

PRESS RELEASE

Iran Human Rights Documentation Center Releases Legal Commentary:

“Using Prison as a Tool of Repression: A Legal Analysis of Harsh Prison Conditions during the Years of Reform”

(New Haven, Connecticut, October 26, 2007) – The clerical establishment in Iran responded to the popularity of the reform movement which blossomed in Iran during the Khatami era by striking back at oppositionists detained in the prison system and establishing secret detention facilities of their own outside the control of government ministers.

This argument is advanced by the prominent Iranian jurist Mrs. Mehrangiz Kar in the second of a series of commentaries on developments in Iranian law during the Khatami era in which the clerical establishment responded to the reformist agenda pressed by President Mohammad Khatami by reasserting its authority through state institutions. The series is published by the Iran Human Rights Documentation Center (IHRDC), a New Haven-based non-profit with the mission of documenting the human rights situation in Iran.

In ***Using Prison as a Tool of Repression***, Mrs. Kar examines how the clerical establishment established parallel structures to exert control over prison populations distinct from established government institutions. She also recounts how the rights of Iranian prison detainees were systematically abused throughout the reform era in contravention of Iran’s 2001 Penal Code and international human rights standards.

Mrs. Kar is an attorney, writer and activist working toward the promotion of democracy, the rule of law and human rights within the framework of Islamic law in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Despite her efforts being frequently impeded and curtailed by the Iranian authorities, she has been an active public defender in Iran’s civil and criminal courts, and has been widely published inside and outside Iran. In April of 2000 Mrs. Kar was arrested and imprisoned on charges of acting against the national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran. She was eventually released on medical grounds. Mrs. Kar is currently a Newhouse Fellow at Wellesley College and is unable to return to Iran as there are further charges of a similar nature pending against her.

"IHRDC is proud to be associated with Mrs. Kar’s work and we believe that her commentary will carry great weight inside Iran. Mrs. Kar’s report exposes how the clerical establishment in Iran subverted state institutions and disregarded national laws during the reform era in order to intimidate and brutalize their political opponents. In doing so she reveals the true price of public debate in the Islamic Republic," said Tom Parker, Executive Director of the IHRDC.

Using Prison as a Tool of Repression is available in Farsi on IHRDC’s website at <http://www.iranhrdc.org>. The report is the second in a series of four legal commentaries contributed by Mrs. Kar.

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