

Shedding light on the truth about Iran's human rights situation



Iran Human Rights Monitor Monthly Report August 2018

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Iran Human Rights Monitor, Monthly report - August 2018**Introduction**

August was marked with news of at least 30 executions, one case of flogging and 25 flogging sentences, 10 arbitrary killings and six deaths in custody.

Mistreatment and torture of political prisoners including by denying their needed medical treatment, arrests of civil and human rights activists, and handing out heavy sentences for students arrested during the Iran uprising in December/January, are the basic components of a routine practice by the regime.

In the month of August, a suspicious forest fire took the lives of four environmental activists. Reports indicate that the blaze was launched as a result of IRGC artillery fire on August 25. When regime authorities refuse to provide any support, people & activists are forced to such measures to fight a fire.

Sharif Bajour and Omid Kohnepoushi, members of the Chya Green Association, and Mohammad Pazhouhi and Rahmat Hakiminia, members of the Marivan Department of Environment, died from smoke inhalation and severe burns.

Two others — Mokhtar Aminejad, 33, and Mohammad Moradveisi, 57 — were injured in the flames. Moradveisi was transferred to the city of Sanandaj by helicopter due to the severity of his burns.

Marivan County Governor Mohammad Sharifi said that the fire broke out near the villages of Selsi and Pileh in Marivan County due to the scorching temperatures the region had been experiencing the day before. Of those who were present when the flames swelled out of control, i.e. civilians, environmental activists, and forces from the Department of Environment, Mohammad Sharifi said: "Unfortunately on Saturday morning at 9, when gusts of wind exacerbated the blaze, four were engulfed and died, and two more were injured."

Bajour was a member of the Board of Directors of the Chya Green Association and a well-known environmental activist who had reportedly been arrested and interrogated several times by security apparatuses in regards to his environmental activities.

Chya Green Association was among the most active NGOs orchestrating efforts to contain the fire. Within hours of the activists' deaths, Marivan citizens took to the streets in front of Bou-Ali hospital where the bodies of the dead are being held.





Executions, arbitrary murders, deaths in custody

a. Executions

Iran Human Rights Monitor has registered 30 executions in the month of August, of which only six cases have been made public by the state media.

- On the morning of August 13, a prisoner identified as [Moslem Shiri](#) was executed at Ardabil Central Prison. He was arrested on the charge of murder in June 2009. Moslem Shiri went on a hunger strike for a week in December last year in protest against the continuous harassment by prison authorities. Moslem Shiri, was accused of murdering one of the relatives of Farhad Nowrouzi, one of the officials of the Central Prison of Ardebil. The official had reportedly tortured the prisoner in solitary confinement and threatened him with death during the past nine years. Nowrouzi had told the prisoner that, "Your punishment is not death with the gallows. I will kill you slowly and your voice do not get anywhere."
- One prisoner identified as Keramat Hassani was hanged on Monday, August 20, at Gachsaran Prison on murder charges. Keramat Hassani and his family were the only residents of a village in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, southwest Iran. According to a close source to the family, Mr. Hassani's family was attacked by three robbers in 2010 and in the ensuing clash between the family members and the robbers, the family's young son unarms one of the robbers but is killed by the other two attackers. Mr. Hassani uses his hunting rifle against the robbers which leads to the death of one of them while the other one becomes paralyzed. Keramat Hassani had gone on a hunger strike last year protesting the authorities who had frequently tortured him.
- Iran [hanged six men](#) convicted of stealing 10kg of gold jewelry using cold weapons, the state media reported. The victims were convicted of stealing 10kg of gold in 2015 from a car carrying gold jewelry in Mashhad's airport Blvd. Although the culprits only injured one person during the incident, the six men, all under the age of 30, were sentenced to death for the charge of "Moharebeh" (enmity with God).



