

IRAN PROTESTS

FEMINISTS & WHRDS DETAINED

NO.8



February 2023

FEMINISTS & WHRDS DETAINED



Five months have passed since the start of the uprising in Iran. Hundreds of protesters remain behind bars, facing long-term sentences, court hearings, and uncertainty over their trials. On February 5, 2023 however, Gholamhossein Mohseni-Ejei, the head of Iran's judiciary, announced that tens of thousands of protesters and other prisoners would be pardoned as part of an amnesty in observance of the 44th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution. There are, however, certain conditions regarding pardons and commute of sentences. For example, those charged with "enmity with God or Corruption on Earth" which could carry the death penalty, those charged with "espionage" or those facing charges of "direct links with foreign intelligence services, murder, or attack on governmental, military and public sites, through vandalism or arson" will not be eligible for pardons, or early release under the amnesty scheme.

Rights groups had estimated the number of those arrested in relation to the protests at around 20,000, with over 5000 names confirmed. But recent commentary from those close to the government indicates that the severity of crackdowns and widespread arrests were in fact much higher than previously believed. For example, some political figures celebrating the benevolence of the state on social media for releasing prisoners as well as a February 7, 2023 report published on a website called Roydad-24 have claimed that up to 100,000 prisoners would benefit from the amnesty scheme, with 30,000 of them having been arrested in relation to the recent protests.



Initially there was much speculation about the reason for the widespread amnesties. Some rights groups dismissed the amnesty program by claiming that it would not benefit political prisoners or those arrested in protests. But the amnesty has in fact benefitted a large number of prisoners, the exact figures remain unknown. For example, according to Femena's sources, 35 of the 61 political prisoners in Evin's women's ward and 43 of the 49 women political prisoners in Qarchak prison have been released following the amnesty scheme, with many of them being women human rights defenders.

Some observers believe the amnesty was provided at an opportune time when protests had died down, as such the state and security forces were not experiencing a direct threat. If the protests were continuing in their full force, these analysts believe, then amnesty would not have been provided.

Other factors, according to observers, have also contributed to the decision on amnesty. For example, the high number of detainees and insufficient prison capacity to accommodate the current prisoners has been cited as one of the main reasons behind the recent amnesty. According to reports from those recently released, prison conditions have been so overcrowded that prisoners often could not find enough space to sleep, many were suffering from hunger and prisons were unable to feed inmates.

Others have speculated that the amnesty was a preemptive move intended to prevent the formation of networks of dissent among prisoners and their families. In fact, political prisoners have long organized to express dissent, by issuing statements, staging sit-ins and resisting injustice. The large number of protesters arrested, many unversed and inexperienced in political activism, being held alongside more experienced activists, allows for the formation of connections between like-minded individuals who are discontent with the status quo. These prisoners can continue their their connections and collaborations long after being released which would prove problematic for the state.



Further, family members of political prisoners were also connecting during their visits to the prison and organizing in support of their imprisoned loved ones. For a state and security system long opposed to the formation of civic and political networks, prisons were serving as a breeding ground allowing dissatisfied citizens to find one another and organize.

While the amnesty scheme has benefited a number of political prisoners and many protesters, it is still criticized by rights groups for pushing those who are released to admit to their guilt in writing, express repentance and commit to not engaging in any form of social or political activism upon release. This places an undue burden on those pardoned, because if they are perceived as violating the terms of their release they could be taken back to prison. So, they may be free, but continue to be at imminent risk of re-arrest. Other prisoners have been asked to post bail as a condition of their release.

It should be noted that some who have refused to sign such statements or to post bail have still been released, but their numbers are limited. Furthermore, better known political prisoners, like Farhad Meysami, who refused to post bail or sign statements of repentance was still released. Farhad Meysami, who was serving a prison term for opposing the mandatory hijab, made the news on February 2, 2023, when he released pictures of his emaciated body due to a hunger strike. While his release is welcome, he along with several other notable political prisoners who were released under the amnesty scheme, had already served the bulk of their sentences. Others such as **Yasaman Aryani and Aliye Motallebzadeh** were also released after serving a substantial portion of their sentence.



Meanwhile, many WHRDs and HRDs facing serious charges or already serving long prison sentences have not been able to benefit from the amnesty scheme. This includes those arrested in relation to the recent protests, such as journalists and WHRDs **Niloufar Hamed**i and **Elahe Mohammadi** as well as those who face other charges like **Bahareh Hedayat**, **Narges Mohammadi**, or **Vida Rabbani**.

