter said the political prisoners, especially Zahra Safaei, were speaking against the state and discussing political matters when they went to the workshop.

Based on this letter, the prison's warden closed the door on political prisoners and did not allow them to go to the workshop.

The political prisoners including Zahra Safaei, Parastoo Mo'ini, Forough Taghipour, Maryam Nassiri and [Golrokh Iraee](#) expressed their protest against the new restrictions by banging on the door and chanting "death to the dictator."

After this incident, the political prisoners spoke to the signatories of the letter. It became clear that 10 signatories were new arrivals and did not know anything about the content of the letter. Three others apologized to Zahra Safaei and other political prisoners. They said they had done so under pressure of prison authorities.

The next day, [Zahra Safaei suffered a heart stroke](#) after being harassed and intimidated by prison authorities. But she was only given a few tablets and returned to the ward.

Zahra Safaei, her daughter Parastoo Mo'ini, and Forough Taghipour, are imprisoned in Qarchak for supporting the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI/MEK) and for disseminating propaganda against the state.

They have been repeatedly attacked in this prison by ordinary inmates hired and incited by the warden of Qarchak. The lives of these prisoners are in serious danger.



Clockwise from top left: Khadijeh Mehdipour, Ashraf Nafariyeh, Elham Samimi, Aliyeh Motallebzadeh, Shabnam Ashouri, Neda Pirkhezranian, Bahareh Soleimani and Nahid Taghavi

New arrests and detentions

As in the previous months, the clerical regime continued to make new arrests from among civil and human rights activists.

- Agents of the IRGC Intelligence in Ilam-e Gharb arrested [Khadijeh Mehdipour](#) on October 5, 2020, for her posts in the Instagram.
- Intelligence agents arrested [Shabnam Ashouri](#) at her home on October 6, 2020. Ms. Ashouri is married and lives in Tehran. She is the managing editor and producer of *Agahnameh*, a labor publication.
- Security forces arrested social activist [Neda Pirkhezranian](#) in Tehran on October 6, 2020.
- [Aliyeh Motallebzadeh and Ashraf Nafariyeh](#) were transferred to the Evin Prison on October 11, 2020.

Motallebzadeh is a photographer by profession and a women's rights activist who chairs the Association to Defend Freedom of the Press. Ashraf Nafariyeh is a student activist.

- [Elham Samimi](#), a Tehran University student of anthropology, and Kurdish civil activist Somayyeh Kargar, a graduate of philosophy from Tabriz University, were both arrested on October 16, in Tehran.
- [Bahareh Soleimani](#), a healthcare worker in Karaj, was arrested on October 16. She is presently detained in a security ward and in solitary confinement.
- Intelligence agents arrested [Nahid Taghavi](#), 66, at her home. She is presently detained in solitary confinement in Evin. Ms. Taghavi had recently undergone a surgical operation and suffers from high blood pressure. She has been deprived of having access to her medications since the time of arrest.

New prison sentences

The clerical regime has issued new prison sentences for more civil and political activists in October:

- The Revolutionary Court of Tehran sentenced Ms. [Farangis Mazloum](#), civil activist and mother of political prisoner Soheil Arabi, to 18 months in prison.

- The Revolutionary Court of Behbahan in Khuzestan Province sentenced [Maryam Payab](#) to one year in prison and 74 lashes on October 22, 2020. She is charged with disruption in public order for participating in the protests in November 2019. Security forces shot her in the back and took her captive despite her critical condition.
- In Khorramabad, capital of Lorestan Province in western Iran, [Fatemeh Khoshrou](#) was informed of her one-year prison sentence via email on October 22, 2020. Ms. Khoshrou had been arrested during the protests in November 2019. She was brutalized in the detention center of IRGC Intelligence to be forced into making false televised confessions.



From left: Maryam Payab, Farangis Mazloun and Fatemeh Khoshrou

Special Guards raid defenseless women jailed in Kermanshah

Women imprisoned in Kermanshah's Correctional Center for Rehabilitation held a protest on October 21, 2020. They protested the harsh conditions imposed on prisoners by the head of this prison. Their peaceful protest however was responded by an attack by the Special Guards.

The [Special Guards brutalized the prisoners](#) by batons and lobbed tear gas at them. Two female prisoners, Sheno Rahmati and Fatemeh Rahimi, were badly beaten. They were dragged on the ground and taken to solitary confinement.

A number of protesters suffered shortness of breath due to tear gas and pepper spray used by guards.

Soheila Zahiri, a member of Bassij, heads the women's section. She implements the harsh new rules on female inmates, making conditions intolerable for inmates.

Several days later, the family of one of the inmates said: "Prison authorities have summoned some of the prisoners and threatened to send them to prisons in remote locations. In addition, sick prisoners have been punished by being deprived of receiving their medicines, and other prisoners face restrictions in making phone calls."



Prison of Tabriz – inhumane treatment of sick prisoner

A recent report from the Prison of Tabriz states that a 60-year-old woman by the name of [Shahin Solhjoo](#) has contracted herpes zoster. Tabriz Prison authorities initially transferred Shahin Solhjoo to the dispensary and then to solitary confinement. But since prison guards were afraid of contracting the disease, they sent her back to the general ward after two days.

Inmates objected to the authorities' failure to hospitalize and treat Ms. Solhjoo. In reaction, prison guards have resorted to yet another inhumane measure, forcing this elderly woman who is in pain, to sleep in the yard in the cold nights of autumn.

Some 150 women detained in the [women's ward of the Prison of Tabriz](#) are exposed to herpes zoster. At least 9 prisoners contracted the COVID-19 in the last week of September 2020.

