ON THE EVE OF NOWRUZ, THE IRANIAN REGIME STEPS UP EXECUTION OF WOMEN, EXILE OF WOMEN POLITICAL PRISONERS

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MONTHLY REPORT

NCRI WOMEN'S COMMITTEE
On the eve of Nowruz, the Iranian regime steps up execution of women, exile of women political prisoners

The Persian New Year, Nowruz, started on March 20, 2021. Nevertheless, on the eve of the New Year and in months when all Iranians were preparing to celebrate Nowruz, the clerical regime in Iran stepped up execution of women and exile of women political prisoners. This inhuman measure in violation of the prisoners’ rights ruined the New Year celebrations for their families, too.

Executions of five women
The clerical regime has executed five women since the beginning of 2021.

An unidentified woman was hanged in the Central Prison of Sanandaj on January 27, 2021.

Another unidentified woman, only 23 years old, was hanged in the Prison of Ardabil, on February 8, 2021.

Zahra Esma’ili was hanged in Gohardasht Prison of Karaj on February 17, 2021.

Maryam (Massoumeh) Karimi was hanged in Lakan Prison of Rasht, on March 13, 2021.

Nafiseh Pakmehr was hanged in Taybad Prison on March 14, 2021.

Hanging the lifeless corpse of Zahra Esma’ili, mother of two
Zahra Esma’ili, 42 with two children, was hanged at dawn on February 17, 2021, at Gohardasht Prison of Karaj.

Before her own execution, she witnessed the hanging of 16 others before her. So before reaching the gallows, she suffered a heart stroke and died.

Subsequently, her lawyer announced that prison officials had hanged her lifeless body. He saw her death certificate which indicated “heart stroke” as the reason of death.

Zahra Esma’ili was an innocent woman. She claimed responsibility for the murder of her husband to save her teenage daughter who had shot him in the head.

Alireza Zamani, her husband, was a managing director at the mullahs’ Ministry of Intelligence. He routinely mistreated and battered his wife and children. He used to take different women home before the eyes of his own family.

Alireza Zamani had even threatened to kill his wife and attempted to rape his own daughter.

As a result of such brutalities, his daughter killed him with the help of her brother.

Her execution was an inhumane revenge by Intelligence agents.
Maryam Karimi (Massoumeh) was hanged in Lakan Prison of Rasht on March 13, 2021. She was also married with one child. Maryam Karimi was a victim of domestic violence but her husband did not agree to a divorce.

The last woman executed was Nafiseh Pakmehr who had been imprisoned on the death row for eight years. She was the 116th woman to be executed during Rouhani’s tenure.

The mullahs’ misogynous regime is the world’s top executioner of women

Iran holds the world’s record with the highest number of per capita executions. It is also the world’s top executioner of women. The executions are carried out after grossly unfair trials.

More than 4300 people have been executed in Iran during Rouhani’s tenure. As of now, they include 116 women.

The actual number of executions and particularly the execution of women is much higher.

The Iranian regime open-handedly uses the death penalty as a form of punishment. In many cases and in a discriminatory manner this punishment is carried out against the religious and ethnic minorities, political dissidents, and women.

Most of the women executed are themselves victims of domestic violence and commit murder in self-defense. But the mullahs’ regime does not categorize deliberate murders, and all cases of murder regardless of the motivation are punished by death sentence.

NCRI Women’s Committee condemns the death penalty

The NCRI Women’s Committee strongly condemns the death penalty. The Committee has repeatedly urged the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, and all the international human rights organizations and women’s rights advocates to strongly condemn the executions in Iran and particularly the execution of women.

The NCRI Women’s Committee has also called for urgent action to save the lives of death row prisoners, particularly the female inmates.

Illegal exile of women political prisoners

One of the systematic pressures brought on female political prisoners and is still in force, is their illegal exile to prisons in other cities away from their city of residence.

Maryam Akbari Monfared and Atena Daemi are among the resistant political prisoners who were sent to exile in the month of March.

From left: Maryam Akbari Monfared, Golrokh Iraee, and Atena Daemi
Maryam Akbari Monfared

According to news on March 9, 2021, political prisoner Maryam Akbari Monfared was abruptly relocated from the women’s ward of Evin Prison and banished to the Prison of Semnan in the 12th year of her imprisonment.

Reports from the women’s ward of Evin indicate that her cellmates protested her banishment and intervened to prevent her relocation. But prison guards violently broke into the ward and took her out of the ward by force.

In a statement on March 11, the NCRI strongly condemned the illegal exile of women political prisoners Maryam Akbari Monfared and Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee.

Maryam Akbari Monfared is presently detained in the general ward of the Prison of Semnan among ordinary prisoners without access to her personal belongings. Her detention in the general ward is in violation of the principle of separation of crimes.

Deprived of having a telephone card, she makes her daily calls in the prison’s Security Office and in the presence of a prison guard.

