



MONTHLY REPORT  
NCRI WOMEN'S COMMITTEE  
**MAY 2023**



**IRAN**

Families Protest as  
**EXECUTIONS SOAR**

Targeting Voices of Change

## Families Protest as Executions Soar in Iran, Targeting Voices of Change

The month of May saw the executions of at least 146 prisoners in Iran, including three women and three political prisoners.

One of the three women executed was the 39-year-old Madineh Sabzevan, the mother of five children. She was hanged on drug-related charges while the mullahs' parliament had approved a bill on August 13, 2017 to restrict the death penalty to drug lords and crime syndicates and punish small-time offenders with jail time. Investigations show most drug peddlers are not the actual smugglers or ringleaders, but are dragged and/or tempted into the crime due to poverty, joblessness and hopelessness. ([The Financial Times](#), August 14, 2017)

On various instances, these families and their young children gathered outside the mullahs' [Judiciary in Tehran](#) and in front of other prisons in Isfahan, Bandar Abbas, [Karaj](#), etc. urging the authorities not to execute their loved ones. They vehemently protested the rising number of executions and demanded an immediate halt to the unjust execution orders imposed on their loved ones.



Families rally outside the Judiciary HQ in Tehran

Carrying heartfelt messages, [the children of the prisoners](#) held signs displaying phrases such as "Don't execute my father" and "No to execution," passionately urging an end to these acts of capital punishment.

Of course, the State Security Force dealt with them brutally and fired tear gas at them.



Families of death-row prisoners wounded in raid by SSF

During the [nightly protests](#) against the execution of three political prisoners in Isfahan on May 19, some 100 individuals, including 40 women, were arrested in Tehran and transferred to Evin, Qarchak, and Greater Tehran prisons.

The execution of so many people in just one month has brought tremendous suffering to their mothers, wives, and families, especially the families of protesters detained during the 2022-2023 uprising.

The families of [executed protesters](#), Saleh Mir-Hashemi, Majid Kazemi, and Saeed Yaghoubi suffered greatly as the security services did not allow them to bury their children. Security forces buried the three protesters in three distant locations and did not allow their families to hold funeral ceremonies for them.



Family of Saleh Mir-Hashemi mourning at this grave

Intelligence authorities called Majid Kazemi's brother and told him to join them without telling anyone. Then they took the body to a remote location and put Majid Kazemi in a ditch that was too small for him. After burying him, the authorities told his brother to call home and let their family know that he was buried.

Even worse, the regime violently arrested and detained the sister and two brothers of the executed protester, Majid Kazemi.

As for Saleh Mir-Hashemi, the prison authorities gave assurances to his mother, that they would not execute him, but they did. His mother said, "They handcuffed his father and took Saleh's body to a remote village and buried him there. They didn't allow us to hold a ceremony."



Mothers of Kurds killed by security forces during Iran protests

### **The regime's tactics to prevent the outbreak of another uprising**

The alarming surge in executions follows other tactics by the regime to prevent the outbreak of another uprising by a disgruntled and defiant populace seeking its overthrow.

First, it granted amnesty to 82,000 prisoners, 22,000 of whom were detained protesters, to calm down the infuriated populace. Shortly after, however, the Judiciary began to summon the released protesters and put them back in prison, for various reasons.

Another tactic was the chemical attacks on schoolgirls, which has continued for six months, in an effort to silence the young women who were bravely vocal during Iran protests and uprising. It further keeps people busy with their children's life-and-death.

The regime has also been rounding up activist teachers and labor activists, depriving student activists from continuing their studies and entering the campus, even banning them from living in dormitories. Other groups of citizens targeted by the mullahs' Judiciary are journalists and human rights lawyers.

A [Kurdish source](#) reported that at least 107 citizens, including 21 women, were arrested or abducted in May.

### **Human rights lawyers summoned to Evin Security Court**

An estimated 130 lawyers from across the country, including dozens of women, have been summoned or arrested by the Judiciary since September 2022 and the beginning of the Iran uprising. Their charges range from practicing their profession to expressing views on social media.

The trend has picked up since the second week of May with 70 lawyers summoned. The proceedings are mostly conducted by the security court located in Tehran's notorious Evin Prison with no specific charges stated.

