

IRANIAN TEACHERS MAP OUT A TURBULENT
ROADMAP FOR THE REGIME IN THE
2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

SEPTEMBER
2021

MONTHLY
REPORT



NCRI WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

Iranian teachers map out a turbulent roadmap for the regime in the 2021-2022 school year

September was marked by nationwide protests and sit-ins by Iranian teachers, half of whom are women. As [World Teachers Day](#) is approaching, we devoted September's monthly bulletin to the Iranian teachers' protests and the obstacles they face for living a decent life.

Teachers' protests took up a new height in September. The coordinated and nationwide demonstrations spread to [40 cities and 20 provinces](#) by September 25 when the schools reopened in Iran.

Thousands of teachers cried out their demands against Iran's oppressive rulers on most days throughout September. Women played an effective and decisive role in all those protests. Female teachers actively participated in at least 113 acts of protest during September. The protests included:

- 20 days of round the clock protests in Tehran by [teachers with Green Report Cards](#)
- 21 protests and gatherings in [various cities](#)
- Three [nationwide](#) and coordinated protests in 70 regions

The nationwide protests reacting to the Iranian teachers' difficult living conditions under the clerical regime that have been [going on for years](#), culminated in the suicides of a few teachers in recent months.

A teacher self-immolated in Isfahan in July due to financial straits. On September 16, 2021, a math teacher committed suicide in Fars province because of being unable to make an advance deposit of 5 million Tomans to receive a 50 million Toman loan.



While the poverty line presently stands at 14 million Tomans (\$497), a teacher does not have even five million Tomans (\$177) to provide their families' most basic needs.

Free all imprisoned teachers!

Iranian teachers have mapped out a turbulent new school year for the clerical regime with their protests. And the regime will have to expect more united, coordinated, and widespread protests by teachers.

"[Free all imprisoned teachers](#)" was one of the teachers' demands in the protests.

Dozens of teachers are behind bars, including women. [Nahid Fat'halian](#), [Zeinab Hamrang](#), [Zahra Mohammadi](#) are among the teachers presently incarcerated for their activism. The former two contracted the Covid-19 in Evin Prison.

Tehran's Revolutionary Court recently summoned [Mahboubeh Farahzadi](#), a retired teacher and a women's and teachers' rights activist.

What is the Teachers' Ranking Plan?

Implementing the Teachers' Ranking Plan was the most crucial demand of teachers during their protests in September. But what is this plan?

The ranking plan classifies teachers into five ranks based on their work experience, expertise, and competence. It applies to teachers with at least 21 years of work experience. Teachers get promoted one rank every five years. Those working in deprived, border, and nomadic regions earn a rank every four years.

According to the ranking system, the salary, and benefits of the five ranks of teachers must equal 80% of the salary and benefits of members of the science faculties of universities with the same rank. The plan has turned into law under the education system. A retired teacher must also receive not less than 90% of the salary of a working teacher of the same rank.



The Teachers' Ranking Plan was first proposed in 2004. The government has been obliged to implement the plan since March 2011, but it has not yet done so. (The state-run Eghtesadonline.com - September 29, 2021)

The Parliamentary Education Committee has already adopted the bill, and the government has been obliged to draft the executive regulations of the ranking regime in the shortest possible time. (The state-run Tasnim news agency – May 17, 2021)

The clerical regime has promised to rank 503,000 officially employed teachers by March 2022. (The state-run Eghtesadonline.com – July 5, 2021)

Why does the regime not fulfill its promises to teachers?

The Iranian economy is bankrupt. The government faces a budget shortfall and will face even higher inflation by the end of the year. In such circumstances, it cannot allocate funds for vital and valuable issues, such as education, health, natural resources, the environment, etc. The government therefore lacks the budget to implement the Teachers' Ranking Plan.

"The financial resources for implementing the Teachers' Ranking Plan must be defined in the 2022 budget," said Asghar Salimi, a member of the parliamentary Economic Commission.



Salimi added, "Presently, the main obstacle for teachers' ranking is the lack of sufficient funding and credit to implement it. The Guardian Council rejects plans that do not have specific funding sources." (The state-run Eghtesadonline.com, citing ISNA news agency – September 4, 2021)

The vice-chair of the parliamentary Education Committee, Mehdi Esmaili, also had this about the Teachers' Ranking Plan: "(The plan's implementation) needs a budget of 30,000 to 40,000 billion (Tomans) (approx. \$1.07billion to \$1.42billion). The only problem is funding. The government has

announced 15,000 billion Tomans (\$533 million) for the implementation of this plan. Still, this amount is not sufficient in any way.” (The state-run Eghtesadonline.com – September 18, 2021)

In comparison, the regime spends the lion’s share of its budget on nuclear weapons development, illegal circumvention of sanctions, and funding of terrorist groups abroad, including the Hezbollah in Lebanon and the war in Syria. Add to this the embezzlements and grand thefts of the regime officials.

Therefore, the clerical regime does not have any intention to implement the Teachers’ Ranking Plan. Raisi’s government shifted the implementation deadline to the last week of August. Still, it has not implemented it despite growing nationwide teachers’ protests. Instead of meeting the teachers’ demands, the clerical regime wants to keep them poor and engaged in their livelihood issues to prevent them from coming out to the streets.

Teachers’ salaries are several steps below the poverty line

Teachers educate future generations. For this reason, a teacher should have no concerns other than educating students. But in Iran, teachers’ salaries do not meet their living expenses, especially considering the current inflation.

According to the latest available statistics, the Ministry of Education is the largest in Iran, with 1,013,655 teachers and administrative staff.

Only the teachers employed by the Education Ministry are considered officially hired. The Education Ministry does not formally employ most teachers in Iran.

