

Human Rights Defenders in Iran 2018



HUMAN RIGHTS
DO NOT END
their harassment!



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Preface

The present report on the Iranian human rights defenders in 2018, is the first report about the condition of human rights defenders that will be published annually by Iran Human Rights (IHR) organization.¹ IHR was able to provide this report with the support of Norwegian Human Rights Fund.² The report does not provide any statistics, but seeks to give a picture of the situation by telling the stories of 19 Iranian human rights defenders in Iran. The aim of the report is to attract the attention of the international community to the condition of human rights defenders in Iran. In 2019, Iran's human rights situation will be reviewed under the framework of Universal Periodic Review (UPR). A list of all UPR recommendations to Iran, addressing human rights defenders in the previous round of UPR, are provided at the end of the report.

¹ www.iranhr.net

² www.nhrf.no

Introduction

In 2018, the pressure upon and suppression of human rights activists in Iran intensified through detention, threats and imprisonment. Iranian authorities view human rights defenders as threats to the security of the state.

The report on the condition of Iranian human rights defenders in 2018 coincides with the 40th anniversary of the Islamic revolution in February 1979. We have chosen the second half of February for publication of the report because it marks the start of the darkest era in modern Iranian history with regards to persecution of human rights defenders. A historical analysis of the situation of human rights defenders in the last 40 years is beyond the scope of this report. But this report shows that the persecution and crackdown of human rights defenders continues and is even intensified 40 years after establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The report also coincides with the 20th anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. 20 years ago, on December 19 1998, the UN General Assembly adopted Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, officially known as *Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*.¹

The first Article of the Declaration states: “Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels.”²

At the declaration’s 20th anniversary, Iran Human Rights (IHR) provides the current report about the condition of 19 human rights defenders in Iran, their arrest, torture, unlawful imprisonments and authorities’ refusal of providing medical treatment during imprisonment. The gravity of the situation has been underlined in the recent report of Michael Frost, the United Nations’ Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders.³

The following report does not name all of the suppressed human rights activists in Iran. Based on the definition of human rights defenders in a recent report by Amnesty International: “Human rights defenders come from all walks of life. They are students, community leaders, journalists, lawyers, victims of abuses and their families, health professionals, teachers, trade unionists, whistle-blowers, farmers, environmental activists and more. They can defend rights as part of their jobs or in a voluntary capacity”.⁴

In this context, the number of human rights defenders in Iran are so high that we are afraid no report can count all of them. Moreover, human rights defenders in ethnic

1 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/srhrdefenders/pages/declaration.aspx>

2 <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Defenders/Declaration/declaration.pdf>

3 World Report on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders 2018, pages 346-350

4 <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/ACT3060112017ENGLISH.PDF>

regions of Iran, such as Baluchestan and Khuzestan provinces, suffer from another problem. These areas are the black holes of Iran regarding human rights violations because the authorities impose tougher suppression over activists. The authorities suppress even peaceful voices, claiming they are connected to armed anti-government groups.

During the past year, we witnessed further deterioration of the human rights defenders’ conditions. Lawyers, who played a progressive role in Iranian civil society, came under an unprecedented wave of repression. Some lawyers were arrested, tried, and some were consequently sentenced to long jail terms. You can read about them in this report.

In 2018 many human rights defenders were persecuted, arrested and sentenced to long jail terms for union activities or defending the rights of teachers, truck drivers, sugarcane workers or other workers. Likewise, many of those who protest against the compulsory hijab law¹ and numerous environmentalists² were arrested, tortured and imprisoned. We name only a few of them in this report and hope to be able to include more people in our future reports.

The imprisoned human rights activists are facing many problems in prisons, including lack of access to proper medical care. In many cases, they face more limitations in prisons than other prisoners. For authorities, it seems to be a systematic method of putting additional pressure on human rights defenders.

On the launch of this report, IHR calls on the international community to draw special attention to the condition of human rights defenders in Iran.

IHR director, Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam, says: “Unfortunately, the international community has not reacted properly in order to address the unprecedented repression against human rights defenders in Iran. Human rights defenders and the civil movements they represent, are the pillars of a peaceful transition towards the establishment of a system that can guarantee the respect of human rights in Iran.”

In 2019, Iran will have its third Universal Periodic Review (UPR). During the last UPR review in 2014, Iran received 16 recommendations relating directly or indirectly to human rights defenders. Iran either accepted or partially accepted 9 of the recommendations.³ However, there is no indication that the authorities have delivered on any of the accepted recommendations. On the contrary, the evidence shows that the situation has been deteriorated. This year’s UPR is an important opportunity for the international community to put the issue of human rights defenders on the agenda again.

Stories of 19 Iranian human rights defenders in 2018

In the following section, cases of 19 Iranian human rights defenders who faced repression in 2018, are briefly presented in alphabetical order.

1 <https://iranhr.net/fa/articles/3438/>

2 <https://www.radiofarda.com/a/iran-environment-activists-case/29401312.html>

3 <https://www.upr-info.org/database/>

Esmaeil Abdi



Activities: Teachers' rights activist
Current condition: Imprisoned - Evin Prison
Verdict: 6 years of Imprisonment

Esmaeil Abdi is a teacher, a civil activist and the Secretary General of the Teachers' Association. He was first arrested on March 14, 2007, for taking part in a teachers' protest.