Lawyers are being urged during the hearings to sign a prewritten "commitment letter" pledging adherence to the law as a condition for their release on bail. The letter contains an "expression of

regret" for nationwide protests and a pledge not to contact "networks outside the country and counter-revolutionary elements."

The move is a pressure tactic to keep lawyers from supporting the protests and protesters.

Branch 29 of the Revolutionary Court in Tehran sentenced Ms. [Marzieh Nikara](#), a prominent human rights lawyer, to one year of imprisonment on May 14.



Tutia Partovi Amoli, Marzieh Nikara, and Forough Sheikhol Eslami Vatani

Another human rights lawyer, [Farzaneh Zilabi](#), was sentenced to 1.5 years of imprisonment by the Revolutionary Court of Ahvaz.



Farzaneh Zilabi

Nazanin Salari, Forough Sheikhol Eslami Vatani, Tutia Partovi Amoli, [Mitra Izadifar](#), [Marjan Esfahanian](#), [Samin Cheraghi](#), and [Sara Hamzezadeh](#) were also among lawyers summoned to appear before the court.



Samin Cheraghi, Mitra Izadifar, Sara Hamzezadeh, Marjan Esfahanian

The escalating number of lawyers being summoned to the Tehran Security Court has raised alarm, especially considering the increased risk of executing more protesters without access to independent and fair representation. The clerical regime has so far executed seven protesters, including three on May 19.

In a shocking revelation on the death of a lawyer after being released from prison, her mother said that her newly wed daughter, [Maryam Arvin](#), who had been arrested for defending her clients, had been injected with drugs under the pretext of injecting tranquilizers and sedatives. The injections caused her death after being released on bail.



Maryam Arvin

### Teachers arrested for protesting their unacceptable conditions

The clerical regime is putting more pressure on teachers through arrests, summonses, and expulsions. The Security Department and the Administrative Violations Board of the Ministry of Education have practically turned into the arms of security forces over the past year. They have concentrated all their efforts on baseless file-making for activist teachers to suppress their protests.

There was a series of unjust expulsions, arrests, and protests involving teachers in Iran during the month of May. These actions reflect a growing pattern of repression and intimidation against educators who dare to speak up for their rights or advocate for a better education system.

[Widespread teacher protests](#) were staged in 14 provinces on May 9, demonstrating the collective frustration and demands for change within the education system. Teachers have been subjected to harsh treatment, including arbitrary arrests, detention, and even hunger strikes, as they demand fair working conditions and an inclusive educational environment.



Atekeh Rajabi, Fatemeh Tadrissi, Kowkab Badaghi

One notable case was that of [Atekeh Rajabi](#), a teacher who was arrested before she joins the teachers' protest in Mashhad on May 9. She went on a [hunger strike](#) to protest her unfair dismissal and the broader repression of teachers in Iran.

[Fatemeh Tadrisi](#) was also arrested and imprisoned in Tehran on May 9, 2023.

[Ms. Fariba Anami](#), a brave and well-respected teacher in Anzali was expelled upon an unjust and oppressive order. She had been teaching in high schools in Gilan and Anzali for over 25 years.

Currently, at least 16 freedom-loving teachers are imprisoned in various prisons. Among the charges against these teachers are meeting with the families of those killed during recent protests and sharing content in solidarity with the protests on social media.

[Ms. Farzaneh Nazeranpour](#), a teacher residing in Tehran, is among the imprisoned teachers. In mid-March, she was sentenced to ten months in prison by Branch 26 of the Revolutionary Court of Tehran on charges of "propaganda against the state" and "disturbing public opinion." After the Revision Court upheld the sentence, she was transferred to Evin Prison on May 2, 2023.



Fariba Anami and Farzaneh Nazeranpour

Furthermore, eleven teachers, including [Ms. Kowkab Badaghi](#) and Ms. Zahra Bakhtiyari, have been indicted in Khuzestan province. The defense attorney of these teachers has stated that the charges against them include "membership in groups aimed at undermining national security" and "propaganda activities against the Islamic Republic system."

### **Student activists deprived of continuing their education**

After the widespread arrests and imprisonment of students who had been at the forefront of the 2022-2023 uprising, the Iranian regime has begun depriving dozens of students of education to exert more pressure on this intellectual and freedom-loving class. Among those who were denied education are a considerable number of female students.

