

THE UPRISING IN KHUZESTAN,
MOTHERS OF MARTYRS AND WOMEN
OF RESISTANCE UNITS ACTIVELY
SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATE

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The uprising in Khuzestan, mothers of martyrs and women of Resistance Units actively support and participate

July 2021 was an eventful month for the Iranian people. The Iranian Resistance's annual gathering, [the Free Iran World Summit 2021](#), successfully convened from July 10-12. This international online Summit connected Ashraf 3 with more than 50,000 points in 105 countries. The three-day Summit saw the participation of 1,029 prominent figures from five continents, many of whom spoke at the summit and expressed their support for the Democratic Alternative of the National Council of Resistance of Iran and the Iranian people's uprising.

One of the most outstanding parts of the event in its 17-year history was the participation of the supporters of the Iranian Opposition People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI/MEK) and [members of Resistance Units from inside Iran](#). In their direct video contacts with the Summit, the female members of the Resistance Units showed that these leading women by accepting many risks keep alive the light of hope and faith in victory for the Iranian people.

Outburst of anger of thirsty people in Khuzestan

A few days after the Iranian Resistance's annual Summit, [the uprising of the thirsty people](#) of Khuzestan made news headlines around the world. The uprising in Khuzestan spread rapidly throughout the province. Then many cities joined the uprising and declared their solidarity with the thirsty people of Khuzestan. The protests in Khuzestan and their rapid expansion once again revealed the fact that Iranian society no longer wants the mullahs.

Women were active in all the arisen cities. Young women and girls sent many of the reports from the scenes of protest.

The women of Ahvaz braved the atmosphere of terror created by the security forces and chanted "death to Khamenei" and "death to the dictator."

The [brave women and girls of Tehran](#) connected the heart of Iran in the capital to its vital artery, the thirsty Khuzestan, by their chants of "down with the principle of Velayat-e Faqih," "death to Khamenei," and "death to the dictator" in the Sadeghieh subway station. They thus echoed the cries of the thirsty people of Khuzestan in the heart of the capital.



The presence of the [mothers of the martyrs](#) and their declaration of support for the uprising in Khuzestan was another scene of the presence of the dedicated and brave women of Iran. The mothers of the martyrs of the November 2019 uprising expressed their solidarity with the Khuzestan uprising and the thirsty people of that province by posting video clips. Then, they staged a [daring protest](#) in Tehran's Azadi Square.

Khuzestan uprising spreads throughout Iran

The uprising in Khuzestan began on July 15, 2021, in protest of severe water shortages, continuous water cut-offs and its transfer to other cities. [The protests quickly spread](#) throughout the province. The protests took place among others in Ahvaz, Khorramshahr, Bostan, Hamidiyeh, Shadegan, Susangerd, Mahshahr, Izeh, Hoveyzeh, Abu Hamizah, Kut Abdullah, Weiss, Shavur, Shush, Shooshtar, Behbahan, Andimeshk, Dezful, Ramshir, Masjed Soleyman, Shush-e Danial, Elahi, Khowr-e Musa, Mollasani, and Darkhovin.



The mullahs' regime, however, responded with bullets to the cries for water. So far, [the names of 12 young people shot and killed](#) by the security forces have been confirmed and announced.

The uprising in Khuzestan quickly spread to cities throughout Iran.

People and youth in Lorestan, Khorasan, Kermanshah, East Azerbaijan, Tehran, Isfahan, Karaj, Sistan and Baluchestan, Fars, Qazvin, Zanjan, Bushehr, Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari, Golestan and Ilam rose up with chants of "death to the dictator," "death to Khamenei," "Unity with Khuzestan," and "Khuzestan is not alone."

The demonstrators shook the ground under the feet of the ruling mullahs.

The Iranian Resistance received reports indicating that intelligence, military, and State Security forces detained at least 1,000 citizens until the 11th day of the Khuzestan uprising. They violently beat up and arrested a large number of young people. In some cities and even villages, security and intelligence agents raided citizens' homes at night or early in the morning, beating them and moving them to unknown locations.



In Aligudarz (Lorestan province), at least 150 people were arrested and transferred to other provinces and their fate is unknown. Dozens of people were beaten in Tabriz and taken to an unknown location after their arrest.

The news came as the internet was down in many cities and it was not possible to provide accurate news.

Internet blockage observatory NetBlocks said it could "corroborate widespread user reports of cellular network disruptions, consistent with a regional internet shutdown intended to control protests."

The Iranian regime has curbed internet access in the past during the November 2019 uprising to prevent protesters from posting videos on social media.

Women from all walks of life support the Khuzestan uprising

Various groups of women in Iranian cities held protests and expressed their support for the uprising in Khuzestan.