On September 17, 2007, he was arrested at a coordination meeting of Teachers' Associations of Iran. He was arrested for his peaceful activism several times after that. On 22 February 2016, a Revolutionary Court sentenced Ismail Abdi to six years in prison for organising a teachers' demonstration in front of the Parliament on 15 May 2015.¹

Esmaeil Abdi was arrested on November 9, 2016, to serve the prison term. He suffers from lung diseases and does not have access to proper health care service in Prison.

¹ [Iran International TV's Website - April 24, 2017.](http://www.radiofarda.com/a/hafttappah-protests-nineteen-persons-arrested/29607331.html)

Esmaeil Bakhshi



Activities: Trade unionist
Current condition: Under detention
Verdict: Pending

Esmaeil Bakhshi is a trade unionist and spokesperson for the independent Workers Union of Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Agro-Industrial Company. 14 days after starting a strike to protest against months' delays in paying wages, he was arrested on November 18, 2018, along with more than a dozen other workers at the local sugar factory in the Iranian city of Shush. Although the other workers were released on bail, Esmail was held on charges of jeopardizing "national security".¹ According to the media reports, during the period of detention, he faced physical and psychological tortures.² On November 24, authorities from the Iranian Ministry of Labor announced that they cannot intervene on Bakhshi's behalf because of the "national security" nature of the case.³

He was released on bail on December 12, 2018. On January 4, 2019, he posted a note on his Instagram page, confirming his torture in prison, and invited the Iranian minister of intelligence to a live television show to discuss use of torture in prisons. Afterwards, his lawyer Farzaneh Zilabi announced that Bakhshi is under pressure to deny the torture claims.⁴ Esmaeil Bakhshi was arrested once again following his talks about torture on January 20, 2019.⁵

¹ <https://www.radiofarda.com/a/hafttappah-protests-nineteen-persons-arrested/29607331.html>

² [Radio Farda - December 4, 2018.](http://www.radiofarda.com/a/hafttappah-protests-nineteen-persons-arrested/29607331.html)

³ [Iran International TV's Website - November 24, 2017.](http://www.radiofarda.com/a/hafttappah-protests-nineteen-persons-arrested/29607331.html)

⁴ <http://www.bbc.com/persian/iran-46781159>

⁵ <http://www.bbc.com/persian/iran-46941685>

Atena Daemi



Activities: Child rights' activist / abolitionist
Current condition: imprisoned / Evin prison
Verdict: 7 years of imprisonment

Atena Daemi is a human rights activist, children rights activist and the death penalty abolitionist. She is held in the women ward of Evin prison in Tehran. Atena was arrested first time on October 21, 2014, and was held in solitary confinement for 86 days. After the interrogations, she was moved to the women ward of Evin Prison on January 18, 2015. For her peaceful activities, Atena was sentenced to 14 years of imprisonment for the charges "Propaganda against the system, gathering and conspiracy against national security, insulting the founder of the Islamic Republic, and hiding pieces of evidence which would prove her guilt." Atena's Facebook posts against the death penalty were used as evidence of her "crime." Atena was released on bail on February 15, 2016 to await the final verdict of the court of appeal. The court of appeal reduced her sentence to 7 years of imprisonment, 5 years of which can be implemented (according to article 134 of the penal code).¹ Atena Daemi was arrested on November 26, 2016, and transferred to prison. In March 2017, a court in Tehran issued additional charges against Ms. Daemi and her two sisters, Ensieh and Haniyeh. They were each sentenced to three months and one day in prison on charges of "insulting agents on duty". In protest against the new prison sentences, Ms. Daemi announced a hunger strike in Evin Prison on April 8, 2017. She stopped the hunger strike after 54 days after her sisters' charges had been dropped.² Atena Daemi and Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraei went on a hunger strike again to protest against their illegal transfer from Evin Prison to Qarchak Prison. They stopped the hunger strike following after they had transferred back to Evin Prison.

¹ <https://iranhr.net/fa/articles/2712/>
² <https://iranhr.net/fa/articles/2905/>

Amirsalar Davoudi



Activities: Lawyer
Current condition: In detention / Evin prison
Verdict: pending

Amirsalar Davoudi, a member of the Iranian Bar Association, was arrested on Tuesday, November 20. Amirsalar Davoudi was a defense attorney of several political and civil activists in Iran. A source close to the matter informed IHR that Amirsalar Davoudi was arrested on November 20 and is being held in an undisclosed location. His office and home were searched and some of his personal belongings, computers and also his clients' legal files were confiscated.¹ Charges against him had been unclear until January 23, 2019, when his lawyer, Vahid Moshkani Farahani, announced that Amirsalar Davoudi was charged with "propaganda against the system" and "defamation of the authorities." Davoudi could not meet with his wife after his arrest but was able to see his parents once after two months of detention.² His case is pending for trial at Branch 15 of Tehran Revolutionary Court.

¹ <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/3569/>
² [ISNA - January 23, 2019.](https://www.isna.ir/news/ISNA-January-23-2019)

Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraei



Activities: Writer and civil activist
Current condition: Imprisoned - Evin Prison / women's ward
Verdict: 6 years of imprisonment

Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraei, an imprisoned human rights activist who is currently held in the women's ward of Evin Prison, was first arrested on September 15, 2014, along with her husband, Arash Sadeghi, by the IRGC intelligence department and transferred to ward 2-A of Evin Prison, well known for being under control of the IRGC. She was released on bail after a few weeks but was charged with "insulting the sanctity and distributing propaganda against the system" for an unpublished story she wrote. The agents had found the handwritten story in her home during the search.

Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court sentenced Golrokh Ebrahimi to six years and her husband to 15 years in prison in May, 2015. The Court of Appeal upheld their sentences on December 22, 2015. Therefore, Golrokh was arrested again on October 24, 2016, to serve the prison term.

It is important to note that Golrokh is sentenced to five years' imprisonment following charges of "insulting the sanctity" and one year on charges of "propaganda against the system".

Violating the compulsory hijab law and protesting against it, condemning death penalty, signing different petitions against death penalty, and attending meetings in support of political prisoners, and meeting with political prisoners were some of the charges she faced.

Golrokh had earlier told IHR that she was not present at her first trial and couldn't defend herself and the court held the trial in absentia.

Although Human rights Organizations and UN Special Rapporteurs have demanded freeing these prisoners several times, Golrokh remains in prison.¹

On February 3, 2018, Golrokh and the prominent human rights defender Aneta Daemi went on hunger strike to protest their illegal transfer from Evin prison to Qarchak prison. After 57 days of hunger strike, her physical condition had seriously deteriorated and she was hospitalized. Thereafter, Golrokh has discontinued the hunger strike.

Golrokh Ebrahimi Iraei suffers from several diseases and her access to proper health care is limited in prison.

¹ <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/3287/>

Sepideh Gholiyan



Activities: Civil activist, workers' rights activist
Current condition: Under detention
Verdict: Pending

Sepideh Gholian is a civil rights activist who was arrested by Iranian security forces on November 18, 2018, while reporting on a labor protest organized by the Workers Union of Haft Tappeh Sugarcane Agro Industrial Company. Sepideh was held without charge or legal representation for 30 days and eventually released on bail.¹

After the release, Sepideh Gholian revealed the tortures she faced under interrogation. She claimed that intelligence officials repeatedly subjected her to sexual insults, calling her a "whore", accused her of having sexual relationships with workers and threatened to have her family kill her "in the name of honour".²

According to Sepideh's father, security forces had warned Sepideh that she will be "powdered into ash" if she revealed the tortures.³ Following her public comments about the torture she had been subjected to, Sepideh was arrested again on January 20, 2019.

¹ <https://ir.voanews.com/a/iran-labour-rights/4705360.html>

² <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/01/iran-labour-rights-activists-at-imminent-risk-of-further-torture/>

³ https://www.radiofarda.com/a/iran_dezful_sepideh_qolian_khodarahm_torture_arrest/29722168.html

Mohammad Habibi



Activities: Teachers' rights activist
Current condition: Imprisoned
Verdict: 7 years and 6 months of imprisonment; 74 lashes

A teacher at a high school in Shahriar County in Tehran Province, and a member of the Teachers Union was arrested on March 3, 2018 in front of his class, and violently dragged away. Mohammad Habibi did not have access to a lawyer or the family in the primary stages after his detention. On 4 August, Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran sentenced Habibi to ten years and a half in prison, which seven and a half years of which is implemented (according to article 134 of the penal code). His sentence also includes a ban on social and political activities for two years, a travel ban for two years, and 74 lashes.¹

Habibi is currently serving a seven and a half years' sentence at the notorious Great Tehran Penitentiary (GTP), in Fashafouyeh. He was convicted of "assembly" and "collusion" against the security of the Islamic Republic.

Mohammad Habibi suffers from kidney malfunction and is currently denied access to a proper health care service in prison.

When he is released he will be subject to a two-years' travel ban and a two years' ban on participating in unions and political parties, as well as to 74 lashes.

¹ <https://www.ei-ie.org/en/detail/15931/iran-teacher-trade-unionist-mohammed-habibi-sentenced-to-ten-and-a-half-years-in-prison>

Teimour Khaledian



Activities: Prisoners' rights activist
Current condition: Sentenced to prison, waiting for the start the jail term
Verdict: Imprisonment

Teimour Khaledian is a human rights defender and a worker from the city of Malayer, Hamadan province of Iran. He had been arrested several times between 2015 to 2017. The last time, he was arrested on December 31, 2018, during mass protests in Iran. He was released on bail on January 20, 2019: he had been reportedly beaten and tortured while in detention.¹

Teimour was sentenced to a 20 months' imprisonment and additional 3 months of suspended jail term. He is now free on bail but awaits the beginning of his jail term.

¹ <https://ir.voanews.com/a/iran-human-rights-justice/4402045.html>

Reza Khandan



Activities: Civil activist

Current condition: released on bail

Verdict: 6 years of imprisonment at the court of first instance

Reza Khandan, a civil activist, was arrested on September 4, 2018, in Tehran.¹ He is the husband of Nasrin Sotoudeh, the lawyer and civil activist who is currently held at Evin Prison.

A night before his arrest, Reza Khandan had posted on his Facebook: "Someone from the Ministry of Intelligence called me on my cell phone today. He said that I had to be there tomorrow. Because no person or institution other than judicial authorities are allowed to surveil people, which should be done in writing while stating the reasons and accusations, I reminded him of my legal rights. Unfortunately, he said, 'You will be arrested then'".²

He is accused of "propaganda and illegal gathering against the establishment" and "propaganda against compulsory hijab" by possessing "No To Compulsory Hijab" badges.