The [female students](#) who were denied education included Zahra Rahimi, a chemistry student at Yazd University, Shahin Dabestani, a medical science student in Tabriz, Aida Ghorbani, an Italian language student at Tehran University, Shakiba Hoshidar, a mechanical engineering student at Razi University in Kermanshah, Niloufar Mirzaii, a graphics student at Al-Zahra University in Tehran, and students from Damghan University such as Bahareh Davani, Mobina Yaqubzadeh, Mahsa Soltani, and Parizad Esmaili.



Fatemeh Sadrifar, Motahareh Gouneii, and Sepideh Rashno

[Motahareh Gouneii](#), a dentistry student and the political secretary of the Students Association at Tehran University and its School of Medical Sciences, has been expelled from the university and prohibited from studying at any institution for the next five years.

[Fatemeh Sadrifar](#), a dentistry student at Oom University of Medical Sciences, has been suspended from academic activities for four terms and will be required to change her study location.

[Sepideh Rashno](#) has been banned from studying at Al-Zahra University for a period of two terms for her failure to observe the compulsory Hijab in university environments.

Sohila Sepidedam, a pharmacy student, and Elaheh Ashrafpour, a nursing student, were among [eight medical students](#) in Tabriz sentenced to academic suspension and exile to the cities of Ahvaz, Semnan, Kashan, Urmia, and Ardabil. These unjust verdicts were issued after these students protested the widespread poisoning of schools during a gathering on March 7, 2023.



Soheila Sepidedam and Elaheh Ashrafpour

[Fahimeh Soltani](#), a student at Isfahan University, was sentenced to a 2.5-term academic suspension by the university's disciplinary committee.



Fahimeh Soltani

[Mowlud Safari](#), a painting student at Al-Zahra University, and several other students, faced a ban from entering the university on May 20. Ms. Safari was deprived of education for two terms for failing to comply with the compulsory Hijab policy on the campus of this all-women college. Her sentence was issued based on an unclear photo, and the photo's attribution to her was also unclear.



Mowlud Safari

### Dedication brings personal cost for journalists

The regime's Judiciary is summoning journalists who were previously released in February, falsely claiming to have granted them amnesty. However, journalist [Maryam Vahidian](#) was sentenced to four years in prison.



Maryam Vahidian

[Marzieh Mahmoudi](#), a journalist and the editor of Tejaratnews, has been sentenced by the court to pay a cash penalty of 24 million Tomans for posting a single tweet, objecting to the highly foul language used by Mullah Hamid Rasaii, a former MP, against freedom-loving protesters.



Marzieh Mahmoudi

On May 20, [Nasim Sultan Beigi](#), a journalist, and former student activist, appeared before the fourth branch of the Evin Prosecutor's Office to defend against charges of "propaganda against the state," and "assembly and collusion." Ms. Sultan Beigi had been arrested at an airport on January 11, and released on bail on February 6, 2023.



Nasim Sultan Beigi

In the meantime, [Vida Rabbani](#), a journalist, was transferred from Evin prison to Tehran's Taleghani hospital for much-needed medical treatment, on May 21. She had been grappling with severe headaches for the past two months, but the relevant authorities staunchly opposed her transfer to an external medical facility.



Vida Rabbani

The closed-door trials of two renowned journalists, detained since September 2022 for reporting the death and burial ceremony of [Mahsa Amini](#), were held at Tehran's Revolutionary Court, on May 29 and 30. [Niloufar Hamed](#) and [Elaheh Mohammadi](#) were not allowed to meet their lawyers in advance.



Elaheh Mohammadi and Niloufar Hamed

The trial for Ms. Hamed lasted only two hours, and her defense attorneys were not granted time to present their defense. Ms. Hamed rejected the charges against her, including “collaboration with enemy government (US)” and “propaganda against the state.”

[Reporters without Borders](#) condemned the show trials aimed at legitimizing harassment of the two journalists, and called for their immediate release.

### Harassment and detention of labor and human rights activists

The clerical regime has conducted widespread arrests targeting labor activists, women's rights activists, and human rights activists.



Labor activists Sarvnaz Ahmadi, Asal Mohammadi, Reyhaneh Ansarinejad, and Anisha Assadollahi

On the eve of Teachers' Day in Iran (May 2), security services raided the residence of an imprisoned teacher and [arrested](#) several teachers and labor activists. Among them, [Anisha Assadollahi](#) who was later sentenced to five years and eight months of imprisonment.