Private intermediary companies hire teachers on unofficial, temporary contracts. [Unofficial teachers have different names](#), but all of them are exploited by the regime. Their salaries are way below the minimum wage set by the Labor Ministry. At the same time, they do not receive any benefit, insurance, overtime fee, etc., for long hours of hard work.

Casual teachers, teachers selling their services, and outsourcing teachers are the principal unofficial teachers in Iran. Along with retired teachers and conscript soldiers, unofficial teachers teach the classes in public schools. They compensate for a large part of the Education Ministry’s workforce shortage but are never officially employed.

Official teachers receive a monthly salary of 5.8 million Tomans (\$206).

The minimum salary for full-time teachers in non-public schools is 3,800,000 Tomans (\$135) with 9-month insurance. (The state-run PANA news agency – August 13, 2021)

The Education Ministry has no obligation to employ casual teachers who receive much lower salaries and benefits than official teachers. Casual teachers’ salaries in public schools are meager. Depending on their education degree, from high school diploma to Ph.D., casual teachers receive between 18,000 Tomans and 23,000 Tomans per hour (64 to 80 cents). For example, suppose a teacher has 10 hours of teaching in a month. In that case, she will receive between 180,000 (\$6.4) and 230,000 Tomans (\$8), which the company usually pays with a delay of several months.



99% of teachers live under the poverty line

The National Statistics Center announced that the annual inflation reached 43% in June 2021. (The state-run Shahraranews.ir – June 26, 2021)

Ghaffar Jalali, a math teacher, told Etemadonline, “Other than top officials, 99% of our colleagues are living under the poverty line.” (The state-run salamatnews.com – September 28, 2021)

On the rising poverty line, Mohammad-Reza Mahboubfar, a sociologist, said, “The poverty line of a family of four was estimated at an average of 12 million Tomans (\$426) per month in March 2021. Today, the poverty line has reached 14 million Tomans (\$497) per month.” (The state-run ROKNA news agency – July 25, 2021)

The food basket for a family of 3.3 people exceeded 3 million Tomans (\$106.5) per month at the end of spring. (The state-run Shahraranews.ir – June 26, 2021)

Of course, the purchase of detergents, healthcare, clothing, transportation, water, electricity, and gas costs is not considered when calculating the food basket cost. How could a teacher, especially a woman head of household, support their children with such low monthly salaries?



Failing to employ teachers officially

The Ministry of Education faces a shortage of 197,000 workforces. (The state-run Eghtesadonline.com - September 25, 2021)

Earlier, Hamid Reza Haji Babaii, the head of the teachers' faction in the parliament, had announced the shortage of workforce is 300,000. (The state-run Tasnim news agency - August 15, 2021)

Despite the shortage, the Education Ministry refuses to officially employ the temporary teachers.

One of the most obvious examples of teachers who remain unemployed is the teachers with Green Report Cards. They passed the Education Ministry's employment exam last year but have not been employed by the ministry to this date. They held a 20-day protest gathering and sit-in outside the ministry's building in Tehran.

“Every once in a while, people gather outside the Ministry of Education, hold placards, and chant slogans,” wrote the state-run Didarnews.ir. “One day the outsourcing teachers, the next day the teachers who sell their services. One day the casual teachers, and another day the student teachers. And the most recent of these rallies belonged to the teachers with Green Report cards that resumed in September. In their round-the-clock sit-ins, the Green Report Card teachers had only one demand from the Education Ministry: official employment!” (The state-run Didarnews.ir - September 8, 2021)

The regime does not want to pay the teachers' full salaries and insurance by employing them officially. Like workers and nurses, teachers are forced to work through third-party contractor

companies that operate without any supervision in such a system. Teachers working on temporary contracts do not receive the Education Ministry's benefits for officially employed teachers.

The situation is worse in smaller cities. The average monthly salary of teachers in non-public schools is around 600,000 to 800,000 Tomans (\$21-\$28). This small amount is only for the school year and does not cover all 12 months of the year.



New slavery conditions

The state media describe the exploitation of teachers, with 20 years of experience, as “new slavery.”

Many of these contracts deprive teachers of the right to file complaints. These teachers, primarily women, are forced to sign the contract to earn a small piece of bread. They lose their jobs with any incident such as pregnancy, illness, or protesting low salaries. (The state-run ROKNA news agency - July 12, 2021)

Many teachers working in private schools receive a monthly salary of 500,000 to 1 million Tomans (\$17.5-\$35.5), equivalent to only 5 to 10 working days. (The state-run iscanews.ir - July 5, 2021)

“We teach in schools. Our selection has been formal and permanent. After all, we are in the Education Ministry's system, but they do not recognize us. They say that because we work in private schools, we cannot claim to be officially employed,” said one female teacher. (The state-run Fars news agency - July 3, 2021)

Another female teacher said: “Since last May (2020), teachers have joined from across the country and held large gatherings outside the parliament to demand official employment. However, MPs say that because you work in private schools, you cannot demand to be officially employed. With eight years of experience and 25 hours of teaching per week, my salary is 1,375,000 Tomans (\$49). I do not receive any insurance. Now, an official teacher in elementary school with the same work hours receives a monthly salary of at least 4 million Tomans (\$142).” (The state-run Fars news agency - July 3, 2021)

Crises are neither resolved nor ended

Part of the problems and crises in education is related to the rights of teachers. To these problems, we must add the tsunami of retirees and the ranking of teachers, students left out of school, private school teachers, shortage of workforce for the exceptional students, and so on.

Under the medieval rule of the mullahs' regime, “crises are neither resolved nor ended. We just move from one crisis to the next,” wrote the state-run Didarnews.ir on September 8, 2021.