The names and characteristics of the executed in July are as follows:

Executions carried out in August 2018					
R	Name	Age	Date of execution	Place of execution	Official source
1	Unnamed		1-Aug-18	Rajaei Shahr Prison	
2	Unnamed		1-Aug-18	Rajaei Shahr Prison	
3	Unnamed		1-Aug-18	Rajaei Shahr Prison	
4	Unnamed		1-Aug-18	Rajaei Shahr Prison	
5	Unnamed		1-Aug-18	Rajaei Shahr Prison	
6	Unnamed		1-Aug-18	Rajaei Shahr Prison	
7	Miran Amiri	42	2-Aug-18	Zahedan Prison	
8	Ami Ali Kelivand	46	7-Aug-18	Bandar Abbas Central Prison	
9	Unnamed		8-Aug-18	Minab Central Prison	
10	Unnamed		8-Aug-18	Minab Central Prison	
11	Unnamed		8-Aug-18	Minab Central Prison	
12	Mohammad Abdi		8-Aug-18	Rajaei Shahr Prison	
13	Unnamed		8-Aug-18	Rajaei Shahr Prison	
14	Eivaz Bidast		8-Aug-18	Tabriz Central Prison	
15	Moslem Shiri		8-Aug-18	Ardebil Central Prison	
16	Milad Zia		15-Aug-18	Tabriz Central Prison	
17	Meysam		18-Aug-18	Mashhad Central Prison	Rokna news agency
18	Unnamed		18-Aug-18	Mashhad Central Prison	Rokna news agency
19	Unnamed		18-Aug-18	Mashhad Central Prison	Rokna news agency
20	Unnamed		18-Aug-18	Mashhad Central Prison	Rokna news agency
21	Unnamed		18-Aug-18	Mashhad Central Prison	Rokna news agency
22	Unnamed		18-Aug-18	Rajaei Shahr Prison	
23	Keramat Hassani		19-Aug-18	Gachsaran Prison	
24	Abbas Aghayi		19-Aug-18	Rajaei Shahr Prison	
25	Jafar Samimi	36	-21Aug-18	Maragheh Prison	
26	Shahram Mohammadi Vahed	38	26-Aug-18	Ardebil Central Prison	
27	Mojtaba Assadi		-30Aug-18	Rajaei Shahr Prison	
28	Vahidollah Loghmani	54	-30Aug-18	Rajaei Shahr Prison	
29	Unnamed			Rajaei Shahr Prison	
30	Unnamed			Rajaei Shahr Prison	

b. Arbitrary murders

Iran Human Rights Monitor recorded 10 arbitrary murders.

- On August 3, a protester identified by social media accounts as [Reza Otadi](#), 25, was shot and killed during protests in Karaj. Iranian authorities reportedly pressured relatives of Otadi to identify him as a pro-government militiaman.
- 20year old Sajjad Zargani was gunned down by state police, on August 16. He was on a motorcycle & didn't stop at a checkpoint. In response, the police opened fire & murdered the young man.
- Seven porters were shot and killed by border patrols. Two young men, Hasel Badbarin, 18, and Tohid Haghdar, 19, are among those killed.

c. Deaths in custody

At least six prisoners lost their lives due to being denied medical access, torture or committing suicide in Iran's prisons.

- An inmate of Urmia Central Prison, Moloud Vanousheh, who suffered intestinal illness, lost his life on August 3, due to being denied medical access.
- An inmate of Central Prison of Zahedan, took his own life on August 14, due to inhumane pressures imposed on him. There is no information available on his fate.
- Five inmates of Sanandaj Prison, attempted suicide on August 18, by taking pills and hanging themselves. One of them, Eghbal Khosravi lost his life and the others were taken to hospital.
- Majid Ebrahimi, director of a Telegram Messenger channel in Iran, was found dead on August 10, in a Shahreza road after disappearing for two days. Sources say authorities demanded he close down his social media channel but he refused.



Inhuman treatment and cruel punishments



- Iranian political prisoner, [Mohammad Mozaffari](#), received 74 lashes at Evin prison. According to the political prisoner's brother, on the morning of Sunday, August 5, Mohammad Mozaffari received 74 lashes. He was sentenced to 2 years imprisonment, 74 lashes, and a fine of 2 million Tomans on the charge of "propaganda against the system" and "insulting the leadership and the clergy" because of his peaceful activities and

disclosing information about the condition of political prisoners.

- The lawyer of teachers' rights activist, [Mohammad Habibi](#) said that his client has been sentenced to seven years and a half in prison, the state-run ISNA news agency reported on August 4, 2018.
- Attorney Amir Raisian was cited by the state media as saying that Mohammad Habibi was sentenced to seven years and a half by the branch 26 of Revolutionary Court.
- 17 members of Gonabadi Dervish order were sentenced to a total of 143 years behind bars, 1480 lashes, exile to remote locations, ban on leaving the country, and ban on any forms of social or political activities. Since May 2018, revolutionary courts have sentenced at least 208 members of the religious minority to prison terms and other punishments in trials that violate their rights, according to [Human Rights Watch](#).