[Zhina Modarres Gorji](#), an advocate for women's rights, is currently detained in the women's ward of Sanandaj Prison. She endured 40 days of solitary confinement and torture to extract false confessions.



Zhina Modarres Gorji

On May 29, [Hamideh Zeraii](#), one of the detainees of the nationwide protests in 2022, was arrested by security forces at her residence and transferred to an undisclosed location.

Ms. Zareii had been arrested during the Iran uprising on November 3, but was released from the Kachouii Prison of Karaj on February 7, 2023, following the regime's amnesty show.

She was summoned to the Prosecutor's Office in Karaj on May 3, on charges of "engaging in propaganda activities in favor of groups opposing" the clerical regime, before being arrested.



Hamideh Zareii

These women activists and journalists have tirelessly worked to report the truth, improve working conditions, and fight against human rights violations. Unfortunately, their dedication has come at a tremendous personal cost under the oppressive rule of the regime.

### Heavy sentences for protesters

On May 28, prison sentences were communicated to the [three women political prisoners](#), Zeinab Hamrang, Shiva Esmaeili, and Soodabeh Fakharzadeh.

The three women had been tried on May 14, in the absence of their lawyers.

Political prisoner Zeinab Hamrang, 58, was sentenced to 5 years in prison on charges of "assembly and collusion." Ms. Shiva Esmaeili, 58, was sentenced to 10 years in prison on charges including "assembly and collusion." Ms. Soodabeh Fakharzadeh, 65, was sentenced to 5 years in prison on charges of "propaganda against the state."



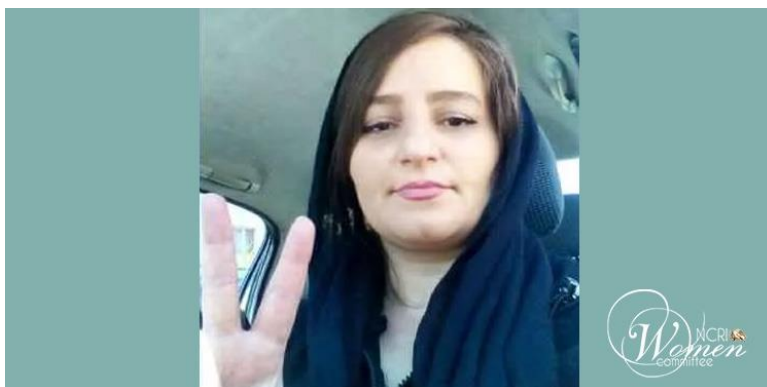
Zeinab Hamrang

In the meantime, labor activist [Nasrin Javadi](#), 65, who suffers from several diseases, is denied treatment at a civic hospital despite her dire conditions. She is serving her five-year sentence in Evin Prison, since July 2, 2022. She spent 50 days in solitary confinement.



Nasrin Javadi

On May 14, political prisoner [Massoumeh Senobari](#), resorted to a desperate act of self-harm in Fardis (Kachouii) Prison of Karaj. She cut her wrist in protest against the escalating pressure and torture she endures. She is isolated from other prisoners and is not allowed to talk to anyone. Her limited short calls home has also been hampered, as the authorities refuse to let her recharge her phone card.



Massoumeh Senobari

Massoumeh Senobari, 35, has a daughter. She was arrested on December 13, 2022, in Karaj. Accused of leading the protests, she is sentenced to 7.5 years in detention.



Arghavan Fallahi

On May 30, [four political prisoners](#), Arghavan Fallahi, Nasrollah Fallahi, Ardavan Fallahi, and Ms. Parvin Mirasan, were accused of “waging war against God,” “corruption on Earth through extensive destructive actions,” and “assembly and collusion against internal and external national security.”

Agents of the Intelligence Department of Piranshahr re-arrested [Soada Khadirzadeh](#) and her one-year-old daughter on May 19, only several hours after she left prison on temporary leave. The Kurdish political prisoner is imprisoned in the women’s ward of the Central Prison of Urmia.



Soada Khadirzadeh

The Iranian regime seeks to silence dissenting voices and suppress the Iranian people’s aspirations. However, Iranian people, particularly women, remain resilient and determined to continue their fight for a better future. The struggles outlined in this bulletin highlight the ongoing battle for freedom and democracy in Iran.