The release of so many prisoners, especially ordinary protesters with no or little experience of prior political and social activism, also increases fears about the fate of those left behind. It is clear that the state views those not released as a serious threat and as such, their welfare is in danger. Fourteen protesters remain on death row and are in imminent danger of execution. In the past five months, four protesters, **Mohsen Shekari**, **Majidreza Rahnava**rd, **Seyed Mohammad Hosseini**, and **Mohammad Mahdi Karmi**, were executed in short trials that failed to meet due process standards.

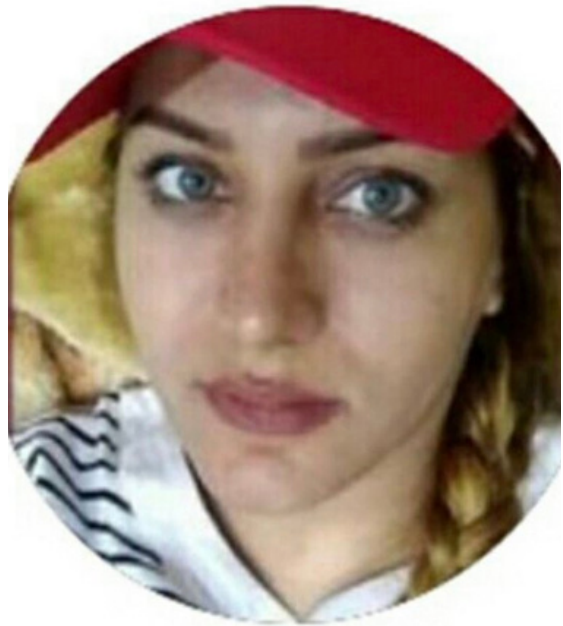
So the need for human rights groups to remain vigilant and focused on the situation of prisoners is as critical as ever.

This current report, the 8th in the series, highlights the arrests, intimidations, and suppression of 51 imprisoned WHRDs, arrested in relation to the protests. Some of these prisoners remain in prison; some have been temporarily released on bail, awaiting their trial, and others have received their sentences. Femena aims to document the cases of WHRDs arrested in the aftermath of the Woman, Life, Freedom uprising, with the aim of raising awareness and ensuring that their cases are followed by international bodies, rights groups, and feminist movements who can provide solidarity and continue to demand their release.

FEMINISTS & WHRDS DETAINED

Vira Akbarzadeh

Vira Akbarzadeh, a children's rights activist, was arrested at her home on September 27, 2022, by Bushehr Ministry of Intelligence security forces. Her case was sent to the Revolutionary Court on charges of "acting against national security" and she reportedly has been pressured to make a forced confession. **She was released on bail on October 4, 2022.**



Raha (Zahra) Teimouri

Raha (Zahra) Teimouri, a Psychology graduate from Tehran University, was sentenced in the 105th Branch of Shahriyar's Criminal court to one year of imprisonment and 74 lashes for "disturbance of the public peace." This sentence was later confirmed by the 36th Branch of the Appeal court. According to her lawyer, Mohammad Ali Kamfiroozi, although bail was set by the court for Zahra Teimouri's temporary release, the lower court and appeals court refused to release her, despite repeated inquiries and in-person follow-ups made by her lawyers. It should be noted that Zahra Teimouri has been detained since September 25, 2022, and her sentence cannot be appealed or converted to a fine.

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Marzieh (Rozhin) Yousefzadeh

Marzieh (Rozhin) Yousefzadeh, a 26-year old from Mahabad, was arrested on September 18, 2022, on Valiasr Street, two days after Mahsa Amini's death, while holding a protest sign with her friends and was transferred to Qarchak Prison. She was sentenced to 5 years in prison and is currently is serving her term. **She was released on February 16, 2023.**



