

Spreading false narratives to cover up the regime's role in heinous killings of protesters



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NCRI Women's Committee

Monthly Report

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During the 110 days since the Iranian people's uprising, there have been many protestors' deaths, which the clerical regime falsely attributed to accidents, suicides, underlying diseases, poisoning, etc.

In this final monthly report of 2022, we discuss the regime's everyday use of spreading false narratives over the killing of female protestors. Naturally, more cases related to protesting youths and men are not in this report's scope.

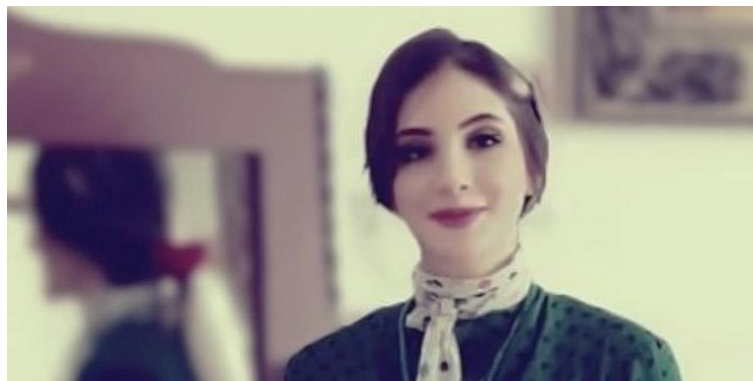
It is important to note that the clerical regime imposes extraordinary pressure on the families of those killed in the protests. The authorities instruct the families to either remain silent about the death of their children or to appear on state television and confirm the official false narrative about their death. Otherwise, their other children would suffer the same fate.

In some cases, security, and intelligence services pressure the families to coerce them into cooperation. They do not hand over the child's body until the family promises to cooperate. In other cases, they try to force families to register their slain children with the regime's Martyrs Foundation in exchange for money. In this way, the regime can pretend that the victim was their supporter or related to their affiliates.

[Amnesty International](#) wrote in its report on October 13, 2022: "Other examples of state cover up efforts include the cases of two 16-year-old girls, Nika Shakarami and Sarina Esmailzadeh, who were killed after security forces fatally beat them on their heads. Intelligence and security forces have subjected the girls' families to intense harassment and intimidation to coerce them into recording video statements reiterating the official narrative that their children committed "suicide" by jumping off a roof."

AI also noted: "Security forces fired both metal pellets and live ammunition at Amir Mehdi Farrokipour, aged 17, during protests in Tehran on September 28. According to informed sources, he died from gunshot wounds in his chest, while intelligence officials forced his father to record a video statement stating that his son died during a car accident, threatening to kill or otherwise harm his daughters if he refused."

Following is a summary of false narratives spread by the clerical regime on the deaths of women and girls killed during the Iran protests.



Sepideh (Bigard) Ghalandari killed under torture

One of the latest such false narratives concerns a young Kurdish woman, [Sepideh \(Bigard\) Ghalandari](#), who was killed under torture.

Sepideh Ghalandari was arrested in Tehran in November and finally died under torture. Her body was handed to her family on January 1, 2023, provided that her family keeps silent about this atrocity. She was buried in her hometown of Mahabad, Western Azerbaijan, on the morning of January 2, 2023)

Sepideh Ghalandari was buried in Mahabad on Monday, January 2, 2023.

Iranian security and intelligence services declared the reason for the death of Sepideh Ghalandari as “illness.” They [threatened her father](#), a former political prisoner, to refrain from leaking information on the manner of his daughter’s murder to the press and media. (Kurdistanmedia.com, January 3, 2023)



False narratives over the death of Dr. Ayda Rostami

Dr. [Ayda Rostami](#), 36, was among the trusted doctors who went house to house to treat the wounded protesters.

Many of those wounded in the protests do not go to a hospital for treatment because the intelligence services and plainclothes agents abduct the wounded from their hospital beds. That was the case during the November 2019 uprising and what the regime also did during the 1980s.