His trial was scheduled for December 2, 2018, at branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court, but he refused to appear in the courtroom. His lawyer told IHR, "Reza Khandan objected to this because, according to article 343 of Iranian Code of Criminal Procedure, there should be a minimum of 7 days between the date of notification and the trial date. Moreover, Mr Khandan says that he faces political charges and, according to article 168 of the constitution, he should be tried by the jury openly and publicly in a criminal court in Tehran; not by the revolutionary court."

Nevertheless, Reza Khandan's trial was completed on December 19, 2018, and he was released on bail on December 23.³ On January 22, 2019, he was sentenced to six years' imprisonment, of which 5 years on charges of "gathering against the establishment" and one year for "propaganda against the system." He is also prohibited from joining any political party or group for two years, activity on social media, media outlets and he is not allowed to travel abroad, all for two years after completing the jail term. The verdict is preliminary and he has the right to appeal.⁴

¹ <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/3465/>

² <https://www.facebook.com/reza.khandan.5/posts/2062261610450843>

³ <https://tinyurl.com/yxwh57oc>

⁴ <https://www.radiofarda.com/a/khandan-masami-six-years-prison/29724849.html>

Navid Khanjani



Activities: Advocate for the rights to education

Current condition: Released from prison in 2018

Verdict: Finished 6 years of his prison term

Navid Khanjani is a minorities rights activist and founder of The Association Against Educational Discrimination.

Navid was arrested for the first time on March 1, 2010, by security forces and was released on bail after two months of interrogations.¹ On December 20, 2010, Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court sentenced him to 12 years in prison.

With the implementation of Article 134 of the Iranian Penal Code, he was sentenced to five years in prison and he had to be released on June 6, 2017. However, on the day of his release, the authorities announced that his one-year sentence from a different case was to be served immediately and he had to remain in prison. The other case was related to another kind of peaceful activism. Navid was one of the civil society activists who had gone to East Azerbaijan province of Iran in 2012 to help the earthquake victims. They were arrested there for "group travelling without coordination [and permission from authorities]."

He remained in jail continuously for six years and released on May 7, 2018. He could not have proper access to health care services during his jail term.²

¹ <http://aftabnews.ir/vdchw-nw.23nmwdf2.html>

² <https://ir.voanews.com/a/iran-prisoners-freed-khanjani/4382745.html>

Farhad Meysami



Activities: Civil activist against compulsory hijab
Current condition: Imprisoned - Evin Prison
Verdict: 6 years of imprisonment at the court of first instance

Farhad Meysami, a physician, civil activist and publisher, was arrested on July 31, 2018, for possession of badges with the phrase “I protest compulsory hijab”. He was accused of collusion against national security by encouraging women to remove their headscarves in public, propaganda against the state, and defamation of the hijab as one of the sacred notions of Islam.¹ He was transferred to ward 209 of Evin prison.

He was accused of “propaganda against the system, gathering and conspiracy against the system and encourage people to not wear hijab in the society.”² His trial was held on December 19, 2018, and he was sentenced to 6 years of imprisonment by branch 15 of Tehran Revolutionary Court. According to his lawyer, Mohammad Moghimi, five years’ term is for unlawful gathering and conspiring against the system, and one year for propaganda against the system. Moreover, he is banned from being a member of political parties or social groups, using social media, other forms of media outlets for two years. He cannot travel abroad in the two years’ time. His lawyer announced that he will file for appeal if his client wishes to do so.³

1 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/3438/>
2 <https://iranhr.net/fa/articles/3438/>
3 <https://iranhr.net/fa/articles/3623/>

Narges Mohammadi



Activities: Human rights activist/Abolitionist
Current condition: Imprisoned - Women’s ward; Evin Prison
Verdict: 16 years of imprisonment

Narges Mohammadi is a journalist, human rights defender and abolitionist. She lost her job in 2009 for her activities in Human Rights Defenders Center in Iran. A year after, Narges was charged with being a member of this activists’ group and summoned to branch 4 of Tehran’s revolutionary court, and was later released on bail. However, she was sentenced to 11 years’ imprisonment in Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court following charges of “gathering for conspiracy against the system, being a member of an illegal association, and propaganda against the system.” The verdict was reduced to 6 years in the Court of Appeal and she was transferred to the prison in April of 2012. However, due to her several illnesses, she was transferred to hospital and released on bail.

In 2014, she was highly criticized by hardliners and their media in Iran for meeting with former EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton in Tehran.¹

Narges Mohammadi was arrested on May 5, 2015,² and Branch 15 of Tehran Revolution Court under Judge Salavati sentenced her to a total of 16 years in prison. She was sentenced to 10 years in prison on charges of “founding the illegal group of LEGAM” (Step by step towards the abolition of the death penalty), five years for “assembly and activities threatening the national security” and one year for “propaganda against the establishment”.³ The verdict was later upheld by a court of appeal.⁴ She suffers from several illnesses⁵ and was given 3-days furlough in September 2018 for the first time since she was imprisoned.⁶ Her furlough extension motion was denied and she returned to prison.