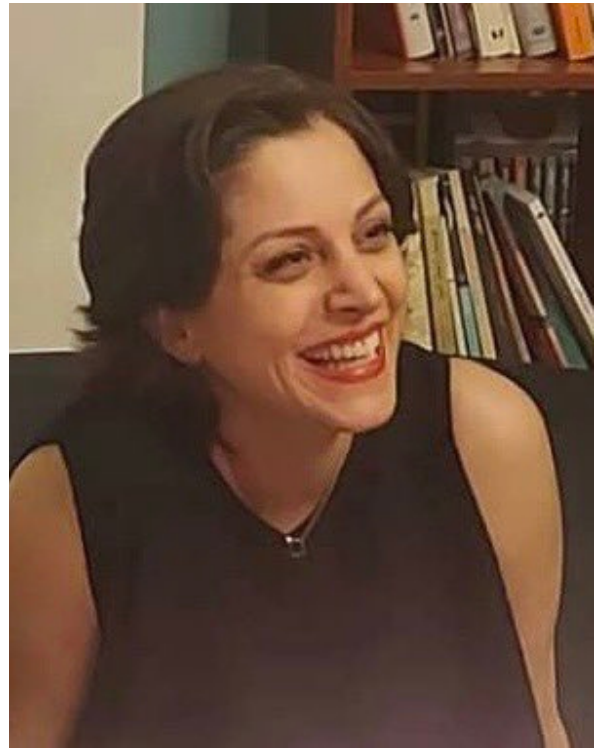
Vajiheh Pari Zanganeh

Vajiheh Pari Zanganeh, a graphic artist, has been detained since October 1, 2022, and was sentenced to six years in prison. One of the charges against Vajiheh was wearing clothing with a quote from the supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei embroidered on it. The quote "we should shed tears of blood wailing for the Islamic society that has been forced to even propose me [as supreme leader]" is from a 1989 video in which Ayatollah Ali Khamenei addressed the Assembly of Experts before his appointment. **She was released on bail on February 10, 2023.**

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Nazanin Kaynejad

Nazanin Kaynejad, an interpreter and an activist based in Tehran, was arrested on October 8 when security forces raided her private home and was imprisoned for over 100 days. She was temporarily released on bail from Qarchak Prison in Varamin on January 17, 2023. On January 18, 2023 in a ruling by Judge Salavati, she was sentenced to four years in prison and a two-year ban on leaving the country, membership in political parties, factions, and groups, and activities in cyberspace.



Maliheh Daraki

Maliheh Daraki, a journalist and photographer from Shiraz, was arrested by plainclothes agents on October 28, 2022, during protests on Eram Street in Shiraz and was taken to Adelabad Prison. Her whereabouts, condition, and charges against her are not known. Reportedly, her family was not allowed visitations and has been pressured.

Saeedeh Mirghorbani

Saeedeh Mirghorbani, a 32-year-old lawyer from Babolsar, Mazandaran, was summoned by Babolsar Security Police Department on December 3, 2022, and was arrested after refusing to sign a letter apologizing for her activities on social media. **She was released on bail on January 22, 2023.**



Neda Mohseni

Neda Mohseni, a 35-year-old sociologist from Isfahan, was arrested on December 24, 2022, five days before her birthday, while participating in protests. She has been subjected to physical and psychological torture during her detention. On December 29, 2022, she was sentenced to eight years in prison, a two-year travel ban, and mandatory attendance in the "Behavior Management and Crime Prevention" course by Isfahan Judiciary. **On February 10, 2023, she was released temporarily on bail.**

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Fariba Mostafavi

Fariba Mostafavi, a professor emeritus at Al-Zahra University, international Tai Chi instructor, and Wushu Federation master coach, was arrested around November. Her situation remains uncertain, and she has been denied legal counsel. As of now the charges against her and her whereabouts are unknown.



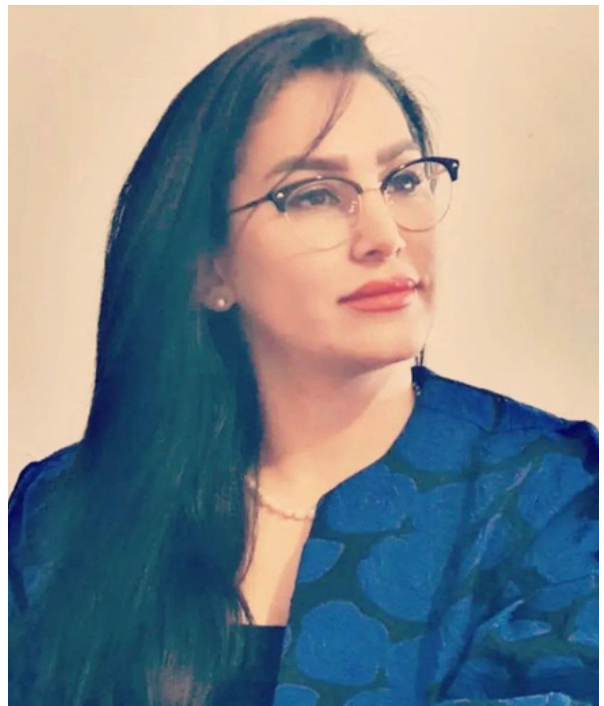
Soheila Kahledian

Soheila Kahledian, a teacher in Sanadaj's 1st District, and environmental, civic, and union activist, was arrested at her home on November 12, 2022. The Revolutionary Guard's Intelligence Organization raided her home and arrested her without an arrest warrant. She was released on bail on December 12, 2022, and is currently awaiting trial.