- The 102nd branch of Criminal court sentenced Shoja Hossein Zadeh, director of the Baneh news Telegram Channel to 74 lashes. The verdict was issued on charges of insulting President Hassan Rouhani in the Bana news channel in the absence of Shoja Hossein Zadeh.

Arrests

Iran Human Rights Monitor registered 557 arrests across the country including 202 politically motivated arrests, eight arrests on religious and ethnic grounds, and 347 arbitrary arrests.

Here are some instances:

- According to the state media 20 protesters in Karaj were detained by security forces during the recent protests over high inflation and increasing economic hardship caused in part by the dramatic decline of the national currency, the rial. The actual figures however suggest that at least the authorities have detained more than [50 people](#) during protests in Tehran. A number of the detainees have been taken to the [Great Tehran Penitentiary](#).
- At the end of a football match on August 10, in Azadi Stadium between teams of Tehran and Tabriz in Tehran the state security forces arrested 43 fans.
- At least 17 fans were arrested after a football match in Ghadir Stadium of Ahvaz,
- The state security forces arrested at least 40 Azerbaijani Turkic activists on August 10, after attacking their camp in Mount Sabalan, northwest Iran.
- 40 men and women were arrested for taking part in a private party in South Khorasan's Province, in the suburbs of Birjand. South Khorasan's deputy Prosecutor, Mohammad Reza Arab Sheibani, said, "Those arrested aged 20 to 35 years." "The 24 women and 16 men were arrested on charges of consuming alcoholic drinks." he added. ([IRNA](#) state-run News Agency – Aug. 16, 2018)
- A wave of arrests of civil and human rights activists by Iran's security agents has led to the detainment of Zahra Modarreszadeh and her husband Reza Bozorgmehr, Sahar Kazemi, Nagisa Shahbazi, Nader Afshari, Farhad Meysami and Behnam Ebrahimzadeh.



Prisoners

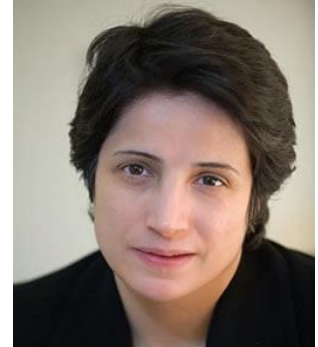
In the last few weeks, a number of prisoners across the country have declared hunger strike.

Nasrin Sotoudeh

Lawyer and human rights activist

Nasrin Sotoudeh started a hunger strike on August 25th in protest to her arrest and the judicial pressures being placed on her family, relatives, and friends.

She published an open letter outlining her reasons for the strike.



Ramin Hossein Panahi

Political prisoner

Sentenced to death, Ramin Hossein Panahi was recently transferred to Karaj's Rajai Shahr

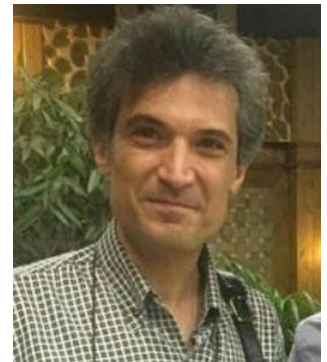
Prison and declared hunger strike on August 27th by sewing his lips together. He is protesting his sentence and multiple violations of his legal rights. His lawyers published a statement sharing the reasons behind the strike. According to them, his whereabouts have been unknown since his August 26th transfer out of Rajai Shahr.



Farhad Meysami

Civil rights activist

[Farhad Meysami](#) was arrested July 31st by security forces. He started a hunger strike August 1st, protesting his arrest and the constraints being placed on his choice of attorney. He was transferred from Evin's Quarantine Ward to the General Ward on August 26th, where he is reportedly suffering from low blood pressure and drastic weight loss.



Farhad Ariai (Sahrapeyma)

Political prisoner

Farhad Ariai (Sahrapeyma), a political prisoner in the Workers' Ward of Urmia Prison, is in the sixth year of his seven-year sentence. Eligible for early release per Article 134 on the serving of concurrent sentences, he declared hunger strike on August 15th when the court refused to review his request thereof. According to a credible source, Ariai was transferred to the quarantine ward immediately after starting his hunger strike.