Therefore, every protester wounded during the protests does not go to a hospital. They stay home and ask a trusted doctor to visit them at home. Dr. Ayda Rostami was a trusted doctor who saw patients in Ekbatan district, one of the hotbeds of protest in Tehran.

On Monday, December 12, she was visiting patients when she realized she had finished her bandage and gauze. So, she went out to get some from a pharmacy but did not return.

At noon on Tuesday, December 13, 2022, they called her family from the police station. They informed them that Ayda had died in a car accident the night before and that they had to go to Tehran’s main cemetery, Behesht-e Zahra, to receive her body.

The Forensics Office had been ordered to write the reason for death as “being struck by a hard object” in “an accident.” The authorities did not want to show Dr. Ayda’s body to her family, but the family insisted on seeing it.

When they opened the wrapping, the family was shocked to see Dr. Rostami with a smashed face and nose, broken arms, and an enucleated eye. Her body was also bruised in the lower part indicating the scars of a sexual assault. She had been killed under torture. And the police have yet to show the place of the accident or Ayda’s car to her family.

The circumstances of Dr. Rostami’s death outraged the public, so the Judiciary came out and gave an explanation on December 17. Based on this explanation, Dr. Ayda Rostami had thrown herself from a pedestrian bridge after arguing with a man they said was her boyfriend. (The state-run Tasnimnews.com, December 20, 2022)



Recalling Mahsa Amini's case

At the beginning of the protests in mid-September, Iranian authorities denied every responsibility for the death of Mahsa Amini. She went into a coma after being brutalized and because of consecutive blows of batons to her head. After three days of hospitalization, she died due to brain death, a fractured skull, and internal bleeding. The authorities claimed that her death was due to a chronic disease.

The Amini family's lawyer said the bleeding from the back of her neck and ear was due to external trauma. Her father, Amjad Amini, said she never had any illness.

In an interview with Emtedadnews.com, Mr. Amini said many of the girls who had been arrested on the same day as Mahsa had called and told him that security forces had beaten Mahsa. Mr. Amini urged the authorities to publish the complete footage of cameras at the time of arrest, the images from inside the Morality Police van, and the Vozara detention center. The officials refused to publish the films and presented only selected parts of the footage from the Vozara detention center.

Hossein Rahimi, commander of the State Security Force in Greater Tehran, said, "Because of being lengthy," it was impossible for them to air all the footage. (The state-run Sharqdaily.com, September 19, 2022)

Amjad Amini said that officials had not provided any answers on the reason for her daughter's death and that they passed him around from one agency to the other.

Mahsa Amini's family, her father, brother, cousins, and others have been pressured not to talk to the media about Mahsa's death.

In addition to Mahsa Amini, two other protesters, and two young women, died similarly, but the authorities tried to cover up the truth about their deaths with false narratives. The victims were Sarina Esmailzadeh and Nika Shakarami, who were consecutively hit in the head by batons.



False narratives about Sarina Esmailzadeh

Today, the world is familiar with the unique image and personal character of Sarina Esmailzadeh, a brilliant and energetic girl who recorded everything she did and posted it on [YouTube](#).

The initial reports on Sarina's death indicated that she had been killed under the blows of batons to her head during a protest in her hometown, Mehrshahr, on September 21.

The Iranian authorities, however, announced that Sarina had committed suicide by throwing herself from the 5th floor of a building adjacent to her grandmother's residence. (The state-run Entekhab.ir, October 7, 2022)

Then, they brought a woman on state television and said she was Sarina's mother. A woman who was calm and completely in control of herself despite the terrible loss of such a lovely daughter. She said Sarina was not opposed to the forced Hijab, was preoccupied with her studies, and would not participate in such protests. Statements were in contrast with all [the videos left by Sarina](#) and are still available on her [YouTube channel](#).

Everyone on social media questioned whether the woman was Sarina's real mother since all her photos and videos showed someone else accompanying her.



False narratives of suicide to cover up the murder of Nika Shakarami

Nika Shakarami was 17. The state television aired a program in which Nika's aunt and uncle said Nika had committed suicide by throwing herself from the top of a building in their neighborhood. Earlier, however, when they saw Nika's body, both had declared that her condition was not like someone who had jumped off a tall building.