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Fariba Kamali

Fariba Kamali, 44 years old, was arrested on December 18, 2022 during a violent raid of her home by the security forces and was transferred to Section 209 of Evin Prison. Her situation remains uncertain, and she has been denied legal counsel. **On January 23, 2023, Fariba was temporarily released on bail.**

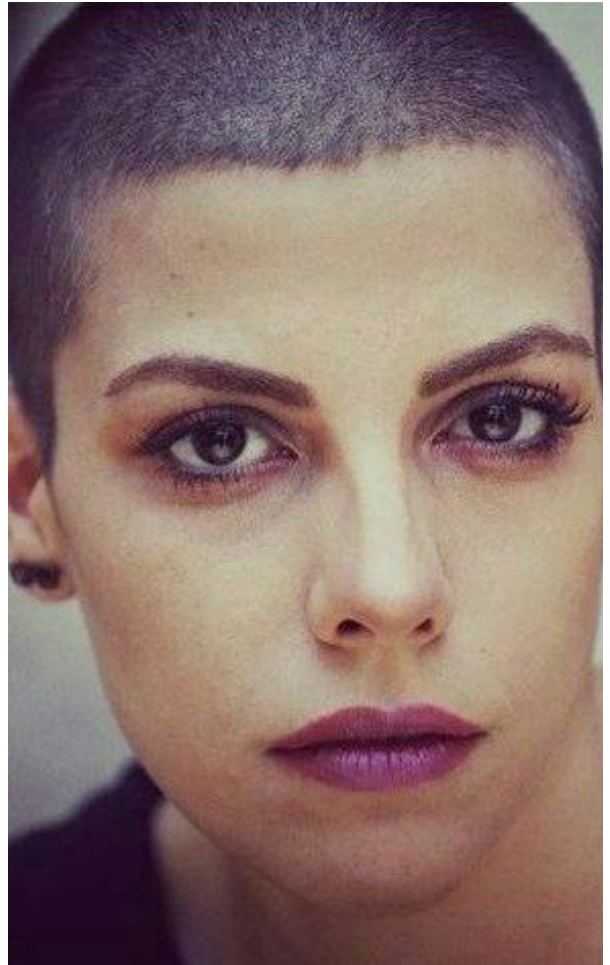


Negin Kiani

Negin Kiani, a lawyer, and member of the East Azerbaijan Bar Association was arrested on October 31, 2022, and temporarily released on November 13, 2022. On December 21, she was sentenced by the courts to one year in prison, a travel ban and seizure of her cell phone. **On February 7, 2023, the appeal court sentenced her to pay a fine in the amount of 10 million Toman instead of a 4-month imprisonment, two years travel ban, and confiscation of her mobile phone.**

Shiva Shabani

Shiva Shabani, a freelance cinematographer and theatre artist, was arrested in late October. Shiva Shabani and her husband Farshad Parsa, who was arrested with her, were transferred to Qarchak and Fashafouyeh prisons after being interrogated. On January 20, Shiva Shabani was sentenced by Tehran's Revolutionary Court's 15th Branch to five years in prison on charges of "assembly and collusion," 1 year on charges of "propaganda against the state," a two-year ban on leaving the country, a two-year ban on membership in political parties, factions, and groups, writing for printed media and activities in cyberspace, and a two-year ban on working in film, theater and radio industries. She was released on bail in late November.



Mashal Alamdari

Mashal Alamdari, a 33-year-old from Noorabad in Mamasani, was arrested on November 6, 2022 for walking without a hijab and holding signs. It is unclear what charges were brought against her, and no further detail is available on her release.

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Kokab Bodaghi

Kokab Bodaghi, a teacher and union activist, was summoned to the court on November 7. In previous years she has been summoned, brought to court, and interrogated repeatedly for her workers' rights demands and union activities. Islamic Republic has launched a wave of summoning teachers to various security agencies to suppress people's movement.



