

Reopening of universities sees stepped up restrictions on female students



April 2022

NCRI Women's Committee

Monthly Report

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In early April, simultaneous with the reopening of Iranian universities after two years, there were reports that university guards were putting more and more pressure on female students. These pressures led to student protests at universities in Tehran and Tabriz in late April and early May.

The pressure on female students follows the already increasing suppression of Iranian women and girls on the orders of Ebrahim Raisi, the president of the mullahs' regime.

The Department of Security at [Tehran University](#) [authorities put pressure](#) on female students in that university to wear the [Maghna'eh](#), a black cloth covering their head, forehead, chin, and chest.

On April 30, the Minister of Science and Higher Education reacted to student protests over compelling female students to wear the mandatory Hijab and their treatment by the Department of Security.

Mohammad Ali Zolfi-Gol endorsed the suppressive policies adopted by Iran universities and said, "We must try to accept freedoms as stipulated by the law!" "Students must abide by university laws," he added.

Zolfi-Gol said the crackdown was part of the law. "According to the law, if some individuals do not abide by the law, they must be compelled to do so. They must observe the regulations on their behavior, collective behaviors, expression, and clothing." (The state-run Mehr news agency, April 30, 2022)

Earlier, Ebrahim Raisi had stressed the need to suppress women by various methods in a speech to a gathering in Razavi Khorasan Province. He said, "Some 28 government organs are enforcing the Hijab and chastity." (The state-run Mehr news agency, April 1, 2022)



Student protests against repressive measures

Hundreds of students of the Science and Technology University in Tehran held a protest on April 24, 2022, on their university's campus. They protested the bullying of students by agents of the Department of Security at the university.

The students gathered outside the building of the Department of Security, chanting,

"We don't want a security department that acts like Police,"

"The Security Department is an operative of the power holders,"

and "Do not fear; we are all together in this."



On their hand-written placards, female students wrote:

"The girls' dormitory is a prison ward,"

"students are alive,"

["University is not a military barracks,"](#)

and “we do not want a police state in university.”

One of the protesting students at the University of Science and Technology told the protest gathering, “Less than two weeks since the university reopened, we witnessed security patrols disturbing young women about what they wear; they control people in the dormitories. Finally, they recently beat up a student for protesting their acts. Now, the Science and Technology students respond with this gathering, ‘University is not a military barracks!’”

On the same day, students of Tehran University gathered outside the central library at 2 p.m. Many plainclothes agents of the Department of Security were stationed in various parts of the university and Central Library to create an atmosphere of fear and terror to prevent the students’ protests.

The students, however, continued to protest and marched on towards the Fine Arts Campus. The plainclothes agents and security guards followed the students in every step to disperse them and quell the protest, but the students did not give in.

Finally, the plainclothes agents and security forces started taking photos and films of the protesters to file complaints against them.

On April 27, 2022, the students of the School of Medical Sciences at Tabriz University protested against the Department of Security at that university on April 27, 2022. They opposed the inspection of girls for Hijab in front of the [girls’ dormitory](#) and the repressive atmosphere on campus.

On the morning of April 27, security forces blocked the road on two female students and prevented them from leaving the dormitory.

Crackdown on female students

Two weeks after the opening of universities, Iranian students reported on an unprecedented measure of launching a motorized patrol at Amirkabir and Tehran universities. Motorized patrols warn female students about Hijab and girls and boys if they sit together and write down their student numbers. (The state-run Ensafnews.com, April 22, 2022)

University security guards are strict when female students enter the university. One of the girls said female students living in dormitories were forced to return to the dormitory and change their clothes. (The state-run Ensafnews.com, April 22, 2022)



A security guard forced one of the female students to unzip her coat to see what she was wearing underneath. The excuse of the security guard was that she wanted to check and see whether her clothes underneath were suitable if she took off her jacket at the university!! Officers first prevented the female student from entering the university. Then they said she had no right to take off her coat at the university because the clothes she was wearing underneath were too short. (The statement of the Islamic Association of the Student of Science and Technology University, April 20, 2022)

The security guards’ harsh restrictions imposed on female students at the Science and Technology University, including limitations on their Hijab and movements, led to [protests by students](#) in this university.

There have been many reports from various universities on warnings to female students and recording the number of their student cards.

Tehran University students have revealed such pressures and restrictions in their tweets. They wrote that wearing the *Maghna'eh* had become compulsory for female students. The student cards of those who defied this order are confiscated.

The girls' dormitory is a prison ward

The latest [regulations](#) of some universities, female students must return to the dormitory by sunset. In this way, female students are officially deprived of going out after their class hours.

Suppose a female student is not present at the dormitory at the time set by the university. In that case, she must fill out a Delay Form and state at what time and why she arrived late.

The dormitory officials then go through the delay forms and contact the students' families. These contacts lead to tensions between the female students and their families in many cases.

Sometimes, they are deprived of continuing their education.

Many female students need to work outside to be able to pay for their educational expenses. Some students need to use the library after class hours. So, they are inevitably forced to return to the dormitory after the time designated in the regulation.

Female students would rather stay out in the street to not have to fill out the delay forms.



University officials have sealed the windows facing the street in the girls' dormitory. In other places, they cover the windows in various ways, including darkening the glass or welding metal sheets in front of the windows so that the girls in this place, which is more like a prison, have no contact with the urban environment.