On January 2, 2019, Narges Mohammadi and Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe announced that they were to start a three days’ hunger strike from January 14 to protest against the lack of proper access to health care service. On January 16, UN human rights experts have called on Iran to urgently provide Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and Narges Mohammadi access to appropriate health care and reiterated calls for their immediate release.⁷

1 <https://www.rferl.org/a/ashton-rights-iran-criticism-meeting-women/25293849.html>
2 <https://iranhr.net/en/statement/25/>
3 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/2530/>
4 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/2663/>
5 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/2904/>
6 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/2530/>
7 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/3617/>

Mohammad Najafi



Activities: Lawyer

Current condition: imprisoned in Arak Central Prison

Verdict: Two years of imprisonment plus 10 years under review in the court of appeal

Mohammad Najafi is a human rights lawyer who was investigating the suspicious death of Vahid Heidari, one of the detainees from Iran's December 2017 protests in Arak. "Those who saw Vahid's body noticed a fracture and a bump on the left side of his head that could have been caused by a baton's blow to his head. They determined the place of burial and withheld all reports including forensics reports from the victim's family. There has been no explanation so far, and the family does not know anything else," Najafi told IHR about Vahid Heidari's death.¹ In the aftermath of revealing his suspicions about his client's death, Najafi was arrested by the security forces at home on the evening of January 15. Mohammad Najafi has been summoned and arrested several times for his professional activities. The last time he was summoned to the court on November 8, 2017, when he was charged with propaganda against the system. Najafi was sentenced to three years of imprisonment and 74 lashes. The verdict was upheld by Supreme Court in October 2018.² He is being held in Arak Central Prison.³ His flogging sentence was suspended due to his diabetes and with the implementation of Article 134 of the Iranian Penal Code, his jail term will be reduced to two years. However, he was sentenced to 10 years in prison on charges of "helping enemy states by giving an interview to foreign media." This verdict is in appeal court waiting for review. If not upheld, Najafi would remain in prison for 10 years.

He was arrested and transferred to Arak Central Prison on October 28, 2018.⁴

¹ <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/3262/>

² <https://iranhr.net/fa/articles/3455/>

³ <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/3528/>

⁴ <https://iranhr.net/fa/articles/3539/>

Raheleh Rahemipour



Activities: Civil activist seeking the truth

Current condition: free /waiting for the verdict

Raheleh Rahemipour has been demanding the truth about the fate of her nephew, the daughter of her executed brother.

is recognizable thanks to her photo, in which she holds a poster with a message: "You killed my brother; what did you do with his daughter?"

Raheleh's brother, Hossein, was arrested along with his pregnant wife in 1984. A year after that, he was executed for being a member of the leftist group "Rah-e Kargar" (Workers' Way Organization). However, his baby daughter, Golrou, who was born in prison at that time, later disappeared. Although the authorities claim that the baby had died in Evin prison after she was born, they failed to release the body to his remaining family.

A plaintiff in the 1980s execution cases, Raheleh, was arrested at her home by agents of the Ministry of Intelligence on the evening of Sunday, September 10. The agents also searched her home and seized some of her personal belongings such as her documents, laptop, and two phones.

"This is the first time Raheleh is arrested. She was unofficially invited to the Ministry of Intelligence last year, and she told them to issue a subpoena. After summoning and interrogating her three or four times at Evin prison, each interrogation lasting several hours, she was put on trial at branch 15 of the Islamic Revolutionary Court and, after two court sessions, Judge Salavati sentenced her to one year in prison," one of Raheleh Rahemipour's relatives told Iran Human Rights (IHR).¹ In the second trial at Branch 28 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran, among other charges, she was charged with "propaganda against the establishment, participation in protests, sending a complaint to the UN and giving interviews to the opposition media." She is currently out of the prison on bail. According to IHR sources she is under pressure to retract her complaint to the UN.

In response to the inquiry of Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, the Islamic Republic authorities announced: "According to the documents signed by the prison's doctor and Imam Khomeini hospital, the new-born was preemie, suffered from neonatal jaundice and vascular coagulation. Despite exchange transfusion, the infant died on April 4, 1984,"

¹ <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/3056/>

Arash Sadeghi



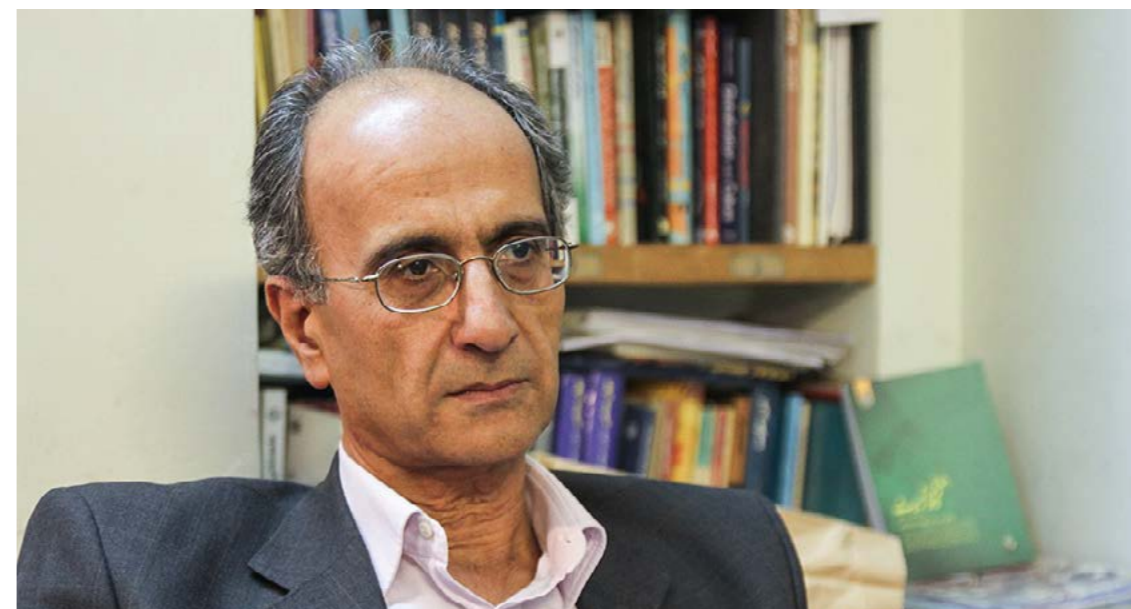
Activities: Civil activist
Current condition: Imprisoned - Rajai Shahr Prison
Verdict: 19 years of imprisonment

