



NCRI Women's Committee

Monthly Report

April
2016

Introduction

The month of April was marked by the second round of so-called elections for the regime's parliament and the Assembly of Experts. The Iranian regime attempts to portray the elections as successful, investing much on the "record number of 17 women" elected to the tenth parliament. The fact is that Iranian women endeavored tremendously, launching various campaigns in an attempt to change the "male image" of the parliament. As expected, however, their efforts were futile under the absolute rule of the supreme ruler or the Vali-e Faqih the pillars of whose regime rely on misogyny and misogynic laws.

Numbers speak: 1126 women initially registered for election to the parliament. 1100 of them were disqualified by the Guardians' Council which decided that they did not have sufficient theoretical and practical allegiance to the Velayat-e Faqih. They considered only 26 women qualified to run for the parliament who in their views had proven their "allegiance to the principle of Velayat-e Faqih". So Iranian women had to choose their representatives from among those who were strongly loyal to the mullahs' Supreme Leader to fight for their rights.

Consequently, only 17 women were "elected" to the 290-member parliament, a meager 5.86 percent. The question is: Would they be able to prevent adoption of misogynist laws? Would they want to do so, at all? Will Iranian women enjoy more of their rights and freedoms? Or as it has been proven in the three years of Rouhani's government, their situation would ever more deteriorate? The facts that follow help shed some light on the prospects:

Systematic violations of the right to life

Executions, arbitrary killings, deaths in custody, and death sentences

Death penalties

The clerical regime had a strong start in repressive measures with the beginning of the Iranian New Year. Four women were hanged in the month of April.

Ameneh Rezaii, 43 years old, was executed in Kashmar, and two women were hanged in Birjand, in the northeastern province of Khorassan on April 14, 2016.

Zeinab Chamani, 27, was also hanged in Sari's Prison, northern Iran, on April 26, 2016.

The total number of executions under Rouhani thus reaches 67.

Inhumane treatment and cruel punishments

Amputation, flogging, torture and humiliation

The common and systematic practice of cruel punishments continued in the month of April. On April 27, 2016, a woman was flogged in public in the city of Golpayegan, in the central Province

of Isfahan. She was accused of having illicit relations out of marriage with another man. In addition to 100 lashes of the whip, she must spend 15 years in prison.

We also witnessed resumption of acid attacks in April. On April 4, a young woman in Tehran was attacked by acid and suffered burns in her face and hands. The assailant approached her with a motorcycle and fled after splashing the acid. Despite systematic repetition of this horrible crime, not a single one of the perpetrators of these crimes have been arrested.

Suppression and torture of women affected ranking woman officials. The regime methodically conceals political issues under the pretext of mal-veiling and social crimes, and so was case for Elmira Khamachi, member of the City Council of Tabriz, capital of the northwestern Province of East Azerbaijan. Reports in April indicated that she had been detained in solitary confinement under torture for more than 50 days. She was accused of mal-veiling and graft, while the real reason behind her arrest was that she had insulted Khamenei's representative and rejected allocation of any budget to the Revolutionary Guards Corps' social and economic plans while serving in the City Council's budget committee.



Arbitrary arrests

Political arrests



Nahid Gorji, a civil activist living in the city of Mashhad, reported in to the city's Vakilabad Prison on the morning of April 7 to begin serving her three-year sentence behind bars. The reason for her arrest and conviction is her activities in the social networks.

Nargess Farhadi, a member of Erfan Halgheh was summoned to the Prosecutor's Office at Evin Prison on April 6, to serve her one-year sentence in prison.



Kurdish student activist Afsaneh Bayazidi was arrested for the third time by agents of the Department of Intelligence in Boukan, West Azerbaijan Province (northwestern Iran).

The agents of the Intelligence Department of Boukan raided Ms. Bayazidi's residence on April 21, 2016, without presenting any warrants.



Social arrests

Soheila Mohammadi, a civil activist in the city of Sanandaj, west of Iran, was summoned by security forces to be questioned for taking part in the (Persian) New Year celebration. Security forces went to Mohammadi's house on March

31st and summoned her to 5th branch of the Sanandaj public prosecutor's office on the charge of "disrupting public order."

A number of environmental activists were arrested during a gathering April 1, 2016, at Tehran's Laleh Park in defense of animals' rights and environment. Plain clothes agents filmed the gathering and subsequently arrested a number of the participants including an Iranian actress, Hediye Tehrani.

Prison

Prison conditions



Many inmates in women's wards across Iran are forced to raise their children behind bars.

The state-run ILNA news agency reported citing that some 200 to 250 children are held in prison along with their mothers.

Prisoners also have to deal with illegal and inhuman pressures imposed on them.

Nazak Afshar was detained two months in horrible conditions in Evin Prison despite her abysmal health conditions. A former employee of the French Embassy in Iran, she was arrested upon arrival at the airport in March and transferred to prison. Ms. Afshar frequently lost consciousness and fainted, and her body got bruised all over. She was interrogated every day for several hours during which she blacked out several times. However, instead of taking her to the hospital, the interrogators resumed their work every time she came to.



Kurdish political prisoner Qadriyeh Qaderi, held in the women's ward of Yasouj Central Prison, is suffering from numerous infectious and orthopedic illnesses. However, she has been deprived of being sent to a hospital to receive treatment.



The physical conditions of political prisoner Sedigheh Moradi, a 1980s prisoner, is reported to be dire. She suffers from a reputed meniscus and tendon and a sciatic nerve condition, which have been further aggravated because of the location of the women's cellblock in Evin Prison where she has travel up and

down the stairs every day.