Fatemeh (Naazi) Habibi

Fatemeh (Naazi) Habibi, a graphic artist and theatre actor living in Mehrshahr in Karaj, was arrested in her car in Chitgar on November 25, and her car and mobile phone were seized. She was reportedly transferred to Qarchak prison and is still being detained despite promises made by judicial authorities for her temporary release. Meanwhile, she has been denied legal counsel of her choice and is being coerced to make a confession. **She has been released on February 14, 2023.**



FEMINISTS & WHRDS DETAINED

Jasmine Haj Mirza Mohammadi

Jasmine Haj Mirza Mohammadi, a graduate of Soore University, was arrested on November 3rd after attending the ceremony for the 40th Day after Hadis Najafi's death in Karaj and was transferred to Kachuei Prison. She was sentenced to 5 years in prison and a two-year ban from employment in the field of education on charges of "collusion with the intent to commit crimes against internal security" and "propaganda against the state through slogans." Jasmine's trial was held virtually on December 10, 2022. **She was released on February 8, 2023.**



Farahnaz Nazeri

Farahnaz Nazeri, a painter and sculptor from Qaemshahr, was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment and a two-years ban on travel. She was arrested on November 6, 2022, and **released after 65 days on bail**. For the first two weeks she was held in the Intelligence Agency's detention center and then transferred to Qaemshahr Prison.

FEMINISTS & WHRDS DETAINED

Narges Behyari was arrested on November 9 while attempting to stop the beating of a young woman by the security forces and was



Leila Mansour

Leila Mansour, a civil society activist, was arrested at her home in Tehran on November 16, 2022, and transferred to Evin Prison. Security forces seized her laptop and mobile phone. She was released on December 26, 2022 and on January 8, 2023, was sentenced to one year in prison and 50 lashes.

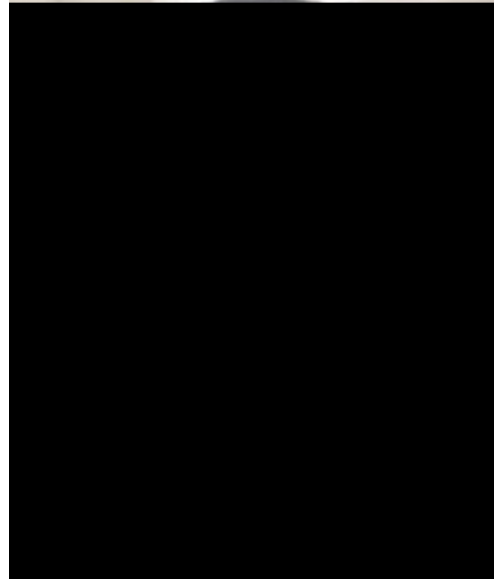


Saba Abdollahi

Saba Abdollahi, a feminist activist, Women's Studies researcher, and editor-in-chief of the student feminist publication "Bidad," was arrested on November 15 when Revolutionary Guard's Intelligence forces raided her home in Arak, according to her Instagram story. She was released on bail on December 7.

Soheila Mata'i

Soheila Mata'i, women's rights activist, was arrested for a second time on November 12, and sentenced by Dehghan Revolutionary Court's 2nd Branch to three years and 10 months imprisonment. She was first arrested on October 1 and released on bail on October 17. She was sentenced to 3 years and half in prison. She is currently being held at Sanandaj's Correctional and Reform Center and her trial was held virtually.