In some dormitories, female guards also patrol each dormitory room every night under the pretext of attendance. The female guard even complains about the girls' clothing inside the dormitory. There are also CCTV cameras in the open air and the dormitory's courtyard. In this way, university [officials violate the privacy](#) of thousands of female students and prepare archives for them.

"The university is not a barracks. The [dormitory](#) is not a prison," the Science and Technology University students wrote in a statement on April 20. They protested the actions of the security department and dormitory supervisors. For example, warning female students about their clothes and head cover, threats to file cases against them, stopping female students on their way out to check their clothes, and illegally confiscating their student cards. The students stressed that "repeated disciplinary actions that violate the students' dignity and trample on their human rights have caused concern and anger among students."

Before the Science and Technology students, the students of Tehran University and its School of Medical Science had written an open letter to the president of Tehran University and criticized double standards in dealing with female students over their clothing and covering.

A reminder of the past - the cultural coup and the closure of universities



The history of confrontation between students and the mullahs' religious dictatorship dates back to 43 years ago and the first years after the [1979 Revolution](#).

Iranian universities have always been the cradle of freedom and a hotbed of opposition to the ruling dictators. Universities, which played an active role in the anti-monarchical revolution, were also a place for dialogue and peaceful political activities after [the 1979 Revolution](#).

The goal was to establish political freedoms and return classrooms to their academic channel. These objectives were never realized as the Revolutionary Guards (IRGC), armed guards, and zealots attacked universities at the behest of Khomeini in a "cultural coup."

The Iranian regime's recent repressive measures in the universities are reminiscent of the conspiracy to close the universities in 1980.

Khomeini, who on various occasions stirred up society at the time against opposition groups, once said, "All corruption in the world comes from these universities." In his speech in mid-April 1980, he gave his final verdict.

The University of Tabriz was the first to be attacked by Bassij thugs and club wielders on April 17, 1980. Then, on April 20, 1980, Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, the regime's incumbent president, ordered an attack on the university. Thus began the "Cultural Revolution" project, a coup against the university and freedom-loving students.

The attack was accompanied by many conflicts, bloodshed, and violence. According to the Islamic Revolution newspaper, the number of students killed and wounded in four days (from April 18 until April 21, 1980) was as follows: 30 injured in the University of Babolsar; 310 wounded in the University of Shiraz; 100 injured in the Teachers' Training School in Tehran; 400 wounded and one killed in the University of Mashhad; 491 wounded and four killed at Tehran University; 700 wounded and five killed in Jundishapur University, 50 wounded and one killed in Sistan and Baluchestan University; seven killed and hundreds wounded at Gilan University, etc.

Finally, after a week of fighting and skirmishes, universities and higher education institutions across the country were closed for three years. Many have called the closure of universities an "educational disaster."

Khomeini and other leaders of the clerical regime backed the closure to purge the universities of opposition students and political activists who opposed Velayat-e-Faqih and his absolute rule. Investigation teams were formed, and over three years, they reviewed the records of all university professors and students.

Hundreds of university professors were expelled for not supporting the government. Having graduated from the best universities in the U.S. and Europe, they were the country's assets. As a result, the university faculties suffered a significant shock.

In other words, the number of professors and faculty of universities decreased from 16,877 in 1980 to 8,000 in 1982. The figures indicate that more than 50% of the academic staff of universities were purged during the mullahs' cultural coup.

More than 57,069 students were expelled for supporting opposition groups. Of the 120,000 [victims of political executions](#) in Iran in the 1980s, 40 percent were opposition students, primarily supporters of the PMOI/MEK. Many of them were students who had been arrested and imprisoned in 1980 during the "Cultural Revolution."

Female students and girls put up a [brilliant resistance](#) against the clerical regime. They comprised a large share of the 120,000 executed by Khomeini's religious dictatorship.

During the so-called "Cultural Revolution," or Khomeini's cultural coup, the regime undertook various measures to Islamicize higher education institutions. For example, they created a Bassij quota to bring pro-Khomeini forces into universities.

The government also imposed gender segregation in schools that were still mixed. Over the years, compulsory Islamic dress in schools and universities, [banning women from studying in specific fields](#), reviewing textbooks, and removing pictures of unveiled women from them have been among these measures. In 1985, the regime's Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution imposed restrictions on women's education in engineering, science, technology, and agriculture.

During the reopening of the universities, the Khomeini regime allocated 50 percent of the university admission quota to Bassij students to control the university atmosphere. However, the student movement rose again in 1999 and 2009. Despite the regime's brutal crackdown on students, the university has been a hotbed of protests and the starting point of many uprisings.

Forty-three years after the "Cultural Revolution" conspiracy, the university remains the clerical regime's concern.

On April 26, 2022, the mullahs' supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, expressed concern about the university environment in a meeting with Bassij students. He acknowledged that the centers of science and knowledge have always been a hotbed of challenges to the regime.

On April 25, the clerical regime [sentenced](#) two elite students of Sharif University of Technology, [Ali Younesi and Amir Hossein Moradi](#), to 16 years in prison, each for activities in favor of the opposition PMOI. They had been in solitary confinement and under torture since April 10, 2020, to extract forced confessions from them. During the two years, they were not allowed to see a lawyer or contact their families.



Both students are highly gifted. In 2016, Ali Younesi won a gold medal in the International Astronomy Olympiad, and Moradi won a silver medal in the national Astronomy Olympiad in Iran.