The [retirees of Tehran and Karaj](#), [nurses and the staff of the main hospital of Karaj](#), teachers working on temporary contracts, homemakers and women heads of households who mourn the loss of their loved ones due to the pandemic, joined the protesters in Khuzestan and bravely stood up to the regime's repressive forces.

Women in different parts of Karaj and [Tehran went to the rooftops](#) and chanted "death to the dictator", "death to Khamenei" and "Khuzestan is not alone."

In Gohardasht, Karaj, [a group of women](#) chanted, "So long as the mullahs are in power, our country will not be prosperous!"

On Tuesday morning, July 20, 2021, in Tehran's Sadeghieh metro station, brave, young women chanted slogans against the ruling religious fascism. Chanting "[Death to Khamenei](#)," "[Death to the Islamic Republic](#)," and "[Death to the principle](#) of Velayat-e Faqih" (the absolute rule of a jurisprudent), these brave women displayed the Iranian people's anger against Khamenei and his detested regime.



On Thursday, July 22, 2021, a group of women in Borazjan held a [protest against water shortage](#), on Thursday, July 22, 2021. Also a group of women from Ahvaz gathered to protest against the water shortages in front of the Governor's office. They chanted, "They wanted to humiliate us, but we were not humiliated" and "We sacrifice our lives for Karun."

[The people of Tabriz](#) took to the streets on Saturday, July 24, and staged extensive demonstrations to show their solidarity with the water protests in Khuzestan, in southwest Iran. Security forces intervened, arrested, and detained a number of protesters, including a good number of women.



Women played in a leading role in the protests in Tabriz. They bravely went among security forces. Unconfirmed reports say the chants of woman sparked the protest in Tabriz.

The [nurses and medical staff](#) of the main hospital of Karaj also marched in the city on Monday, July 26, with chants of "death to the dictator." They demand their past-due wages and salaries. Chanting, "One less embezzlement will solve our problems," they called for the uprooting of oppression.

In the evening, [residents of the Fardis district](#) of Karaj took to the streets. They chanted "death to the dictator," "from Karaj to Khuzestan, unite, unite," and "Iranians die but will not accept humiliation." Women had a prominent presence in both protests in Karaj.

A [group of mothers](#) of the November 2019 victims marched in [solidarity](#) with the people of Khuzestan in Tehran's Azadi Square around noon, on Friday, July 30. They chanted, "We are seeking our rights, we hold hands until the [regime's] overthrow."



One of the mothers cried out: "Enough is enough! Enough with slavery!"

These bereaved mothers held photographs of the November 2019 martyrs as they marched in Azadi Avenue.

At 2.30 p.m., the mothers gathered in Tehran's [Sadeghieh Metro Station](#) where they were [arrested](#) by security forces and brutalized. The security forces took them all to the basement and held them in custody.

The mothers of Milad Mohagheghi, Ebrahim Ketabdard, Pejman Qolipour, Farhad Mojdami, and Vahid Damvar, as well as the aunt of Sajjad Rezaii, and the sister of Hamid Rassouli are among those arrested.

Young women and men in Tehran [gathered Saturday evening](#), July 31, 2021, in the park of the City Theatre to express their solidarity with the uprising in Khuzestan. They chanted, "[Iranians die but will not accept humiliation](#)," "From Khuzestan to Tehran, Unite, Unite," "Fellow compatriots support," "Death to the dictator," etc.



Security forces fired tear gas and bird shots to disperse the crowd. They brutalized some of the protesters and attempted to arrest them. However, the participants in the protest stood up to the repressive forces and defended the victims.

One of the video clips on this gathering shows a middle-aged woman defending a young woman against being arrested by a security force, and the crowd chants, "let her go!"

Female political prisoners support the uprising in Khuzestan

In a [letter from Lakan Prison](#) of Rasht where she is detained in exile, political prisoner Atena Daemi declared that she supports the uprising of the thirsty people of Khuzestan. In part of her letter, she wrote:

"[The people of] Khuzestan give their lives to receive water, and the government takes their lives to give them water. One of the most prominent features of this regime is the oppression of ethnic minorities, discriminating against and suppressing them. As we have witnessed in the past 42 years, the regime responds to any form of protest by unprecedented violence...



"May we neutralize all forms of despotism and repression by greater and broader unity to gain our legitimate rights. Although I am incarcerated and in exile, I stand with you."

Political prisoner Maryam Akbari Monfared also [sent a message from the Prison of Semnan](#), expressing her solidarity with Khuzestan. In part of her letter, she wrote:

"The blood of the political prisoners executed in 1988 has now intermingled with the blood of the young people killed in the streets from November 2019 to July 2021 in Khuzestan and Lorestan. There is a 33-year interval but the blood of these young men in this geographic location [i.e. Iran] have joined to prove that so long as the masterminds and perpetrators of the 1988 massacre are not brought to justice, no generation will be safe. It is our firm resolve to put an end to this continued bloodshed and crime! We are determined to achieve justice!