Arash Sadeghi was first arrested on July 9, 2009, along with some other students who were protesting against the controversial results of the 2009 presidential elections. After 90 days he was released on bail. He was arrested in May of 2014 and was released after six months on a bail of 600 million Tomans. After he was released from prison, the agents of the Ministry of Intelligence broke into his home, causing his mother's heart attack and a consequent fatal stroke. The activist was arrested in June of 2016 for the last time and was transferred to Evin prison to serve a 19-years' prison term.

The imprisoned Iranian human rights defender, Arash Sadeghi, was diagnosed with chondrosarcoma cancer in August 2018.¹ Arash was transferred to a hospital of the prison's choice in September 2018, however, he was returned to prison after a few days without completing his treatment process.²

1 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/3457/>
2 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/3486/>

Kavous Seyed-Emami

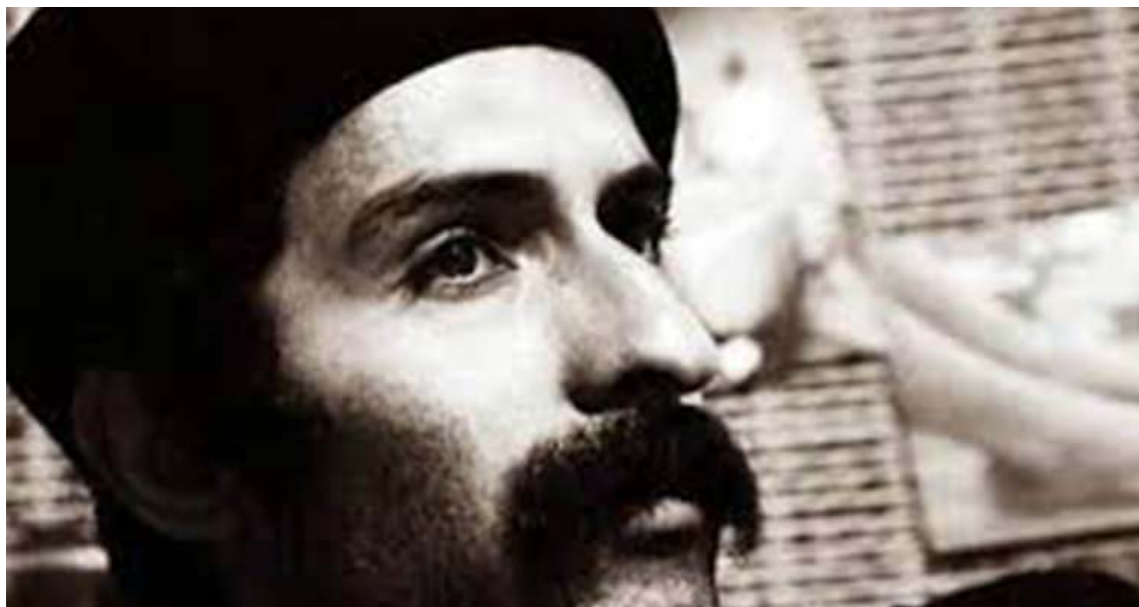


Activities: Environmentalist scholar
Current condition: Suspicious death in detention

Kavous Seyed-Emami was an Iranian-Canadian university professor and a prominent environmentalist who was arrested on January 24, 2018, and died two weeks after in custody at the IRGC intelligence service. In February 2018, Iran's Judiciary announced that he committed suicide in prison facing overwhelming evidence against him in an espionage case.¹ The claim has been rejected by his family. According to Payam Derafshan, lawyer of Seyed-Emami family, "the forensics report states that pressure on the neck and following suffocation were the reason for his death."² Following the suspicious death of Kavous Seyed-Emami, the pressure on his family was increased, his wife was interrogated and banned from travelling abroad.³

1 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43025356>
2 www.irna.ir/fa/News/82948250
3 <https://www.radiofarda.com/a/kavoos-seyed-emami-house/29321292.html>

Saeed Shirzad



Activities: Children's rights activist
Current condition: Imprisoned - Rajai Shahr Prison
Verdict: 6 years of imprisonment

Saeed Shirzad is a children's rights defender in Iran. He has worked with a number of children's rights NGOs including the Association in Support of Children's Rights, Children's Home of Shoosh and Society in Defence of Street Children.