The sanitary conditions in the general ward of the Prison of Semnan are deplorable. Despite widespread outbreak of the coronavirus in prisons, everyone uses the same slippers. Prison authorities do not provide detergents or disinfectants to the inmates.

Maryam Akbari Monfared has three daughters and is serving her 12th year in prison. She has been detained since December 31, 2009, without one day of furlough, for seeking justice for her sister and three brothers executed in the 1980s. She has been deprived of access to medical treatment and care.

Atena Daemi

Political prisoner Atena Daemi was abruptly exiled to Lakan Prison of Rasht on Tuesday night, March 16, 2021. The forcible relocation of Atena Daemi took place on the eve of the Persian New Year on March 20.

Atena Daemi had not been informed in advance, and she was not allowed to pack her belongings or contact her family. Prison guards put cuffs on her hands and feet and removed her from the women’s ward of Evin Prison.

Atena Daemi was among the signatories of a letter protesting forcible relocation and illegal exile of political prisoner Maryam Akbari Monfared to the Prison of Semnan.

In a statement on March 17, the NCRI Women’s Committee strongly condemned the forcible relocation and illegal exile of women political prisoners, including the exile of Ms. Atena Daemi.

Atena Daemi, 32 and a human rights and children’s rights activist, must have been released on July 4, 2020, after completing her 5-year prison term. But she was sentenced again to a total of 5 years of imprisonment and 74 lashes because of trumped up charges filed against her by the Ministry of Intelligence and the Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraee

Political prisoner Golrokh Iraee was exiled to the Prison of Amol, in Mazandaran Province, north Iran, on January 24, 2021, after being returned to Qarchak Prison earlier that day. She had been under interrogation by the IRGC Intelligence for 43 days at Ward 2A of Evin Prison in Tehran.

Before being forcibly moved out of Qarchak Prison, she was not allowed to take her personal belongings and necessary items.
Some 50 prisoners are detained in two rooms in the women’s ward of Amol Prison. Most of them are convicted on drug-related charges and some have hepatitis. There is no quarantine to hold the new arrivals and there is a high risk of contracting the virus in this prison.

Exile of Kurdish women political prisoners

The clerical regime had earlier exiled a considerable number of political prisoners from the women’s ward of Evin Prison. Among them were two Kurdish political prisoners who have been exiled to different prisons several times.

Kurdish political prisoner Sakineh Parvaneh has been transferred back and forth between prisons in several cities. Her latest relocation was on February 24, 2021, from the Central Prison of Mashhad to an undisclosed location.

Kurdish political prisoner Zeinab Jalalian who is sentenced for life, has been relocated between four prisons in various parts of the country since April 2020. In her last telephone call to her family on November 10, 2020, she said she had been forcibly transferred to the Prison of Yazd. She said she had been brutalized and insulted on the way.

Why does the regime send prisoners to exile?

The regime has recently stepped up sending political prisoners to exile to ramp up pressure on them and punish the resistant political prisoners. But some observers say that this is part of a plan to gradually disband the women’s ward of Evin Prison.

The women’s ward of Evin is the focal point of resistance and protest by women political prisoners. They go on hunger strike, individually or collectively, write open letters exposing the regime’s inhuman crimes in prisons and condemn the execution of other political prisoners.

One of the worst experiences in jail

Prisoners who have experienced being exiled, say it is one of the worst and most damaging experiences during imprisonment. This illegal measure not only punishes the prisoner but also her family.

Families have to travel long distances for a 20-min visit. In some cases, even after doing so, they cannot make the visit because of lack of familiarity with the new prison’s internal rules.

UNSR: gender discrimination permeates all areas of law and practice

Women and girls in Iran are treated as second class citizens, said Mr. Javaid Rehman, the United Nations’ Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran.

Mr. Rehman’s report released on the International Women’s Day explains how gender discrimination has permeated almost all areas of law and practice.
Iran is one of only a few states not to have signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

**Iranian women spearhead the struggle against an oppressive regime**

It is the honor of Iranian women who have waged a relentless struggle for freedom and equality during 40 years of the clerical regime’s rule despite all the discriminations and deprivations and despite the repressive conditions. And eventually, the regime is going to receive the last fatal blow from Iranian women.

The month of March saw the effective and decisive role of women in all anti-government acts of protest including in prisons and in Resistance Units, in all protests and uprisings, in the activities celebrating March 8 under tightly repressive measures, in commemorating the martyrs in Nowruz, and everywhere.

In the final days of March, too, the people of Iran held protests all across the country against the anti-Iranian 25-year Cooperation Contract signed with China. Women spearheaded these protests in all major capitals. They chanted: “Iran is not for sale” and “We will fight and die but will take back Iran.”

On the third day of these protests, a group of women held a protest outside the mullahs’ parliament in Tehran despite massive presence of security forces and plainclothes agents. They were savagely attacked and brutalized by security forces.