Ariai also declared hunger strike last year when prison officials denied his request for furlough. In response to that strike, prison staff forcibly handcuffed and transferred him to the Workers' Ward of the prison, where he remains to this day.

Namegh Deldel

Prisoner of conscience

Sunni prisoner Namegh Deldel from hall 21, Ward 7 of Rajai Shahr Prison has been suffering from an injury to his right leg. In protest of his restricted access to medical care, including the prison's refusal to transfer him to an outside hospital, he has been on hunger strike for more than a month.

**Seyed Ghassem Abasteh**

Prisoner of conscience

Seyed Ghassem Abasteh, a Sunni prisoner in Karaj's Rajai Shahr prison, started a hunger strike on July 17th to protest his inadequate medical care and the prison's denial of his access to a clinic. Despite developing asthenia and severe weight loss as of the fifteenth day of his strike, prison authorities continue to ignore his pleas.

His poor health condition has been repeatedly reported on, and in March, he was diagnosed with thyroid cancer. His condition has deteriorated to the point that he struggles to speak and breathe.



Abasteh is married with two children. He was arrested in early 2010 and sent to solitary confinement in Urmia Prison, which is run by the Ministry of Intelligence. He spent eight months there before being transferred to Evin Prison, where he spent six months in the solitary cells of wards 240 and 209. After 14 months, he spent another 20 days in Ward 350 of Evin before finally being transferred to Rajai Shahr on April 8, 2012.

He faces charges such as "militant activity", accused of backing Salafi groups. He denied such involvement, saying the charges are baseless.

He has been awaiting trial since his 2016 prison sentence from Judge Moghiseh was nullified. He has thus far spent eight years in prison without due process.

Farshid Nasser

Prisoner of conscience

Sunni prisoner Farshid Nasser of Rajai Shahr started a hunger strike on June 16th to demand his right to furlough. Twenty-eight days later, his condition had severely deteriorated. He suffers from back and neck problems, in addition to psychological issues stemming from his years spent in prison.

**Saman Rahmani**

Saman Rahmani, a prisoner in the Health Ward of Sazez Prison, is on the verge of losing his arms after suffering an injury, yet continues to be denied the rights of furlough and access to a clinic. He started a hunger strike on July 20th in protest.

"Rahmani was to be sent to Karaj's Rajai Shahr prison for care, but prison authorities changed their minds," a credible source told Hrana.

When authorities promised him medical care earlier this year, he stopped the hunger strike he had started in June for the same reasons.

Varya Saed Mouchashmi

On August 19th, on orders from a Ward chief penalizing their refusal to end their hunger strike, five prisoners from Ward 3 of Rajai Shahr were beaten and sent to solitary confinement. They were reportedly striking to protest issues with their respective legal cases.

These prisoners to be Varya Saed Mouchashmi, Hossein Esmaeili, Saeed Moradpour, Mojtaba Kounani, and Alireza Kounani. As of August 27, 2018, Mouchashmi is the sole among the group to continue the strike.

In 1998, Mouchashmi, then 17, was sentenced to death and 80 lashings when he was convicted of aiding and abetting murder. He has so far served 21 years in prison.



Persecution of religious minorities

- Baha'i student [Romina Asgari](#) was expelled from Islamic Azad University Central Tehran Branch, because of her Baha'i faith. Romina Asgari was dismissed after her 4th semester from the University due to being a Baha'i.
- Sarir Mooghen, a 23-year-old Baha'i student, has been expelled from Isfahan's Azad University just one semester before she was due to complete her Bachelor's degree in architecture. She had been at the university since 2014. After the expulsion, security agents raided and searched Mooghen's home in Isfahan and interrogated her for hours.
- Iran The Revolutionary Court of Bushehr has sentenced a [Christian](#) couple and 10 other Iranian Christians to one year in prison each for 'Propagating against the state in favor of Christianity.' The group of Christian converts was arrested on April 7, 2015.
- Security forces have blocked the burial of a Baha'i citizen, Abbas Kholousi, in his hometown, Kerman, who died on August 7. After four days the family was forced to bury him in another city.
- A number of [Baha'is were arrested](#) on Friday, August 17, for their religious beliefs in Shiraz, southern Iran. They include Pezhman Shahrari, Dorna Esmaeili, Kourosh Rohani, Negar Misaghian and her husband Mahboub Habibi.