Intelligence agents had arrested Nika's aunt and uncle and forced them under torture to make false confessions and cooperate with the regime's false narrative.

Nika's death certificate indicated that she had been killed due to "repeated blunt force trauma to the head."

"I probably don't need to try that hard to prove they're lying... my daughter was killed in the protests on the same day that she disappeared," said [Nasrin Shakarami](#), Nika's mother, in a video released to Radio Farda.

"I saw my daughter's body myself... The back of her head showed she had suffered a very severe blow as her skull had caved in. That's how she was killed." (Radio Farda, October 7, 2022)

She also argued that the CCTV footage shown by the state television was unclear and could not prove that Nika was the girl going into the building. Nika's mother rejects the government's false narrative of her daughter's death. She said, "We demand justice. I want the ambiguities in my daughter's case clarified and those responsible for this bitter tragedy held to account. I want the ambiguities in Nika's case be examined without imposing pressure and transparently."

Nasrin Shakarami said Nika was "fearless and outspoken," opposed the Morality Police, and wanted to express the grievances of her generation during the protests. She had talked to her mother several times during the day and told her that she was in the protests. In one call, her mother said that she and her friends were escaping from security forces. Mrs. Shakarami said Nika was not a depressed girl but wanted to bring about change.



A false narrative about the death-under-torture of Darya Nazemdeh

[Darya Nazmdeh](#), a 27-year-old happy girl from Koohsar, left home with her friends on November 3, 2022, to participate in the 40-day memorial of Hadis Najafi.

On their way back from the memorial, they encountered the IRGC's Sarullah Corps. The IRGC forces fired sound grenades and tear gas at the protesters, and clashes ensued. Darya's friends ran away, but she stood up to the IRGC forces. One of her friends testified that Darya was beaten and violently pushed into Sarullah's patrol van and taken away.

For two weeks, Darya's family inquired about their daughter from all police stations and security agencies. They referred to all the district's prisons, clinics, and hospitals, and once they were disappointed, they went to the morgue. Finally, they identified the lifeless body of Darya Nazemdeh in the morgue of Behesht-e Sakineh cemetery in Karaj.

Darya's mother saw her body bearing bruises and injuries. There were bruises on her face and cheeks, but she was recognizable, and there were no broken bones or things like that.

After identifying Darya's body, security agencies pressured the family to accept their false narrative. They instructed the family to confirm in front of the cameras that their daughter had been killed in a car accident to receive her body. And they threatened that they would suffer their daughter's fate if they talked about Darya's death and her arrest by the IRGC forces after handing over the body and holding the ceremony.

The family received the death certificate two weeks later. The authorities recorded the date of death a week before Darya's arrest. In contrast, Darya's mother has the contact list that she called

and talked to Darya on November 3. In the death certificate, the cause of her death was mentioned as being hit by a hard object and shock caused by the trauma, but the hard object was an accident, meaning that she was hit by a car, not that baton blows to her head and face caused her death.



Distorting the remarks of Sarina Saedi's father

Sarina Saedi, 16, suffered a brain hemorrhage during protests in Sanandaj on October 26 after being beaten and hit with a baton on the head. She died in the hospital the next day.

Sarina's father, [Hashem Saedi](#), revealed in an Instagram post on November 29, 2022, that he was forced to give the interview aired on state television. He added that contrary to the statements of the governor of Sanandaj, who announced that Sarina's death was caused by drugs, the cause of death in the death certificate had been indicated as "unclear." He protested the destruction of the image of his daughter and family. He also said that he had been offered money by the security of his daughter's school to keep silent about his daughter's death. (Kurdpa.net – December 31, 2022)



The case of Behnaz Afshari and suicide in a hotel

Behnaz Afshari, a student from Pakdasht, left her home on October 26 to participate in the protests in Tehran. Her body was found after five days in forensic medicine. Security officers told her family that she had committed suicide in a hotel. Her relatives say she was a happy and lively girl with no signs of depression or suicidal tendencies. Instead, she had an active presence in the recent protests. By putting pressure on the family, the security officers are trying to make this murder appear as a suicide.