"I hail the courageous youths in the arisen cities. Despite being surrounded by walls, I see myself along their side. My heart beats with the rhythm of their footsteps in the streets. I bow before [the thirsty martyrs of Khuzestan](#)."

Declarations of support for the Khuzestan uprising and its bereaved mothers

Mothers of Navid Behboudi, Mehرداد Mo'infar, Pejman Qolipour, Milad Mohagheghi, and Amir-Hossein Zare'i –all shot to death by security forces during the November 2019 uprising—posted messages, [declaring their support](#) for the uprising in Khuzestan.

Moreover, the mother of Amir Arshad Tajmir also posted a message. Her son, 25, was crushed under the wheels of two State Security Force vehicles that ran over him three times on December 27, 2009, at the height of the 2009 uprising against the clerical regime.

In part of her message, Shahin Mahinfar said, "As a grieving mother who seeks justice for her child, I express my sympathies and solidarity with all the mothers who have recently joined us in the thirsty Khuzestan... Today, I want to say that I am a Khuzestani, too. Please accept my sympathies and know that my heart beats for you."

In her message, the mother of Mehrdad Mo'infar said, "Thirst must not be answered by bullets... The grieving mothers who seek justice for their children stand by the mothers who have recently joined our ranks. They are not alone."

In her message, the [mother of Navid Behboudi](#) said, "I hail the arisen people and youths. I hail all the arisen cities. I hail the martyrs of these days. The answer to water demands is not bullets. You, who respond to people's demand for water with bullets, are worse than Yazid and Shemr [the murderers of the 3rd Shiite leader, Imam Hussein]. The mothers [of martyrs] of November 2019 support the people of Khuzestan."



The mother of Milad Mohagheghi hailed the thirsty people of Khuzestan. She said, "We, the mothers who seek justice for their children who were killed in November 2019, express our sympathy and support for the brave people of Khuzestan and other arisen cities. We say Khuzestan is not alone. We tell the mothers of Khuzestan to cry out our common pain."

The mother of Amir Hossein Zare'e said, "They killed our youths for petrol in November 2019. Now, they are killing our innocent youths in Khuzestan for water. The November 2019 mothers support the protests in Khuzestan. Thirst must not be answered by bullets!"

In parts of her moving message, [Mahboubeh Ramezani](#), the mother of Pejman Qolipour said, "My country's youths are getting killed for water. They killed [our youths] for petrol. Now, they are killing for water, for drinking water. Enough is enough! I don't want to see our young men end up in the cemeteries. I don't want the mothers of my country to end up holding the framed pictures of their children. I don't want to see another mother like me."

Mrs. [Batoul Hosseini, the mother of Behnam Mahjoubi](#), who was killed while in detention, said in her message, "I declare my support for the grieving mothers of Khuzestan... I warn those who ordered the troops to open fire on our country's youths that we will persevere and defend our rights. Stop your killing machine. The answer to demands for water is not bullets. I am a Khuzestani, too."

International condemnations of the regime's crackdown on Khuzestan

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights [Michele Bachelet](#) condemned the regime's use of excessive forces against protesters who demand their right to water. She urged the regime to address the chronic water shortage instead of crushing the protesters.

In a [statement issued in Geneva](#), she pointed out: "When you hear reports that injured protesters are avoiding hospitals for fear of being arrested, it is an indication of just how bad the situation is." Mrs. Bachelet described the situation as "catastrophic."



"Water is indeed a right," the UN Human Rights Chief said. "But instead of heeding the legitimate calls by its citizens for that right to be upheld, the authorities have for the most part concentrated on oppressing those making those calls. The situation is catastrophic, and has been building up for many years. The authorities need to recognize that and act accordingly. Shooting and arresting people will simply add to the anger and desperation."

[Amnesty International](#) said in a statement that at least eight people have been killed during the weeklong crackdown.

"Video footage verified by Amnesty...and consistent accounts from the ground indicate security forces used deadly automatic weapons, shotguns with inherently indiscriminate ammunition, and tear gas to disperse protesters," it said.

The [ARTICLE 19](#) Organization also issued a statement on July 28, 2021:

"In the wake of people's protests in July against a worsening water crisis in the country, the Iranian authorities have responded with the unlawful use of force including by firing at protesters, arbitrary detentions and Internet shutdowns. ARTICLE 19 is calling on Iran to immediately end the use of unlawful force against the protesters and respect the right to protest, unconditionally release all those detained solely for exercising their right to protest, and end Internet disruptions and shutdowns during periods of protests."