Saeed was arrested on August 22, 2012, while he had travelled to East Azerbaijan province of Iran to help people affected by an earthquake. After 19 days, he was released on bail but the court sentenced him to one year's suspended jail term for "group travelling without coordination [and permission from authorities]."

Saeed Shirzad was arrested again on June 2, 2014, and sentenced to five years after being charged with 'gathering and colluding with intent to act against national security'. After the court of appeal upheld the verdict, the previous one year's jail term - which was suspended - was added to his current sentence.

On 18 September 2017, Saeed Shirzad was physically attacked and taken into solitary confinement. The human rights defender has been on hunger strike since 30 July 2017 in protest of inhumane prison conditions.¹

Saeed suffers from several health problems, including intervertebral disc herniation and kidney problems. Most of his health problems appeared during his time in jail during which he went on two long hunger strikes.²

1 <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/case/saeed-shirzad-sentenced>
2 <https://iranhr.net/fa/articles/3577/>

Abdolfattah Soltani



Area of activities: Lawyer
Current condition: Released from jail in 2018 after 7 years of imprisonment
Verdict: 13 years of imprisonment

Abdolfattah Soltani is a lawyer and human rights activist who was arrested in September 2011 on a charge of "propaganda against the system" and "co-founding Defenders of Human Rights Center." One of the charges against him is that he accused authorities of using torture during his clients' interrogations. However, Jamal Karimi Rad, one of the Judiciary's spokespersons, told what Soltani revealed to media and the prisoners' families, were related to the secret nuclear information and he is charged with spying.¹ The spying charge was later dropped and he was sentenced on other aforementioned charges. Ultimately, Soltani was sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment which is based on article 134 of the Iranian Penal Code, had to remain in prison for 10 years. The Article states that if a defendant is faced with more than one charges, the charge with the highest penalty will be taken into account.

Mr. Soltani had served more than two thirds of his sentence and technically he could be granted conditional release, but he was denied a conditional release for unknown reasons.²

Abdolfattah Soltani had been granted the furlough to attend his young daughter's funeral on Saturday, August 4, 2018. Despite some hopes that the Islamic Republic authorities might extend his furlough, Mr Soltani returned to prison after the motion for furlough extension was denied on October 28, 2018.³

On November 21, 2018, the human rights lawyer was conditionally released after spending 8 years in prison.⁴

It should be noted that some of Abdolfattah Soltani's charges were receiving Nuremberg International Human Rights Award and giving information about his clients who were political, ideological, and syndicate activists.

Abdolfattah Soltani is suffering from several diseases including acute neuronal colitis and fluctuating blood pressure after seven years in Evin Prison.

1 <https://iranhr.net/fa/articles/3540/>
2 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/3265/>
3 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/3540/>
4 <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/3559/>

Nasrin Sotoudeh



Activities: Lawyer, Human rights activist
Current condition: imprisoned / Evin Prison, women's ward
Verdict: 5 years of imprisonment and two open cases

A prominent lawyer and a human rights defender, Nasrin Sotoudeh, was arrested at her home on Wednesday, June 13. She was previously imprisoned for her professional and HR activities.¹ During the past years, Mrs. Sotoudeh represented in courts many Iranian activists. Recently, she represented Girls of Revolution Street, who took off their hijab in public in a protest against the compulsory hijab law.²

Nasrin Sotoudeh was convicted in absentia and was sentenced to five years in prison following charges of "espionage". Later, the authorities announced that the verdict was issued on a "hiding espionage" charge. Hypothetically, if the crime is committed, the defendant is to be sentenced to the term from six months to three years in prison. According to Article 510 of Iran's Islamic Penal Code, anyone who, with the intent to disrupt national security or aid the enemy, recognizes and conceals espionage, or assists spies who are on a mission to collect information or cause damage to the country, shall be sentenced to from six months to three years' imprisonment.

"Based on what the system believes, any diplomat or tourist who visits Iran from a foreign country is a spy. There's another problem with this case, that is, based on article 510 (which the judge has mentioned) the punishment for this crime is imprisonment from six months to three years, while it's five years in the verdict!," Payam Derafshan, Sotoudeh's lawyer, told IHR.³

Moreover, after her transfer to the prison, Nasrin was summoned two times for face new charges. One charge, for defending one of the protesters against the compulsory hijab, and another for being a member of LEGAM. LEGAM (Ending Executions in Iran Step by Step) is a civil rights group and Nasrin Sotoudeh was one of its co-founders. After increasing pressure on Nasrin in the prison and banning her family from visiting for "not having a proper hijab", she went on a hunger strike for 39 days from August 25, 2018. On September 29, Nasrin's lawyers filed a lawsuit against judge Moghoseh, the head of branch 28 of Tehran Revolutionary Courts. Moghiseh is accused of convicting Nasrin wrongfully, without due process and against the law,⁴ which is not yet processed.

One of the charges against Nasrin Sotoudeh in a new case against her, filed in Moghiseh's court, is for "receiving Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, in value of 50,000 euros." The European Parliament prize was given to Nasrin Sotoudeh and Iranian Filmmaker Jafar Panahi in 2012.