Ghazaleh Ghasemi falsely said to have died in an accident

Ghazaleh Ghasemi, 26, had a Bachelor of Biology and worked in an animal clinic.

She was killed by government troops with a heavy blow to the head at 10 p.m. on Saturday, October 1, 2022. Government officials said that the cause of Ghazaleh Ghasemi's death was an accident, while her death certificate stated that a heavy blow to the head killed her.



Random shooting at people and bystanders

Cases of Kobra Sheikheh Saqqa and Fereshteh Ahmadi

On October 27, the funeral ceremony of a slain protester, Esmail Mowloudi (Samkou), in Mahabad led to widespread protests in the city. Government forces opened fire and killed four citizens, including Kobra Sheikheh Saqqa and Fereshteh Ahmadi.

Mr. [Vahed Soltani](#) was on the balcony of his house when he saw people in green military uniforms targeting their street and home with a volley of live ammunition. Following the noise, he ran down the stairs and saw that his wife, [Kobra Sheikheh Saqqa](#), had been shot in the neck and died instantly.

That same night, the authorities contacted Mr. Soltani and pressured him to publicly declare that an unidentified car with no license plate passed before their door and shot his wife. But Mr. Soltani answered: I saw with my own eyes from the balcony that people in military uniforms targeted our street and house with live ammunition, and I know who my wife's killers are.

Then, the governor of Mahabad (Amir Qaderi) and the security officials repeatedly pressured Mr. Soltani through phone calls to hand over the necessary documents to the relevant institutions to register his wife, Kobra Sheikheh Saqqa, as a martyr of the Islamic Republic. Mr. Soltani firmly refused.

Subsequently, the Radio and Television staff of West Azerbaijan Province, accompanied by the prosecutor of Mahabad (Mehrab Pourakbar) and 40-50 other people, went to Mr. Soltani's house without prior notice. They filmed their house and interviewed Mr. Soltani. Then, Urmia Central

Radio and Television aired a program that censored a large part of Mr. Soltani's remarks and distorted the content by mixing it with comments by the Mahabad prosecutor. (Kurdpa.net, November 5, 2022)



[Fereshteh Ahmadi](#), 32 years old and from Sardasht, was shot in the chest by state security forces during the protests on October 27, 2022, in Mahabad, as she was standing on the roof of her house. The family members and relatives of Fereshteh Ahmadi were summoned by the intelligence agencies and put under pressure.

Nasser Atabati, Chief Justice of West Azerbaijan, claimed that the shot was fired inside the victim's house. But Fereshteh's brother, [Ebrahim Ahmadi](#), denied the Chief Justice's claim and emphasized that their family has no complaints against anyone and that they are confident that the Iranian regime forces had killed Fereshteh Ahmadi. (Hengaw.net, November 2, 2022)



Poisoning - False narrative about Nasrin Oaderi and Negin Abdolmaleki

Negin Abdolmaleki was a medical engineering student at the Industrial University of Hamedan.

According to the Kurdish media, [Negin Abdolmaleki](#), 21, from Qorveh, was murdered by security forces during a protest in Hamedan on October 11, 2022. They used batons and repeatedly hit her in the head. A severely injured Negin returned to the Industrial University of Hamedan dormitory, where she died due to severe bleeding.

Security forces at the university threatened eyewitnesses and her family. They ordered them to say Negin Abdolmaleki had died from intoxication by eating expired canned fish.



Tehran University [Ph.D. student Nasrin Oaderi, 38](#), was in a coma following multiple blows to her head. The state security forces in Tehran hit her head with batons during a November 4 protest in Tehran, where she studied philosophy. She died in a hospital on November 5.

State forces secretly transferred and buried her in a local cemetery in Marivan early morning.