The situation of women in the water crisis in Khuzestan

Khuzestan is an important province and has many resources, including oil, gas and key ports in the Persian Gulf. Khuzestan, with a population of 5 million, is the fifth most populous province in Iran and provides 15% of GDP, ranking second after Tehran.

The people of the oil-rich province of Khuzestan are thirsty despite having the great Karun River, which was the only navigable river in Iran, and the Karkheh River. They do not have drinking water. [Women and children](#) are suffering from a lack of drinking water. Farmers have no water for their land and livestock, and many of their livestock have died.



The Women's Commission of the National Council of Resistance has previously addressed the specific problems of women and children by presenting numerous reports on severe water shortages in provinces such as Khuzestan. This situation has doubled in the context of the Coronavirus crisis. In Khuzestan, there is drinking water with bad and unhealthy taste, which has caused protests by the people of this province many times before.

Women's health is the health of society. However, in the absence of drinking water and frequent water outages, women in Khuzestan face many problems, both in terms of personal health and in terms of caring for their children.

In the absence of proper plumbing, women in Khuzestan are forced to carry water. This also causes many physical problems for women. Women have to stand in line for long hours to get drinking water so that they can provide a bucket of drinking water for their families.

Qassem Saeedi, an MP from Dasht-e Azadegan, said: "People in some cities of Khuzestan, such as Hoveyzeh and Dasht-e Azadegan, are standing in the water queues to buy water, and this is a tragedy." (The state-run ISNA news agency - July 5, 2021)

The special role of the IRGC in the water crisis in Khuzestan

The extreme water shortage in Khuzestan is due to the negligence of the authorities and the corruption of the Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

The IRGC has been the main organ of repression in the regime, maintaining a continuous money-making industry and a stable source of income by building dams. One of the effects of the construction of dams in Khuzestan is the drying up of Lake Hamoon.

Karun is the main river in Khuzestan on which the IRGC has built 24 dams and diverted its water for its own industries, causing severe water shortages.



Gotvand Dam, with a construction cost of \$3 billion, is one of the IRGC dams that destroyed the Karun River.

"About 700 villages in Khuzestan are facing serious problems in water supply and distribution," said Sadegh Haghighipour, CEO of the Khuzestan Water and Sewerage Company. (The state-run ISNA news agency - July 3, 2021)

"We do not have safe drinking water anywhere in Khuzestan, and there is no safe water anywhere in the whole of Khuzestan province in conditions of high water and water shortage," said Khuzestan Governor Qassem Soleimani-Dashtaki. (The state-run ISNA news agency - July 24, 2021)

"The Hur al-Azim wetland was dried up with the permission of the Supreme Security Council in favor of the Chinese oil company," said the deputy director of the Marine Environment of the Environmental Protection Agency. (The state-run Aftabnews.com - July 24, 2021)

The IRGC decided to dry one of the largest wetlands in Khuzestan, Hur al-Azim, to cut down its own costs in deals, which squandered Iranian oil.



"What happened in Hur al-Azim is one of the most horrific environmental catastrophes in history," said Qassem Saeedi, a member of the regime's parliament. "Many fish have become extinct and the livestock of the inhabitants of the wetland have been lost, and this wetland is not in a good condition." (The state-run ISNA news agency - July 5, 2021)

The need to support the Iranian people's right to water and freedom

As you briefly mentioned above, the water crisis is the product of the unpopular policies of the ruling regime and due to the anti-patriotic projects of the IRGC. Excessive dehydration of the Khuzestan plain, drying of rivers and wetlands, and the resulting sandstorms have seriously endangered the lives and health of the people of Khuzestan province.

The inhumane clerical regime ruling Iran does not intend to solve the problem of water shortage that is the result of its own policies, nor is it able to do so. Therefore, the only response to the people of Khuzestan who have no guilt but asking for potable water is repression and bullets.

Accordingly, the struggle to overthrow the ruling religious dictatorship is the legitimate right of the people of Khuzestan and throughout Iran.

The mullahs' regime has appointed its most criminal elements to the highest positions at the helm of the three branches of government to run the people's affairs.

Ebrahim Raisi, the henchman of the 1988 massacre, who was appointed president by the mullahs' supreme leader Ali Khamenei, is a symbol of the true nature of the clerical regime. The massacre of the summer of 1967 is just one of the regime's crimes registered in Raisi's black record. Thirty thousand political prisoners were executed en masse without a single one being sentenced to death under the regime's law.

Today, while the death toll due to the coronavirus is reaching 350,000, the brave people and women of Iran have sounded the alarms for regime change.

Freedom-loving people from around the world need to support the Iranian people in their quest for their most basic rights to life - water and freedom. And the world needs to support and recognize the Iranian women and people in their struggle to free Iran and the world from the ogre of religious fundamentalism.