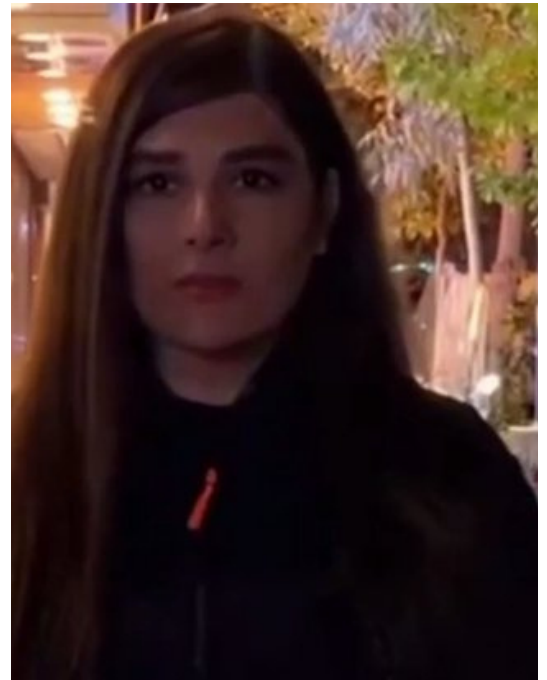


Soheila Golestani

Soheila Golestani, an artist and theater actor, was arrested by security forces on November 30 following the release of a silent protest video in which she and a number of other Iranian artists appear in front of the camera without headscarves. She was released on bail from Evin Prison on December 11. The charges against these citizens are not known at this time.

Hengameh Ghaziani

Hengameh Ghaziani, an actor, was arrested on November 20, 2022 by the order of the judicial authority and taken to court where the interrogator notified her of the charges against her. The charges were “assembly and collusion against national security” and “propaganda against the regime.” Her trial was held on January 24, 2023, in Tehran Revolutionary Court’s 26th Branch with Judge Iman Afshari residing.



Katayoun Riahi

Katayoun Riahi, a TV and movie actor, was arrested by security forces in Abyek, Qazvin, on November 20, 2022, on charges of "dissemination of provocative material in support of the recent protests." On November 29, 2022, she was temporarily released on bail. Her trial was held on January 11, 2023. According to Soraya Riahi Rad, a poet and songwriter, Katayoun Riahi’s hearing was kept quiet from the media and she has been transferred to the hospital after increasing pressure and threats against her.

Shora Fekri

Shora Fekri, an economics graduate from University of Mazandaran, was arrested on November 21, 2022, by security agents while crossing the street in Amol. She has been held in detention in the same section as ordinary prisoners in violation of the “separation of crimes” law without any clarifications of the charges against her. **She was released on bail on February 5, 2023.**



Zahra Nazari Komishani

Zahra Nazari Komishani, an attorney-at-law and a member of the Mazandaran Bar Association living in Sari, was arrested at her workplace on November 21, 2022. She reportedly was released after 22 days in detention on December 12, 2022.



Faezeh Abdipour

Faezeh Abdipour, a former student union activist, political science graduate from Allameh Tabataba'i University and a graduate student in international relations at Mazandaran University, was arrested by security and plainclothes forces at her home in Gorgan on November 22, 2022. On January 5, 2023, she was temporarily released on bail from Gorgan Central Prison (Amirabad). Faezeh Abdipour has been sentenced by revolutionary and criminal courts to a total of seven years imprisonment and a fine of 2 million tomans.



If her conviction is upheld on appeal, based on Article 134 of the Islamic Law, the maximum punishment of four years imprisonment will be applied.



Aida Amidi

Aida Amidi, a poet and a member of the Board of Secretaries of the Writers' Association of Iran, was arrested on December 5, 2022, at her home, after Revolutionary Guard forces broke down her apartment door and terrified the neighbors. **She was released on bail from Evin Prison on January 4, 2023, after 30 days in detention.**

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Maryam Sadrnia

Maryam Sadrnia, a 34 year-old attorney and a resident of Atisaz neighborhood in Tehran, was arrested on December 8, 2022, in her home. She was released on bail on December 25, 2022.



Matineh Khodayar

Matineh Khodayar, a 35-year-old sports coach, was arrested on December 8, 2022, when IRGC intelligence agents raided her home in Tehran's Atisaz neighborhood. **She was released on bail on December 25, 2022.**



Zahra Shafizadeh

Zahra Shafizadeh, a Tehran University of Art graduate in architecture and historical restoration and an Iranian Cultural Heritage activist, was arrested on December 3, 2022, in the vicinity of the university. She was released bail from Qarchak prison on December 5, 2022.



Taraneh Alidoosti

Taraneh Alidoosti, an actress, was arrested by security forces at her home on December 17, 2022, and transferred to Section 209 of Evin Prison. According to judiciary's Mizan news agency Taraneh Alidoosti was arrested for "publishing inflammatory contents in support of popular protests without presenting any supporting documents." **She was released on bail on January 4, 2023, awaiting her trial.** This was not the first time she has been arrested and detained.