According to Kurdish sources, the Friday prayer leader of Marivan, the governor of Marivan, the head of the intelligence department, and the commander of Marivan's IRGC Intelligence went to Nasrin's parents. They forced their relatives out of the house. Security forces had surrounded the house. The authorities emphasized that Nasrin's body should be buried at night without ceremony. The security forces did not even allow the family of Nasrin Oaderi to accompany their daughter's body while being transferred from Tehran to Marivan. They have put pressure on her family to bury her without the presence of people. (Kurdistan Human Rights Network, November 6, 2022)

Hours after news broke about the death of Nasrin Oaderi, the clerical regime's official news agency, IRNA, claimed that she had died due to a "chronic disease" and that she was "living a normal life" during the period when she did not have contact with her family. (The official IRNA news agency - November 6, 2022)

But again, on November 10, the Judiciary's media center cited Asgaripour, the prosecutor of Shahriar prosecutor, claiming that according to the final report of the forensic pathologist, the cause of death of Ms. Nasrin Oaderi was the consumption of methanol (non-edible alcohol) and the poisoning caused by it. (The state-run Etemadonline.ir - November 10, 2022)



They killed Donya Farhadi and threw her body into the river

The lifeless body of 22-year-old [Donya Farhadi](#) from Izeh was found on the bank of the Karun River in Ahvaz on December 15, 2022.

Donya Farhadi was a protestor studying architecture at the Azad University of Ahvaz, the capital of Khuzestan province. She had been missing since December 7, Student's Day.

State media announced the cause of Donya Farhadi's death as "self-inflicted jumping from the bridge and drowning in the Karun River." (The state-run Khordad.news, December 17, 2022)



Arnika Qaem Maghami

The false narrative of jumping from the balcony to justify fatal bludgeoning of teenage girl

[Arnika Qaem Maghami, 17](#), was hit in the head by consecutive blows by a hard object (probably a baton) during protests in Tehran. She suffered brain death and a fractured neck vertebra. Security forces deliberately took her to a military hospital.

By forcing her father to give a television interview, the clerical regime claims that Arnika Qaem Maghami jumped down from the top of the building and committed suicide.

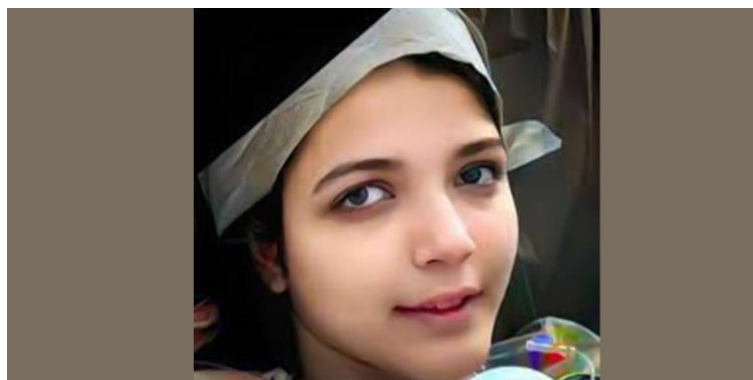
The state media cited Arnika's father, Sassan Qaem Maghami, as saying that he had no complaints regarding his daughter's death and that his daughter was not the target of any assault during the protests but had died due to a fall.

"On Saturday morning, we went with my wife to wake up the child to go to school, we saw that the window was open, and the child had fallen in the yard. With the help of the janitor and ourselves, we put the child in the ambulance, which took her to the Army's Golestan Hospital. She had a cardiac arrest in the emergency room, they resuscitated her, and put her displaced hip bone in place. She was in the ICU for 8 days and died the following Saturday."

These remarks by Arnika's father contradicted the statements of Maysam Hosseinpour, the special homicide investigator of the fourth branch of the Tehran Criminal Prosecutor's Office. He stated that the room was locked when Arnika's parents went to wake her up for school at 5:45 in the morning. "The parents of the deceased started looking for her at 5:45 in the morning when she did not open the door of her room. They found her body in the yard." (The state-run Mashreqnews.ir, October 26, 2022)

False narratives to cover up fatal brutalizing of high school students

Cases of Asra Panahi and Hasti Hossein Panahi



[Asra Panahi](#) studied at Shahed High School for girls in Ardabil. On Monday, October 13, 2022, she and her friends refused to sing an anthem praising the mullahs' supreme leader, Ali Khamenei.