¹ <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/3345/>

² <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/3430/>

³ <https://iranhr.net/en/articles/3430/>

⁴ <https://iranhr.net/fa/articles/3500/>

Recommendations

Iran Human Rights (IHR) calls on the Islamic Republic of Iran to:

- Release all imprisoned human rights defenders immediately and unconditionally.
- Provide proper medical care for all prisoners in line with the international law and standards.
- Cooperate with the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Iran, allow him to visit Iran and meet the human rights defenders in person.
- Guarantee freedom of expression and peaceful association and safeguard the activities of human rights defenders.
- Prosecute and bring to justice those who committed crimes against human rights defenders in prisons, including those who ordered torturing HRDs in order to extract forced confessions.
- Perform impartial and transparent investigations on the suspicious deaths in detention including that of Kavous Seyed Emami.
- Avoid and prevent judicial pressure on human rights defenders, journalists and other activists, taking into account international standards in this respect.

Iran Human Rights (IHR) calls on the international community to:

- Put the condition of the human rights defenders on the agenda of all bilateral and multilateral talks with the Iranian authorities.
- Call upon the Iranian authorities to release the imprisoned human rights defenders unconditionally.
- Support the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of the human rights in Iran.
- Use the UPR and all other UN mechanisms to put focus on the situation of human rights defenders in Iran.
- Hold Iranian authorities accountable for the harassment, persecution, torture and imprisonment of the human rights defenders.

Annex: UPR Recommendations addressing directly or indirectly human rights defenders in 2014¹

- Work towards guaranteeing a favorable environment for the activities of journalists, human rights defenders and civil society. **(Tunisia / Accepted)**
- Strengthen and promote freedom of expression, particularly that of the press. **(Senegal / Accepted)**
- Give further account to its measures to ensure public access to the Internet as well as progress being made thereon. **(Japan / Accepted)**
- Release all persons detained solely for peaceful political activities; inquire into all cases of alleged torture in detention facilities and bring those responsible to justice. **(Lithuania / Partially Accepted)**
- Adopt comprehensive measures on the protection of women against any form of public or domestic violence and the implementation of a national policy to protect women at risk and to bring perpetrators to justice, as well as adopt measures for the protection of human rights defenders and journalists. **(Brazil / Partially Accepted)**
- Guarantee the right to legitimate freedom of expression, association and assembly, and release political prisoners, including activists, lawyers and journalists, detained solely for exercising these rights. **(Australia / Partially Accepted)**
- Ensure full respect for freedom of expression and opinion, including the freedom of the media, and guarantee unfettered access for all persons in Iran to domestic and foreign media information, both offline and online. **(Germany / Partially Accepted)**
- Guarantee freedom of speech and eliminate restrictions to the free flow of information, including through the Internet, and stop arrests, prosecution and sanction of individuals for expressing views and opinions. **(Netherlands / Partially Accepted)**
- Effectively implement its international obligations to ensure the protection of human rights defenders and others exercising their rights to freedom of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly and association in compliance with international human rights law. **(Finland / Partially Accepted)**
- Cease its censorship of the media, as well as the harassment and arbitrary detention of journalists, and provide guarantees for the right to freedom of expression and freedom of the media. **(Sweden / Not Accepted)**
- Release immediately and unconditionally all persons detained for peacefully exercising the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. **(Switzerland / Not Accepted)**
- Repeal all legal provisions that infringe the freedoms of expression, assembly and association, as guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. **(Belgium / Not Accepted)**

¹ Thanks to Impact Iran (www.impactiran.org) for preparation of the recommendation list

- Amend its press law to define the exceptions to article 24 of its Constitution in specific terms and that do not infringe upon freedom of expression. **(Canada / Not Accepted)**
- Ensure genuine freedom of expression and information, including on the Internet, by putting an end to the harassment against journalists, bloggers and human rights defenders. **(France / Not Accepted)**
- Take adequate steps to lift restrictions on freedom of expression and adopt a framework for the protection of journalists from persecution, intimidation and harassment. **(Greece / Not Accepted)**
- Provide more information about the detention of journalists and individuals expressing dissenting views so as to address the concerns expressed by the Secretary-General and the Special Rapporteur. **(Japan / Not Accepted)**

IRAN HUMAN RIGHTS

Iran Human Rights (IHR) is a non-profit, politically independent organization with members and supporters inside and outside Iran. The organization started its work in 2005 and is registered as an international non-governmental organization based in Oslo, Norway.

IHR has a broad network among the abolitionist movement inside and outside Iran:

Besides supporters and collaborators among the civil society activists in the central parts of Iran, IHR also has a wide network in the ethnic regions which are often not the focus of the mainstream media. In addition, IHR has a network of reporters within many Iranian prisons, and among Iranian lawyers and the families of death row prisoners. This enables IHR to be the primary source of many execution reports in different Iranian prisons. IHR has been member of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty (WCADP) since 2009 and a member of its Steering Committee since 2011. IHR is also a member of Impact Iran, a coalition of more than 13 Iranian human rights NGOs.

IHR's core activities include:

Fighting for abolition of the death penalty, through monitoring, reporting, empowerment of the abolitionist Iranian civil society and international advocacy

Promoting due process and rule of law, through raising the legal debate in Iran and encouraging legal reforms. IHR publishes a bi-weekly legal journal with contributions from Iranian lawyers, jurists, law students and religious scholars

Defending human rights defenders, by creating safer working conditions, giving voice to the imprisoned human rights defenders and supporting human rights defenders in danger



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