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Maryam Ghannad

Maryam Ghannad, a correspondent for IRNA News Agency, was arrested by security forces on December 11, 2023, on her way home from work. A few days after her arrest, she had disclosed on a short phone call that she is detained in section 209 of Evin Prison. **She was temporarily released on bail on January 11, 2023.**



Ziba Omidifar

Ziba Omidifar, a journalist for KurdPress news agency in Qorveh, was transferred by the Revolutionary Guards Intelligence Forces to Kowsar Hospital in Sanandaj on December 15, 2022, one week after her arrest. According to a reliable source she has been tortured and her cognition has declined, leading to her transfer to the hospital, where she has been treated in ER. The IRGC has stressed to the hospital staff that she will be returned to prison after the basic treatments. **On December 30, 2022 Ziba was released temporarily from prison on bail.**

FEMINISTS & WHRDS DETAINED

Zohreh Jam

Zohreh Jam, an art graduate from Tarbiat Modares University, was arrested by security forces on December 19, 2022, and transferred to an undisclosed location. She was released on bail on January 9, 2023.



Tayebbeh Nazari Dr. Maryam Arvin

Tayebbeh Nazari, a teacher at Bentol Hoda Sadr Girls' High School in Sirjan is detained in Kohan Shahr Prison in Sirjan. Allegedly Tayebbeh Nazari was arrested after defending her daughter **Dr. Maryam Arvin**, an attorney, during Maryam's arrest by the security forces on **September 26, 2022**.

Both women were assaulted on the way to prison. The authorities are building a case against them in a psychologically inflammatory environment. Maryam Arvin has been arrested for providing consultation to families of prisoners, which is her job. She was grabbed by her head covering and dragged at the time of her arrest. Both Tayebbeh and Maryam were released on December 13, 2022. **On February 8, 2023, and only two month after her release Maryam Arvin, committed "suicide."**

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Mandana Jabbari



Samiramis Babaei



Pegah Moghimi



Mandana Jabbari, a writer and theatre director, **Samiramis Babaei**, a writer and translator, and **Pegah Moghimi**, a 33-year-old graphic designer and painter, residents of Ekbatan Town in Tehran, were arrested on December 6, 2022, when security forces raided their home and they were taken to Evin Prison. **All three women were released on bail on December 25, 2022.**



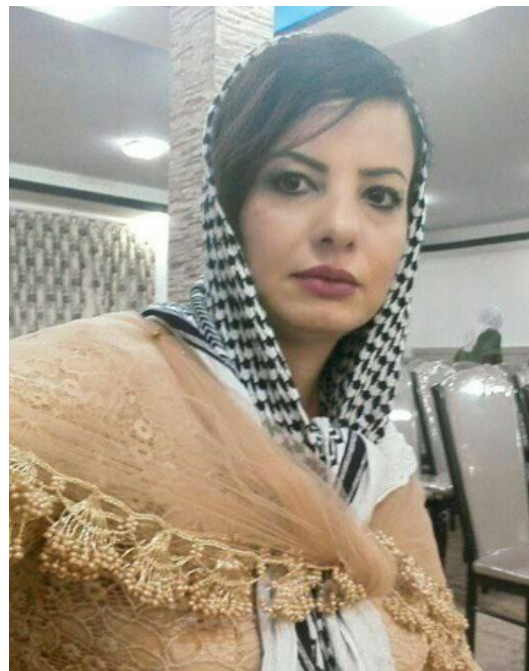
Hiro Sheikh al-Salami

Hiro Sheikh al-Salami, a 40-year-old architecture graduate and painter from Sanandaj and a resident of Tehran's Ekbatan town, was arrested at her home on December 5, 2022, and taken to Evin Prison. She was released on bail on December 25, 2022, while awaiting her trial.

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Shilan Rashidzadeh

Shilan Rashidzadeh, an environmental activist and accounting student in Saqqez, notified her family on a phone call on January 4, 2023, that she had been transferred to a security detention center in Sanandaj. **On January 24, 2023 Shilan was released temporarily on bail.**



