



Women Arrested During January Protest in Iran

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Introduction

Nearly seven months have passed since the January 2026 protests, the largest popular uprising against the Iranian government since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, and one that became among the bloodiest episodes of protest in the country's recent history.

Over the course of January 8 and 9, thousands of people were killed in the streets. The [Islamic Republic](#) has put the death toll at approximately 3,000, while the human rights organization [HRANA](#) has reported that at least 7,000 people were killed. Hundreds more were injured and thousands were arrested in the nationwide crackdown that followed.

The protests initially began among merchants in Tehran's Grand Bazaar, amid growing anger over runaway inflation, the sharp rise in foreign exchange rates, and the collapse of the national currency. Following calls issued by opposition groups and figures outside Iran, the demonstrations expanded into nationwide anti-government protests on January 8 and 9.

Less than two months after the protests and the mass killing of demonstrators, the war waged by the United States and Israel against Iran began. For forty days, cities across the country, including the capital, Tehran, were subjected to bombardment.

As war, sanctions, and a naval blockade have further deepened Iran's economic crisis and made everyday life increasingly difficult, the Iranian judiciary and security apparatus have simultaneously intensified their repression of protesters to an exceptionally severe and unprecedented degree.

Young people—many with no previous history of political activism—who took to the streets to peacefully express their frustration with the country's deteriorating conditions have been handed lengthy prison sentences. At the same time, death sentences have been issued one after another against protesters, most of whom are under the age of thirty. Many have no previous record of arrest or prosecution and have never been affiliated with any political party or organization.

The scale and severity of these sentences demonstrate that, while the Islamic Republic is engaged in a war with external enemies, it is simultaneously waging a deeply unequal war at home against protesters, dissidents, and critics.

So far, at least 27 protesters arrested in connection with the January demonstrations have been executed. According to human rights groups, at least [60 more protesters](#) have received death sentences, while dozens of others are awaiting trial on serious charges that could potentially result in similarly harsh sentences.

In recent months, Iranian courts have also prosecuted numerous protesters under the newly enacted law on the “[Intensification of Punishment for Espionage](#),” sentencing defendants to death or lengthy prison terms. The law was adopted in October 2025, following the Twelve-Day War, and has since provided the legal basis for numerous sentences against protesters, civil society activists, and individuals arrested on allegations such as espionage or collaboration with Israel or the United States.

Available information about court proceedings, however, has raised serious concerns about the evidence presented against defendants, the nature of the charges, and the fairness of the judicial process in many of these cases.

The authorities have continued to expand the legal framework available for criminalizing dissent and restricting contact with the outside world. On August 16, 2026, Iran’s Parliament, holding its first in-person session after months of suspension, approved a bill titled “Countering the Infiltration of Foreign Intelligence Services, Governments, or Institutions in the Country.”

Under the bill, interviews or communication with media outlets outside Iran without prior coordination with security authorities, as well as communication with international organizations and institutions, are criminalized and punishable by imprisonment. The measure further expands the risks facing journalists, human rights defenders, civil society activists, and others who communicate with international organizations or independent media.

Against this backdrop, Femena’s seventh report examines the cases of additional women arrested in connection with the January protests. Nearly seven months after their arrest, some of these women remain behind bars without a final verdict and in a

state of prolonged legal uncertainty. Others have been sentenced to prison and are currently serving their terms.

Their cases illustrate the continuing use of detention, prosecution, lengthy prison sentences, and increasingly severe national-security charges against women who participated in, supported, or were otherwise associated with the January protests. As attention has increasingly shifted toward the war and its devastating consequences, these women—and thousands of other protesters detained in its aftermath—continue to face repression largely outside the international spotlight.

1. Romina and Taraneh Rahimi

Romina and Taraneh Rahimi are 20-year-old twin sisters from Isfahan who were arrested during the January protests. They are among the defendants in what has become known as the “Isfahan Shohada Square case,” which involves 16 defendants.

According to HRANA, Romina and Taraneh Rahimi, who are currently detained in Dowlatabad Prison in Isfahan, have been tried on charges of “moharebeh” (enmity against God) and participation in moharebeh. No verdict has yet been issued in the case of the two sisters.



2. Setayesh Saedi

Setayesh Saedi, 19, is another defendant in the Isfahan Shohada Square case. She was arrested at her home on February 2, 2026 .

Sources close to the case have reported that Saedi is the youngest defendant in the case and that she spent her 18th birthday, in April, in prison.