They chanted anti-regime slogans. The school's principal called for help from the security services and plainclothes agents to calm the situation. They raided the school and beat the students who refused to participate in the pro-regime rally.

What they did to the teenage students was what security forces and interrogators do to political prisoners in prisons.

At least ten students were severely injured and transferred to Fatemi Hospital. Asra Panahi, 15, died due to [severe internal bleeding](#). Another student, Aytak, went into a coma.

The government forced Asra's uncles and brother to make false confessions on TV, saying that she had passed away due to a heart condition. Her brother reportedly committed suicide after appearing on state TV against his will and lying about his sister's cause of death.



Hasti Hossein Panahi, a 16-year-old Kurdish student from Dehgolan, has been in a coma since November 10.

Some [reports on social media](#) indicate that Hasti was seriously injured during the Dehgolan protests when security forces beat her in the head with consecutive blows of the baton. She was subsequently transferred to the Kowsar Hospital in Sanandaj, the capital of Kurdistan.

Other reports indicate that Hasti had been summoned to the Department of Education for tearing Khomeini's picture off her textbook. At the Department of Education, Hasti was threatened with being expelled from school and banned from continuing her education.

It was there, at the department, where they beat her up to the point of death. Then, her half-dead body was transferred out of the department by a bus and thrown out in the street. Then the authorities declared that she wanted to commit suicide and jumped out of the bus despite efforts by her friends and the driver to prevent her.

Like Asra Panahi's family, security forces [pressured](#) Hasti's family to say their daughter had committed suicide. The Hossein Panahi family, however, refused to give false testimonies and cooperate with the regime.

Security services have warned Hasti's father, an Education Department teacher, to stay away from the media." (Hengaw.net, November 10, 2022)

False narrative to cover up the murder of Kian Pirfalak

During the crackdown on the protests in Izeh, Khuzestan Province, on November 16, 2022, security forces opened fire on a family passing by in their car. [Kian Pirfalak](#), 9, was killed on the spot, and his father, Maysam Pirfalak, was severely injured.

Ms. Zeinab Mowlaii Rad, Kian's mother, declared that the security forces had killed her son. She said security forces and plainclothes agents told her husband to turn around and leave the area, but they started shooting at them when he turned around.



The state media, however, rejected Ms. Mowlaii's remarks, saying she had no documents to prove. They said she was under the influence of counterrevolution.

Security forces subsequently arrested several citizens and protesters in Izeh to introduce and execute them as murderers of Kian.

The Pirfalak family issued a statement on December 28, announcing that "the identities of the shooters at Maysam Pirfalak's car on November 16 is completely clear and unchangeable for us. Under no circumstances do we accept fake and untrue stories about the murder of Kian and the wounding of Maysam. If there is a will on the part of the authorities, to introduce the killers of Kian Pirfalak, we welcome it. Otherwise, we express our consent in advance to (forgive) all individuals from the people of Izeh who are introduced as the murderer of Kian Pirfalak by distorting the reality and faking the narrative of the incident."

What should be done about such a rogue and ruthless regime?

The clerical regime's authorities are systematically harassing and intimidating victims' families to cover up the truth. The latest wave of protest killings is rooted in a deep crisis of systemic impunity for the most serious crimes under international law that has long prevailed in Iran.

Such despicable methods further underline the scale and depravity of the Iranian authorities' crackdown and further prove that all avenues for truth and justice are closed at the domestic level.

Given the scale and severity of past and ongoing human rights violations, the UN Human Rights Council and other human rights agencies have not sufficiently addressed these issues.

We call on democratic governments to condition their relations with the clerical regime on improving the human rights situation in Iran, end executions, and release all detained protesters. We urge them to shut down the regime's embassies, expel their operatives, and recall their ambassadors from Iran.

The clerical regime only understands the language of force, and it should be compelled in this manner to stop the persecution of Iranian people and women.