Sahar Eliyassi, 21, is detained in the Prison of Arak, Central Province, for her social network activities and "insulting the sanctities." Ms. Eliyassi was tricked to get out of her residence and subsequently arrested last December. She is presently awaiting her court hearing for revision of her verdict. (April 12)

The legal situation of Golnaz Ahang Khosh, detained by the Revolutionary Guards in June 2014 in the city of Orumiyeh along with a number of Kurdish activists, remains in limbo nearly two years after her arrest. She is currently held in Orumiyeh Prison.



The case of Maryam Akbari Monfared is currently under review at the Iranian Supreme Court. Mother of three girls, she was arrested in December 2009 during the uprisings. She has been suffering from a number of illnesses but officials have prevented her from being visited by specialists outside the prison and she has never been granted any leaves.

Basic freedom and rights abused

Iranian women are deprived of their basic rights by various means and methods. One of the rights that is most commonly violated is the right to choose their own clothing.



Ahmad Alamol-Hoda, Friday Prayer Leader and Khamenei's representative in Razavi Khorasan Province, preposterously declared that "mal-veiling is worse than embezzlement." (April 9, 2016)

Another stage of the activities of the Moral Security patrols began in the Iranian capital on April 16, 2016. The police and the State Security forces began dealing with individuals who fail to observe the government's mandatory dress code, and women who drop their veils while driving, etc. The Moral Security patrols are stationed with their vehicles or motorcycles in front of shopping malls and centers, main squares, also on highways and high-traffic avenues.



7000 undercover police agents have also been organized to work in line with the Moral Security Plan. This was announced by

Tehran's Police Chief, Hossein Sajedi-nia. The SSF has been praised and lauded by various officials for implementing this plan.

Compulsory veiling also affected flight attendants of Air France who refused to work on flights to Tehran.

Women's deprivation of their basic social rights has led to many grave consequences. In 2015, women under 20 years of age comprised the largest number of applicants for divorce in the Province of Mazandaran. 40 per cent of the total number of applicants for divorce and 90 per cent of these cases lead to divorce. The condition is particularly caused by forcible marriages and marriages under the legal age.

There were also many instances of domestic violence against women disseminated by the media, but not followed up by Iranian authorities in charge. Sakineh Ozbak, 15, who had been forced to

marry an old man at the age of 14, was beaten up by her husband and thrown out the window of the third floor. She is presently abandoned in a hospital without government agencies following up to pay for her treatment and have her released.

The rape and murder of six-year-old Setayesh from Afghanistan shocked Iran.

Women were reported murdered in at least 94 headlines published in the news from March 21, 2015 until March 19, 2016 (the past Iranian year 1394).

It was also reported that a woman by the name of Azam was tortured virtually to death for 21 days by her husband who can be easily released from prison on a bail of 20 million toumans. Shahindokht Molaverdi, Rouhani's deputy on Women and Family Affairs, admitted that the 21-day torture of Azam took place after she received no legal protection from relevant authorities. Women's suicide also took on a rising trend in the month of April, and included the successful suicide attempts by two 10 and 15-year-old Kurdish and Turkish girls as well as a pregnant woman.

Religious and ethnic minorities



Sahar Panahi, a fifth-term student of literature, learned that she had been deprived of continuing her education when she referred to the website of Payam-Noor University. She was expelled from university only because she is a Baha'ii.

Discrimination against women

Discrimination against women has been admitted time and again by officials of the Iranian regime. One common form of discrimination manifests itself in the segregation of public places. In the month of April, Iranian officials announced that a wagon had been allocated only to women on the Tehran-Mashhad train of Nour Railways.



Women's entry to sports stadiums continues to be banned and officials have set various retrogressive conditions on women's entry.

Farnaz Esmailzadeh who has been winning medals in rock climbing for many years, spoke of various discriminations in her field.



Iranian gymnast, Mahsa Ahmadi was not allowed to continue her sports activities after she was 18 and so she went to Hollywood where she won awards as the best stunt actress.

Of course, sports is not the only problem women face in Iran. The state-run iranestekhdam.ir website reported that women's employment

in Iran is considered as nearly non-existent.

According to a survey done by Talent Job Institute in Iran, women receive 29% smaller wages than men. Female laborers constitute only 5 per cent of the workers community, and consequently their fundamental rights are easily ignored.

Soheila Jelodarzadeh, former member of the parliament, said female workers receive at least one-fourth of their male counterparts. She underlined the fact that women have to accept such exploitative conditions because they are so desperately in need of some financial source.

Jelodarzadeh also pointed out that more than 2.5 million women are looking for jobs without any success and are suffering under poverty and destitution.

Alireza Mahjoub, Secretary General of the Workers' House, also admitted: "In factories and workshops, we see that women's job security is threatened by marriage or pregnancy. Most companies refuse to hire women who have infants or small children."

Women's protests

Mothers of execution victims and political prisoners were most active in the month of April by undertaking activities, condemning the common practice of the death penalty in Iran.

Sholeh Pakravan, mother of Reyhaneh Jabbari, young interior designer who was executed for defending herself against an intelligence official, addressed the mullahs' Chief Justice in a letter after a young man, Heiman Oraminejad, received the death sentence. She wrote in her letter: "Judges who sign such verdicts must know that on the reckoning day, they must answer for every single one of their signatures. What a bad fate is awaiting them on that day."



She also addressed the mother of the 27-year-old execution victim, Ms. Zeinab Chamani, who was just recently hanged. She wrote: You must choose how to spend the rest of your life. Will you hide in the house and cry out yourself, or will you join the ranks of advocates of "No to the Death Penalty!" You can try to save other young women from being hanged.

Teachers' protest has also continued since a few months ago. On April 18, 2016, a large group of teachers gathered in Tehran and protested low monthly salaries for teachers. Most of the participants in this gathering were women.