According to available reports, she currently faces charges including “assembly and collusion” and “propaganda against the state.” Setayesh Saedi is currently being held in Dowlatabad Prison in Isfahan.



3. Neda Dadehjani

Neda Dadehjani, an artist and puppeteer from Qorveh who was arrested in connection with the January protests, has been sentenced by a Revolutionary Court to two years of imprisonment on the charge of “assembly and collusion against the internal security of the country.”

In a separate ruling, a criminal court sentenced her to one year in prison

and two years of internal exile in Nik Shahr, Sistan and Baluchestan Province, on the charge of “disrupting public order and peace.” Of the prison sentences imposed on her, two years are enforceable.

4. Tara Farhangian

Tara Farhangian, a Kurdish university student from Qorveh who was arrested during the January 2026 protests, has been sentenced by the Criminal Court and Revolutionary Court of Qorveh to a total of one year in prison, 31 lashes, two years of internal exile in Zabol, and a fine of 120 million tomans.

Farhangian was arrested by security forces during the January protests and was later temporarily released on bail.





5. Paria Dadgar

Paria Dadgar, 23, who was arrested in connection with the January protests, was initially sentenced to 10 years in prison. Following her appeal, the sentence was reduced to six years of imprisonment, with an additional four-year suspended prison sentence.

Following her arrest, Dadgar spent three months in Evin Prison before being released on bail. In early August, her case was transferred to the Sentence Enforcement Unit, requiring her to report to prison to begin serving her sentence.

6. Ghazal Yousefi

Ghazal Yousefi is among those arrested during the January protests in Tehran. She was sentenced to one year in prison and is currently serving her sentence in Evin Prison.

Yousefi was arrested by security forces on January 4, 2026 (14 Dey 1404), during nationwide protests in the vicinity of Tehran's 15 Khordad Bazaar. The following day, she was transferred to the women's ward of Evin Prison.

Ghazal Yousefi is 27 years old and a mother of two children.





7. Forouzan Ansari

Forouzan Ansari, a theater actor and civil society activist from Bandar Abbas who was arrested in connection with the January 2026 protests, was sentenced by Branch 3 of the Bandar Abbas Revolutionary Court to one year in prison on the charge of “propaganda against the state.” The sentence can be appealed before the provincial appeals court.

Ansari was arrested by Intelligence Department forces on January 12, 2026 (22 Dey 1404), during the nationwide protests and transferred to the agency’s detention facility in Bandar Abbas. After 10 days in detention and interrogation, she was temporarily released on bail on January 22, pending the completion of judicial proceedings.

8. Azadeh Saleki



Azadeh Saleki, a teacher working in Khaf who was arrested during the January 2026 protests, was recently summoned to prison to begin serving her one-year prison sentence. Saleki was initially sentenced to 10 years in prison. The Razavi Khorasan Provincial Court of Appeals subsequently reduced her sentence to five years, and her sentence was ultimately reduced to one year of imprisonment.

She was arrested during the January protests and held for approximately one month before being temporarily released on bail of three billion tomans.

Saleki had previously faced disciplinary measures in 2022 because of her statements and activities. She was suspended from work for one month and subsequently transferred from Torbat-e Heydarieh to Khaf.

9. Paria (Zeinab) Farrokhi

Paria (Zeinab) Farrokhi, who was arrested in connection with the 2026 nationwide protests, is currently serving a five-year prison sentence in Evin Prison.

Farrokhi was arrested in connection with the protests and transferred to the women's ward of Evin Prison on January 17, 2026 (27 Dey 1404). She was subsequently sentenced to five years in prison by a court of first instance.

Farrokhi had also been arrested during the 2022 nationwide protests and spent a period in detention. She was ultimately released in that case after being granted amnesty.

10. Parnian (Fateme) Hashempour



Parnian (Fateme) Hashempour was arrested in Tehran on December 30, 2025 (9 Dey 1404), at the beginning of the January protests. She was initially sentenced to five years in prison, but her sentence was reduced to two years on appeal. She is currently serving her sentence in Evin Prison.

According to reports, Hashempour holds a master's degree in archaeology. She had previously been arrested during the 2022 Woman, Life, Freedom protests and spent approximately two months in prison.

11. Shadi (Khadijeh) Shadman

Shadi (Khadijeh) Shadman, who was arrested during the January 2026 nationwide protests and is currently detained in Evin Prison, was sentenced to five years in prison by Branch 26 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court, presided over by Judge Iman Afshari.