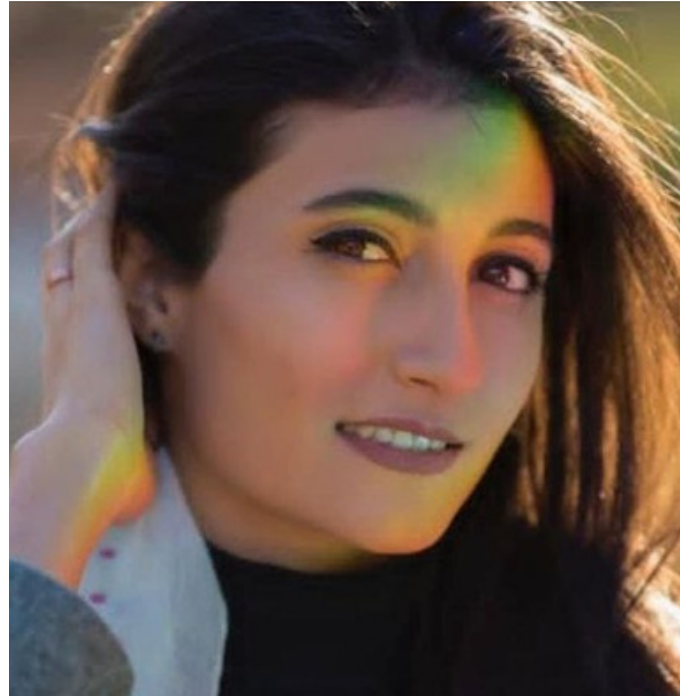
Farnoush Forouzan

Farnoush Forouzan, a student of psychiatry at the University of Social Welfare and Rehabilitation Sciences, was arrested on December 20, 2022, and transferred to Evin Prison. Farnoush is on heart medication and needs access to medical care. **Farnoush has been since released temporarily.**

FEMINISTS & WHRDS DETAINED

Elmira Rahmani

Elmira Rahmani, a cellist, was arrested by the security forces at her home in Isfahan on January 16, 2023. Her electronic devices and personal belongings, including her Cello, were seized at the time of her arrest. Elmira has performed with the Isfahan National Music Orchestra and the city's Philharmonic Orchestra. However, she has been banned from playing at times for being a woman and for being a Baha'i. **Elmira was released on February 13, 2023.**



Nasim Soltanbeigi

Nasim Soltanbeigi, a former student activist and journalist, was arrested at Imam Khomeini Airport on January 10, 2023.

According to sources close to her, she was arrested by the Revolutionary Guards and has spent more than ten days in solitary confinement. She has only been only able to make a few brief contacts with her family. This is not Nasim's first arrest. She had been detained in Evin Prison's Political Women's Ward in 2012 in fulfillment of her two year sentence. The charges against her and her whereabouts are unknown. **On February 7, 2023 Nasim was released temporarily on bail.**



FEMINISTS & WHRDS DETAINED

Soma Pourmohammadi

Soma Pourmohammadi, a civil society activist, Kurdish language teacher and member of the board of directors of the Nozhin Socio-Cultural Association, was arrested on January 18, 2023, at the Sannadaj Revolutionary Court by security forces and transferred to an unknown location. She was there to pursue her husband Idris Manbari's case. **She was released on February 13, 2023.**



Melika Hashemi

Melika Hashemi, an architecture student at Soore University and a reporter, was arrested on January 21, 2023, when she had arrived in Evin Prosecutor's Office to provide them with clarifications. The charges against her and her condition are unknown.

FEMINISTS & WHRDS DETAINED

Mehrnoosh Zarei Hanzaki

Mehrnoosh Zarei Hanzaki, a journalist, was arrested at her home in Tehran on January 22 and transferred to **the ward 2-Alef in Evin Prison**. The arresting authority and the charges against her are not known. The security forces making the arrest, who did not disclose their affiliations, had an arrest warrant issued by the Prosecutor's Office in Tehran's District 33 (Shahid Moghaddez-Security Crimes). They searched the house and seized Mehrnoosh's electronic and personal belongings. She was later transferred to the Ward 209 in Evin prison. **On February 15, 2023 she was released from prison.**

Mehrnoosh has worked with ILNA, ISNA, Chelcheragh and Ana news agencies and has published many reports on social issues.



Saeedeh Shafi'i

Saeedeh Shafi'i, a journalist and writer, was arrested by security forces in Tehran on January 22, 2023, following a raid on her home and the seizure of her personal belongings and was transferred to Evin Prison. Saeedeh Shafii is a fiction writer, active in charities, and journalist. "I am deeply concerned for my wife's health." The charges against her are unknown. **She was temporarily released on February 9, 2023 on bail.**

Femena supports Women Human Rights Defenders, their organizations and feminist movements through analysis of trends and policy, documentation, fostering the development of regional communities of practice and advocacy.

Femena's work is primarily focused on contexts of shrinking or closed civic space and contexts complicated by growing extremism and conflict.



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