Shadman is the mother of a nine-year-old daughter and the sole provider for her family. Before her arrest, she supported her family by working as a seamstress and baker. In January 2026, she participated in demonstrations protesting rising prices, inflation, and deteriorating economic conditions. She is currently serving her sentence in Evin Prison.

12. Mahshad Kashani



Mahshad Kashani was arrested in Isfahan on December 31, 2025 (10 Dey 1404), during the nationwide protests. At the same time that a new case was opened

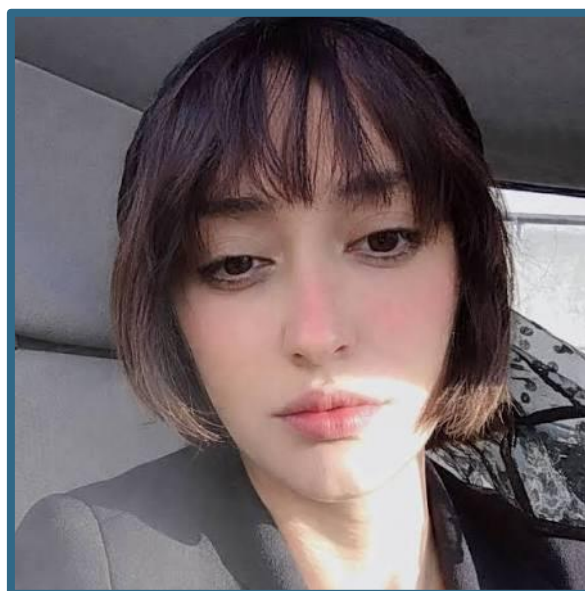
against her in connection with the protests, she was transferred to Dowlatabad Prison in Isfahan to serve a previous sentence.

She was eventually released in July 2026 after completing that sentence and posting bail in the case related to the January protests. However, on August 3, 2026 (12 Mordad 1405), security forces rearrested her at her family home in Isfahan and transferred her back to Dowlatabad Prison.

According to reports, in the case related to the January protests, Branch 5 of the Isfahan Revolutionary Court sentenced Kashani to five years in prison on charges including “propaganda against the state,” “disrupting public order,” and “inciting people to killing.” The sentence was subsequently upheld in full by the appeals court.

Kashani had previously been sentenced in 2024 by Branch 1 of the Isfahan Revolutionary Court, presided over by Judge Mohammad Tavakoli, to six years in prison. Under Article 134 of the Islamic Penal Code, five years of the sentence were deemed enforceable, of which four years and six months were suspended for a period of 10 years. She was also sentenced to a two-year travel ban and prohibited from online activities for two years.

13. Homa Teimouri



Homa Teimouri, who holds a master’s degree in Political Thought from Tarbiat Modares University and was arrested in connection with the January protests, was sentenced by Branch 15 of the Tehran Revolutionary Court, presided over by Judge Salavati, to five years in prison on the charge of “assembly and collusion against national security.”

She was additionally sentenced to a two-year travel ban, a two-year ban on using social media, and the confiscation of her mobile phone. Her husband, Yaser Azadeh, was also sentenced to five years in prison in the same case.

Teimouri was arrested along with her husband and her mother-in-law, Rouhangiz Imani, when security forces raided their home in Tehran on January 25, 2026.



14. Bahareh Aghaei

Bahareh Aghaei is an attorney who was arrested following the January 2026 protests. According to HRANA, more than seven months after her arrest, she remains in detention without a final judicial determination in her case.

Reports indicate that she was recently transferred to Qarchak Prison in Varamin. During her detention, she has reportedly spent at least 15 days in solitary

confinement at Qarchak Prison. She has also gone on hunger strike on one occasion to protest the conditions of her detention.

15. Fatemeh Safari

Fatemeh Safari, the wife of Javad Safari, a retired teacher and a veteran injured during the Iran-Iraq War, was arrested along with her husband on January 22, 2026 (2 Bahman 1404), in connection with the nationwide protests. She was subsequently held for a period in Safarabad Prison in Zanjan.

Safari was recently sentenced to two years and seven months in prison. According to the Coordinating Council of Iranian Teachers' Trade Associations, her husband, Javad Safari, was also sentenced to five years in prison.

According to the same source, Fatemeh Safari is currently outside prison under electronic monitoring with an ankle bracelet.



About Femena

Femena promotes women's rights, and supports women human rights defenders (WHRDs), their organizations and feminist movements in the South-West Asia and North Africa SWANA region. Our work is particularly focused on contexts impacted by repression, fascism and conflict where civic space is closed or shrinking and there is a backlash against rights of women and other structurally excluded groups.

